Truffaut’s Antoine Doinel films DVD collection

By Jan Uhde

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The impact of the DVD revolution goes far beyond the indisputable and conspicuous improvement of the image quality available on the new carrier. The implications - a kind of ripple effect - are profound. Access to a great variety of films, formerly restricted to inhabitants of large metropolises, has been significantly improved. Good movies neglected by the existing distribution and exhibition structures are now coming within reach of practically anyone who desires them. One can even enjoy films which would otherwise be accessible only to a handful of researchers in film archives and research institutes.

Restorations of old films offer a new perspective on the history of cinema: through these, viewers discover damaged, lost or censored image material; enjoy improved subtitles, upgraded musical scores. The DVD publishers are learning to observe aesthetic rules such as proper screen ratio which is often neglected by both the television broadcasters and videocassette producers.

One of the most recent contributions to quality home viewing is the new Criterion Collection edition of five films by François Truffaut - his famous Antoine Doinel "pentalogy," featuring Truffaut's alter ego, Jean-Pierre Léaud. The coffret (the box looks like a small suitcase) contains 400 Blows, the featurette Antoine and Collette, Stolen Kisses, Bed and Board and Love on the Run.

The collection’s films are drawn from new digital transfers, using anamorphic widescreen format; there is a bounty of supporting material far beyond the customary "theatrical trailers:" Truffaut’s 18-minute short Les mistons (The Mischief Makers, 1957), the 44-minute documentary Working with François Truffaut, several interviews, behind-the-scenes footage, archive newsreel footage, a 72-page illustrated booklet and other valuable material. The design of the individual DVD cases is simply beautiful - now one can see that even the small DVD cases can be a joy to look at, once the movie-watching is over.

Figure 1:

Author Information

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His professional and research interests focus on Singapore cinema; the identification and distancing mechanisms of the film viewer; the non-authored modifications and manipulation of films; and specific aspects of film history, including the Central European cinema.

He founded KINEMA in 1993.