

1. *Doctor. Zhivago* ©1965. Dir. David Lean 197 min. Based on the novel by Boris Pasternak, w/ Omar Sharif in the title role, Julie Christie as Lara, and Geraldine Chaplin as Dr. Z's lovely wife, Tonya. Tom Courtney, Alec Guinness, Ralph Richardson and Rod Steiger are in it. Oscars for Best Original Score & Cinematography. Set just before and after the Russian Revolution. The snow and the Spring and "just living" enjoyably romanticized (but HOW did they make that country cottage so clean and cozy with no supplies?) I saw it at 19, but really only remembered a train scene, and that Dr. Z loved two women. Now I think loving Lara at arms length when they worked together on the front for 6 months, and he told Tonya about it, was a positive. But adultery a few years later lead to *immediate* anguish, interfering with his idyll just down the road with pregnant wife, son, and father-in-law. Lara's husband, Pasha, who started out idealistic, turned into the cruel rogue Streinikov who believed personal lives had to be sacrificed for the cause. Dr. Z was a poet who went with the flow. 19 families are moved into their house in Moscow? Fine. We'll move to our country place and live off the land.
2. *The Queen's Gambit* ©2020. Dir. Scott Frank. 7 episodes Based on the 1983 novel by Walter Tevis. Netflix. I binge-watched this in two sittings. It's a fantasy, because women in the 1960s were not high up in the chess world. In fact I read that Beth was loosely modelled on Bobby Fischer! In the miniseries, the woman's World Champion, a Russian, had never played a man in a tournament. Won 11 Emmys. 96% Likes on Rotten Tomatoes. The orphanage where Beth was introduced to chess in 1957 dispensed tranquilizers to the kids until that was outlawed. Starring Anya Taylor-Joy as Beth Harmon.
3. *Antonia's Line* ©1995 Dir. Marleen Gorris. 102 min. In Dutch with subtitles. A quirky feminist film that fast forwards through 50 years of Antonia's life and descendants starting from when Antonia, widowed, returns with her teenaged daughter, after 20 years away, to the rural village where she grew up. Her difficult mother is dying. They stay on. Character actors populate the village. Oscar for Best Foreign Film in 1996. Ebert gave it 4*s. I liked the A's mother's singing scene.
4. *Into the Forest* ©2015. Dir. Patricia Rozema. 110 min., Canada. Based on the 1996 book by Jean Hegland. w/ Elliot Page as Nell and Evan Rachel Wood as Eva, teenaged sisters who live with their wonderful father in a beautiful modern house in the forest. The electricity and internet go out. There's no gas at the gas station, but the father is resourceful until he has an accident and dies. Nell's b.f. shows up by foot and bicycle. They consult books about how to forage. Eva gets raped by a guy who then steals their car. After 15 months their house is falling apart and one of the sisters is pregnant. I'll stop there.
5. *Happy Valley* ©2014. Season 1, 2 DVDs. BBC. Netflix. Starring Sarah Lancashire as Sgt. Catherine Cawood of Halifax, West Yorkshire. James Norton plays the criminal she brings down. Catherine, 47, is raising a grandson. She still communicates with her ex (the grandfather), who is in another relationship. It's called Happy Valley because of drugs.
6. *Mare of Easttown* ©2021. Dir. Craig Zobel Terrific 7 part drama set in a fictional working class Pennsylvania town. Kate Winslet plays detective sergeant Mare, who knows everybody in town and has her own domestic complications. HBO, but I got it at the library. Basically an American remake of *Happy Valley*, though I watched *Mare* first. I loved them both.
7. *Belgravia* ©2020. Dir. John Alexander. 6 episodes, 2 DVDs. Opens with the ball the night before the Battle of Waterloo (1815). Sophia Trenchant is in love with dashing young Edmond Brockenhurst, who dies in battle. Sophie dies in childbirth, sheltered from scandal. Her father places her newborn son with a clergyman, Benjamin Pope. 26 years later Anne Trenchant, the most level-headed character in the series, played by Tamsin Greig, tells Lady Brockenhurst about her grandson. Lady B (Caroline) is played by Harriet Walter (stepsister of my old colleague Liz). All the other heirs are feckless. Tom Wilkerson plays the Earl of Brockenhurst. Based on the novel by Julian Fellowes (Downton Abbey), who writes strong women.
