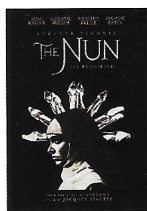


director Douglas Sirk would helm the film, but the job went instead to competent veteran David Lowell Rich. Extras include audio commentary by film historians Lee Gambin and Dr. Eloise Ross. Recommended. (T. Keogh)

The Nun ★★★

Kino, 140 min., in French w/ English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$19.99, Blu-ray: \$29.99

The second film by French New Wave director Jacques Rivette, adapted from the 1796 epistolary novel *Le Religieuse* by Denis Diderot, *The Nun* stands out from the freewheeling filmmaker's career for its controlled, classical approach. Anna Karina stars as Suzanne, the youngest daughter of a wealthy lawyer in 18th-century Paris who is forced to take vows in a convent against her wishes. Suzanne is a devout woman who loves God but simply does not feel a calling and wishes to experience the world outside. When she sues to have her vows annulled, she suffers under a tyrannical Mother Superior who cruelly punishes her, and is sexually pursued by a decadent abbess when she relocates to a more permissive convent. *The Nun* is essentially a chamber drama, taking place almost entirely within austere convent cells and chapels, and Suzanne's spirit and individuality is all but suffocated by the habit she wears and the cold, claustrophobic rooms she inhabits. Rivette treats convent life and ritual as a kind of performance, which Suzanne disrupts with her defiant protest. Karina powerfully brings Suzanne to life, and even while covered in the habit she stands out from the conformity of her sisters. Completed in 1966, the film was banned for a year in France and not seen in the U.S. until 1971. Extras include audio commentary by film critic Nick Pinkerton, a new "making-of" documentary short, and a booklet with an essay by film critic Dennis Lim. Recommended. (S. Axmaker)



One Sings, the Other Doesn't ★★★1/2

Criterion, 121 min., in French w/English subtitles, not rated, DVD: \$29.99, Blu-ray: \$39.99

Agnès Varda wrote and directed this portrait of two women over a 15-year period as each becomes—in her own way—a part of the feminist movement in France. Valérie Mairesse plays Pauline, a rebellious high school girl in the provinces, and Thérèse Liotard is Suzanne, the wife of a frustrated photographer and an overwhelmed mother of two. When the pair meet again 10 years later at an abortion rights rally in Paris, Pauline (who goes by the name Pomme) is working with a theater group and Suzanne has founded a family planning clinic. One could call the film a feminist musical—

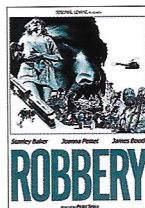


Pomme and her traveling band The Orchids perform socially conscious songs across the countryside (with lyrics penned by Varda)—but it's also a touching drama of friendship, sisterhood, and creating a meaningful life. Varda doesn't emphasize the conflicts that the women face while pursuing their careers and promoting female empowerment, but rather the connections they make with others, empathizing with almost every character in the film. She makes her points through the action rather than dialogue and her collaborative approach to filmmaking gives the film a warm inclusiveness. All in all, it's a minor classic of feminist cinema and a lovely portrait of self-empowerment in a time of social change. Presented with a new restoration, extras include the 1977 documentary *Women Are Naturally Creative: Agnès Varda*, Varda's short films *Response de femmes* (1975) and *Plaisir d'amour en Iran* (1976), and a booklet with an essay by film critic Amy Taubin. Highly recommended. (S. Axmaker)

Robbery ★★★

Kino, 110 min., not rated, DVD: \$19.99, Blu-ray: \$29.99

Before Peter Yates came stateside to direct Steve McQueen in *Bullitt*, which set the bar for dynamic car chases onscreen, the British filmmaker helmed the 1967 caper drama *Robbery*. Inspired by the true story of the 1963 Great Train Robbery, the film stars Stanley Baker as a criminal mastermind who works behind the scenes while his partners execute his planned robberies. Yates opens the film with a tightly-directed daylight heist and an impressive car chase through London, illustrating the skill and smarts of the team, before the leader offers his gang the crown jewel job of their careers: the Glasgow-London Night Train, which carries millions of pounds in a guarded vault. The robbery is meticulously planned and Yates follows every detail of the execution, which is nearly flawless, but a few mistakes and short-sighted decisions put it into jeopardy. James Booth costars as Inspector George Langdon, who has made nabbing the gang a personal priority, and Frank Finlay is the currency specialist shanghaied against his will from prison only months shy of his release date. Yates directs with a hard realism and gritty action, capturing the physical aspects of the robbery without dwelling on the characters (only Baker and Finlay's roles have any dimension) in this well-made if not well known showpiece. Extras include audio commentary by film critic Nick Pinkerton. Recommended. (S. Axmaker)



The Running Man ★★

Arrow, 104 min., not rated, Blu-ray: \$39.99

Not to be confused with the 1987 Arnold Schwarzenegger action film of the same name, this 1963 thriller by Carol Reed stars Laurence

Harvey as Rex, an English pilot who takes revenge on the insurance company that denied a claim for his airplane crash due to a late payment. With the help of his American wife Stella (Lee Remick), Rex fakes his own death in a glider crash and moves to Malaga, Spain, where he takes on the identity of an Australian sheep farmer while waiting for the money to come through. But with the change in identity also comes a change in personality—and a scheme for another insurance scam, which is tossed into jeopardy when the original insurance investigator (Alan Bates) shows up in Malaga. The premise is intriguing and the backdrop—a Spanish vacation town shot in widescreen color by cinematographer Robert Krasker, who filmed Reed's classic *The Third Man*—is lovely. Harvey's performance is lively (even if his Aussie accent tends to slip), Remick is engaging, and Bates brings a touch of loneliness to his role, but there is little suspense in the cat-and-mouse game, and a climactic car chase through the mountains of Spain to Gibraltar is more routine than thrilling. Extras include audio commentary by author Peter William Evans, a new "making-of" featurette, an audio-only recording of Remick speaking at the National Film Theatre from 1970, an isolated music and effects track, and an image gallery. Optional. (S. Axmaker)



Shaft in Africa ★★★

Warner, 112 min., R, Blu-ray: \$21.99

The idea of casting a black actor as James Bond has floated around for years (black actress Lashana Lynch will apparently be the new 007 in the untitled 25th Bond film), but one successful variation on the notion was 1973's *Shaft in Africa*, the third and final entry in the original *Shaft* blaxploitation trilogy about New York City private detective John Shaft (Richard Roundtree). Here, streetwise Shaft is on more of an international 007-like adventure, infiltrating a human trafficking ring. After passing several tortuous physical tests, Shaft is deemed strong enough to pose as one of the many Ethiopian men being lured to Europe for allegedly good-paying jobs. But once in Paris, the illegal immigrants discover that they are enslaved under the corrupt grip of a sick villain (Frank Finlay). Shaft takes to the mission with a fury and impressive physicality, scrambling over roofs, fighting stick-wielding bad guys, and riding a camel. Director John Guillermin brings his typically sharp craftsmanship to the pace and vigor of a better-than-average action movie which, somewhat surprisingly, was written by Oscar-winning screenwriter Stirling Silliphant (*In the Heat of the Night*). Without fanfare, Silliphant seamlessly incorporates Bond-like

