

# MEDIA MIX | A Quick Take on the Week's New Releases

	TITLE	FROM	BASIC STORY	SAMPLE GRAB	WHAT YOU'LL LOVE	WHAT YOU WON'T	GRADE
DVD	<b>De-Lovely</b> Rated PG-13	MGM \$27	This lifeless biopic chronicles the complicated 40-year relationship between gay composer Cole Porter (Kevin Kline) and his wife, Linda (Ashley Judd).	"You like them more than I do. Nothing is cruel if it fulfills your promise." — Linda matter-of-factly accepts her husband's taste for men	Porter's snappy tunes, interpreted by contemporary performers including Robbie Williams, Alanis Morissette and Elvis Costello	The weak framing device—an aged Porter looking back on his life as if it were a stage play—only slows the pace of an already ho-hum film.	C
COMIC	<b>Dogs and Water</b> By Anders Nilsen	Drawn & Quarterly \$10	In this meditative graphic novel, a young man and his teddy bear wander a barren landscape in search of refuge and, ultimately, meaning.	"You don't have to tell me where we're going... I just want some reassurance, just a sign." — The nameless protagonist tries to get his stuffed companion to open up	Nilsen uses spare renderings to create a haunting narrative that will leave you wondering whether you've read a book or walked through a dream.	There's no true sense of resolution, forcing readers to wonder what all the aimless ambling and symbolism were about.	B+
COMIC	<b>Jingle Belle No. 2</b> Written by Paul Dini, drawn by Jose Garibaldi	Dark Horse Comics \$3	Jingle Belle, Santa's rebellious daughter, always gets relegated to the yuletide sidelines. But that stands to change when a writer starts tracking down men who claim to have met her.	"In the long run it didn't matter who she was... For a few hours we had Christmas instead of war, and that was fine." — One of Belle's beaux recalls a WWII visit	Dini's script distills enough commercial-free Christmas cheer to leave readers feeling toasty, sans schmaltz.	The backup story's wackier tone is an abrupt shift from the earnest sincerity of the lead feature.	B-
BOOK	<b>Life Studies: Stories</b> By Susan Vreeland	Viking \$25	The best-selling author of "Girl in Hyacinth Blue" presents fictional portraits of famous painters and the people influenced by them, from the 1800s to the present.	"Street sweepers found him dead drunk in that dustbin... A shouter, he was. Roaring drunk, spouting poetry in the cemetery." — From "In the Absence of Memory," about artist Amedeo Modigliani	The scandalous what-ifs, such as Edouard Manet's wife, Suzanne, confronting his haughty mistress after he dies of syphilis ("Olympia's Look")	The collection's overly narrow focus on impressionists and post-impressionists. Imagine what Vreeland could have done with Dali!	B-
GAME	<b>Mario Party 6</b> GameCube Rated Everyone	Nintendo \$50	In Nintendo's latest foray into the video-board-game realm, four players roll the dice, move along imaginatively designed levels and face off in varied events.	A slew of new mini-games will have players competing at such diverse tasks as herding ghosts, delivering mail and dusting a dirty house.	Using the included microphone, you can toss aside your controllers and shout commands to the characters.	Many Mario titles are enjoyed by young and old, but the Party franchise skews a bit too kid-game cutesy.	B-
CD	<b>Music From the OC, Mix 3: Have a Very Merry Chrismukkah</b> Various artists	Warner Bros. \$12	This compilation, inspired by the Cohen family's interfaith celebration, proves that the folks behind the WB's hit show have good holiday intentions and great taste.	"Last Christmas I gave you my heart / But the very next day / You gave it away." — Wham's "Last Christmas," performed by Jimmy Eat World	Delectable pop served up by revered modern rockers including the Eels, Rooney and the Raveonettes; swaying to the acoustics of indie darling Ben Kweller	Clocking in at a mere 28 minutes, it's too short!	A-
DVD	<b>Napoleon Dynamite</b> Rated PG	20th Century Fox \$30	In this cult Sundance hit, awkward loser Napoleon Dynamite (Jon Heder) helps the new kid at school (Efen Ramirez) run for class president against the mean teen queen (Haylie Duff).	"I don't even have any good skills... you know, like nunchuck skills, bowhunting skills, computer hacking skills." — Napoleon laments his inability to find a date to the big dance	Classroom current events: Napoleon baffles schoolmates with his peculiar ramblings on what's new and noteworthy in Lake Loch Ness.	What some viewers see as deadpan style and offbeat humor may strike others as bad acting and inscrutable inside-joking.	B+
CD	<b>Shimmy Down the Chimney: A Country Christmas</b> Various artists	Capitol \$19	This well-rounded assortment of classic hits features country stars old (Willie Nelson, Tanya Tucker) and new (Toby Keith, Trace Adkins).	Get ready for boot-kickin', kid-friendly fun: On Dolly Parton's bluegrass version of "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer," she's backed up by a cheerful children's choir.	Glen Campbell's moving rendition of "I'll Be Home for Christmas"; Alison Krauss's intensity on the title track; old-school takes by Nelson, Del McCoury and Kenny Rogers	Not much. There's enough originality and variety to appeal to even the country novice.	A
GAME	<b>Sprung</b> Nintendo DS Rated Teen	Ubi Soft \$30	In this romp, in which you can play a guy or a girl, a bunch of lusty, angst-filled teens gather at a ski resort for fun, flirting and soul-mate searching.	Guy protagonist Brett (who looks suspiciously like Jake Gyllenhaal) and his buddies wager to see who can collect the most phone numbers at the lodge nightclub.	The quirky dialogue; trying to read the facial expressions of the characters you're chatting up so you can figure out what to say next	Being forced to think like a teen soap character. What would Ryan Atwood do?	B-

