

THE DVD LASER DISC NEWSLETTER

AUGUST
2017
Issue #396
\$5.00

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Monsters!

Taking **Apocalypse Now** to heart (one of the characters is named 'Marlow' and another is named 'Conrad') and embracing **King Kong** in ways its original creators could never have imagined (Kong is Kurtz), **Kong Skull Island**, a Warner Home Video Blu-ray + DVD + Digital release (UPC#8839-29568505, \$36), is a spectacular monster movie, as bursting with thrills as it is with artistry. It is the sort of movie that makes every home video and audio system worth investing in, because not only does it bombard the viewer with amazing images and fantastic, multi-directional sounds—up and down the range—but it does so with a real consideration for cinematic expression. The cinematography is caring and the editing has maturity (there is a stunningly imaginative cut from a helicopter to a dragonfly), so that although the film is exciting as all get out, it will also pause to savor the beauty of the jungle and the glow of light and fire. The performances are solidly professional—to provide just one example, Samuel L. Jackson has, for quite some time, been competent but playful in his roles, and has been consistently cast for who he is rather than what he can do; in **Skull Island**, however, he is serious and focused, working hard from beginning to end to present the character that the filmmakers need to tell their tale believably.

The story is not about bringing the building-sized gorilla to civilization; it is about encountering the gorilla in his world and surviving not only his wrath, but the many other enormous dangers that populate the island, from giant squids to huge, vicious lizard-like creatures that only have two arms and a tail. Set during the closing days of the Vietnam War, which was also the final era in which parts of the Earth above water were still undocumented, a scientific team with an arranged military escort is sent to explore a newly discovered Pacific island. There are quite a few members of the team at first, but not so many by the end. In addition to its thoughtful visual compositions, the dialog is also an ideal mix of frantic information sharing and momentary reflections on the values and value of human civilization. In other words, the characters may be dodging the huge spindles of a gigantic spider creature in one jump-out-of-your-seat sequence, but they are also genuinely attempting to absorb how the presence of such leviathans alters their understanding of their own existence. There is a complex metaphorical resonance to their plight that they do indeed acknowledge at times, albeit on the run. Tom Hiddleston and Brie Larson are the two younger, attractive leads, with John C. Reilly, John Goodman, Terry Notary, Jing Tian and others. Running 118 minutes, the film does lift some of the best ideas that were to be had in the previous **King Kong** movies, but it lifts from other sources, as well (from video games almost as much as from movies), and it compiles a solidly entertaining mix of outstanding special effects, cringe-inducing stunts, furious action and an intelligent, thoughtful narrative. It's the kind of movie you can't wait to show everybody who you know likes movies.

And by the way, as you are reading the end of the credits of the 2017 feature, you will notice an acknowledgment of references that are not seen in the film, but once the credits are over, those references do indeed pop up in a sly epilog. The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1. The image transfer is meticulous, and the Dolby Atmos sound has noises attacking you from everywhere. The DVD included in the set is great, but its 5.1-channel Dolby Digital sound can't come close to delivering the same thrilling experience that the BD's audio delivers, and the picture is not quite as detailed. Both platters have an audio track that describes the action ("The sun fills the screen, acting as a backdrop for the silhouette of the rising gorilla and the heavily armed helicopters moving toward it."), alternate French and Spanish audio tracks, and optional English, French and Spanish subtitles. The BD also has a Portuguese track and subtitles. The BD comes with 4 minutes of uneventful but enjoyably performed deleted scenes, an 8-minute

collection brief Internet teasers made up to look like fragments of government films from the Seventies, and 39 minutes of good production featurettes that look at least briefly at all stages of the special effects development, showcase the extensive breakthrough location work done by the cast and crew in northern Vietnam, and share the impressive photos that Larson actually took while playing a photographer in the film.

Additionally, both the BD and the DVD have an excellent commentary track by the film's brilliant director, Jordan Vogt-Roberts, who, first and foremost, is making a movie that he wants to see. "The whole process really was, if we're having a [big effect or action] scene, we constantly have to see things we've never seen before. As crazy as they are, I'd rather have these insane moments where you feel like you haven't seen them, because I just feel that big movies don't give audiences that any more. That's why, when I went to a movie as a kid, it was to see [stuff] I'd never seen. And I loved that."

He talks extensively about every phase of the production, and about working with the cast, but he also displays his own youthful enthusiasm for the culture he grew up absorbing, be it movies, manga comics, video games, anime or anything else that was crammed into his circuitry. He admits to loading the film with scores of references to other works, from **Full Metal Jacket** to **Dragon Ball Z**, and his own descriptions of his creative process draws from just as wide a net of cultural influences. "These bird creatures took a really long time to design. Went through so many variations of it where we just didn't want it to look like pterodactyls. I love the idea of them kind of being the crack heads of the island. They're just so jittery and weird, like the hyenas in **The Lion King** or something, and my assistant made the observation at one point, he was like, 'Uh, the color scheme on them reminds me of the old **Jurassic Park** toys,' just because they have these really primary, bright colors, and I was like, 'That's pretty funny, because those toys are so ridiculous.'"

His talk is both instructional and informative, but what you get from it more than anything else is that he understands why there are movies that have become classics, and how you achieve that level of appeal. At one point, Hiddleston is slicing the aforementioned birds with a samurai sword. "It was like, 'I've never seen that before.' And you know, it's funny, this scene was on the chopping block for a long time. Some people really thought it was too much and I was like, 'Well, I think it looks amazing and I've never seen it before,' but really, the selling point to me was we had a screening and there were like two nine-year old, ten-year old boys in front of me, and when that scene came on, they just looked at each other, and their eyes just like they went 'Ahhhhhhoh.' You know, and at that point to me, it was like, 'Well, this has to stay in the film now.' And it was one of those moments, it was a super-divisive thing where on like test cards, like some people listed it as their favorite thing in the film and some people listed it as one of their least favorite. I would rather have things in movies that are divisive like that than things that just like kind of go down the middle the entire way."

'Twas Beauty tamed the Beast

The classic 1991 Walt Disney animated rendition of **Beauty and the Beast** was an incredibly cinematic work. Its fusion of music, musical-styled imagery and rich characterizations was as thrilling from the perspective of artistic ambition as it was from the lovely, classic fairy tale it was telling anew. It also contained a couple of sequences that were rendered with computer animation, a major innovation at the time of its creation, and a format that has become so successful, the Disney company seems to be literally running through a checklist of their classic cartoon features and remaking every one as a blend of upgraded, computerized animation and live action performances. One would think that **Beauty and the Beast**, which was, in effect, a cartoon striving to be a Broadway musical, would be an ideal

Beauty (Continued)

candidate for this sort of re-working, but the 2017 Bill Condon feature, **Beauty and the Beast**, released by Disney on Blu-ray (UPC#786936853681, \$40), is something of a letdown. It is forthrightly less cinematic than the cartoon was. There is no excitement about what is being accomplished as there was in every cut, every camera angle and every note of the animated feature.

Presented with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1, there is little appreciation for the widescreen framing. Sometimes, all of the action is just bunched in the middle, and other times, things are spread out randomly to fill the screen. The editing is bland, flowing with the music at times, and hitting the beats almost too precisely, yet rarely offering a harmonic counterpoint. It may also be that the enhanced visual information in the live action feature dilutes the impact of the music. Running 129 minutes, the story has been altered in places, but while some of the alterations are an effective addition to the narrative (the heroine sees her past as a child), the biggest one (a witch places a curse on the Beast in a manner reminiscent of the opening of **Sleeping Beauty**) has no balancing resolution (the removal of the curse goes unnoticed as the film focuses on its effects rather than its act). The film is not entirely a waste of time, by any means. Its source was simply too good to spawn a bad movie. There are new songs that are largely unmemorable, but the old ones are lively and captivating the way familiar tunes often are. One number, *Be Our Guest*, does live up to its transition (although even then, the original version was far more spectacular), and the ballroom dance—ironically, the piece that was computer animated the first time out—has more life and flexibility with this pass. More importantly, the romance that is the core of the story and that must be entirely believable for the story to work at all is fully successful. Emma Watson plays the heroine, who is imprisoned by the Beast in his castle in exchange for her father's freedom, but gradually comes to love him as he begins to love her (the story is generations old, and much analysis has been written over the years about the symbolism involved, just as there have also been many variations of the tale's sexual dynamics). So the film succeeds on paper, but when it comes to the magic of the movies, its best accomplishment is to have viewers running back to revisit the original cartoon feature, to truly bask in how glorious cinema can be when every component of a film is designed and executed with perfection.

Dan Stevens plays the Beast, with Luke Evans as the egotistical villain. Hidden behind costumes or animation are a bevy of stars, including Kevin Kline, Ian McKellen, Ewan McGregor, Emma Thompson, Audra McDonald and Stanley Tucci. The color transfer is precise and the image is sharp, making the blend of animation and reality seem unnoticeable. The 7.1-channel DTS sound has a full dimensionality and clearly defined separations. There is an audio track that describes the action (“Belle gives the Beast a low curtsy. He bows his ram-horned head to her. She offers up both her hands. He takes them and lets her lead him onto the dance floor. They dance.”), alternate French and Spanish audio tracks, optional English, French and Spanish subtitles, a music video with Ariana Grande and John Legend, a 2-minute production featurette about making the music video, a 3-minute interview with Celine Dion about the number she performs on the soundtrack (she had turned down an opportunity to sing on the cartoon), a 14-minute look at an elaborate table read of the script by the full cast that also had them singing songs and doing the basic dances, 46 minutes of decent production featurettes including a piece about the women who had major jobs behind the camera, and 10 minutes of interesting deleted scenes that often contain bits of business or drama that do not match the tone of the completed film.

A DVD platter is also included, although the picture is just a tiny bit less sharp, and the 5.1-channel Dolby Digital sound isn't nearly as flourishing. The language options are the same as the BD and there is one special feature, the music video.

Transfixing Monday

The transfixing Mike Figgis romantic crime feature from 1988, his debut film, **Stormy Monday**, has been issued in a highly worthwhile DVD + Blu-ray by Arrow Video (UPC#760137030980, \$30). With the exception of a narrative flaw at the very end, which can take a bit of wind out of your sails if it starts to bother you, the film is an exquisite, jazz-themed expression of cinematic poetry with a coherent plot and richly drawn characters. Set in an area in Britain's Newcastle that is ripe for urban development, Sean Bean is a drifter who takes a job at a jazz club run by Sting (both gives fine performances). Tommy Lee Jones is an American developer intent upon buying the club as part of a larger renewal project, and has some overly eager thugs working for him to meet these ends. Finally, Melanie Griffith is a waitress who has been living in England as a kind of advance scout for Jones' character, but complicating everything, she and Sean's character fall in love. The film hits its crime story beats in a relaxed manner, but they nevertheless accumulate to a decent level of suspense across the 93-minute feature. In the meantime, the Roger Deakins cinematography is gorgeous in shot after lyrical shot, and the film's musical score, a worthwhile mix of jazz and blues (some of it composed by Figgis), often lingers in the background when it is not at the forefront. Hence, the film is a captivating blend of mood and drama that endures in a viewer's memories long after it is over.

The one irritating error? A minor character, a musician in the band playing at the club, is blown up outside the club in a car by an explosion that

was intended for someone else. Although the heroes rush out to witness the murder, and an ambulance is seen arriving a few minutes later, not long after that there a shot of the band still playing in the club, apparently oblivious to everything that has gone down or the death of their companion. Figgis can almost get away with it sort of, because the film is so poetic (it is suggested in one of the supplements that the entire narrative is just a dream), but it is a testament to how well executed the plot is that he really doesn't.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1. The transfer is beautiful and shows off Deakins' work to its best effects. The DTS sound has a lovely, immersive dimensionality, but unfortunately, car engines and a few other sound effects have a disruptive reverb. There are optional English subtitles, a trailer, a small collection of promotional photos in still frame, and a very good 33-minute documentary that talks not just about the creation of the film, its thematic elements (including the dream speculation) and its performances (Sting was playing himself, not 'Baron Frankenstein' or something, which is why he is so effective), but a comprehensive history of Newcastle (where both Figgis and Sting originated) in movies and the subsequent gentrification that has gone on in just the area Figgis speculated it would. “**Stormy Monday** also works as a kind of love letter from Mike Figgis to what is basically his home town. But it's not Newcastle as it really was in 1986/1987. It's a kind of fantasy dream of Newcastle. When Sean Bean meets Melanie Griffith, she's finishing work at midnight and they go around the corner to a bar and buy drinks. The idea of buying drinks after midnight in Britain in 1986 is clearly not something from the real world. So Mike Figgis is in a way presenting Newcastle as it could be, his vision for the city in the same way that [Jones' character is within the film].”

