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MONDAY, DEC. 17, 2012

## Life of Pi

### Ang Lee's 3D fantasy

By [David Lührssen \(by-author-16-1.html\)](#)



No contemporary Hollywood director is bolder than Ang Lee—at least in the realm of trying new things. With *Life of Pi*, Yann Martel's novel about an Indian boy shipwrecked on a lifeboat with a wild tiger is rendered in dazzling 3D. The boy, called Pi, goes down in the stormy Pacific on the way to Canada, where his zoo-keeping family had hoped to sell their animals and start a new life. The already thoughtful, spiritual adolescent must learn to balance fear with compassion if he is to coexist on the open sea with a growling, hungry creature on short rations.

*Life of Pi* is a meditation on God in millions of manifestations and of finding acceptance, as well as purpose, in a world that can be punishing. Pi is marooned for a long stretch in the immensity of endless ocean and sky mirroring in beautiful cinematography. The best scenes make good use of 3D and computer-generated imagery to evoke the story's magical realism.

#### Home Movies/DVD & Blu-ray

- *Arbitrage*

Robert Miller (Richard Gere) is a risk-taking hedge fund mogul, confident in his luck and the power of money to make more money. But when his house-of-cards empire totters and he accidentally kills his mistress in a car crash, *Arbitrage* veers from *Wall Street* into the clipped, high velocity scenario of a network TV police procedural. Tim Roth plays the dogged, Al Pacino-like detective on his trail and Susan Sarandon is Miller's suspicious wife.

### ■ *Koch Brothers Exposed*

Fred Koch made a fortune as Stalin's oilman and invested his riches in the John Birch Society. The irony was lost on his children, Charles and David Koch, who bankroll Americans for Prosperity, purchase politicians and underwrite disinformation to defund Social Security, deregulate polluting industries, destroy public schools and undermine academic standards. Completed before the November election, this documentary misses its happy ending: the Kochs bet millions on the losing horse of Romney-Ryan.

### ■ *Ravi Shankar, Tenth Decade In Concert: Live in Escondido*

Ravi Shankar, 92, died last week. He had dedicated his time to mastering the music of India and presented those traditions to the world through the end of his life. In the notes to *Live in Escondido*, which documents one of his final concerts, Shankar apologizes for "not feeling very well." Yet his intense focus on sitar sounded undiminished.

—David Lührssen

## ALSO FROM DAVID LUHRSEN

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