8. *CODA* ©2021 Dir. Sian Heder. 111 min. Oscar for Best Picture, Best Adapted Screenplay, Best Supporting Actor (Troy Kotsur, who is deaf, plays Frank Rossi). Apple+. A remake of the 2014 film *La Famille Bélier*. Emilia Jones plays Ruby Rossi, the titular Child of Deaf Adults, and sole member of the Rossi family who can hear. They speak ASL. Ruby is their interpreter. Ruby attends high school in Gloucester, MA, and also helps on the family fishing trawler. She wants to go to the Berklee School of Music, but her family needs her. Marlee Matlin plays Ruby's mother. Ruby's older brother Leo is also played by a deaf actor, Daniel Durant. Ruby's boyfriend is bowled over by the sexual openness of Ruby's family.
9. *Bad Education*. ©2019. Dir. Cory Finley. 108 min. Based on *The Bad Superintendent*, a 2004 New York Magazine article by reporter Robert Kolker. Allison Janney plays Pam Glucker, Assistant Superintendent. Geraldine Viswanathan plays Rachel, the student investigative reporter who broke the embezzlement story. At first we see Dr. Frank Tassone ideally, as the public saw him. Under Frank and Pam, Roslyn became the 4th ranked public h.s. in the US. Later we see him two-timing his b.f. of 33 years, and coming down hard on Pam when she's caught first. The real Frank Tassone spoke admirably of Hugh Jackman's portrayal of him. He denies the Las Vegas b.f. was an ex-student of his. (Why gratuitously throw that in?)
10. *Lean on Me* ©1989. Dir. John G. Avildsen. 108 min. Written by Michael Schiffer. Based on a true story. Joe Lewis Clark was an inner-city high school principal in Paterson NJ in the late 1960s. As an ex-teacher—I did 5 years—I can appreciate the problem and Mr. Clark's accomplishment. Also I appreciate the complaints of his critics. He "lost it" a few times. Joe Clark is played by Morgan Freeman. Lynne Thigpin plays the activist mother whose teenager was one of the 300 "bad apples" expelled to save the 2700 who needed to learn basic skills. Jermaine Hopkins plays freshman Thomas Sams.
11. *A 2 hr Interview with Ann Cooper Hickman* ©2013 Dir. Eric Breitenbach. Unpublished and unedited, but wonderful. Eric is a director of released films on PBS. He was planning a film about his friend Bob Cooper. To this end he interviewed Bob's sister. Ann (1949-2021) was such a good interviewee! She re-created the family dynamics, religion, and milieu in Sutton WV. Bob and Ann's parents were teachers. She describes their family camping trips, representative incidents, and the terrible accident at the end of 1967, always loving and supportive of her parents and Bob. There are no fumbles.

12. *The Windermere Children* ©2020. Dir. Michael Samuels. 88 min. 2 Library DVDs. Dramatizes the arrival of 300 young concentration camp survivors to the Lake District. They stayed there for 4 months, then were placed throughout the UK. This dovetailed with a non-fiction book I read, *Mala's Cat*. Mala also got to England, where she lived in hostels for a while, learned English, & was introduced to British families. Mala, like the young people in this movie, was always trying to find relatives who had survived. The second DVD showed archival photos of the group, for example in Prague before departure. Then at a reunion in 2019 in Prague they re-created that photo. We get statements from nonagenarians. One was an Olympian. Several had been knighted. Most had grandchildren. One was a dentist. Several entrepreneurs employed many.
13. *Belfast* ©2021. Dir. Kenneth Branagh. 98 min. Set in 1969 in the eponymous city. Memoir. Branagh's family was Protestant working class. The father had to go to England to find work, visiting on occasional weekends. Cousins and loving grandparents are close. It was a mixed neighborhood, the children played together. And then things changed. The teenaged son was pressured to participate. The father wanted to emigrate. At first the mother resisted, until things got worse. Barricades went up. 8-yr-old Buddy (Jude Hill) joined in looting. During that year the grandfather (Ciarán Hinds) died. The movie ends with the family departing for England, leaving the granny (Judi Dench). Music by Van Morrison.
14. *The Wipers Times* ©2013. Dir. Andy De Emmony. 92 min. True story of a satirical newspaper published on the front at Ypres 1916-18. Conveys the horrors of WW I, yet leavened with British humor. Weather report 5 to 1 Mist, 8 to 1 Chlorine.
15. *Keep Sweet: Pray and Obey* ©2022. Directors Rachel Dretzin and Grace McNally. 192 min. Based on the 2014 non-fiction book by Rebecca Musser *The Witness Wore Red: The 19th Wife Who Brought Polygamous Cult Leaders to Justice*. Four-part docuseries on Netflix about the FLDS (F for fundamentalist) community in Short Creek UT, which later moved to a TX ranch, and its leader, Warren Jeffs. Right up there with *Wild, Wild Country*, that great series about the cult community in Oregon. Excess boys were expelled. The witnesses, sheriff, prosecutors, and newspaper editor played themselves. Families were ripped apart whenever someone left or was excommunicated. Jeffs still wielded influence from prison.