Figgis also provides a commentary, prompted by film journalist Damon Wise. They talk about all aspects of the production, including the long time it took to get the film off the ground, the locations (the denizens of Newcastle got very excited when the movie fronts went up, because they thought the area was really going to get a nightclub), the cast (Griffith was skittish, but snapped out of it whenever the camera was on; Jones was 'scary' and had Figgis cowering after Figgis had the temerity to suggest Jones do a nude scene; Jones was also unhappy with the film's somewhat anti-American tone), directing (“I have this theory about doing love stories, men and women, and that is that you need to get the actress right. It's very hard for men, these love scenes are very tricky for men, and usually, if you analyze it, the woman is doing most of the work, I mean emotionally and acting-wise, to make it work.”) and the film's intoxicating imagery (“We looked at all things I think everybody now looks at and probably did then, too, which was Edward Hopper paintings, a huge thing. My references were all kind of iconic American, sort of sad/beautiful night exteriors from another era. The truth is, the first draft, or the draft of the script that we went into production with, described how the streets were absolutely throbbing with people, as in **Blade Runner**, you know. There was going to be Chinese neons everywhere, there were going to be thousands of people in the street. And as ever, when you start having budget conversations, there was a moment where the producers said, 'Listen, you're going to have to lose something. We can't afford to do this whole thing. You're really going to have to lose all your extras on the streets, because that's a big expense and time consuming, or you're going to have to lose a major scene.' And so I agreed to go for the lonely, wet streets, reflecting-the-neon kind of look. But it wasn't my original intention at all. I mean having said that, it works much better not to have so many people in a lot of the scenes.”).

Unstuck in time

A terrific low budget time travel movie in which the heroine has to piece together what is happening to her and how to stop her constant fluctuations in time and space, **Displacement**, has been released by All Channel Films (UPC#710051995032, \$23). Shot in Southern California, the film appears to evoke *Mesher in the Afternoon* in a couple of sequences, as the heroine enters a house and then sees herself walking outside from an upstairs window, and it has that sort of dream sensibility as it explores questions of love and grief, and how untethered those feelings become from the constructs of reality. Courtney Hope stars, portraying a brilliant quantum physics student—since her father's character is also a physicist, it's plausible, but her performance rarely sells that point—who creates and becomes dislodged in a time rift. She must repair the rift to stabilize her existence (if not stopping the world from breaking apart) while also reconciling with her loved ones and preventing a corporation from acquiring her formulas and selling the process as a weapon. All of this is accomplished in the film through conversations

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The DVD-Laser Disc Newsletter is edited and published by Douglas Pratt

and characters running around different buildings and houses, with a minimal amount of special effects held for the most important moments. Running 113 minutes, the film has a highly enjoyable puzzle narrative that becomes more engaging every time the heroine revisits a scene from a different perspective. Three stars whose careers have not been treated all that fairly by time have terrific supporting parts, Sarah Douglas, Bruce Davison and Susan Blakely.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback. The image transfer is fresh, and the 5.1-channel Dolby Digital sound has an engaging dimensionality. There are optional English subtitles and 15 minutes of good deleted scenes, including a couple of enlightened explanations about the mechanics of time travel that were deemed too complex to earn a formal placement within the film. The director, Kenneth Mader, supplies a commentary for both the film and the deleted scenes. He never mentions *Meshes in the Afternoon*. He identifies all of the college buildings, libraries and so on that he used as locations, spells out the long process that was required to shoot the movie (and how difficult it is to have actresses maintain their hairstyles for over 2 years of on and off filming), mentions different incidents that tripped him up along the way {"In this shot here, in the mirror, when she turns around, when we submitted it for our television deal, we got a note back that my cameraman, his leg was actually reflected in that mirror, and so they flagged it as a 'crewmember visible on screen,' and so we ended up having to paint out his leg in order to pass the QC for television.,"} explains how he met the different cast members and decided to use them, and works hard to explain the story and the choices he made during its construction. "The big challenge here at the end, and I think with all time travel stories, is to resolve a paradoxical, looping story like this without actually negating everything that we've seen for the past two hours, so this ending was really tricky to make it work, to dovetail everything together and make it so you guys wouldn't feel like you just wasted the last two hours of your lives. If our main character solves the problem, then you could argue that nothing ever actually happened, so that's always a trick, to make sure, 'no, actually, it did happen, perhaps in another timeline, but it did happen and her character actually learned from it,' and so that was the challenge here."

A long way from home

A well staged 2015 French film about the immigrant experience that smartly incorporates elements of a crime thriller to sustain a viewer's engagement with the characters, **Dheepan**, has been issued on Blu-ray by The Criterion Collection (UPC#715515197618, \$40). Three refugees from Sri Lanka who are pretending to be a family wind up in a housing complex in the Parisian suburbs that is overrun with drug dealers. One, a former soldier, works as a building super, while the woman who is posing as his wife takes care of an elderly man during the day. One of the primary dealers also works out of the old man's apartment. A child that they grabbed to fit the description of a daughter on their purloined passports begins attending school. Running 114 minutes, the film has many rewarding facets. It provides a detailed journal of the experiences Asian immigrants undergo on their journey to a new home in Europe. It is structured so that as the characters meet and learn about one another, the viewer does, as well, and the sexual tension between the man and the woman is an elemental part of the film's impact. And it has the simmering tensions of the drug wars that not only spill over into the lives of the characters, but awaken the hibernating skills of war that the soldier thought he had left behind. The performances are subtle and appealing, and the film's cinematography is an ideal mix of careful staging and impulsive reaction. The film builds up its suspense so well that its social lessons are sublimated by default, and stealthily teach the viewer about the humanity of immigration while waving other entertainments as a distraction.

Letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1, the image transfer is sharp and hues are as fresh as the lighting allows. The film's cinematography is both loose and precise. Like the immigrants themselves, it gives the appearance of an undisciplined manner, but is actually quite sophisticated in the way it copes with a stressful environment. The 5.1-channel DTS sound has a solid dimensionality and clear details. The film is in Tamil and French with optional English subtitles. There are 9 minutes of deleted scenes that would have padded the film too much, a trailer, a good 21-minute interview with director Jacques Audiard, who talks about his career and staging the film, and an equally rewarding 22-minute interview with star Antonythasan Jesuthasan, who talks about his experiences as a refugee from Sri Lanka and what aspects of that carried over into the film.

Audiard and co-screenwriter No   Debr   provide a commentary over both the film and the deleted scenes (the latter, Audiard says, helped the actors with the scenes that did make it into the film), prompted by film writer Fabrice Leclerc. They speak in French, with optional English subtitles. They talk about the film's somewhat unique shift in genres and the calculated ways in which it upends expectations. Other aspects to the film were less meticulously planned, such as the reason the film's title refers only to Jesuthasan's character, when Kalieaswari Srinivasan's character is of equal stature in the narrative. "The title doesn't pay tribute to the female character. It was chosen for Cannes [where the film went on to win the Palme D'Or], so we had to stick with it, but the female character's journey is as important as the male character's."

They talk about the reasoning behind many specific shots and lighting effects, go over the economic and political problems that are being

explored, and provide a very good overview of how and why the film was created. Additionally, Audiard explains a number of his working methods and why he favors them. Although the film was shot entirely on location, there is still an art director listed in the end credits (H  l  na Klotz).

"Why do you need an art director?"

"I don't watch the rushes. I like people to sum up for me what's happening in the different departments—costumes, hair and so on. You need a synthesis when you're directing. You can have too much analysis. I just wanted someone to narrow it down for me. I don't want to see forty locations or forty costumes. I want to be called when there are two or three to decide between. That's what I need an art director for."

"You make very personal films, but it's a real joint effort."

"That's why we make films or put on plays, because the whole is greater than the sum of its parts."

Marvelous violence

A gnarly, violent 1971 western with terrific star power, **The Hunting Party**, has been released on Blu-ray by 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment and Kino Lorber Incorporated as a *KL Studio Classics* title (UPC#738329216337, \$30). Oliver Reed is the leader of a group of mercenary gunslingers who have been hired to participate in a range war. On the way to their gig, he kidnaps what he thinks is a schoolteacher, played by Candice Bergen, so he can learn how to read, but she turns out to be the wife of the most important ranch owner in the territory, played by Gene Hackman. Hackman's character and a group of wealthy companions had set out to go hunting with innovative, high-powered rifles, but when they learn of the abduction, they alter their course and start picking off the gunslingers one by one from a safe distance. Bergen's character gets raped more than once during the film—Hackman's character is a real piece of work—but ends up falling for Reed's character faster than you can say Stockholm syndrome. The basic abduction narrative template is fairly common, but directed by Don Medford, the film is a marvelous mix of testosterone and blood, with excellent performances—Bergen's dialog delivery is stilted, as it often was around that time, but when it comes to raw emotion, she's fantastic—great action scenes and a penetrating drama that explores the dynamics of power both viscerally and intellectually. Adding to the pleasure, there are a number of terrific supporting players, including a young and nasty J.D. Spradlin, Simon Oakland, L.Q. Jones and Mitchell Ryan.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1. The transfer looks super, with accurate fleshtones and finely detailed hues. The monophonic sound is okay and there are optional English subtitles. Along with a trailer, there is an excellent 12-minute interview with Ryan, who reminisces about making the film, his fellow cast members, and his drinking binges with Reed, which actually got him fired, except that Reed went on strike until he was rehired.

There is also a good commentary track featuring film historians Howard S. Berger and Nathaniel Thompson, who explore the whole shift that went on during the Sixties and Seventies as violence in films became more pervasive. They also talk a lot about the players, how the film is easily misunderstood as simple exploitation, the frightfully negative reaction it received in the media, and how the film was set apart from other movies of the day because it didn't attempt to counterbalance its violence with abstract pop (**A Clockwork Orange**), sentimentality (**The Wild Bunch**) and so on. "This isn't a film that is 'perverse' in the conventional ways, it's more about 'perverse people' than a 'perverse film about people,' and I think it's actually a very responsible film, with its violence, and the way it depicts sexual dysfunction with the ultimate payoff of the consequences of actually killing somebody. And it's discussed through every scene in the movie. Every character discusses the good and the bad of killing somebody."

Variations on a theme

Sort of vaguely kind of like **Groundhog Day**, a young couple repeats the same morning a number of times in the Candy Factory release, **Life of Significant Soil** (UPC#NA, \$15). They are aware that the experience is happening again, but they are not overly bent out of shape by it, and the film is more about the different paths the lives the characters can take than about them learning or growing from the experience. The air conditioner stops working in the apartment and subsequently crashes onto the sidewalk. The girl learns that she is pregnant. A bird slams into the window. After the girl leaves, the guy goes to visit another woman and makes love with her. As the film advances, the girl looks into obtaining an abortion, and the second relationship moves through various levels of commitment, as the primary couple recognizes the dysfunction of their relationship. In some segments, they save the bird, and in others, they save the air conditioner. Running 71 minutes, the film is a rumination upon the ephemeral nature of young love. If viewers find the performers, Charlotte Bydwell, Alexis Mouyiaris and Anna Jack, attractive or sympathetic, then the 2016 film will be appealing in a meditative sort of way, but otherwise viewers will become impatient with its elliptical structure and the limited emotional maturity of Mouyiaris' character in particular, who really doesn't seem to learn or grow at all.

