

Sights and Sounds

HEAD AKA - The Monkees HEAD



Growing up in the sixties I remember The Monkees TV show with fondness. The Monkees was a show about four musicians, Davy Jones, Peter Tork, Mike Nesmith and Mickey Dolenz, struggling to make ends meet and make it big. In the show they never did. In real life they became one of the biggest groups to hit the teen scene since The Beatles. When we think of the The Monkees we tend to think of three things. First that the show was a family show that appealed to the young people of the time. Second, they were, at first, primarily a vocal group. They added their voices to music tracks recorded by others. Even though there were many vocal groups around at the time that did just that because the show was about a band, we felt somehow betrayed when we found this out. By the time their third album came out and they had taken control and played their own instruments the damage had been done, the public had largely turned on them and the show was headed for cancellation. Third, a fact that falls in line with the second, they were manufactured. Prior to the show these four people did not know each other and they were hired to play a band with the hope that they would become one. This brings us to the movie HEAD. The Monkees wanted to break out of their image and become more relevant. They joined together in a hotel room with show creator Bob Rafelson and a then unknown actor by the name of Jack Nicholson and came out with the movie HEAD. Although the boys were very involved with the script history repeated itself and their names were not listed on the credits. By the time the movie came out the show had been off the air for a number of months and they had lost their standing as musicians. The film failed completely. It has since become a bit of a cult film and is worth seeing.

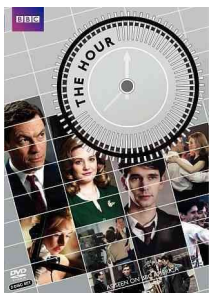
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The Hour



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ISBN:

0780676815

This BBC program from last summer (it aired last September on BBC America) follows the lives of three people who work for an newly created television news program at the BBC in 1956. While I did find it to be a bit slow in parts for a 6 episode series, I enjoyed watching the whole of it - especially the ending (no spoilers here, though). 'The Hour' is the name of the news program created within the show that attempts to challenge the then BBC standard of merely promoting the government's official viewpoint on current events. The plot also revolves around the mysterious death of a friend of the young journalist played by Ben Whishaw. He is, as usual, amazingly good in this, as are the two other leads; Romola Garai, who plays the head producer of the program, and Dominic West, the not-quite-ready-for-prime-time head anchor. If you are at all familiar with BBC programming, many of these shorter series can be standalone pieces, usually with all the episodes written by the same author (This one is actually coming back for a second series sometime later in 2012). The show creator here, Abi Morgan, seems to be an up-and-coming writer for theater, television, and film. Much of the newsroom work on the program gives some insight into Suez Crisis of the period, which I found interesting. For those not necessarily keen on a fictionalized history lesson, there is both a romance angle between several of the characters and some post-WWII, early Cold War espionage spy stuff going on here too. If you enjoy more modern-set period dramas of the BBC, give this one a try.

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Melancholia



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ISBN:

876964004473

I'm not sure how to describe Melancholia. It's a movie about the end of the world, yes, but it's not really. It's a film about two sisters and their dysfunctional family, yes, but it's not really that either.

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Brain Games

National Geographic has produced three television episodes on the biology, psychology and other interesting parts of the human brain. Each episode has several tests to follow along with on the screen. After completing each test the viewer learns why the human brain behaves in the

way that it does. There is no need to feel embarrassed about what we don't know since this is a characteristic of all human beings. It seems that we all have blind spots and things that we miss in our every day interactions. It turns out that the reality that we construct is an illusion and is filled with many gaps and misunderstanding. Each fifty minute episode focuses on a different aspect of reality and how our brains work to construct them. Towards the end of the program there are a few suggestions to help you improve your long term memory. The library has one copy on DVD.

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