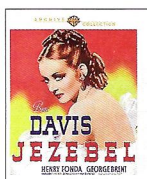


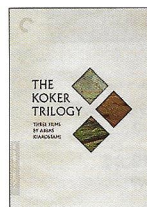
over-the-top, destructive impulses that are released through vindictive whims. Her self-centered behavior as a spoiled belle is often in startling contrast with the tone of chivalry and formal ritual that defines her genteel society. Based on a 1933 play by the Pulitzer Prize-winning Owen Davis, and adapted in part by John Huston, *Jezebel* finds Julie engaged to banker Pres (short for Preston), played by Henry Fonda. Upset that Pres, due to work obligations, can't accompany her to help shop for a dress to wear at the most important ball of the season, Julie defies convention and the warnings of her friends, choosing a scandalous red dress to embarrass Pres at the event. Since single women are typically expected to wear a white gown for the occasion, Julie's choice sends everyone fleeing from the dance floor. Pres stands up to the humiliation that his fiancée has wrought by dancing one dance with her, then ending their engagement. What follows is a prolonged separation as Pres spends a year elsewhere, during which several crises emerge involving an epidemic of yellow fever and still more spiteful actions by Julie. Featuring sumptuous cinematography by Ernest Haller and music by Max Steiner, the film offers a tour de force performance by Davis, who won an Academy Award as Best Actress for her role as catty, careless Julie. Extras include audio commentary by film historian Jeanine Basinger, a retrospective featurette, a vintage musical short, and a classic cartoon. Recommended. (T. Keogh)



The Koker Trilogy

★★★★1/2

Criterion, 3 discs, 281 min., in Persian w/English subtitles, G/not rated, DVD or Blu-ray: \$99.99



The great Iranian filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami (1940-2016) made his international reputation with *The Koker Trilogy*, which consists of three films connected by place, theme, and complex references. *Where Is the Friend's House?* (1987), Kiarostami's first fiction feature, follows the simple but resonant adventure of a schoolboy who travels to a nearby village (against the express orders of his mother) to return homework to a friend. Kiarostami shot the film in Koker, which suffered a devastating earthquake in 1990. *And Life Goes On* (1992) follows a filmmaker and his son as they journey to the remote Koker area to find the children who acted in the earlier film, where they witness streams of homeless people hauling food and equipment to makeshift shelters. The earlier film is naturalistic and looks at the adult world from the perspective of a child, while the latter is more of a fictional semi-documentary capturing the strength of the human spirit in

the face of disaster. Even more self-reflexive is *Through the Olive Trees* (1994), a fictionalized drama about the making of *And Life Goes On* that shifts from the making of a film to the odyssey of a lovesick young actor playing the husband of a young woman he has been forbidden to marry. Kiarostami's richly layered style and structure belie the simplicity and immediacy of his films, which explore increasingly complex relationships between actor and character, as well as story and storyteller. It is through these films that viewers see the evolution of Kiarostami's art and storytelling. Extras include Kiarostami's superb 1989 documentary *Homework*, audio commentary by Mehrnaz Saeed-Vafa and Jonathan Rosenbaum (co-authors of *Abbas Kiarostami*) on *And Life Goes On*, the 1994 documentary *Abbas Kiarostami: Truth and Dreams*, new and archival interviews, and a booklet with an essay by critic Godfrey Cheshire. Highly recommended. (S. Axmaker)

The Major and the Minor

★★★★

Arrow, 100 min., not rated, Blu-ray: \$39.99



After making a name for himself in Hollywood as a writer of witty and worldly romantic comedies, Austrian-born German émigré Billy Wilder made his directorial debut with this very American farce. Ginger Rogers plays Susan, a New York working girl who poses as a 12-year-old to get a half-fare ticket with the last of her savings in order to return to her Midwest home. When she's caught smoking by a suspicious conductor, she takes refuge with a paternal military officer (Ray Milland) who is inexplicably fooled by her disguise. He takes her to a military academy, where the teenage cadets try to romance her and she meddles with his engagement to a high society woman (Rita Johnson) who schemes to keep him out of World War II. Wilder and writer partner Charles Brackett combine high-spirited farce and risqué humor in a very funny comedy that manages to balance worldly cynicism and sincere affection without tipping over into sexualizing a (pretend) little girl. Rogers is in top comic form and the crush her character develops on the charitable Major is Wilder at his most warm and sincere. Diane Lynn delivers the first of her patented wise-beyond-her-years roles as the teenager who sees through Susan's act and becomes her co-conspirator. It's a minor comedy classic with topnotch performances, terrific chemistry, and witty banter, which was remade in 1955 as *You're Never Too Young* with Jerry Lewis in the Rogers role (a film that was nowhere as effective or funny as the original). Extras include audio commentary by film scholar Adrian Martin, a video appreciation by film critic Neil Sinyard, an archival interview with Milland, a 1943 radio adaptation with Rogers and Milland, and an

image gallery. Recommended. (S. Axmaker)

The Man in the White Suit

★★★★

Kino Lorber, 85 min., not rated, DVD: \$19.99, Blu-ray: \$29.99



England's Ealing Studios and actor Alec Guinness were linked in such mid-20th century clever and stylish comedies as *Kind Hearts and Coronets* (1949) *The Lavender Hill Mob* (1951), and *The Ladykillers* (1955). Another of these classics is *The Man in the White Suit* (1951), in which Guinness is superb as Sidney Stratton, an obsessed boyish chemist who invents a revolutionary fabric that resists wear and stains. The film begins on a comic high note, as Sidney—unable to gain employment in a chemical laboratory other than as a low-paid laborer—uses a succession of menial jobs to smuggle his secret experiments in among official corporate research. Befriending Daphne (Joan Greenwood), the daughter of a fabric company's CEO (Cecil Parker), Sidney and his combustible tests achieve victory at last, drawing corporate attention as his invention promises to be a boon to the world. But there's a problem: where's the planned obsolescence? As fabric titans and labor forces get wind of a consumer product that never needs replacement, the film becomes a dark, funny satire about special interests choosing self-interest over progress, with Guinness as a well-meaning disruptor suddenly on the run from those he thought were natural allies. The screenplay by Roger MacDougall is smart, while director Alexander Mackendrick deftly handles the many ironies and farcical turns in the story. Extras include audio commentary by film historian Dr. Dean Brandum, and interviews with filmmaker Stephen Frears and film critic Ian Christie. Recommended. (T. Keogh)

Mirage

★★★1/2

Kino Lorber, 108 min., not rated, Blu-ray: \$29.99



After the lights suddenly go out in a corporate high rise in New York City, the world of cost accountant David Stillwell (Gregory Peck) starts to twist into something like a *Twilight Zone* episode in this 1965 thriller based on the 1952 pseudonymous novel *Fallen Angel* by Howard Fast, and featuring music by Quincy Jones. David follows an enigmatic woman (Diane Baker)—who seems to know him—into a subbasement that doesn't exist, assassins and thugs keep popping up with threats, and he can't remember anything that happened over the last two years. His whole life seems to be a fiction and when he hires a private detective (Walter Matthau) to find out who he really is, the man is killed and David is framed for his murder. What begins as a *Manchurian Candidate*-like thriller