There is no menu. The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback. The cinematography is deliberately hazy or loosely lit at times, but the transfer is clearly accurate. The stereo sound has a pleasant dimensionality, and the captioning logo appears on the jacket.

Another Underworld installment

The Underworld series has been an appealing mix of interesting if moderately confusing character politics and invigorating action, about an ongoing war between vampires and werewolves. Shot in the Czech Republic, Underworld Blood Wars, from Sony Pictures Home Entertainment (UPC# 043396472907, \$27), is pretty much the same as all of the other movies. If you are into the series, it is a fairly satisfying installment, and if you aren't, the 2016 program has nothing special to offer. Kate Beckinsale stars as one of the vampires, with both sides attempting to find out where her character's daughter has been hidden, something she does not know and one must wait until the next installment to learn. But the battles between the two races continue, and along with the cozy European setting, it is the film's busy fight sequences, full of wonderfully gory special effects, that make the 91-minute feature worthwhile. The performances are competent and the film never seems silly or tiresome. One hopes that the writers will come up with more intriguing narrative variations for future films, but so far as delivering what is expected, the film is fully satisfying.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback. The film is often darkly cast, with bluish shades, as most of the installments have been, and the image transfer is solid. The 5.1-channel Dolby Digital sound has a strong dimensionality and details are clear. There is an audio track that describes the action ("David fires across the entrance way at enemies on the second floor. Two Lycans each mans mounted gun, side by side. One of them fires. David leaps to push a vampire out of the bullet's path. He returns fire at the mounted gun. On the first level, Marius notices David standing in the sunlight unharmed. Marius shoots him, and David fires back. They riddle each other with bullets. Marius charges up the stairs and David descends. Varga stares in shock as both of them get shot, but remain unfazed. As David roars, the bullets fall from his healing wounds. Marius does the same thing. Varga tackles Marius down the stairs. Marius pins him down and raises his knife, but a blur knocks him away. The blur zooms around the room, slicing the Lycans. It comes to a stop, revealing Selene."), an alternate French audio track, optional English and French subtitles, and 12 minutes of passable promotional featurettes, one emphasizing the presence of Charles Dance in a supporting role.

3D delight, and Stooges, too!

An eager attempt to imitate House of Wax (May 15), the Columbia Pictures Twilight Time Blu-ray release, The Mad Magician in 3D (UPC#81-1956021649, \$30), is a 1954 black-and-white feature starring Vincent Price as a frustrated Nineteenth Century stage magician who takes revenge on the men that have stolen his performance contraptions. Directed by John Brahm, the 3D effects may lack the innovative dynamism displayed in House of Wax, but there is a lovely, uncluttered simplicity to their presence that makes the entire program highly enjoyable. A few things zoom at the camera lens here and there (including yo-yos, in a replication of Wax's paddle ball segment), but for the most part, the 3D effects are limited to giving the rooms a genuine depth, and giving objects and people their own space. Every shot is thrilling not because of the activity within the shot, but because every shot has a recognizable dimensionality. The magic tricks that Price's character performs are more entertaining, as well, because there is additional magic in how they are being viewed. Patrick O'Neal co-stars as a detective investigating the murders, and Eva Gabor delivers an effective performance as the magician's ex-wife. Price is terrific, as well, although for some of the movie, other actors are standing in for him when he wears lifelike 'mask' disguises. Running 72 minutes, the film breezily delivers its murder and mayhem in a format that remains a lost art even today, amid a resurgence of 3D features.

The 2D version is also presented. The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1, and the framing always looks well balanced and nicely composed. There are some major splotches in a couple of places, but they are in darker areas of the screen, and it is possible to watch the entire movie and never notice them, since otherwise, the presentation looks crisp and spotless. The monophonic sound is strong and sharp, and there is no captioning. An alternate audio track presents the film's isolated Arthur Lange and Emil Newman musical score. A trailer is included, along with a good 20-minute retrospective piece about the film's creation, Columbia Pictures' 3D strategies, the extensive experience of producer Brian Foy, and the enjoyable cast.

A commentary track is also featured, with film enthusiasts David Del Valle and Steven Peros. They do a good job going over the film's production history, pointing out its best 3D effects, and talking about the careers and artistry of the cast and crew, but from the beginning to the end of the talk, their primary focus is on Price, celebrating his performance in the film, as well as his life and career, and sharing many insights about the nuances of his body of work. "Despite Vincent's six-foot-four-inch height, few if any, from 1959 onward, utilized him as a physical menace. But this film actually does that. The notion of him as someone to fear physically is not something that we see at all in the [Roger] Corman [Edgar Allan] Poe films, in so much of his celebrity later, because that whole sense of him being urbane, being sophisticated, of him being effete as a villain was really what was being exploited, and not that he was any sort of physical threat to you."

As an additional and delightful treat, the two 3D Three Stooges

shorts from 1953, each running 16 minutes, have also been included, Pardon My Backfire and Spooks!. Both are letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.78:1. The framing never seems out of kilter, and the black-and-white transfers are terrific. Now while it is generally frowned upon to make thrusting things at the camera the primary purpose of 3D filmmaking, these shorts are a most purposeful and appropriate exception to that rule. You can't watch them in 3D (they are also available in 2D) without flinching at least a dozen times, and ducking a dozen more. The effects enhance the slapstick humor exponentially, essentially including the viewer in the mayhem, as every object that is not nailed down, and many that are, eventually comes flying at the camera. Backfire is set mostly in a service station garage, so objects associated with automobile repair, from wrenches to torches, loom out at you from every angle. Spooks! is set in a decrepit mansion where a mad scientist is at work, and there is a gorilla, as well as a hypodermic needle and the usual knives and clubs. There is also a pretty girl, whose bust is not safe from the 3D gags.

In marked contrast to the wonderful shorts on Mad Magician, 3D Classics has released four colorized Stooges shorts on Blu-ray, The Three Stooges in 3D (UPC#844503002235, \$20). Unlike Pardon My Backfire and Spooks!, the shorts were not shot with 3D in mind, and while the added sense of perspective is mildly stimulating, placing characters and objects on different planes within the field of view, the dimensionality adds nothing to the comedy. The colorization isn't bad and fleshtones look real. The program opens with the 1936 Disorder in the Court, running 17 minutes and the only short in the collection to feature Curley Howard (Shemp Howard is in the other three and is also the third Stooge in Backfire and Spooks!), in which the three are 'witnesses' in a murder trial that devolves into anarchy. Brideless Groom from 1947 runs 17 minutes and is confined to a couple of hotel rooms and a phone booth, as one of the Stooges will inherit money if he marries within a few hours. Sing a Song of Six Pants, from 1947, running 17 minutes, is the best staged short in the group, as the three have a tailoring business where a gangster leaves important information in a suit. The 3D effects add a little bit of presence to the objects in the set. Finally, Malice in the Palace, from 1949, running 16 minutes, has a Middle Eastern setting with lots of gags about Arabian costumes and manners. The three run a sort of restaurant (there is a very funny sequence about the patrons thinking that they are being served cat and dog) and become involved with the search for a precious diamond. The monophonic sound is uneven, coming across more clearly on a couple of the shorts than it does on a couple of the others and thereby obligating the viewer to raise and then lower the volume. There is no captioning.

The more often we see the Stooges in the days when they were working with Ted Healy, the more bizarre their relationship with Healy seems. It's almost as if they are indentured servants; at least, that is the vibe you get. It doesn't help that for the most part, their routines with him came from the stage and don't have the sound effects that would later be infused in their own film shorts after they split from him. The absence of the funny sounds makes the violence seem nastier, just as, despite their vaudeville experience, the less stylized slaps and punches are rawer and meaner. And since Healy is rarely or never on the receiving end, it is as if the three comedians are his pets or something.

Healy and the Stooges are ostensibly backstage assistants in a production that a Broadway director played by Clark Gable is staging in the 1933 MGM musical, Dancing Lady, a Warner Home Video release (UPC#01256-9679047, \$18). Joan Crawford is the undiscovered chorus girl that Gable ends up placing in the lead role, while Franchot Tone is a wealthy financier who wants her to retire. While it is never entirely convincing that the presence of Crawford is what will make the show a hit instead of a flop (her dancing just isn't that good—Fred Astaire even gets pulled in to dance with her, and you wonder why the stagemore they're putting on isn't a hit because of him), she is terrific in her scenes with Gable and with Tone, presenting a perfect blend of sexual maturity and youthful ambition. Directed by Robert Z. Leonard and running 92 minutes, the film is a decent and satisfying production that accomplishes exactly what it intends to accomplish. Except that, because of their subsequent legacy, you can't keep your eyes off the Stooges in the background, regardless of how gooeey eyed Crawford is responding to Gable. And you wonder what it was that Healy had over them that kept them working for him for more than the day after they first met.

The full screen black-and-white picture looks pretty nice, with crisp contrasts, although there are several splices and a few other markings. The monophonic sound is noisy but workable. There is an alternate French audio track and optional English and French subtitles, along with a trailer. Additionally, Warner has included two more Stooges-related 1933 MGM shorts on the disc. Plane Nuts runs 20 minutes and stars Healy. It is a more direct replication of what one assumes is one of their vaudeville routines, again without sound effects, and again, just plain violent, augmented with a couple of elaborate musical numbers featuring an aeronautical theme. There are rudimentary sound effects in the second short and it makes all the difference. Curly Howard is featured in Roast-Beef & Movies, running 16 minutes in faded two-tone color, with George Givot and Jerry Howard in the roles normally filled by Moe Howard and Larry Fine. About an attempt to sell an idea for a feature to a group of what are apparently film studio heads, the piece is again beefed up with elaborate musical numbers, and is generally incoherent but occasionally amusing.

Frankenheimer's America in black and white

If you ignore the mechanics of the plot, which are a little preposterous—somehow, close to a dozen men are so thoroughly brainwashed during a wartime incident that not one of them remembers anything for a very long time—John Frankenheimer's 1962 political thriller, **The Manchurian Candidate**, is an outstanding film. The key to enjoying it is to realize that the characters are more important than the plot, and that for all the world-shattering events that the film attempts to incorporate, its real purpose is to examine how ordinary people—devastatingly ordinary—are affected by their involvement in extraordinary events. Giddily nasty one moment and vulnerably exposed the next, Laurence Harvey delivers a gripping performance as the stepson of a prominent senator who is captured in the Korean war and prepped as an assassin. (Let's see. The Russians are making arrangements so that a man with an extremely limited intellectual awareness will become president and do their bidding. There's got to be some kind of similarity to current events stirred in there somewhere.) Frank Sinatra is the film's star, the commander of Harvey's character, who was also captured and gradually begins to realize that his nightmares are genuine memories. Angela Lansbury and James Gregory co-star, with Lansbury playing Harvey's mother and Gregory as her husband. Janet Leigh is also featured. Sinatra works very hard to deliver a sensitive and detailed performance—some of the little bits of business he does are as good as anyone spending their entire career as an actor might come up with—while Frankenheimer delicately preserves Sinatra's role as the hero of the story despite his character's psychic damage. Ultimately, he is more a witness than a savior, but that is why the movie remains true to its artistry.

Presented in black and white, which looks stunning on the gorgeous Criterion Collection Blu-ray (UPC#715515170215, \$40), the film runs a full 126 minutes, and the movie's real story doesn't even manifest until an hour or so has passed, but a viewer is enthralled from the very beginning because the characters are so intriguing, the imagery is so striking, and everything about the film seems simultaneously so controlled and so unhinged. Satirical and suspenseful, as author Bill Condon's stories often are, the film continually feels like it is not just telling a story, but that it is presenting a complex representation of the sociopolitical dynamics of American society, with its nagging dysfunctions and the unnerving way in which bad dreams sometimes turn out to be very real.

