Lackawanna Blues is a touching story about Nanny, a woman who gives all of herself to help those in need. It's told from the viewpoint of a boy, taken in by Nanny when his own mother isn't quite up to the task. I have respect for this movie for three main reasons:

1) **It is touching, but not sappy**. It's told in a very real fashion, without a lot of the aggravating Hollywood storytelling baggage. **And the ending is quite good** (teary but not over-the-top).

2) Although it's clearly an African-American film, being set in the post-segregation black community of Lackawanna, New York, it doesn't wear its ethnicity on its sleeve. **The story stands on the strength of the characters and the dramas (and comedies) surrounding their lives.** **It's not preachy, it's simply good**.

3) **It has a great soundtrack** (can't beat old-school R&B and Chicago blues).

Generally the acting is strong, but not universally so. Some of the performances simply don't hold up to the characters the actors are supposed to portray. But considering it was a made-for-TV movie, that's to be expected. 8 out of 10. Imperfect but likable, good film for a rainy day.

Lackawanna Blues is a drama through and through. It details the life of a strong woman by the name of Rachel Crosby (S. Epatha Merkerson). Rachel is referred to as Nanny by all who know her, but she could have just as easily been called Wonder Woman. **She epitomized strength, will power, confidence and resolve**. **She owned a home that she used to house just about every type of person that society would rejlect**. **Her tenants consisted of a lesbian, a psychotic war veteran, an amputee, and a host of other vagrants that made the home miles away from ordinary**. Each successive event Rachel took in stride and handled flawlessly. She wasn't a dictator devoid of compassion, but in fact she was quite the opposite. She displayed compassion almost to a fault by giving shelter and refuge to so many that she seemed to over-extend her. Merkerson did a good job, but I believe this role was right up her alley anyway. The movie had an even keel never straying from Rachel. There were of course dramatic moments but they were to be expected. Nothing was ever to shocking or profound other than Rachel herself.

**LACKAWANNA BLUES is an entertaining, engrossing, emotionally-charged HBO-TV movie based on the childhood memories of actor Ruben Santiago-Hudson** (who also appears in a small role). This joyous motion picture experience is centered around Santiago-Hudson's childhood guardian, Rachel "Nanny" Crosby, a strong, big-hearted black woman who ran a boarding house in upstate New York during the 1950's. **Nanny was a one-woman social service organization whose boarding house was filled with drunks, derelicts, cripples, drug addicts, misfits, and everyone else in town who needed a hand-up instead of a hand-out.** The crux of the story revolves around Nanny's relationship with young Ruben (beautifully played by Marcus Franklin),a boy whose divorced parents were unable to raise the boy properly so Nanny took him in. S. Epatha Merkeson, who has been wasted for years in the thankless role of Lieutenant Van Buren on NBC's LAW & ORDER, turns in a powerhouse performance as Nanny, the neighborhood mother-figure whose boarding house became a symbol for the downtrodden black folks in her town**. Merkeson is nothing short of magnificent, in a performance that earned her a Golden Globe and an Emmy Award**. Merkeson is backed by an impressive all-star cast that includes Terrance Howard (brilliant and heartbreaking as Nanny's husband), Louis Gossett Jr., Rosie Perez, Jimmy Smits, Delroy Lindo, Macy Gray, Michael K. Williams, Jeffrey Wright, Henry Simmons, Patricia Wettig, Ernie Hudson, Mos Def, and Hill Harper as the adult Ruben. Colorful and exciting, beautifully photographed and exquisitely scored, this is one of a kind motion picture experience that works on all levels, but if for no other reason, is worth seeing for the electrifying starring performance by S. Epatha Merkeson, who is given the role of a lifetime and makes the most of it.

