

FILM

The film world is full of eccentrics, but one gay director practically defines the term. John Waters, the Baltimore native whose love of drag queens and the shattering of the taboo have made him infamous, appears Feb. 17 in Portland.

Go see the man, sure, but if you kneel at the feet of the pencil-thin mustached patron saint of poor taste, you'd best be familiar with his flicks. The following are all of Waters' works available on DVD, which contain lots of extra digital bits, including commentary by the inimitable director—zowie!

PINK FLAMINGOS
New Line

This 1972 offering wasn't Waters' first film, but it is the one that put him and Divine on the cultural—and countercultural—map. Divine is Babs Johnson, who calls herself "the filthiest person alive." This doesn't sit well with Mink Stole, who covets the crown, and the two embark on a competition to prove who the filthiest one really is. Edith Massey is hysterical as the geriatric babylike "Egg Lady," but if chicken fucking, incest and eating real dog shit on camera aren't your thing, keep your distance. But be warned: No one who starts watching *Pink Flamingos* can stop. It's available packaged with *Female Trouble* as Volume 3 of *The John Waters Collection*. The DVD contains the 25th anniversary restored widescreen version, deleted scenes, a trailer and audio commentary by Waters.

FEMALE TROUBLE
New Line

Divine plays mean teen Dawn Davenport in this 1974 feature. When her parents don't give her the cha-cha heels she wants for Christmas, she embarks on a life of twisted crime. In a creative bit of editing, Divine (out of drag) rapes Dawn, and she later gives birth, biting through the umbilical cord to deliver "Taffy" into the world. Things get even weirder when Dawn begins work at an ultra-strange beauty salon. The DVD contains the widescreen version, a trailer and audio commentary by Waters.

DESPERATE LIVING
New Line

Fans can argue which Waters film takes taste to its lowest level, but this 1977 offering is my choice. Paranoid Peggy Gravel (Stole) and her immense African American maid (Jean Hill) murder Gravel's husband, then go on the lam. They end up in Mortville, a bizarre shantytown where Queen Carlotta rules over all "misfits," including bullydicks and leathermen. One funny scene depicts a lesbian gloryhole, a concept you must see to believe. *Desperate Living* is available packaged with *Polyester* as Volume 2 of *The John Waters Collection*. The DVD contains the widescreen version, a trailer and audio commentary by Waters and '60s bad girl Liz Renay.



POLYESTER
New Line

Waters begins to soften vulgarity and up production values with this 1981 film, in which Divine plays a tortured housewife with the ultimate white trash family. Her life changes when she meets virile Todd Tomorrow ('60s beach movie star Tab Hunter) and embarks on a passionate affair. Like the theatrical feature, the DVD is filmed in "Odorama"

Digital Waters

The King of Trash is bringing his one-man show to the Portland stage. Join *Just Out* for a look at the prolific (and bizarre) film career of John Waters.

BY ANDY MANGELS



Harried mom Divine in *Hairspray*

and comes with a scratch-and-sniff card, allowing you to experience the smells of the film. The DVD contains the widescreen version, a trailer and audio commentary by Waters.

HAIRSPRAY
New Line

Perhaps the most charming and accessible film of Waters' career, this 1988 offering marked the acting debut of Ricki Lake and the final film role of Divine. Lake is Tracy Turnblad, a fat girl in the '60s who wants to dance on a local show for teens and who passionately disagrees with segregation of blacks and whites. A true gem. The DVD contains the widescreen version, a trailer and audio commentary by Waters and Lake.

PECKER
New Line

Waters tries to achieve a balance between quirky and mainstream in this little-seen 1998 film about a boy (Edward Furlong) who uses a secondhand camera to take first-rate photos of the seedy side of Baltimore. When fame beckons, Pecker first embraces it before recognizing the dark side of celebrity. Christina Ricci—luminous as always—stars as his pensive girlfriend. Look for some infamous drag kings at a lesbian bar. *Pecker* is available on its own or packaged with *Hairspray* as Volume 1 of *The John Waters Collection*. Both versions are widescreen and include a trailer, a still gallery with commentary by the film's real photographer and audio commentary by Waters.

SERIAL MOM
HBO

My personal favorite of the Waters oeuvre is this 1994 comedy about a devoted suburban mother who discovers murder is

the perfect way to get rid of many pesky annoyances. Whether blabbing filthy phone sex to the woman she hates or flashing lewdly at her media circus trial, husky-voiced Kathleen Turner is never less than fabulous. Look for real-life bad girl Patty Hearst in a hilarious cameo. The DVD contains a standard version of the film, a trailer and audio commentary by Waters.

CECIL B. DEMENTED
Artisan

Waters' 2000 feature isn't as successful as previous efforts, perhaps because in leaving gross-out comedy behind, his rage against the system becomes somewhat toothless.



Stephen Dorff, the leader of an underground movement of cinema terrorists, kidnaps a Hollywood movie queen and forces her to star in his radical film. Melanie Griffith gives the role her best, eviscerating not only her screen image but that of most movie goddesses. The DVD features the widescreen version, a documentary, production notes, trailers and audio commentary by Waters.

JOHN WATERS SCRAPBOOK
New Line

In a fun bid to make collectors frantic, New Line Cinema has made a deal with fans. If you buy the entire *John Waters Collection*, you get this special extra DVD sent to you! *Scrapbook* features vintage television interviews with Waters and cast and crew members, behind-the-scenes footage, audio interviews, home movies and more. It's a kick-ass package for film lovers and Waters aficionados alike.

We know, we know—we left some out. Don't send us e-mails: At this time, Waters' other films—*Mondo Trasho*, *Multiple Maniacs*, *Cry-Baby* and numerous short featurettes—are not available on DVD. Perhaps you should chat with him about this when he's in town.

JOHN WATERS and naughty indie rapper Peaches perform 8 p.m. Feb. 17 at Crystal Ballroom, 1332 W. Burnside St. For tickets visit www.mcmenamans.com.

ANDY MANGELS is an entertainment writer who discovered the films of John Waters while in college. Still relatively sane after viewing them, he is working on a book about DVDs.



What else would Divine give birth to? Taffy is a terrible tot in *Female Trouble*.

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