Like the picture, the monophonic sound is crisp and precise. We reviewed an MGM DVD in May 98, but it did not have 16:9 enhancement and the image is somewhat murky and soft in comparison to the vivid BD. Along with optional English subtitles and a trailer, there is a sporadic Frankenheimer commentary that originated on the DVD and an incredible 8-minute conversation between Frankenheimer, Sinatra and screenwriter George Axelrod that originated on the LD (Mar 97). Additionally, there is a spellbinding 16-minute analysis of the film by Errol Morris, who points out its deeply satirical precepts (women are controlling the world), and looks at how it reflected popular fears of its own era and of today. "Why after we win, essentially, World War II—we become the most powerful nation in history—why, suddenly, does this turn to some extreme form of paranoia?" There is also a wonderful 11-minute interview with Lansbury, who has some terrific memories of working on the film; and an excellent 21-minute overview of the Korean War and the rise of the myth of brainwashing, which seeped into everything from politics to television (subliminal advertising).

With the improved crispness of the Blu-ray delivery, Warner's already striking black-and-white transfer of Frankenheimer's 1964 **Seven Days in May**, an *Archive Collection* release (UPC#888574488604, \$22), has such a vivid presence, it actually starts to look like one of Frankenheimer's TV dramas. It doesn't help that, unlike **The Manchurian Candidate**, the production designs often have tall, blank walls, enhancing the feel of a soundstage production, and that the drama is mostly sequential conversations, with very few interludes that break away from the interiors. Nevertheless, the program is highly involving, and seemingly more so on BD than it was on DVD (Jul 00). Frederic March portrays the president. Except when he's cupping his hand on the phone while talking, which seems an unlikely thing for a president to do, his performance is quite entertaining, gradually shifting from squishiness to decisiveness as he gets a handle on what he is up against. Kirk Douglas is the hero, a military man who recognizes that this isn't how America is supposed to operate, and Burt Lancaster is the chief conspirator. (And let's see. The president is accused of being overly soft and accommodating with the Russians, which leads to a military plot to overthrow his authority. There's got to be some kind of similarity to current events stirred in their somewhere.) Edmond O'Brien, Martin Balsam, and Ava Gardner also appear, along with a pleasantly surprising turn by a weaselly John Houseman. Running 118 minutes, the film seems to be even more topical and vital than when it was made, and will probably end up speaking to every era in one way or another, so long as America endures.

Letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1, the picture is flawless and thrilling, though as we said, that can actually work against the film at times. The monophonic sound is sharp and clear, and there are optional English subtitles. Along with a trailer, Frankenheimer's outstanding

commentary track from the DVD has been carried over, in which he speaks enthusiastically about the skills of the artists that he collaborated with and shares his own knowledge about the inner workings of Washington.

Smile, you're in Spain

Shot in Todd-AO and originally distributed by the Cinerama Releasing Corp., Screen Archives has issued the 1961 **Holiday in Spain** (UPC#8119560202346, \$30) in the curved smilebox format, even though it is not a three-panel feature (the film was, at one point in its distribution history, however, optically split into three panels for true Cinerama projection). The smilebox effect is not quite as involving as it is in the actual Cinerama features, but the film is a quasi travelog with many panoramic shots of Spain's most scenic vistas, and the format does pull you into them and creates at least a tiny swoon. Produced by Michael Todd, Jr. and directed by Jack Cardiff, the film was originally released in 1961 as *Scent of Mystery*, one of the first movies to offer theater patrons selected odors to accompany different moments in the film. That version, however, was soon trimmed and discarded in favor of the straightforward adventure thriller, which still runs 109 minutes.

Denholm Elliott stars as a mystery writer on holiday, who witnesses an accident and comes to believe that a pretty tourist is an assassination target. He hires a cab, driven by Peter Lorre, and the two proceed to follow the girl around Spain as they thwart further murder attempts and try to figure who the good and bad guys are, and warn the girl about what is going on. Paul Lukas and Leo McKern are also featured, with Beverly Bentley as the heroine. Not to spoil things, but Todd's stepmother also shows up in a surprise appearance. Parts of the film are tedious and tiresome, especially when the film attempts to veer towards humor (among other things, Lorre makes some lame jokes about **Casablanca**), but other segments have enough suspense to hold one's attention, the mystery is viable, and there are all of the visits to the various Spanish tourist spots, which often have an intrigue of their own.

The film comes with an Overture, Entr'acte and Exit Music. The smilebox is a bit taller than the Cinerama smileboxes, but there is still space at the top and bottom of the screen on the edges, and as we said, its effects are discernible. The colors are drab, which is also something of a turn off, although the film has undergone an extensive reclamation, as is detailed in a 7-minute featurette. The 5.1 DTS sound has a full dimensionality and some enjoyable left-right dialog segments, along with other directional effects. There is no captioning.

10 minutes of apparent trims from the original *Scent of Mystery*, all of which are terribly dull, have been included in a supplement, although the most important material, which would have fleshed out the plot a little more, is apparently lost to the ages. A good 18-minute interview with Bentley is included, who talks about her entire career in show business and how she became friends with Ernest Hemingway and his wife during the movie's shoot (unfortunately, the sound recording is very weak, and when the disc producers switch to clips from the film, they make no adjustment for the much louder "normal" volume; Bentley makes no mention, nor is she required to, of being married to Norman Mailer for two decades); along with a very good 15-minute interview with producer Todd's daughter (Mike Todd's granddaughter), Susan, who talks about her father's career and her experiences with the film (she was only two when it was shot, and doesn't remember the experience, but she returned to the U.S. speaking Spanish instead of English); a fairly good 14-minute visit to the film's many locations (with a map to show you where they were) accompanied by plenty of then-and-now clips; a trailer; and a nice 10-minute montage of promotional materials. A soundtrack CD running 36 minutes is also featured in the two-platter set, highlighting Mario Nascimbene's appealing musical score (lifting some ideas from Maurice Ravel), a mix of jazz numbers, orchestral pieces, and Fifties pop (Eddie Fisher has two catchy numbers), all of which have an excellent, smooth fidelity. Beware if you are listening to it in your car, however, since the CD opens, as the movie does, with traffic sounds coming from every direction.

Additionally, there is an enthusiastic commentary track featuring Cinerama experts Bruce Kimmel and David Strohmaier, and Bentley's stand-in, Sandra Shahan. The talk ranges from cherished childhood memories of seeing *Scent of Mystery*, to technical minutia concerning the transfer and presentation ("Now you'll notice a little bit of a camera problem here. It surfaces periodically through the show. There's a halo around Peter's hat, around the car. It has a sort of soft look to it. We checked the negative, we checked both prints and we found out that this existed in the negative, and it was probably due to the camera being threaded in a slightly bigger loop at the top than at the bottom, and it caused this kind of ghosting effect."). They talk extensively about the locations, the cast, different things that went on during the shoot (Lorre had an overdose and was out for several weeks), the odor version and its fate, the stunts, the effects (the animated butterfly in the film's opening was probably created by the Hubley Studios), and the film's spotty distribution in its various forms. The talk is consistently interesting, but more importantly, the three have a great rapport with one another, and their affection for the film and the experience of its existence is readily conveyed and shared with the listener.

Star studded western

One of the many clashes between old Hollywood and new Hollywood that occurred in the Sixties, Edward Dmytryk's 1968 **Shalako**, released on Blu-ray by Kino Lorber Incorporated as a *KL Studio Classics* title (UPC#738329215125, \$30), had international funding and a stellar cast to match, starting with Sean Connery, Brigitte Bardot, Stephen Boyd, Connery's memorable co-star in another film, Honor Blackman, and Jack Hawkins, and it was shot in Spain during the heyday of the Spaghetti Western craze. But Dymtryk was old Hollywood, a functional director who could work with stars and execute a script, yet lacked an enthusiasm for the innovative stylism and violence, which had revitalized a genre that otherwise was undergoing death by saturation on television. Based upon a novel by Louis L'Amour, a group of British and Eastern American aristocrats are conducting what is essentially a safari out west, with servants, silverware and crystal, when they run afoul of an Apache hunting party and draw the ire of an entire tribe. Boyd plays their roughhewn guide, and Connery is an independent scout doing reconnaissance for the Army, who stumbles across the group just as their predicament turns dire. Running 113 minutes, there are many personality conflicts and differing agendas within the group, along with the inevitable haughty obstinance that prevents them from taking good advice, and the film plays out as a siege and a chase when the group splits apart and the Indians start to pick them off. It is a basic adventure and is fun for both its star power—Boyd and Blackman really steal the film—and its basic western trappings. But it is also moribund, as Dymtryk does little to embellish the narrative or create a visual dynamism that would enhance a viewer's engagement with the spectacle.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1. Darker parts of the screen are grainy at times, but otherwise the color transfer looks fresh and fleshtones are accurate—the presentation is sharper and more vivid than the fine looking Anchor Bay Entertainment DVD we reviewed in Mar 99. The monophonic sound is okay and there are optional English subtitles.

The film director, Alex Cox, provides a commentary track that starts out promisingly, but runs out of steam rather quickly, and inadvertently reveals some of his own shortcomings as a director. He says, for example, that if he had made the movie he would have left out the sequence where some of the heroes climb the face of a cliff, even though it is one of the film's most entertaining segments (he claims that you already know where they are going, so there's no point to the scene). Initially, he talks about westerns in general, the changes that were going on in the film industry when the movie was made, the stars and the crew, and the Spanish locations, but he soon subsides into a sporadic play-by-play with indifferent comments on the action.

Old-fashioned Mountain

As old fashioned as a modern movie can get, Delmer Daves' 1963 pastoral drama, **Spencer's Mountain**, has been released on Blu-ray by Warner Home Video as an *Archive Collection* title (UPC#888574488147, \$22). Subsequently an inspiration for the television series, **The Waltons**, although **The Waltons** was set several decades earlier, Henry Fonda stars as the head of a household brood (nine children) on the edge of the wilderness in Wyoming (the film was shot in what was then a rather sleepy Jackson Hole). Although the film is set in the Fifties and his character toils in a quarry during the workday, the family does not have a car or a telephone. Maureen O'Hara co-stars, with the easy-going James MacArthur as the eldest son. Running 118 minutes, the narrative that eventually materializes is about the family scraping together the necessary wherewithal to send MacArthur's character to college. The film, which was hokum even in 1963, will certainly frustrate viewers more attuned to nanosecond editing and furious action, but if one can simply accept it for what it is trying to accomplish, it is a lovely and touching feature about the beauty of America and the strength of the American family. It cannot really be said to influence later films such as **Legends of the Fall** and **A River Runs through It** (or a slightly earlier film that would make a cringe-inducing double bill, **Sometimes a Great Notion**), but its atmosphere certainly lingers in those features and calls forth a time when the country did not seem quite as wired or as intensely mechanized as it does today. Additionally, the dramatic interludes are reasonably intelligent and emotionally effective. The film may dance around sex, but it does acknowledge it as constant presence in an adult's life. As an exploration and tribute to the family spirit and the symbiosis between family and community, the film is both entertaining and rewarding, and it is a lasting memento for a time that may have not actually ever existed, but will linger in the American consciousness forever.

Donald Crisp co-stars and Wally Cox, who was rarely seen in motion pictures, has an enjoyable supporting role as a minister. The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1, and the color transfer is outstanding. Always precise and crisp down to the smallest detail, the film is breathtaking whether it is supplying a vista of the Grand Tetons or a close-up of Fonda and O'Hara's complexions. The monophonic sound is strong and clear. There are optional English subtitles, a trailer, an enjoyable 7-minute promotional featurette that looks, in part, at the kids in Jackson Hole who landed roles as extras in the film, and a decent 10-minute collection of promotional interviews with Fonda and MacArthur conducted during the film's premiere.