This is by far one of the best biographical films of recent times. I'll go so far as to put it up there with Ray and The Aviator. It is the story of a young, bi-racial boy who lives in a boarding house run by the amazing Miss Rachael aka "Nanny". You will fall in love with Nanny, a woman who gives all of herself to those around her. **S. Epatha Merkerson brings the character to life beautifully, and the other cast members are do the same**. If I were to praise each actor for the way they played their roles, I'd have to mention everyone in the entire cast. **The music in this film perfectly blends with the story**, almost dictates the way it goes. And what's more, this film is actually entertaining. It won't bore you at all, not even for a minute! I highly recommend this film to anyone wanting to spend an evening at home watching a very smart, very entertaining, quality film.

S. Epatha Merkerson shines as Nanny in this touching and vibrant look at the life of Ruben Santiago, Jr. (Marcus Franklin) while growing up under the guardianship of Nanny. **The film gives a good character study of both Nanny and Ruben and manages to capture life's ups and downs in a realistic fashion unlike so many memoirs that are made into film**. The supporting cast adds much spark and many recognizable faces appear in smaller roles including Mos Def, Macy Gray, Terrence Dashon Howard, Rosie Perez, Louis Gossett, Jr., Liev Schreiber, Jimmy Smits, Ernie Hudson, Delroy Lindo, and Patricia Wettig. **Loses some steam and vibrancy towards the end, and the ending sequence leaves a bittersweet feeling**. But, overall a great film with a truly outstanding performance by Merkerson.

Lackawana Blues An impressive HBO movie about a beautiful woman that made her house a home for several characters. **Touching,alive,entrancing-a great mix of sound and story- based on a true story featuring an All-Star cast**.A time capsule about ..... you get the point and no I am not on the payola for the HBO crew- I would throw around more superlatives but I am about to go out . The extras on the DVD include a deleted scene,a featurette and commentary.The funniest part about the featurette was "star" lighting they used when interviewing exec producer Halle Berry..OK seriously - good times A

**What a wonderful film, filled with eccentric, unique characters who are wonderfully realized by a great ensemble cast**. The director also did a great job keeping the story held together, getting those wonderful performances (on not messing with them) and using music (and what wonderful music it is) to great effect. S. Epatha in the lead role is great. I had always heard what a brilliant stage actor she is, and although I have enjoyed her on Law and Order, this really shows what she can do with a filled out, complex role. Macy Gray is terrific, Mos Def, as usual, wonderful. Lou Gossett, great. Jimmy Smits, terrific, and doesn't try to pull focus because he's a star. A true piece of ensemble acting. Rent it, enjoy it, groove to it, and treasure it. Something special.

This is one of those movies that you just don't want to end. **The characters are rich like a well woven tapestry**. Colorful costumes, music and characters draw you in and tell a tale of the people that lived in a boarding house over the decades around the time of the civil rights movement and the Vietnam War. A young man is taken in by a dynamic, big-hearted woman that runs the house and these are stories based on his experiences. I couldn't believe this was a made for television film. It was so well executed. S. Epatha Merkerson is wonderful as Nanny and she brings so much life to this role. You want to be right there amongst her boarders. I enjoyed this film so much I bought the DVD.

One of the best,Lackawanna Blues. **Great movie,great cast,great music**,this is one of those movies that is so good that when it is over you wish it would go on for another 90 minutes,I will w3atch this one many times.This is one of those movies that grabs you from the beginning and twist and slams you emotionally throughout the feature. **The cast is extraordinary without the faintest hint of anyone being uncormfortable in their role**. You get the sense that you're really there taking all this in. A great deal of care was given in the sets, costumes and music of the period. The relationship between the characters we meet is both simple and complicated as the movie goes on, but the steady performance of Ms. Merkerson is so powerful that the movie ends before we've had our fill of the wonderful misfits. To single out anyone other than "Nanny" is an injustice because we have very good performances by great veteran actors including: Jeffery Wright, Jimmy Smits, Terrence Howard and Delroy Lindo. But it is Marcus Franklin, Macy Gray and Ms. Merkerson that makes this a wonderful experience.The movie moves rapidly and is short by todays standards, but it is without question one of the best movies you're going to see this year. If you like good period pieces that will challenge you emotionally, tug at your heart, lift you joyfully and have you tapping your feet at the same time, then this is the movie for you. I've shown it to several friends and they all want my copy, that says it all, the movie is that good. Check it out for yourself.danceability-1, Amsterdam Holland

Lackawanna Blues is a moving story about a boy who is raised in a house by some pretty unusual people.It's editing and soundtrack really pulls you in to the story and lets you experience the film the way the writer really meant for it to be seen.The music really tied into the story, which made the characters come to life. The editing made the story more progressive and captivating.I was also surprised by some of the performances of the cast, most notably S. Epatha Merkerson's.I can't wait to see the one man show featuring this films writer, Ruben Santiago-Hudson.

