Thai Media

BLUE ELEPHANT, THE. *The Blue Elephant* is a 2006 Thai computer-animated feature film set during Ayutthaya-era Siam about an elephant that wanders away from its mother and eventually becomes the war elephant for King Naresuan in wars against the Burmese. It is based on a work entitled, *Chao Phraya Prap Hongsaawadi* by Ariya Jintapanichkarn; and the title of this work refers to the royal title bestowed upon this renowned war elephant [The ‘Lord’ (Chao Phraya) who defeated the Burmese]. The title of this animated movie in Thailand was *Kan Klui* (often romanized as Khan Kluay); and this name is derived from a nickname bestowed upon this elephant. This nickname means banana trunk, and this elephant was dubbed Kan Klui because its gently sloping back. The battle between King Naresuan and the Burmese (1593) is of great historical importance, and it has been romanticized in various forms – including this modern animated feature. There is a monument of King Naresuan and his elephant in Don Chedi, Suphanburi. 2008. Color. 1 hr. 20 min. English or French with optional English, French and Spanish subtitles. DVD. [TH 8]

JAN DARA. The title character, played by Suwinit Panjamawat, is established early on as a pariah in his home, when his mother dies while giving birth to him. His father, Khun Luang (Santisuk Promsiri), ostracizes him, labeling him a bastard and delivering brutal beatings to the boy. Khun Luang (which means "master") has an insatiable sexual appetite, and the child's earliest memories are of witnessing his father's conquests. The boy's own sexuality is initiated at an early age, and continues to blossom despite the violence of his father. Eventually thrown out of the house, the grown Jan (Eakarat Sarsukh) is years later asked back into the fold to save the family name. He sets about wreaking his revenge, inadvertently continuing the cycle of cruelty established by his father. Color. 1 hr. 54 min. Thai/Thai with English subtitles. DVD. [TH 2]

LEGEND OF SURIYOTHAI, THE. In the 16th century, the beautiful princess Suriyothai married a man she did not love in order to prevent a bitter clash between the most powerful families in Thailand’s empire. Soon after, this daring princess would battle a band of traitors plotting to take the royal crown. But her greatest challenge would put her in the frontlines of the most brutal war in her country’s history, The Siamese-Burmese War of 1548. Based on a few lines from historical chronicles, this story conjures up the story of a great queen. 2001/2003. Color. 2 hr. 22 min. Thai with optional English and French subtitles. Special features include: Director’s commentary; deleted scenes; making-of featurette; poster artwork gallery; and photo gallery. DVD. [TH 5]

LIFE AND LANGUAGE: THAI LANGUAGE VIDEOS. Color. 1 hr. 35 min. Thai. VHS. [TH 1]

LIFE AND WORK OF BUDDHADASA BHIKKHU. Documentary of the life and teachings of Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, the revered Thai Buddhist monk. Received the highest honor at Thammasat University's film competition in 1987, given the award of best documentary videotape. Features narration in English by ordained monk Phra Santikaro Bhikkhu, an American monk who studied under Buddhadasa Bhikkhu, which aims to give those unfamiliar with both Thai culture and Buddhism an insight into the profound thoughts of this monk. 25 min. English.
MYSTERIOUS OBJECT AT NOON. Thai independent filmmaker, Aphichatpong Weerasethakul, used a surrealist storytelling technique to interview people throughout Thailand, asking them to contribute to the film's evolving oral story. What emerges is a portrait of Thailand's disenfranchised lower classes — farmers, fruit vendors, village performers — and their resulting collective story about a handicapped boy and his tutor, a mysterious woman named Dogfahr. 2002. Color. 1 hr. 25 min. Thai/Thai with English subtitles. DVD. [TH 3]

OVERTURE, THE. This film is inspired by the life of maestro Luang Pradith Phairao, the storied master of the Ranat-Ek – Thailand's traditional wooden xylophone. The Overture is a boldly conceived, stunningly beautiful story bursting with color, energy and music. Sorn, a spectacularly gifted musical prodigy, longs to compete in the ecstatic musical competitions pitting Thailand’s late 19th-century Ranat-Ek players against one another. But when rival musicians murder his older brother, Sorn’s family forbids the young performer from ever playing again. Beseeching his parents to let him carry on for his fallen brother, while surreptitiously studying on his own, Sorn fights to balance his all-consuming need to win with his responsibility to the traditions and loyalties he has promised to uphold. 2004. Color. 1 hr. 44 min. Thai with optional English subtitles. DVD. [TH 6]

UNCLE BOONMEE WHO CAN RECALL HIS PAST LIVES. The recipient of the prized Palme d’Or Award at the 2010 Cannes Film Festival, director Apichatpong Weerasethakul’s hypnotic drama tells the haunting story of a Thai man suffering from kidney failure who retreats to the countryside to die in the company of his loved ones. As Uncle Boonmee nears the end of his life, the spirit of his late wife returns to guide him into the unknown, and his estranged son reappears in the form of a jungle spirit. Later, the ailing man leads his family on a journey to a hilltop cave where he first came into this world. 2010. Color. 1 hr. 53 min. Thai with English subtitles. DVD. [TH 7]