Hollywood spoof

Blake Edwards' delightful 1981 spoof of Hollywood, which would subsequently be echoed in a younger generation with **Entourage**, **S.O.B.**, has been issued with a lovely Blu-ray transfer by Warner Home Video as an *Archive Collection* title (UPC#888574474560, \$22). Much of the film is toy-like in its depiction of Hollywood life, and the bright, crisp colors enhance that aspect of its pleasures. The film has a spectacular cast, beginning with Julie Andrews and William Holden, but also featuring Richard Mulligan, Robert Preston, Larry Hagman, Robert Vaughn, Shelley Winters, Loretta Swit, Marisa Berenson, Robert Webber and Stuart Margolin. Every moment that any one of them is on the screen is an additional delight. Most of the performances are exquisite (Andrews is wonderful), and even Holden, who does the entire sunny, Los Angeles movie dressed like he's in winter in Vermont, brings a pleasure of familiarity and steadfastness to his presence. Like **Entourage**, the film is about the hustle and corporate mood swings that go on when a filmmaker's movie is anticipated to be a hit or a bomb, which is then expanded with some marvelous slapstick and black humor. On the downside, Edward's career-long lampooning of Asian characters becomes more and more problematic as society's sensitivity to such matters matures, and there is a specific narrative continuity error—the producer's kids do not attend his memorial service. The 121-minute feature also downshifts a bit during its final act, as three inebriated characters go on an extended adventure. Although there are moments of laugh-out-loud comedy during the segment, it is slower and less cluttered with business than the most of the film had been up to that point. But these are minor drawbacks. The film is a great deal of fun from beginning to end, and on Blu-ray, the crispness of its joy has an even stronger impact.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1. The monophonic sound is solidly delivered. There are optional English subtitles, and a trailer that emphasizes the film's slapstick.

No more yielding but a dream

Julie Taymor's elaborate 2014 New York stage production of William Shakespeare's **A Midsummer Night's Dream** was recorded live by Taymor and has been released on Blu-ray by Kino Lorber (UPC#73832921-3732, \$35). Like many of Taymor's endeavors, the show is full of elaborate puppetry and wirework, and contains a number of visually impressive sequences. Unfortunately—and this was also true, although to a lesser extent, in Taymor's adaptation of **The Tempest** (Nov 11)—much of the work's poetry gets lost in the process. There is such concentration on movement and appearance that line readings, while emotionally accurate for the most part, have no time to breathe or to be savored on their own. Every time a favorite passage was approached, it would suddenly pass indiscriminately, as the show moved on to the next piece of business. Even the lovely and joyful closing soliloquy is given an offhanded treatment in favor of the final visuals. Running 145 minutes, the program is still impressive, and was probably even more dazzling for the audience members, since the camera cannot possibly catch every activity that is occurring on the stage at a given moment. The stage sits in the center of the theater as an oval, with the ticket holders sitting on three sides and a bit of the fourth. Fabric billows, characters ascend and descend, and every new costume is a thrill in itself. Children play the faeries. As an entertainment, the program is a little uneven, but cannot really fail to be pleasurable, as the play itself is such a parade of joys. Kathryn Hunter plays Puck and David Harewood plays Oberon, with Tina Benko, and Max Cassella. Notably, Mandi Masden does an excellent job as Helena, while in contrast, Lilly Englert is very poor as Hermia. Because of their scenes together and the similarities of their roles, the contrast between their two performances magnifies both the good and the bad. But the way to approach the program is to celebrate Taymor's artistry. There are plenty of other versions of the play available, and none so prodigiously blend the play's magical elements with an equally magical stagecraft.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.78:1. The video image is sharp, vivid and flawless, which adds to the impact of the show's details. The DTS sound has a full dimensionality that puts you in the center of the stage with the characters. There are optional English subtitles, two trailers and 12 minutes of decent promotional featurettes.

Early Chabrol

Claude Chabrol's 1962 take on **Hamlet**, **Ophelia**, has been released on Blu-ray by Olive Films (UPC#887090133715, \$30). When a factory owner dies and his wife marries his brother, his brooding son begins to see parallels between what has happened and William Shakespeare's play—Laurence Olivier's adaptation just happens to be playing at the local bijou as well—and starts to push the similarities along. Set in the provinces, one of the film's primary saving graces is its cinematography, as the black-and-white visions of the French countryside are often highly compelling, framing the son's eccentricities in an almost abstract landscape. The film has flashes of comedy and genuine cleverness (the grave digger scene is lovely), and diverges enough from Shakespeare to avoid seeming soporific. Alida Valli and Claude Cervel are top billed, but André Jocelyn, playing the son, is the center of the 104-minute film. His obsessions and depression make it difficult for the viewer, or the other characters within the film, to have much affection

for him, and that is the primary cause of the film's uneven appeal. But the movie's occasional wit and constant visual stimulations, along with an inherent curiosity over how much of Shakespeare's story will ultimately be replicated, are sufficient to hold one's attention to the end.

Letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.66:1, the picture looks lovely, with crisp contrasts, intricate detail and no wear. There is a grain under many lighting conditions, but that is part of the image's texture. The monophonic sound is also quite crisp and pure, and the Pierre Jansen musical score is appealingly oblique, very much like the Matthieu Chabrol scores that would appear in the director's later features. The film is in French with optional yellow English subtitles, and comes with a trailer.

They had faces then

Gloria Swanson is a tempestuous singing star who falls in love with a diplomat nicely played by H.B. Warner in the 1923 Paramount silent feature directed by Allan Dwan. **Zaza**, a Kino Lorber Incorporated Blu-ray release (UPC#73829212223, \$30). Running 84 minutes, they have a romantic idyll, but their careers draw them apart again. The film is entirely a vehicle for Swanson, and her charms are at times elusive. Unlike audiences of the day, a viewer is not automatically drawn to her, so her tantrums and dilettantish behavior lack any sort of compensating allure (twenty-three at the time, her character has a life-hardened air that comes across quite clearly in both her performance and her looks; she calls to mind Joan Crawford after her ingénue phase had passed). In the latter half of the film, as her heart softens, there are moments that are more appealing, and the period setting—almost contemporary at the time, but ancient now—is delightful. Dwan's staging choices are also impressive and pull you into the film effectively. From a narrative perspective, it is a fairly cut and dried affair, but there are enough peripheral pleasures—and the historical presence of Swanson would count among those—to make the program worthwhile.

The full screen black-and-white picture looks very nice. There are plenty of scratches, but the image is reasonably clear and finely detailed. The mildly stereophonic piano musical score, by Jeff Rapsis, was drawn from the original cue sheets and works reasonably well. The film is accompanied by a commentary from Dwan biographer Frederic Lombardi, who goes into detail about the lives and careers of both Dwan and Swanson, supplies briefer profiles of the other players and crewmembers, provides a decent history of the film's production and boxoffice success, and occasionally deconstructs a scene or a shot, including the meticulously timed sentimental finale.

Period legal drama

An excellent 1967 legal drama directed by Lamont Johnson, **Covenant with Death**, is available from Warner Home Video as an *Archive Collection* title (UPC#883316615898, \$18). Set it in the early Twenties in New Mexico, the film's period detail is one of its strongest attractions. The hero, a young, partially Hispanic judge, played by George Maharis (the reason he was appointed is clearly articulated), even drives an older automobile that requires an elaborate startup routine. The film opens on a dead body, and the trial is fairly cut and dried, but after the verdict, the presiding judge goes on vacation and Maharis' character inherits what is supposedly some minor housekeeping on the case that blows up in his face. To give more detail would spoil the immense pleasure in how the film unfolds, but one of the surprises that can be revealed is that Gene Hackman has a fairly meaty supporting part, as the local cop, and it is a joy every moment he is on the screen. Earl Holliman, John Anderson, Kent Smith, Laura Devon, Whit Bissell and Arthur O'Connell are also featured, and Katy Juado plays the mother of Maharis' character. Running 97 minutes and based upon a novel by Stephen Becker, for much of the movie a viewer can legitimately wonder what the point is, as the film couldn't seem to care less about the murder and is instead just trolling around the characters, the hero's romantic life, and the town's vague but still present racial tensions. But Johnson, whose greatest successes were in television (**Covenant** was his first feature film), makes use of the wonderful cast and the marvelous Sun Belt period setting to sustain a basic interest in the characters and their lives, so when the unexpected plot twist does kick in, everything comes together wonderfully.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.78:1. The color transfer is beautiful and the image is crisp. There are a couple of brief, minor incidents of damage, but otherwise the presentation is immaculate. The monophonic sound is okay, and there is no captioning.

Chiba action

Sonny Chiba portrays an apparently country bumpkin detective who comes to Tokyo with a pet pig, but runs circles around the city cops when a girl from his hometown is murdered, in the enjoyable 1977 crime feature, **Doberman Cop**, an Arrow Video DVD + Blu-ray release (UPC#76013702-2480, \$40). His character is not only instinctively astute when it comes to a crime scene, but he also has a physical prowess that allows him to dispatch gangsters and other villains several at a time. The film has some wild violence, terrific stunts (many clearly performed by Chiba) and a nice touch of sex here and there. The 'mystery' is basically a conspiracy of corruption involving mobsters and the exploitation of female recording artists, but it is enough of a narrative to sustain the 90-minute film's momentum (and give it some music sequences), as the action scenes and the film's slick,

stylish look fill in the pleasures. That the comedy is often juxtaposed uncomfortably with the film's glossy demeanor adds to its satirical undercurrent, so that the film is sort of messing with the genre at the same time that it is embracing it.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1. The hues are bright and shiny, and grain is minimal. The monophonic sound is reasonably strong. The film is in Japanese with optional English subtitles, and comes with a trailer, a 9-minute summary of the film's attributes and an 18-minute interview with screenwriter Koji Takada, who goes over much of his career, talks a little bit about the film, and also talks about Chiba's career. There is also a very good 18-minute interview with Chiba, who talks about the many films he made with director Kinji Fukasaku and what he learned about filmmaking from him, as well as talking about the movie, and he provides a fascinating history and appreciation of Okinawa, which is where his character was from.

Kidnapping

The precedent for the 1996 Ron Howard/Mel Gibson blockbuster, **Ransom**, was a 1955 MGM drama entitled **Ransom!**, which has been released by Warner Home Video as an *Archive Collection* title (UPC#888574055523, \$22). Co-written by Richard Maibaum and directed by Alex Segal, the 102-minute feature, which was itself spun off from a television drama, has the tone of a stageplay. It is set almost entirely in one location and has no action scenes or anything like that. Rather, it is just about the wealthy father going through the different stages of fright and frustration when he learns that his beloved little boy has been abducted. Glenn Ford stars, with Donna Reed as his wife, although, this being the Fifties, everyone decides that she should remain as drugged up as possible for the length of the ordeal. Leslie Nielsen delivers an excellent performance, entirely free of any unintentional self-mockery that one can otherwise read into his early roles on occasion, as a hustling newspaperman who gradually becomes sympathetic to the father and his predicament. The big twist, as anyone familiar with the Howard movie or even just its memorable commercials is aware of, is that rather than paying the ransom, the father turns the tables on the kidnapers by offering the same amount of money as a reward for their capture. In the Howard film, this played out as an action thriller with grand twists and turns. In its original manifestation, the film is a cerebral exercise that never leaves the father's side. Although, seen from today's perspective, there are gigantic arrows pointing at one supporting character being the villain on the inside, it turns out he's just a snot by nature, and you never see the bad guys or learn of their fate. The film plays instead simply on the failure or success of the father's strategy to gain the return of his son. That was apparently all that it was felt Fifties audiences could handle, but it still makes for a very strong and appealing drama, so rich in the potent emotional exchanges that one would anticipate from such a situation that any anticipation or knowledge of where the plot will lead is of secondary importance.

The black-and-white picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.66:1 with an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback. The image is smooth and free of wear, and the monophonic sound is fine. There is no captioning, and a trailer has been included, which also uses the ransom/reward twist to lead off its promotion.

The Howard film was released by Touchstone Home Entertainment as a *Special Edition DVD* (UPC#786936232981). Running 121 minutes, the film gives almost equal time to the band of kidnapers as they bicker among each other, and updates the film with chases, fights and so on, also embellishing the ending so that the main hero and the main villain can have a final standoff. Rene Russo is the wife, and Gary Sinise, Lili Taylor and Delroy Lindo are also featured. We reviewed a 139-minute LD in Jul 97, which developed the secondary characters and some of the story transitions more effectively, but the shorter version works well enough. Embellishing the original narrative—Maibaum gets a full screenplay credit—the story is well paced (the editing is quite good) and continually intriguing, and the performances are richly delivered. Gibson's character breaks down in tears at one point, and often looks like he is a step behind in figuring out what is happening to him, until his force of will enables him to get the upper hand.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1, but there is no 16:9 enhancement. The image quality is adequate but not glossy. The 5.1-channel Dolby Digital sound, on the other hand, is quite good, with an energetic dimensionality. There is an alternate French audio track, optional English and Spanish subtitles, 5 minutes of inconsequential deleted scenes, a good 13-minute promotional featurette that includes extensive discussions about the film's editing process, and 4 minutes of quasi-bloopers.