Just a great soundtrack. Really enjoyable music. Outstanding cast, great lead performance. Worth watching.Doesn't really explain what happened to the neighborhood. You are left feeling that integration is to blame or that with the departure of the lead character the neighborhood disintegrated.This movie seems well researched and extremely well crafted. I especially enjoyed some of the minor characters like Jeffrey Wright.The cutting during the opening sequence helps express what a lively, engaging and desirable experience that nightclub would have been with the jump music, food, drink, dancing, gambling and sex.

I have watch this movie almost every night that is was on HBO. It is of my opinion that it could have been successful in the theater, providing the advertisement leading up to it was top scale. I was thoroughly impressed with the actress who played Nanny. She is an outstanding actress. Of course, my favorite actor is Terrance Howard. He is a very understated actor and he deserves much more credit than he has received. Ebony magazine did do a nice article on him, giving him some of his due propers. Lakawanna Blue, gave me a understanding of the stories my parents use to tell us. They were from a similar town "Philadelphia, PA" were they had to have their fun in the junt joints and such. I also like to say that Mos Def is a incredible actor. He has found his calling. I've seen him in several movies where he has played a variety of roles, from thug to doctor and he has the stuff! Overall, please put Lakawanna Blues on video for rental.

Lackawanna Blues is and excellent movie. The casting was perfect. **Every actor and actress was perfectly suited for the role they played. Their chemistry together was amazing**. The acting was superb. I felt as if i knew the characters. I could almost 'feel' them. They reminded me of people that I knew as a child growing up in the 50's and 60's. Oh, the memories!! My personal belief is that this movie should have been on the big screen for all to see. I have watched this movie so many times, that I can almost recite the lines as the characters are saying them. I can't even list my favorite part, because I have SO MANY favorite parts. Thank you for bringing back a part of my youth that I never see in this day and age...and that is Black people loving each other, looking out for each other, respecting each other, caring about each other, and doing all we can to help each other. Gotta go now. I have to go watch it again.

I watch Lackawanna Blues every time it comes on. It brings back happy times for me. I grow up in a big city in the mid-west. It reminds me of when I was a child although my situation was a little different it feels the same. It makes me wonder if all we will ever know about families are lost. The big mama's of day are under the age of 55. Will they see know what it takes to be a inspiration to other. I hope that I was not the only one who loved this movie enough to relate it to their past. The music was great in this movie. I truly felt like this should have gone to the theaters I would have paid to see it. As I viewed the movie for the second time I figured out who life this movie was about. He did an superb job in writing and producing this film. I guess who better to produce a film based on your life other than you. As soon as I can I will be obtaining a copy for my home use. I alway enjoy black producer or directors they make such film feel like you were actually living in the time right than. Thanks for such a great movie.

Lackawanna Blues is a very moving film depicting an era filled with varying emotions and characters as seen through the eyes of a young boy. The film clearly supports "it takes a village to raise a child" and reminds of an important time in black history and culture. I gained an incredible amount of respect for Macy Gray as an actress. Her character was a little crazy, yet lovable; clearly we all have known someone like Macy's character. S. Epatha Merkerson is absolutely fantastic as Nanny. I never realized that Epatha was such a great actress. Law & Order never showcased the depth of Epatha's acting abilities like Lackawanna Blues. I was pleasantly surprised and amazed! The music and the characters reminded me of my own childhood...it was a sweet nostalgic walk down memory lane. I truly enjoyed the film and eagerly await the DVD release to add to my collection.