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Polanski with Farrow and Peter Sellers at the *Rosemary's Baby* premiere, 1968

ethos into mindless libertinism and worse. In 1969, Polanski, whose mother died in Auschwitz, suffered a second horrific loss when his eight-months-pregnant wife, the starlet Sharon Tate, was murdered by members of the apocalyptic hippie Manson gang. Over the next seven years, Polanski partied hard and made four movies, including the superb *Chinatown* (1974). But what was he thinking when he piled a starstruck 13-year-old Valley girl with champagne during a supposed photo shoot for *French Vogue*, then sodomized her before taking her home? Actually, he was probably thinking he could get away with it, and he almost did. The heart of the movie is the ensuing 1977 rape case in which Polanski was able to plea down to a single charge of unlawful sexual intercourse and was sent to prison for a 90-day psychiatric evaluation. It was understood that

this would function as his sentence, but when he was released after 42 days, the judge got cold feet, and Polanski fled to France, where he remains a fugitive from U.S. law. When he won an Oscar in absentia for *The Pianist* (2002), most audience members gave him a standing ovation.

The movie comes perilously close to doing that too. The Hollywood gossip mill so luridly painted the girl in the case that it's a shock when Zenovich zooms in on a photo of her round-cheeked adolescent face. Even more striking is the articulate, self-possessed woman she's become, Samantha Geimer, who discusses the past without rancor. How Polanski, now 74, feels about what he did goes oddly unaddressed, since Zenovich didn't talk to him until after the film had wrapped. We only see an archival clip of the judge who describes feeling victimized by the judge. He's right about that. In her most impressive achievement, Zenovich exposes the judge as a glory hound who grabbed celebrity cases and, when this one threatened to make him look bad, double-crossed everyone involved. It was an outrageous abuse of power. But then, what Polanski did to Samantha Geimer was, too.

PRINCE'S FAVORITE A CAPPELLA GROUP?

In this month's *Pitch Perfect*, author Mickey Rapkin exposes the burgeoning subculture of collegiate and professional a cappella groups [just in time for the 10-day A Cappella: Singing Solo festival at DC's Kennedy Center beginning May 28]. Sound, well, dorky? In the following excerpt, the Purple One begs to differ. —CAROL RABNEY



Mosaic [a professional a cappella group] took up residence in Las Vegas, where they landed a one-year deal opening up for veteran comedian George Wallace in his 600-seat theater at the Flamingo. And they thrived. At the time [2006], Prince—yes, that Prince—had his own standing gig in Vegas, at the Rio. One night, Prince caught the George Wallace show, fell in love with Mosaic, and invited the boys to perform at his

2007 New Year's Eve gig.

And so, on New Year's Eve, Mosaic opened for Prince. They sang a short set, went to dinner, and never expected to hear from Prince again. "We thought, That was cool," says Mosaic's Josh Huslig. But later that night a message arrived. Prince wanted Mosaic to meet him at his signature nightclub, 3121, where he regularly played intimate, late-night sets. Mosaic was thrilled. Even more so when, sometime around four in the morning, Prince invited Mosaic back up onstage with him to close down the club. "Do you know any Sly and the Family Stone?" Prince whispered. Actually, they did. "How about 'Thank You'?" Josh Huslig tells the story: "So Prince gets the guitar out and doesn't say another word... And Prince just starts jamming." Six handheld microphones appear. Luckily, the band played "Thank You" in E—the same key Mosaic sings it in.

Excerpt from *Pitch Perfect* by Mickey Rapkin, courtesy of Gotham Books



A PASSAGE TO INDIA	LONG DAY'S JOURNEY	A FAMILY AFFAIR
<p>The beautiful English-language debut of award-winning director-cinematographer Santhosh Sivan. Before the rains is a smart, suspenseful melodrama of cross-cultural adultery set in 1937 Kerala as India's surging independence movement reached the countryside. Although the affair between Linus Roach's British planter and his family's married housekeeper can only be a catastrophic, the movie's intelligence and capacity for surprise keep things exhilarating.</p>	<p>Taking a break from <i>The Tudors'</i> sex-and-power diatribe, Jonathan Rhys Meyers plays nice as an idealistic journalist, amped too shy to woo Raधा Mitchell's fearless nurse on horseback as they rescue 60 Chinese orphans from slaughter by the invading Japanese army in <i>The Children of Huang Shi</i> in the fact-based pre-World War II drama by Roger Spottiswoode (<i>Tomorrow Never Dies</i>), the semiferid kids nearly steal the show, so stick around for an end-credits feel-good break.</p>	<p>Having wowed the film world with the fierce, punk-inflected 2004 tragicomedy <i>Head-On</i>, Turkish-German director Fatih Akin returns with <i>The Edge of Heaven</i>, a tale of love and death among people caught between two worlds that's as luminous and tantalizing as its title. The great German actress Hanna Schuylla is among the captivating actors playing parents and grown children who keep finding new ways to break each other's hearts. —KD</p>

Top left: GARY HERRICK; book: GOTHAM BOOKS; remaining images: courtesy of the movie studios