Howard supplies a reasonably good commentary track, as well, explaining how he approached different narrative or staging problems, what it was like working with the cast and the crew, and where specific technical strategies were employed. "The camera movement in this scene is much subtler. There is some motion, but it's restrained. Later in the film, the camera movement during the phone call sequences intensifies as the temperature heats up in the conflict." He also reveals that the subject unnerved everyone working on the film, including him. "Emotionally, I think this was probably the most challenging film, for me, that I've worked on. I don't think I ever had a film that I've made as a director affect my moods, affect me emotionally, as much as this one."

Now you can choose your mayhem

We reviewed the marvelous Arrow Video Emilio Miraglia giallo double bill, **Killer Dames**, in Feb 17. Arrow has now chosen to release the two films separately on Blu-ray, **The Red Queen Kills Seven Times** (UPC#760137985488, \$30) and **The Night Evelyn Came Out of the Grave** (UPC#760137985389, \$30). Both films have Italian audio tracks and alternate English tracks, although the Italian is preferable, and there are optional English subtitles. On both, the picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1. The color transfers are excellent and the monophonic sound is quite strong.

The 1972 **Red Queen** is the better of the two, but only slightly, although it also features a marvelous commentary track by the delightful British critics, Alan Jones and Kim Newman, which advances the appeal of the BD even more. The film is about potential heirs to a will being knocked off one by one, and stars Marina Malfatti and Barbara Bouchet. Also featured are interviews with various cast and crew members, running a total of 59 minutes, and two trailers.

The 1971 **Evelyn**, starring Anthony Steffen and Malfatti, about a man who is apparently killing women that remind him of his dead wife, until she starts showing up again, has a serviceable commentary track by critic Troy Howarth, a better 15-minute analysis of the film by Stephen Thrower, 66 minutes of interviews with production designer Lorenzo Baraldi and co-star Erika Blanc, and a trailer.

Clowning with murder

A crime writer and his fiancée, Ernest Truex and Una Merkel, are eloping, but their car breaks down and they ask for help at the wrong mansion in the 1933 MGM production, **Whistling in the Dark**, a Warner Home Video *Archive Collection* title (UPC#888574475048, \$22). The mansion is a gangster haven, and when the head gangster, played by Edward Arnold, learns who Truex's character is, he demands the writer come up with a 'perfect crime' scheme to assassinate a mob target. Running 79 minutes, there is a lot of tomfoolery, and as talented as Truex and Merkel are, the humor is sporadic at best, although there are a few touches of pre-Code sauciness to liven things up. Arnold is excellent in the straight part, and some of his henchmen are played by Nat Pendleton, Johnny Hines and John Miljan, adding to the amusements. Fortunately, the film's final act is the strongest, so it leaves you with a good feeling and thinking that you've just seen a better and funnier movie than you actually have.

The full screen black-and-white picture has an expected amount of scratches and speckles, and is mildly grainy, but the contrasts are sharp and well defined, and over all, the presentation is okay. The monophonic sound is a bit noisy but workable, and there is no captioning.

After appearing in a 1941 remake, *Whistling in the Dark*, Red Skelton went on to make two more films with the same character, a radio mystery show star, and all three MGM movies are available in the Warner Home Video *Archive Collection* set, **Red Skelton Whistling Collection** (UPC#883316257838, \$30). Each full screen black-and-white film appears on a separate platter and comes with a trailer selling Skelton's comedic skills. On all three, the monophonic sound is passable and there is no captioning.

Skelton's first starring role, *Whistling in the Dark* is an effective and comically streamlined reworking of the original premise. Conrad Veidt is the villain, a con man who is bilking little old ladies and needs to devise a 'perfect murder' when his group is named in one little old lady's will only after the death of her nephew. He proactively asks his men to kidnap Skelton's character, and also abduct the two female co-stars on his program, played by Ann Rutherford and Virginia Grey, as motivation. Skelton's character does come up with a few MacGyver-like contraptions to help him get out of the mess, such as somehow turning a radio into a two-way telephone, and running 78 minutes, the narrative is brisk enough to accommodate the humor and the many unlikelyhoods. Tighter and more focused on comedy than the first film, the movie also benefits from Skelton's clowning, which is relatively subdued compared to subsequent performances, but brightens up the proceedings effectively. Eve Arden and Rags Ragland co-star. The picture is pretty much spotless, with smooth contrasts.

There isn't much of a mystery in the 1942 *Whistling in Dixie*, because you find out right away who the villains are, but the story has its amusements. Rutherford returns with Skelton, as the two characters travel on a vacation to assist a friend in Georgia who is worried that her boyfriend has been murdered. There is a cranky Confederate War veteran (there were a couple of them around in those days) and a nasty reference about the Japanese, but the film is mostly on good behavior, and has the same kind of MacGyver-like moments as the first film, peppering some amusing slapstick fight sequences and other character conflicts. Ragland also returns from the first film, playing twins, which adds to the humor. At one point the heroes are trapped in a vault. There is a drainpipe near the floor, and they whistle to a parrot through the pipe, an activity that eventually leads to their rescue. However, while they are still trapped, the vault begins to fill with water and the filmmakers apparently neglected to cover or otherwise care about the pipe at that point, because the room fills up and the hole is somehow no longer there. Running 74 minutes, Guy Kibbee and George Bancroft co-star. The picture has some minor speckling and a little grain, but is generally in fine condition.

The third film, *Whistling in Brooklyn*, from 1943, has the best narrative and a slightly larger budget, along with an expanded 87-minute running time. When an anonymous writer leads the police to several murder scenes, it is surmised that the writer is a serial killer, and after a few coincidences, the jittery police come to believe that Skelton's character is the murderer. He, Rutherford's character, and Ragland's character, who is now his driver, go on the run and try to find the real villain. Those who are knowledgeable in the formats of such features will have the villain spotted before the opening credits are finished, but unlike *Dixie*, the killer remains hidden for as long as possible. The finale has several extensively staged slapstick fight sequences, as well as an elaborate and entertaining baseball sequence involving the Brooklyn Dodgers, several of whom appear in the film. On the other hand, and unlike the first two movies, there is never any whistling. The picture has fewer speckles than *Dixie*, but is not as pristine as the first film.

Western remake

In our review of the fine Allied Artists 1954 black-and-white western, **The Desperado** (Aug 16), we pointed out that even the companies turning out lower budget product had to up their game to compete with television. The performances and the story were a step above the usual formula western action film because they had to be for the movie to survive the changing market. Well, in 1958, Allied Artists remade **Desperado** as **Cole Younger, Gunfighter**, which has been released by Warner Home Video as an *Archive Collection* title (UPC#883316715338, \$22), and the competition with television being even more intense, not only is the film in color, but it is in Cinemascope, and has been letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback. Running 79 minutes, the plot is the same. A young man is framed for the murder of a lawman and doesn't even know it, thinking that he is only on the run for lesser crimes. He meets an established outlaw of sorts, but both men have decent hearts and so they bond in spite of themselves, and continually help one another out of tight fixes. The film builds to a very entertaining trial sequence (charmingly staged in a school house) and ends on a satisfying, upbeat note. Like the earlier film, the cast is hardly stellar, including Frank Lovejoy, James Best, Jan Merlin and Abby Dalton, but the performances are affecting and earnest, and the film basically has no real downside. **Desperado** is a slightly better film—both the performances and the story beats are a little bit sharper—but **Cole Younger** is still an enjoyable and successful entertainment.

The color transfer is adequate. The colors aren't rich, and the image isn't always crisp, but there are no outright flaws in the presentation, just mildly faded hues and weaker contrasts from time to time. The monophonic sound is okay and there is no captioning.

Widescreen western

Stewart Granger is a former gunslinger who returns to his homestead to settle down and mend his relationship with his son in **Gun Glory**, a 1957 MGM production released by Warner Home Video as an *Archive Collection* title (UPC#883316213087, \$18). He has an uneasy relationship with his neighbors, and tensions rise when a cattleman backed by more gunslingers wants to run a herd through the valley and spoil the farming land. Toward the climax of the 89-minute feature, the logistics stop making sense. It takes the hero a very long time to get to a strategic point, but no time at all to return from it, while other characters also seem to get back and forth a lot more quickly. The timing on that aspect of the narrative never really makes sense. Otherwise, however, the film is quite appealing. The gunfights are exciting, the cast is enjoyable, and the film's emotional conflicts are moderately complex. Directed by Roy Rowland, Chill Wills tries very hard to act, playing the town's preacher, and Rhonda Fleming, James Gregory and Steve Rowland are also featured.

The widescreen cinematography also adds to the film's entertainment. Letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback, the color transfer is lovely, the image is sharp and fleshtones are accurate. There is nothing overly dynamic about the widescreen compositions, but the basic majesty of the Cinemascope framing is often difficult to resist. The monophonic sound is fairly strong and the mix is enjoyable—Granger's spurs are constantly clanking as he walks. There is no captioning, and an earnest trailer is included.

Back when Greece was solvent

A really, really bad melodrama with fun movie stars and some nice European sightseeing, the 1963 MGM production, **In the Cool of the Day**, has been released by Warner Home Video as an *Archive Collection* title (UPC#883316449400, \$22). Directed by Robert Stevens, Peter Finch—not so much fun—is a literary editor or something that doesn't require him to do too much except go to a couple of parties, and Angela Lansbury—quite a bit of fun—is his bitter, icy, just-nasty-for-the-heck-of-it wife. A young and confused but quite attractive Jane Fonda, before she understood the art of choosing good scripts, is the wife of one of the editor's friends. Even though Fonda has no idea what she is doing—not because she's a bad actress, but because her character is absurd—she's cute as a button and quite magnetic. She has a number of mysterious, unspoken ailments that make her skittish. But she and Finch end up traveling together through Greece and eventually, after the endless 88-minute film is almost over, kissing and waking up under the same sheets. Then she gets pneumonia and dies. Whoops, spoiled the ending. Sorry.

Well, all of the Greek locations look terrific. The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback. Contrasts are weak and the image is a little soft at times. Hues are reasonably accurate but not exceptionally fresh. The monophonic sound is passable. Francis Chagrin's musical score was just Greek enough to have us running back to the **Never on Sunday** soundtrack album for a fix. And the title song is performed by Nat King Cole, which makes the film seem way more promising than it turns out to be. There is no captioning, and a trailer that tries to sell the film as something steamier has also been included.

Globe trotting romantic comedy

Globe trotting to China, New York and the Amazon (without leaving Hollywood, of course), Clark Gable stars as an ace newsreel photographer in the 1938 MGM production, **Too Hot to Handle**, a Warner Home Video *Archive Collection* title (UPC#883316127254, \$18). Walter Pidgeon is his chief rival, and Myrna Loy is a pilot that they are also competing for. Gable's character gets himself into trouble by staging shots and the problems escalate. The film has solid star power, some very humorous moments (Gable's antics dressed in a native bird costume are especially funny), several well-staged action sequences, and glamour galore to sustain its 105-minute running time quite effectively. The ethical standards that the characters follow are fairly lax, and while that is also meant to be comical, it can impede one's affection for them, but otherwise, the film is full of grand entertainment.

The full screen black-and-white picture is in fine condition, with minimal wear, and the audio track is reasonably clean. There is no captioning. A cute trailer (especially surprising from trailer-challenged MGM) is included that looks like a pretend newsreel.

