VIDEO REVIEWS

What this video is more universally addressing is the contemporary need to redefine the word family. The video was produced with the support of PFLAG (Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays), The Alternative Family Project, and the Gay, Lesbian, Straight Teachers' Network. Camp Lavender Hill meticulously provides a unique educational tool for classroom or discussion group. Highly recommended for all collections.

Gerald A. Notaro, Univ. of South Florida Lib., St. Petersburg

Qigong


T'ai Chi Chih On the Rocks
color. 57 min. East West Prods., dist. by 411 Video Information, PO Box 1223, Pebble Beach, CA 93953; 408-622-9441. 1997. $19.95. Health.

A moment of meditation, please. Breathe. Chi...chi...chi... Suddenly, my vision is clear. I see tapes. Videotapes that promise to heal body and mind, help achieve inner peace and balance, open spiritual and mental potential, and bring joy to all practitioners. Qigong employs gentle movements combined with special breathing techniques that are well demonstrated and clearly explained. Instructor Ken Cohen is relaxed and direct. T'ai Chi Chih is less successful, despite its gorgeous setting and lovely music. Explanations for specific movements tend to focus more on mental imagery rather than on how to hold your body and when to breathe, and the "practice session" oddly takes place before the "teaching session." Neither tape is essential, but larger public libraries should consider one or the other as demand warrants.—Ellen Druda, Half Hollow Hills Community Lib., Dix Hills, N.Y.

Alan Paton: A Profile


Paton (1903-88), author of the wrenching South African novel Cry the Beloved Country (1948), died before South Africa's peaceful revolution began in 1990, but his writing and political activism helped define an earlier, less militant opposition to apartheid. Melding interviews with Paton (from 1978) and comments from relatives and associates, this low-key film sketches a wide-ranging—if not always accessible—portrait of the author. Perhaps Paton's most notable influence was during a term as superintendent of a reformatory, where he instituted more liberal policies in a land known for its harshness. Born of his knowledge of black South Africa, Paton's landmark novel courageously warned of future confrontation. Unfortunately, Paton often mumbled. Moreover, because this film was made for a local audience, it lacks context for Americans: while it touches on Paton's opposition to sanctions—which separated him from the emerging anti-apartheid consensus in the 1980s—it could explain more how the author's incremental liberal- justly recommended for all collections.

Gerald A. Notaro, Univ. of South Florida Lib., St. Petersburg

The Ultimate Jump-Rope Workout


Veteran performer and trainer Louis Garcia ignites the screen with his revolutionary and exciting jump rope routines. Assisted by Rita Bland and the Rebel Ropers, he demonstrates proper technique and moves designed to maximize performance in every type of sport: burn calories and reduce body fat; improve endurance; enhance muscular training and development; increase eye, hand, foot coordination; and improve lateral movement and agility over time. Creative, fast-paced, portable, and never boring, the video provides a perfect cross-training or interval workout that viewers can design for themselves. Building from basic rope turns and neutral resting moves to high-intensity advanced moves, Garcia emphasizes the many uses of the sport, for rehab and injury recovery, cardiovascular conditioning, and mental conditioning and concentration. With excellent color and quality production, music, and slow-motion sequences, the video is stylish and polished. Highly recommended.—Mary Soete, San Diego P.L.

Camp Lavender Hill


Camp Lavender Hill sensitively portrays the children of gay and lesbian parents. It opens with scenes indistinguishable from any other camp: the music of Allan Sherman's classic "Hello, Muddah, Hello Faddah" and kids riding on a bus, singing rounds and camp songs. For the first time, these kids, who share the same secret, can talk openly about their home lives without fear of shame or reprisal. Overall, George's complicated birth tales to tell, e.g., of birth mothers, biological fathers, donors, partners, kind-of-sisters, really good friends, and sort-of uncles. They tell of the humiliation they suffer at school but are resolute about their situations; their maturity is striking. When the name-calling is discussed, faggot and queer are often reported. Many of these young people are suspected of being gay or lesbian by their peers. Fortunately, they also report positive support from teachers, counselors, and principals.

A Visit with Bill Martin Jr.


This tape begins with Martin telling the story of the Ghost-Eye Tree, one of his most popular children's books. After years as a nonreader, Martin was encouraged by a caring teacher to become the dedicated reader he is today; his lifelong passion for the written word developed out of his early love of poetry and the rhythm of language. His Brown Bear, Brown Bear, What Do You See? continues to captivate young listeners, and hearing Martin "sing" the text reinforces his use of language as dynamic and moving. The video is professionally produced, showing Martin relaxing at home. The storytelling will interest youngsters, and the discussion will be of particular interest to teachers and librarians familiar with his work.—Christine Muesch, Buffalo & Erie Cty. P.L., N.Y.

Paul McCartney:

In the World Tonight


Sir Paul is riding a wave of media attention that began with the Beatles Anthology releases in 1996 and 1997 and his recent knighthood, the wake of which has made his latest solo effort, Flaming Pie, red hot. This tape offers an insider's look into the creation of Flaming Pie, a home-span effort for which McCartney literally got by with a little help from his friends, e.g., Steve Miller, Jeff Lynne, twin Linda, and Ringo. Although it does include several music videos, the program is more than just a plug for the album. It covers McCartney's Standing Stone, his second foray into classical music, which recently debuted at Carnegie Hall; his dabbling as a painter; and a cartoon called Tropical Island Hut that he created and for which he is providing voices and music. This offers some of the most candid footage ever re-