

Not quite 101 new videos to rent this week

By GERRY BELTZ
Film Critic

It's another eclectic week of new releases — romance, comedy, drama and even something for the kids. Pretty good quality all the way around, too. This week's pick-of-the-week looks at an actor, not a film.

"Emma" — Here's a story about a cook who has a hand in everyone else's stew, but can't even handle making Ramen noodles for herself.

Emma (Gwenyth Paltrow) has a habit of helping relationships along the path she chooses ... for better or for worse. However, when a charming young man (Jeremy Northam, "The Net") finds a spot in her heart, she hasn't the faintest idea what to do or how to act.

"The Ghost and the Darkness" — Man hunts animal. Animal hunts man. You say tomato, I say tomato.

The clean-cut engineer with perfect hair and teeth (Val Kilmer) must join forces with the rugged hunter with dazzling eyes (Michael Douglas) to kill a couple of killer lions.

Good sound effects, music and cinematic tension help the film stay above average in quality, but the pacing needs some real work. Kilmer and Douglas are OK, but nothing spectacular.

"The Associate" — What is it with Whoopi Goldberg's movie selections of late? "Theodore Rex," "Ghosts of Mississippi," now "The Associate." None of them seems to be panning out for her whatsoever.

Laurel (Goldberg) works on Wall Street, but finds out just how many barriers she has to break through to achieve success.

This flick did play in Lincoln for about a week or so. No confirmations yet as to whether anybody went to the film. Still, it has Whoopi, so there must be something funny for somebody somewhere.

Roll the dice on this one.

"101 Dalmatians" — No, this isn't the animated version. This is a live-action film with 101 non-computer-generated black-and-white spotted pups running all over the screen making the humans look like they have the intelli-



PHOTO COURTESY OF DISNEY ENTERPRISES, INC.

GLENN CLOSE stars as Cruella DeVil in the live-action remake of "101 Dalmatians," a film that will hit video store shelves today.

gence of boiled cabbage.

Cruella De Vil (Glenn Close) wants a coat made out of dalmatian fur, but all of the puppies she has gathered for this purpose escape with Perdita and Pongo to reunite with their human owners Roger (Jeff Daniels) and Anita (Joely Richardson).

Director Stephen Herek ("Mr. Holland's Opus") brings in lots of laughs from beginning

to end, and Close is deliciously perfect as one of the most memorable screen villains of all time. Definitely worth the price of rental.

PICK-OF-THE-WEEK — With the recent release of the incredible "Grosse Pointe Blank," this week's pick-of-the-week focuses not on one movie, but some of the more memorable movies of one star: John Cusack.

Never one to take normal, middle-of-the-

road roles, some of Cusack's better films include the ultra-romantic "Say Anything" and great, offbeat comedies such as "The Sure Thing" and "Better Off Dead."

Cusack has also had his share of dramatic roles and performed with equal style and quality in movies such as "True Colors," "City Hall" and "Eight Men Out."

Check 'em all out.

CD Review

Chris Rock
"Roll With the New"
Dreamworks
Grade: A-

When he first came to the nation's attention on "Saturday Night Live," Chris Rock — like many groundbreaking comedians who have started on that show — was restrained to the point that his brand of humor suffered.

With the exception of his "Nat X" character, Rock's participation was often limited to supporting roles in sketches and the occasional pseudo-monologue on the show's news segment.

But now that Rock is free of network television's restraints on language and content, he is funnier than ever. And "Roll With the New" captures Rock's humor to near perfection.

The album, which was released on the new Dreamworks label, contains lengthy clips from his HBO special "Bring the Pain" as well as several comedy sketches featuring other comedians — most notably former MTV comedy host Mario Joyner.

Rock's gift for social commentary is thinly veiled by his penchant for obscene language and irreverent jokes, but it still shines through as Rock provides his own insight on subjects ranging from motogamy to public education to O.J. Simpson (who happens to be one of Rock's favorite targets).

Unlike Eddie Murphy (another



COURTESY PHOTO

CHRIS ROCK, a former cast member from "Saturday Night Live," is now the host of his own comedy/talk show on HBO and a high-demand stand-up comedian.

"SNL" alumnus who excelled in the stand-up field), Rock's social conscience outweighs his desire simply to shoot for laughter, and it is primarily this approach that makes Rock's stand-up comedy both a hilarious and enlightening experience.

The comedy sketches on this album tend to be a hit-and-miss

proposition, with only a handful of memorable clips (especially "O.J. and O'Jays" and "Luther Campbell").

But overall, "Roll With the New" is a worthy addition for Rock's most avid fans and a hilarious point-of-entry for the uninitiated.

— Jeff Randall

Author Michael Dorris found dead at age 52

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) — Michael Dorris, who told the story of his adopted son's battle with fetal alcohol syndrome in his award-winning book "The Broken Cord," has died after an apparent suicide. He was 52.

Dorris was found dead in a motel room Friday. Fred Wilk, owner of the Brick Tower Motor Inn, said he used a plastic bag to suffocate himself.

Police Lt. Paul Murphy confirmed the cause of death was suffocation. He said police in Brattleboro, Vt., took a missing-person report on Dorris on Friday morning from someone who said he might be suicidal.

Dorris checked into the motel under an assumed name and faked his address and license plate number. He left a suicide note addressed to whom-ever found him, telling them whom to contact, Murphy said.

Dorris and author Louise Erdrich, with whom he wrote the 1991 best-selling novel "The Crown of Columbus," were divorcing.

Dorris, who held degrees from Georgetown and Yale universities, had been on leave as an English professor at Dartmouth College. As an anthropology professor, he founded the college's Native American Studies Department in 1972 and headed it until 1985.

In 1971, Dorris, who was of part American Indian descent, became one of the first bachelors allowed to adopt a child. He later adopted two more children, and had three more children after his 1981 marriage to Erdrich, author of "Love Medicine" and other acclaimed novels about Indians. His adopted son Reynold Abel,

whom he called "Adam" in his book, was born on a Sioux reservation to a woman who eventually died of alcohol poisoning.

"The Broken Cord," published in 1989, detailed his son's struggles with incurable mental handicaps caused by his birth mother's drinking. The book helped spread understanding of the problem of fetal alcohol syndrome and won a National Book Critics Circle award in the nonfiction category.

In a 1989 Associated Press interview, Dorris said that even as a young adult, Abel, as his son was called, lived in a group home and had to be reminded to bathe, change his clothes, even eat.

Writing the book, he said, did not prove "cathartic. One of the problems with this book is that it does not have an ending.

"It keeps going on. It's like constantly opening doors into a dark room."

Abel died after being struck by a car in 1991. More heartbreak was in store for Dorris in 1995, when another adopted son, Jeffrey, stood trial on charges he used threats to try to get Dorris and his wife to give him \$15,000 and publish a manuscript he wrote. Jeffrey Dorris was acquitted of one charge and a second was dismissed when jurors deadlocked.

Dorris' other works include "Native Americans: 500 Years After," "A Guide to Research in Native American Studies" and the novel "A Yellow Raft in Blue Water." His latest novel, "Cloud Chamber," was recently published.