By Shirley Halperin (CDs), Christopher Healy (games), Evan Narcisse (comics and games), Anne Phelps (DVDs), Eugena Pilek (books)

## HOWTO | Pump Up Your Salary

The end of the year is fast approaching, which means jingle bells, shopping hell, eggnog and... annual reviews. If you've been nice, not naughty, that also means it's prime time to ask for a raise. Maybe your company's performed well this past year, or maybe it's cutting corners, but either way, if you know you've done a great job, then by all means, step up and ask for what you're worth. Here are some tips on how to finesse your way into a salary upgrade:

**DO YOUR HOMEWORK.** How much should they be paying to keep you, anyway? In your mind's eye, you are, of course, priceless. But when it comes to your salary, you need to arm yourself with information before asking for a raise. Find out how much local employers pay someone in your position. Salary.com has an excellent salary calculator to give you some idea of what your price tag should be.

**EXPLAIN WHY YOU'RE WORTH IT.** You'll get nothing unless you make a case for yourself, so give your boss a reason to dig into her glass penny jar and slap some extra change down on your desk. Spend a week or two planning what to say, and as you make your list of accomplishments and attributes, be specific. In what ways did you save the company money?

When and how? Do you put in more hours than expected when necessary? Are you a leader? In what way? If you've got documentation to back this up (e-mails or memos praising your performance, for example), use it. Put your accomplishments in writing, and at your meeting, hand your boss a copy and start from the top. This gives her time to absorb the information and something to keep in case she needs to think about it or make a case to her boss.

**PLAY IT COOL.** Phew. The hard part's over. Now, give your boss the time and space to say yes: "I know you can't make this decision right now, so why don't we talk when you've had time to think about it." Demonstrate that you're a thoughtful, reasonable person, and she'll be more likely to give you what you need.

**CONSIDER THE WHOLE PACKAGE.** Maybe there isn't enough money. That's okay—there are ways to compensate you other than cold, hard cash. Do you want a certain kind of health insurance? More vacation time? Do you want to do an executive MBA program and have the company pay for it? Employers offer a variety of non-monetary benefits to make the raise that couldn't be... be.

**GET IT IN WRITING.** She said yes? Congratulations! Now the all-important follow-up: Ask for a note confirming the terms of the salary increase. If you're worried about sounding pushy, a more casual e-mail works just fine: "Hi, this is just to confirm that you've agreed to increase my salary by X amount, beginning on Jan. 1," you might say. Then save her e-mail when she writes back.

**DON'T GIVE UP.** If your boss says no, don't let not getting the raise sour you on your company or job. Say something like "I really appreciate your looking into it, and I hope you can keep it in mind for the future."

Another option is to ask for a salary review at a future date—say, in three to six months. While you don't want to hound your boss, it is okay to let her know, gently, that your compensation is as important to you as your quality of work is to her.

— Jennifer Ramo  
Ramo is a member of the New York and Louisiana bar associations. She practices law in New Orleans and always negotiates her salary.



BY MATHEW VINCENT FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Get up to

# \$10

in Mail-In Rebates on your Holiday Card order

Go to [ritzpix.com](http://ritzpix.com) for your rebate certificate

Same Day Service Available!



Happy Holidays

Lots of Love, John, Anne, Peter, and Julie

Send Picture Perfect Photo Greeting Cards from your digital or film camera

Packages starting at \$9.99 for 20 cards & envelopes

Come in or order online at [ritzpix.com](http://ritzpix.com)



at



Camera Store Quality - Satisfaction Guaranteed

Available at over 60 Maryland, Virginia and DC locations