Deadliest catch

In Howard Hawks' 1932 First National production, **Tiger Shark**, a Warner Home Video *Archive Collection* release (UPC#883316221938, \$18), Edward G. Robinson is an immigrant fishing boat owner who is awkward around women, unlike his capable and confident mate, played by Richard Arlen. Robinson's character ends up marrying the daughter of one of his sailors, to protect her after the man is killed by sharks, and they develop an affection for one another to a point, but the girl and the mate are more suited for each other and a nasty triangle develops.

Running 77 minutes, the film displays both the best and the worst of Hawks. The action in the fishing and shark scenes is superbly executed and quite exciting, while the 'male bonding' segments can feel rather maudlin. The specific narrative is also quite a common one, lessening the surprises the film may hold. On the whole, however, the better aspects of the film outweigh its drawbacks. The story's pacing is well executed, the performances are enjoyable, and the movie turns a somewhat mundane profession into an exciting adventure, long before reality TV caught on to the possibilities. Zita Johnson co-stars.

The full screen black-and-white picture is in adequate condition. The image is soft and grainy at times, with scattered scratches and speckles but no significant problems. The monophonic sound is a bit rickety but workable, and there is no captioning.

Letterboxed **Samson**

A delightful 1960 Italian muscleman movie, *Son of Samson*, has been given a really nice, letterboxed picture transfer on the RetroMedia release **Son of Samson and Son of Cleopatra** (UPC#014381285222, \$15). The source material has a few splices and other markings, but colors are fresh and the letterboxing, which has an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback, is thrilling, especially since the only way any modern viewer is familiar with the film would be through cropped presentations on Saturday afternoon TV. Set in ancient Egypt, Mark Forest plays the title character, although he is called 'Maciste,' as so many Italian muscleman heroes seem to be.

The Persians are taking over Egypt and enslaving the people with the help of a few magic potions. The hero helps the slaves rebel and also helps the good Egyptian pharaoh get out from the clutches of the hot evil Persian temptress. What makes the 87-minute film so enjoyable, however, is how enthusiastically it embraces the muscleman conventions. The hero picks up a stone column or a boulder and takes out four or five Persian soldiers with a single toss. He stops moving walls from moving. He fights crocodiles. And, since it's so sunny out, he walks around everywhere with his shirt off. There is also some rudimentary but satisfying gore that probably didn't make it onto those Saturday afternoon broadcasts. The narrative is somewhat confused and jumbled, but the film is never dull and is totally fun from beginning to end. The monophonic sound is adequate.

Presented in cropped format on the flip side of the disc, the 1964 Italian production, *Son of Cleopatra*, is not as splashy, although it makes a decent double bill with the Egyptian settings. Mark Damon plays a desert rebel who makes life difficult for the Roman rulers, as they come up with various schemes to capture him. The 104-minute film is not a muscleman

movie, but it has plenty of action, and even more gore than *Samson*. The cropping and scanning is annoying when you know what to look for, but it really isn't all that noticeable most of the time. The colors are reasonably fresh, although the image looks somewhat worn and soft, and has its share of wear. The sound is workable and the musical score is engaging. Neither movie is captioned, and a trailer for *Samson* is included.

Spinoff zombies

The first full season of the **Walking Dead** spinoff released by AMC and Anchor Bay Entertainment, **Fear the Walking Dead The Complete Second Season** (UPC# 013132648446, \$70), begins on the open sea, which is a welcome variation from the land-based terrors of the regular series and demonstrates that you really aren't safe no matter where you go. That takes up about a quarter of the season, and then the show shifts to a substantially more metaphorical location, Mexico, as the characters go through the usual patterns of separation and reunification while finding different havens that provide short term respite, but never complete or enduring safety. The show manages to say more interesting things about the potential for violence in civilized human beings when civilization collapses, and the strength of familial and romantic bonds, but it is also a harsher and less forgiving drama—not that the original **Walking Dead** is all that forgiving—and where the first, brief season provided some genuine variety, **Second Season** just offers more of the thrills, more of the unique psychological and moral explorations, and more of the intense drama that fans will gladly cluster around and feed from, even as others choose to avoid the horror.

Fifteen episodes are spread across four platters, running a total of 650 minutes, and each platter has a 'Play All' option. The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.78:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback. The color transfer is accurate, and the show mostly has a dusty, drained look to it. The 5.1-channel Dolby Digital sound is well worth amplifying, with directional thrills and a satisfying dimensionality. There are optional English and Spanish subtitles.

Like the badly designed **Walking Dead** DVDs, commentary tracks for the individual episodes are hidden on each platter, and can only be found if the viewer avoids the 'Play All' option and selects the individual episodes. If an episode has a commentary, the option to activate the commentary comes up. If the episode doesn't have a commentary, it just starts playing. If you wish to avoid this frustration, here is a guide—on the first platter, all four episodes have commentaries; on the second platter, the first three of the four episodes have commentaries; there are no commentaries on the third or fourth platters. The talks feature various members of the cast and crew. Some are bland conversations about the experience of the shoot, while others contain interesting production details ("There's so much water work in this episode, and there was actually, when the cut came in, there was a lot of worry and consternation because there was so much green screen. I was getting calls from the network about the fact that the boat wasn't moving, and I had to remind everyone that it wasn't an actual boat.") or character insights ("That's something I was really into from a personal standpoint, the themes of where lulls of protection start to shift within the apocalypse, and also in life. Kind of like, at what point, in growing up, you start to want to protect your parents, and at what point in just general threat and danger you, as a child, want to shield your parents in the way they've always shielded you. To me, it's very heartbreaking instincts, because their innocence is sort of dissolved completely, I think.").

A fifth platter contains a bevy of special features. Unfortunately it also retains the same poor menu design that the regular **Walking Dead** collections have. There are 103 minutes of really good production featurettes, systematically covering highlights from each episode, but there is no 'Play All' option, so you have to select each of thirty separate segments individually. The segments go into many details about the staging of stunts, the creation of the makeup effects, the ever more ubiquitous use of drone cameras, and the primary narrative and character dynamics. The pieces are definitely worthwhile if your thumb doesn't get tired. There is, fortunately, a single 8-minute collection of deleted scenes from a number of the episodes, which add small bits of character embellishment but were sensibly excised. A 54-minute Q&A in front of an audience with an extensive collection of cast members and a couple of crewmembers is presented that was staged before the season was broadcast. There is not too much of value in the content of their talks, but it is rewarding to see the real personalities of the actors and actresses. Interestingly, an actor who is often the most difficult to get a straight answer from on the panel is one of the few major characters who does not make it to the end of the season, and his death seems unusually abrupt, as it is only revealed in a flashback.

Finally, there is a 15-minute short film, *Fear the Walking Dead Flight 462*, which is broken into installments for the Internet, but tells a complete and harrowing story about a zombie outbreak aboard an airliner as civilization on the ground almost literally retracts before the eyes of the passengers. It also contains a brief, but well-executed romance, and is an excellent example of the potency and endless flexibility of the **Walking Dead** premise.

Divorce

Sick of her nasty and selfish ways, a lawyer played by Herbert Marshall divorces his wife, played by Mary Astor, in the 1938 drama, **Woman against Woman** a Warner Home Video *Archive Collection* release (UPC#888574475062, \$22). He meets a much nicer prospect, played by Virginia Bruce, and marries her, but the two face social ostracization when he returns from his honeymoon and attempts to carry on as usual. Astor's character also has custody of their daughter, and attempts to manipulate Marshall's character through her. Running 61 minutes, the film explores what was at the time a sensitive and exotic topic, and even more interestingly, it does so with sympathy—unlike **The Women**, it is the jilted wife who is the villain. Astor plays her part with great, steely flair, and the film justifies the breaking up of the family for the pursuit of true happiness. The actual melodrama is somewhat predictable, but the movie's star power makes for sufficient entertainment, especially because of the systematic way in which the movie explores the different angles of its touchy topic.

The full screen black-and-white picture has a regular presence of stray speckles and scratches, but is sharp, with well defined contrasts. The monophonic sound is a bit aged but workable, and there is no captioning. A reasonably straightforward trailer—something unusual when it came to MGM—is also included.

DVD letters

To the Editor:

In your review of **Ghostbusters Answer the Call**, you mistakenly referred to Kate McKinnon as 'Jane.' Kate McKinnon is a name with which you need to familiarize yourself. She has already won an Emmy last September for her portrayal of Hillary Clinton on **Saturday Night Live**. She is amazingly versatile and will be a force to reckon with in comedy for years to come.

—Malcolm Woodworth
Indianapolis IN

(Our bad.)

DVD News

IN MEMORIAM: David Goldstein, one of the key figures in bringing letterboxed movies to home video, was killed in a car crash on June 1, 2017. David had been retired for more than a decade, but while he was at 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment, he nurtured their laser disc program and, along with just a couple of individuals at the other home video companies, and a few more at the specialty labels, was responsible for identifying and promoting the link between the quality and versatility of laser video discs and the enthusiasm of cinephile collectors. This legacy lives on today in the elaborate Blu-ray collector's editions and 4K Blu-ray releases that are automatically considered the top-of-the-line catalog offerings at every major motion picture company and home video distributor. David was also a wonderful human being, with a rich heart, a warm sense of humor and something that is very rare, a genuine interest in people regardless of their background or agenda. He will be greatly missed.

CRITERION CORNER: The Criterion Collection's release of David Lynch's **Twin Peaks Fire Walk with Me** will include 90 minutes of deleted and alternate takes from the film, assembled by Lynch; an interview with Sheryl Lee; and interviews from 2014 by Lynch with Lee, Ray Wise, and Grace Zabriskie. Stanley Kubrick's **Barry Lyndon** will have a documentary featuring cast and crew interviews as well as excerpts from a 1976 audio interview with Kubrick; a program about the film's groundbreaking visuals, featuring focus puller Douglas Milsome and gaffer Lou Bogue, as well as excerpts from a 1980 interview with cinematographer John Alcott; a program about Academy Award-winning production designer Ken Adam with historian Christopher Frayling; an interview with editor Anthony Lawson; a French television interview from 1976 with Oscar-winning costume designer Ulla-Britt Söderlund; an interview with critic Michel Ciment; an interview with actor Leon Vitali about the 5.1-channel surround soundtrack, which he co-supervised; and a piece analyzing the fine-art-inspired aesthetics of the film with art curator Adam Eaker. Olivier Assayas' **Personal Shopper** will feature an interview with Assayas and a 2016 festival press conference featuring members of the film's cast and crew, including Kristen Stewart. Agnieszka Smoczyńska's **The Lure** will have a program about the making of the film, featuring interviews Smoczyńska, actors Marta Mazurek and Michalina Olszańska, screenwriter Robert Bolesto, Kijowski, composers Barbara and Zuzanna Wroński, sound designer Marcin Lenarczyk, and choreographer Kaya Kolodziejczyk; deleted scenes; and **Aria Diva** (2007) and **Viva Maria!** (2010), two short films directed by Smoczyńska. Carl Th. Dreyer's **Vampyr** will include a commentary from 2008 featuring film scholar Tony Rayns; **Carl Th. Dreyer**, a 1966 documentary by Jørgen Roos chronicling Dreyer's career; a video essay by scholar Casper Tybjerg on Dreyer's influences in creating **Vampyr**; and a radio broadcast from 1958 of Dreyer reading an essay about filmmaking.

MORE GOOD, NOTHING BAD OR UGLY: Kino Lorber Incorporated will be releasing an ultimate five-platter presentation of Sergio Leone's **The Good, The Bad and the Ugly**. There will be two Blu-ray platters and three DVD platters, and the set will include a 4K transfer of the

Original U.S. Theatrical Cut available for the first time in HD, a commentary by film historian Tim Lucas, **Trailers From Hell** with Ernest Dickerson, a restored 1967 UA Logo, an alternate scene: The Optical Flip, a deleted Scene 1: Skeletons in the Desert, a deleted Scene 2: Extended Torture Scene, **The Good The Bad & the Ugly** animated behind-the-scenes image gallery, a posters & lobby cards animated image gallery, Sergio Leone Westerns: Original Theatrical Trailers, Italian Dolby Digital 2.0 Mono, English DTS-HD MA 5.1 Audio, a 4K transfer of the Extended Cut, a newly Restored 2.0 Mono Audio, a commentary by film historian Richard Schickel, a commentary by historian Christopher Frayling, **Leone's West: Making Of Documentary, Il Maestro: Ennio Morricone and The Good The Bad & the Ugly, The Leone Style** featurette, **The Man Who Lost The Civil War:** Civil War documentary, **Reconstruction The Good The Bad & the Ugly**, a deleted Scene 1: Extended Tuco Torture scene, a deleted Scene 2: The Socorro Sequence - A Reconstruction, Vignette 1: Uno Due Tre, Vignette 2: Italian Lunch, Vignette 3: New York Accent, Vignette 4: Gun in Holster, the original U.S. Theatrical Trailer, and the original French Theatrical Trailer.

