

CIVAL WAR ON THE BATTLESTAR

BATTLESTAR GALACTICA SEASON 2

7 Hours and 18 minutes, Universal

I have to say that aside from "LOST", I am truly enjoying the SciFi Network's "BATTLESTAR GALACTICA".

Sure, this is definitely not the same "BATTLESTAR GALACTICA" that many of us grew up watching the early 80's, in my opinion, this version is so much better.

The main revolving storyline of the series is about how man created machine. The machine known as the cylons wanted to eliminate mankind and thus a war broke out and the cylons lost and disappeared for many years.

In the first season, you realize that all these years, the cylons were working hard to create machines that look like humans and in turn, through their deception in learning

the secrets of the military, the cylons attack the humans by penetrating their defenses, nearly obliterating all human life with the exception of those who were able to escape to space.

In season 1, the story focuses on how the humans need to find home and by doing that, they need to head back to the mother planet, Earth.

But unbeknownst to the humans, the cylons are now disguised as humans and these hybrids are among the crew or residents of the Battlestar Galactica and leads to a major betrayal at the end of the first season with one of the well known cast members revealing herself to be a cylon and shoots to assassinate Commander Adama.

In Season 2, this DVD picks up with Adama is fighting for his life, there is new leadership on the Battlestar Galactica which puts the new leadership against the leadership of the President. Thus civil war is in-

stated on the Battlestar Galactica as fellow crew members face off against each other.

To make matters worse, it is revealed that the cylons have been capturing women and putting them in a hybrid farm to give birth to hybrid human/cylons.

And of course, what happens when the Battlestar Galactica comes across the Battlestar Pegasus (which was thought long destroyed) and Admiral Cain of the Pegasus threatens to execute two of Adama's men. Hell's definitely going to break loose!

The second season of "Battlestar Galactica" continues the action and suspense of the first series and doesn't let down at all.

The imagery is beautiful (and featured in widescreen 1.78:1) and the audio is featured in digital 5.1 and sounds awesome.

If there was only one negative that I can find was that there were fewer episodes for season 2 versus season 1 (which the DVD also featured the Battlestar Galactica mini-series).

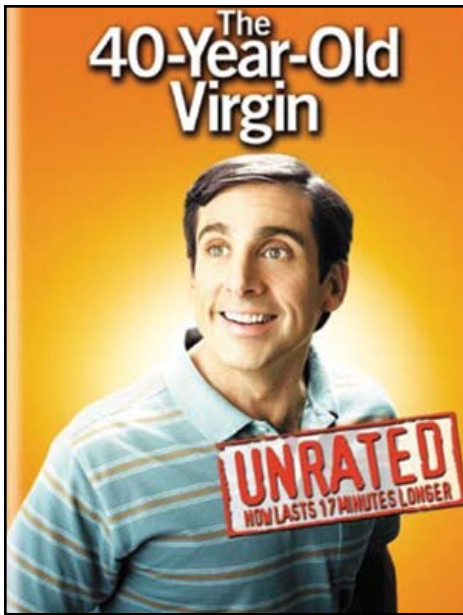
Also, unlike the first season DVD, there are no specials included with this box set.

What you do get for special features are the podcasts (which are literally the director's commentary) which have been previously available for free online, as well as each episode featuring its deleted scenes.

On the final third disk, a sneak peek to the third seasons is included.

"BATTLESTAR GALACTICA SEASON 2" is riveting, suspenseful, beautiful and storytelling, special effects well done. I highly recommend checking both box sets of this series. You can't go wrong.

A+ —DENNIS A. AMITH



THE 40-YEAR-OLD VIRGIN
133 minutes, Universal, Unrated

This film has been regarded one of the sleeper hits of 2005 with critics placing it as one of the top 3 comedy films of 2005.

At first, I avoided even watching the film because I thought it was one of those B-flicks that are just crap.

But being a toy and action figure collector myself, friends have told me that it's a fun movie to watch and after watching it, I agree.

The main storyline focuses on a man named Andy. Andy is quite anti-social and his home is mainly a sanctum for action figures and video games.

His co-workers feel bad for Andy because he's a virgin and do their best to teach him how to pick up women.

The result is film full of laughter and unlike being a juvenile sex film, there is a really good underlying story that makes Andy worth rooting for.

Also, with the concept of a man who just plays video games and collects toys will definitely hit home for

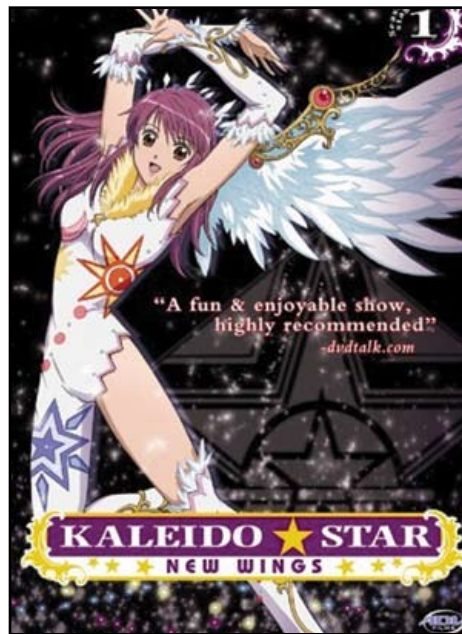
a lot of fanboys and fangirls this day and age.

The DVD comes with deleted scenes and the unrated version has 17 minutes of extra footage that is really nothing important but to make Andy look more nerdy than he already is.

The main problem for me was that the normal version is better in terms of pacing without the 17 minutes but it is only available via fullscreen. Only the unrated version is widescreen which is unfortunate.

But if you do enjoy lewd comedy, I definitely recommend checking out this film.

B — DENNIS A. AMITH



KALEIDO STAR NEW WINGS

Volume 1, TV PG, ADV Films

The original "KALEIDO STAR" (2003) anime series was in my opinion, a sleeper hit.

It was easy for people to mistake this anime as another "magical girls" type anime.

This anime is nothing like that.

In fact, the storyline is quite involving, fun and quite unique in some ways.

The original story of "KALEIDO STAR" revolved around a girl named Sora. Her dream and her promised made to her parents was that she would do her best to become a member of the popular "KALEIDO STAR" which is in this series, the ultimate entertainment where people put their life on the line to do the riskiest but most beautiful trapeze moves ever.

In "New Wings", the first volume features the first two episodes recapping the whole entire season and the OAV narrated by Fool.

With most recaps being boring and monotonous, this one was done with flair and very enjoyable that even though you haven't watched or completed the first season, the recaps are probably all you need.

The third episode starts the second season where Sora now assumes Layla's position as the top star of Kaleido Star. With not having the top notch abilities that Layla has, the company is not attracting the audiences they once had.

Unfortunately for Sora, there is another person named May who wants that top status badly and is determined to be #1. Thus the second season features the rivalry between Sora and May and both vying to be the partner of Leon.

The first volume of "KALEIDO STAR - NEW WINGS" features five episodes, mini-poster, production sketches and the clean opening and closing animations.

All in all, a very fun anime with enjoyable characters. Definitely a series worth checking out.

B+ — DENNIS A. AMITH