

Sex and the City: DVD includes commentaries, farewell tributes

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through it all, and it's satisfying to finally see a resolution to this story line. The support that her husband Harry, played by Evan Handler, shows for her is remarkable and inspiring. I think this plot is by far the most melancholy and the tears came down every time I watched the last few episodes.

There is a whole disc dedicated to bonus features, although I found it a bit disappointing. There are three alternative endings shot to leave the audience guessing. They were very short, maybe two minutes each, but all would leave Carrie in a different place in her life. There are also deleted scenes from seasons two, three, four, five and six, as well as two HBO farewell tributes.

The finest bonus feature, however, is the audio commentaries. If you are as big a "Sex and the City" fan as I am,

there is nothing better than sitting down and watching the audio commentaries on every season possible. Michael Patrick King, the executive producer and a writer on the show, goes through a select number of episodes and gives great insight into the writing, the characters and the premise. The audience can learn so much more about "Sex and the City" just by listening to King, who has been there since the beginning of the series.

The finale of "Sex and the City," easily one of the most wonderful and revolutionary television shows out there, was heartwrenching and bitter-sweet. The final release of the last eight episodes has given some closure to the millions of fans out there, although I don't think anyone will ever fully recover from saying goodbye to these four fabulous women.

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Animated: Sitcoms stand out with creative writing and appealing visuals

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So television it was. I have an overpowering distaste for the medium, stemming from the poor quality of writing, the irritating repetition of clichés and the nagging suspicion that I am being hypnotized through the subliminal coordination of flashing lights emitting from the screen. But this usually passes after a few minutes.

Through these bouts of television I always discover anew a fact that is often considered common knowledge: Ninety percent of everything is crap. With this in mind, the key is to find out what is worthwhile. So I came up with a hard and fast rule for watching television that seems to work with a decent level of accuracy (this is the theory I was speaking of above. You remember, right? Right?). The rule is: Animated sitcoms are the best-written and funniest shows on television. Can we all agree on that? Good.

Proof of this theory is pretty easy to come by. Think of all of the animated television shows that have been on the air in the past five years. How many of them sucked? I rest my case. It is possible to come up with a few bad apples in the bunch, but these are in the minority. Imagine that — a form of television in which the good outweighs the bad. And thanks to the wonders of digital technology, I no longer have to actually watch television on a regular basis in order to enjoy the cream of this particular crop. The boom of television shows being released on DVD has brought with it the pleasures of commercial-free viewing of good television at my convenience. And nothing pads out a DVD collection like a few well chosen box sets.

It has in fact come to the point where I no longer have to watch television stations to see the shows I like. Buying the DVDs of my favorite shows has actually lowered the amount of television I watch to almost nonexistent levels. Funny how the world works.

While there are plenty of shows out there worth watching, a few stand out

far above the rest. "Futurama" stands out for its endlessly inventive writing and appealing visual style, even if it does start to falter a bit in its final season. "Family Guy" is like "All in the Family" on a three-day crack-bender and has actually come up with a new sort of visual gag — the brief flashback — that I do not believe I've ever seen on television. These shows are of course followers to that godhead of animated television, "The Simpsons," about which nothing more really needs to be said. These shows actually seem to work better on the DVD format than on television because their scattershot approach to comedy makes them endlessly watchable.

A few other shows stand out, such as the understated humor of "King of the Hill" or any number of oddities found on Cartoon Network's "Adult Swim" programming. Another show I've recently gotten into is "Invader Zim," a Nickelodeon program that has been released on DVD. The show is more kid oriented than most of the shows mentioned above, but this hardly detracts from its values. It is one of those rare children's shows that doesn't insult the intelligence of its audience, nor does it create a sugar-coated view of the childhood it depicts. Instead, it imagines childhood, particularly public education, as a freakish sci-fi world full of equally freakish children.

Some of the plot lines even push the boundaries of children's programming. In the episode "Dark Harvest," the diminutive alien invader of the show's title steals the organs of his fellow students at the public school he is hiding out in. The purpose of this is to look as much like a real human as possible so he can pass a health examination. The show actually condenses an entire horror film plot into fifteen minutes, yet remains funny enough to be palatable for children. Check it out, it will be worth your while.

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