

TV

Fantastic voyage

A film education without the musty lecture halls.

THE STORY OF FILM: AN ODYSSEY 15

Show ★★★★★ Extras ★★★★★

2011 **OUT 23 APRIL** £49.99 DVD



FOR YONKS, MARK COUSINS has been the connoisseur's choice of TV film critic. Between 1996 and 1999, his *Scene By Scene* strand on BBC2 introduced a whole generation to a host of classics that, in the pre-Lovefilm and Amazon days, would have been next to impossible for provincial film buffs to track down. For that alone, his statue should be outside the BFI, but last year he delivered what might be his masterwork.

Years in the making, *The Story Of Film* is a 15-hour jog through cinema's backstory, from the Lumiere brothers to Christopher Nolan. Taking us from scratchy fairground sideshows to Imax, it's no dry history lesson. It's an examination of the ceaseless innovation that drove cinema to become, for a time, the world's most popular art form. As such, *The Blair Witch Project* is afforded as much attention as the work of Sergei Eisenstein.

More crucially, Cousins takes a freshly global perspective, showcasing little-known films from Africa and elsewhere, which are, it's fair to say, pretty obscure. But Cousins' passionate advocacy (delivered in a deceptively relaxed voiceover) means you'll finish the epic series with a to-watch list the length of your arm.

Even more importantly, Cousins is immune to the latte-quaffing wankery that can so often infect film criticism, whether it's in finding a staggering parallel between Cocteau and *Inception*, or in giving *Top Gun* and its ilk the same respect that's normally reserved for, say, Satyajit Ray. Genuinely democratic, honest in its broad perspective, and unusually technically aware, this is the definitive history of cinema's first century-and-a-bit. **Andrew Lowry**

EXTRAS

None



He was very competitive with pub games.



CASTLE: SEASON 2 15

Show ★★★★★ Extras N/A

2009-10 **OUT 16 APR** £29.99 DVD

JUMPING INTO ITS SECOND SEASON like it's been running for years, the hit US comedy/romance/mystery/cop hybrid is deservedly brimming with confidence. Tough NYPD 'tec Stana Katic is still pretending not to like Nathan Fillion's cocky crime writer – and he's still pretending to research his next novel as he tags along on all her murder cases. The premise might be straining, but the crackling chemistry and wit has been matured, refined and distilled into a fine old-school buddy-cop series. **Paul Bradshaw**

EXTRAS

Featurettes Deleted scenes/outtakes
Music videos



TITANIC: 100 YEARS BELOW E

Show ★★★★★ Extras ★★★★★

2012 **OUT NOW** £11.99 DVD, £32.99 Special Edition

RELEASED TO MARK 100 YEARS OF morbid obsession with the Titanic tragedy, The History Channel delivers another overstuffed boxset. Three discs of endless hours of archive footage, underwater archaeology and computer reconstructions cover everything you ever wanted to know. The 'Deluxe Centenary Edition' even comes with a memorabilia pack and CD of music that the ship's band might have been playing as they sank into the North Atlantic. **Paul Bradshaw**

EXTRAS

Featurettes CD/book/memorabilia pack



TREME: SEASON 2 TBC

Show ★★★★★ Extras N/A

2011 **OUT 30 APR** £27.99 DVD, £36.49 BD

DAVID SIMON'S POST-KATRINA SERIES brings the meticulousness of *The Wire* to bear on the story of New Orleans. Season 1's detailed approach was an antidote to the ADD news coverage Simon rails against. Season 2 continues in a similar vein, using the musical storytelling tradition of the city to tell its own meditative tale of people surviving and rebuilding in the face of opportunism and indifference. Once the initial point's made, events become more conventionally dramatic. Still, it compels like nobody else's work and remains essential. **Nathan Ditum**

EXTRAS

Commentaries Featurettes



TITANIC TBC

Show ★★★★★ Extras N/A

2012 **OUT 16 APR** £19.99 DVD, £24.99 BD

DOWNTON ABBEY AT SEA: THIS four-part ITV drama ties into the centenary of the RMS Titanic's fateful voyage with a screenplay by Julian Fellowes. All four episodes take the ensemble cast through myriad class tensions and romantic subplots, with Linus Roache, Celia Imrie and Toby Jones on top form. More surprising is the inventive decision to set each episode during the hours leading up to the fatal iceberg collision, deepening our understanding of the characters. Solid, but doesn't come close to sinking Cameron's epic. **Jamie Russell**

EXTRAS

TBC