16. *For the Bible Tells Me So* ©2007. Dir. Daniel Karlake. 98 min. Documentary. We meet 5 sets of parents raised in a faith tradition who initially were devastated when their offspring came out to them but who have come around. Well in one case the daughter committed suicide at age 29 before her mother accepted her, but that mother, not wanting Anna's death to be in vain, and full of regrets, has changed her stance. Dick Gephardt's daughter Chrissy went on the campaign trail for her father as an out lesbian. Gene Robinson, first openly gay bishop of the Episcopal church tells his story. I particularly liked the Lutheran family from MN whose son looks like Ronan Farrow. People of color are represented. DVD Extras.
17. *Best of Enemies* ©2015. Directors Robert Gordon & Morgan Neville. 88 min. Amazon Prime. Documentary about the Gore Vidal/Wm. F Buckley debates of 1968. Clips from the 10 debates are presented with 2015 commentary by Christopher Hitchens, Buckley's brother, and others. Archival footage of Dick Cavett, Jack Paar, Walter Cronkite, and Huntley & Brinkley. We see clips from Buckley hosting *Firing Line*. Buckley was driven up the wall by Vidal's novel *Myra Breckinridge*. The words "Crypto Nazi" and "Queer" were hurled. I learned that in 1965 there was a 3-way race for Mayor of NYC. Democrat Abraham Beame came in 2nd. Wm. F. Buckley brought up the rear. We see his concession speech where he acknowledges Liberal Republican John Lindsay's victory and says he accomplished a Conservative constituency.
18. *Summer of Soul* ©2021. Dir. Ahmir Thompson. 118 min. Hulu. Like *Harvard Beats Yale 29-29*, it uses archival footage from 1969, and interviews people at filmmaking time who were there, in the crowd or as a participant. The concert footage is upbeat. Stevie Wonder is 19; Songs from *Hair*. From the 1969 footage I particularly liked the audience dancing or moving to the beat. Or just rapt. There had been riots all over the country the previous summer. Responding to some great leadership in Harlem, Mayor Lindsay supported the free series of 6 concerts in a park. NYPD and Black Panthers provided security. Charlayne Hunter-Gault, 79, retired journalist, recalled she wrote an article for *The NY Times* using the word "Black." The editor changed it to "Negro." H-G protested and won. *The Times* from that point forward used "Black." There were archival clips from 1961 when Charlayne Hunter-Gault integrated the U. of Georgia. Two white co-eds were asked how they felt about it. "Enrolled, OK. In our dorm, NO." Charlayne recalled she was given a floor to herself. There was pounding every night on her ceiling, but "I just ignored it and listened to Nina Simone on my record player."
19. *A Very English Scandal*. ©2018. Dir. Stephen Frears. 3 episodes. Amazon Prime. Based on John Preston's non-fiction 2016 book. The story begins in the early '60s when MP Jeremy Thorpe begins a relationship with a mixed-up youth, Norman. For a few years Thorpe "keeps" Norman, who eventually complains he has nothing to do all day. Plus, Norman wanted a National Insurance card from his "employer." Thorpe refused, as that would leave a paper trail documenting the relationship, which thus ended. Homosexuality stopped being illegal in Britain in 1969. Thorpe became leader of the Liberal Party. He marries. Norman blackmails him with an old love letter. Thorpe asks a confidant to "find someone who can kill him." His confidant (a colleague) is shocked, but does not tell anyone, and in fact finds someone who botches the job. Norman brings evidence to the police. There are trial scenes in the Old Bailey. The presiding judge is flagrantly biased in favor of the upper classes. With Ben Whishaw as Norman, Hugh Grant as Jeremy, Adrian Scarborough as Barrister George Carman (Think F. Lee Bailey in a wig), and Patricia Hodge as Jeremy's mother. Terrific acting.
20. *The Best Intentions* ©1992. Dir. Bille August. 181 min. Writer Ingmar Bergman. Amazon Prime. w/ Pernilla August & Max von Sydow. Winner of the Palme d'Or at Cannes. About Bergman's parents' courtship and marriage.
21. *King Richard* ©2021. Dir. Reinaldo Marcus Green. 145 min. About Richard Williams (Will Smith) during the childhood of his daughters Venus (Saniyya Sidney) and Serena (Demi Singleton). Watched on the flight home from Japan. In addition to V and S, he had 3 step-daughters, older, and a strong wife. Richard did not want to be a "tennis parent," so he pulled his 10 and 11 year-old daughters out of Juniors. He had no money but he managed to get his daughters pro coaching.