LATEST SILENTS: The latest silent film releases on Blu-ray and DVD from Grapevine Video include **Brothers, Billy Dooley Comedies #2** and **The Stampede/Letters of Fire**. Sound releases include a Blu-ray and a DVD release of **The Mystery Squadron** and DVD releases of **Lady Possessed** and **Lost Jungle**.

ARCHIVES LATEST: The latest Blu-ray titles announced by Screen Archives and Twilight Time include **Wild Bill, Play Dirty, The Captain from Castile**, and **The Pirates of Blood River**.

ARCHIVES UPATE: **Queen of the South Season 1** has been released as part of the 20th Century Fox *Cinema Archives Collection*.

ARCHIVE UPDATE: The following titles were recently released as part of the Warner Home Video *Archive Collection*—**Blood Alley** (Blu-ray), **Looking for Comedy in the Muslim World, The 100 Season 4** (Blu-ray), **The Sea Chase** (Blu-ray), and **Where the Boys Are** (Blu-ray).

NEW IN BLU: The following titles were recently released on Blu-ray—**The Lost City of Z, Song to Song** (Broad Green); **Accidental Exorcist, Bat People, Billy Jack Complete Collection, The Man from Planet X, Scorchy, Sex Doll, A Shock to the System, Species, 2017 Stanley Cup Champions, Windows, WWE: Fight Owens Fight - The Kevin Owens Story (Cinedigm); L'Argent, Lost in America, Roberto Rossellini's War Trilogy, Stalker (Criterion);** And you thought there is never a girl online?, **The Boy and the Beast Kuma Mika Complete Series, Hyouka Complete Series, Record of Lodoss War, Three Leaves Three Colors Complete Series (Goldhil); Girls Season 6 (HBO); Drone, Freeway, The Hunting Party, The Last of the Finest, The Lemon Drop Kid, My Favorite Brunette, Night People, No Man's Land, Road to Bali, Road to Rio, Shalako, Silkwood, Star Crystal, Star Slammer, Who's Crazy? (Kino); Black Butterfly, Their Finest, Warlock Collection (Lionsgate); Another Evil (MPI); A Quiet Passion (Music Box); Don't Look in the Basement/Don't Look in the Basement 2 (MVD); Contemporary Colors (Oscilloscope); Ghost in the Shell, Masterpiece Mystery: Grantchester: The Complete Third Season (Paramount); Resident Evil Vendetta, Smurfs The Lost Village (Sony); The Boss Baby, Gifted (Fox); Drone, Emerald City Season 1, The Expanse Season 2, The Fate of the Furious, The Magicians Season 2, The Promise, Spark A Space Tail, The Zookeeper's Wife (Universal); Kong Skull Island, Unforgettable (Warner); Buster's Mal Heart, The Final Master (Well Go)**

NEW IN 4K: The following titles were recently issued in 4K—**Song to Song (Broad Green); Ghost in the Shell (Paramount); Resident Evil Vendetta, Smurfs The Lost Village (Sony); The Boss Baby (Fox); The Fate of the Furious, King Kong (Universal), Kong Skull Island (Warner)**

DVD and LD Ads

(All DVD and LD Ads are 50 cents a word. Deadline is 5 business days before the end of the month. Address all ads: DVD & LD Ads, The DVD-Laser Disc Newsletter, PO Box 420, East Rockaway NY 11518-0420.)

We are happy to announce the availability of our latest book, *DVDs by Douglas Pratt*, as a .pdf file on CD-ROM for \$15.95, plus \$3 s&h (\$6 s&h overseas). It contains more than 14,000 reviews of DVDs and Blu-rays, including those that appeared in last month's issue. Current subscribers to The DVD-Laser Disc Newsletter can receive a copy of the .pdf file via Internet download for \$7.95. Just write to The DVD-Laser Disc Newsletter at PO Box 420, East Rockaway NY 11518, or email us at DPratt@DVDLaser.com, or fax a request to (516)594-9307.

BACK ISSUES AVAILABLE A complete collection of DVD-Laser Disc Newsletter back issues in PDF format, spanning from Sep 84 to last month, is available on two double-layer DVD-ROM platters for \$64.95, plus \$8 shipping (\$12 shipping overseas). Title indexes are included on each platter. Write to The DVD-Laser Disc Newsletter at PO Box 420, East Rockaway NY 11518, or email us at DPratt@DVDLaser.com, or fax a request to (516)594-9307.

RARE LDs for sale on E-bay! New titles posted every week.

Coming Attractions

The following select DVD titles are promised for the near future. How many of them will show up is never a certainty. Logical subdivisions appear unmarked within each division. Titles which did not appear on last month's list are marked with an arrow (→) and are added to the bottom of subdivisions so that the longest awaited titles appear at the top within each grouping:

From Acorn:

Murdoch Mysteries Season 10

The Heart Guy Season 1

Loch Ness

Walks with My Dog

Hamish Macbeth

Delicious

Decline and Fall

From Allied:

Concrete

From Altered Innocence:

Baby Bump

→A Closer Walk with Thee

From Arrow:

→The Ghoul

From Bill Zebub:

→A Devil's Wind

From Breaking Glass:

→Kept Boy

→Jesus

From Broad Green:

Amelia 2.0

→WTF: World

Thumbwrestling

Federation

→Day of Days

→Fight the Good Fight

→Buena Vista Social Club

Adios

From Buena Vista:

Guardians of the Galaxy

V.2

→Grey's Anatomy Season

13

→Star Wars Rebels

Season 3

→Pirates Of The

Caribbean: Dead Men

Tell No Tales

→Spider-Man Homecoming

From Candy Factory:

Wichita

Game Changers

→Face 2 Face

→Bender

From CAV:

Amsterdamned

The Flesh

Spider

The Fox with a Velvet Tail

→The Otherworld

→Snapshot

→Red Roses of Passion

→Sunny/More Than

Passion

→The Intrusion

→Throat...12 Years Later

From Cheezy Flicks:

→Convoy of Girls

→Elsa Fraulein SS

→Nathalie: Escape From

Hell

From Cinedigm:

Mysterious Mr. M (serial)

Wakefield

House on Willow Street

Hickock

Digimon Adventure Tri

Determination

→Chesapeake Shores

Season 1

→WWE: Kurt Angle - The

Essential Collection

→Police Story Season 2

→Ironsides Season 4

→Band Aid

→A Dark Song

→Midnight Fright Show The

Master Collection

From Criterion:

Othello (Welles)

Hopscotch

Meantime

La Poison

The Breaking Point

David Lynch The Art Life

Rebecca

The Piano Teacher

Certain Women

Festival

→Barry Lyndon

→Personal Shopper

→Twin Peaks Fire Walk

with Me

→Vampyr

→The Lure

From Dekkoo:

→I'm Fine Season 1

From eOne:

→Maurice

→Heal the Living

From Film Movement:

After the Storm

→Hana-Bi

→Amnesia

→Inseparables

→1944

From Gravitas:

→Hearing Is Believing

→Broken Mile

From Godzilla:

→Shin Godzilla

From HBO:

Crashing Season 1

→Veep Season 6

→Silicon Valley Season 4

→The Wizard of Lies

From Icarus:

→Chantal Ackerman by

Chantal Ackerman

From Indican:

On War

Starcrossed

Shanghai Red

Love Me Still

From IndiePix:

Roaring Abyss

La Vie de Jean-Marie

→A Blast

→Mouton

From Kino:

Prizzi's Honor

→Obit.

→One Dark Night

→Notes on Blindness

→Milton Glaser To Inform

and Delight

→Sin Alas

→Betting on Zero

→Beggars of Life

→Barton Fink

→Duel in the Sun

→Clash

→Eva Hesse

→The Good Son

→The Devil's Brigade

→Frankie and Johnny

→Clambake

→The Good The Bad and

the Ugly

→The Bureau Season 3

→Variété

→Viva Activa

→Love Sweat & Tears

→Sonny Rollins -

Saxophone Colossus

Son of Paleface

From Lionsgate:

The Lovers

The Circle

The Exception

Ash vs. Evil Dead Season 2

→The Dinner

→Undercover Grandpa

→The Hunter's Prayer

→The Wall

→How to Be a Latin Lover

→Blind

→Showing Roots

→Kill Switch

→The White Princess

→Black Sails Season 4

→A Family Man

→Inconceivable

→Dean

→First Kill

→It Comes at Night

→The Hatred

From Magnolia:

Peter and the Farm

XX

I Love You Both

2:22

Person to Person

From Michael Saul:

→The Daydreamer's

Notebook

From Mill Creek:

The Secret World of Alex

Mack Complete Series

Blackbeard (miniseries)

The Poseidon Adventure

(miniseries)

Mary Higgins Clark -

Original TV Mysteries - 3

Film Collection

The Sheena Collection

(Original Movie, Complete

Series, and Bonus 1955

Episodes)

Jumanji Complete Animated

Series

Divorce American

Style/How to Save a

Marriage and Ruin Your

Life

From Mniibus:

Inseparables

From Monarch:

Violent Stuff The Movie

→Pitching Tents

From Monterey:

→I Am Battle Comic

From MPI:

Don't Knock Twice

Wolves

Kiki

→Chuck

→Wolves

From MVD**Entertainment:**

Hitler's Last Train

The Black Room

Saisho Suzuki's The Taisho

Trilogy

Pulse

Stormy Monday (reviewed

in this issue)

New Battles without Honor

and Humanity

Jane's Addiction - Ritual De

Lo Habitual Alive At 25

Gospel According To Al

Green

Portlandia Season 7

Glamour Dolls

→Portlandia Season 7

→Convict

→Effects

→Lycan

→Devil's Domain

→The Love of a Woman

→The Big Knife

From Orchard:

→Take Me

From Paramount:

Shimmer and Shine:

Magical Pets of Zahramay

Falls

Bull Season 1

Billions Season 1

NCIS New Orleans Season

3

NCIS Los Angeles Season

8

→NCIS Season 14

Blue Bloods Season 7

Elementary Season 5

Hawaii Five-O Season 7

Criminal Minds Season 12

Baywatch

→Blaze and the Monster

Machines: Wild Wheels

Escape to Animal Island

→Tales of the Teenage

Mutant Ninja Turtles

Wanted: Bebop &

Rocksteady

From Right Stuf:

Mobile Suit Gundam The

Origin: Chronicle of Char

and Sayla

From Sony:

Hardcore Zombie

S.W.A.T. Under Siege

→Hired Gun

→Boone The Bounty

Hunter

→Girl on the Edge

→Blacklist Season 4

→Executor

→The Hollow One

→Teletubbies Follow the

Leader

→Starship Troopers Traitor

of Mars

→Never Let Go

From Strand:

→The Ornithologist

From Time-Life:

→The Carol Burnett Show:

The Best of Harvey

Korman

From TLA:

4 Days

→He's with Me Seasons 1

& 2

→Three The Series

→Center of My World

From Fox:

An index to the reviews contained in this issue**DVDs**

Cole Younger, Gunfighter p8
 A Covenant with Death p7
 Dancing Lady p4
 Displacement p2
 Doberman Cop p7
 Fear the Walking Dead The Complete Second Season p9
 Gun Glory p8
 In the Cool of the Day p8
 Life of Significant Soil p3
 Ransom p7
 Ransom! p7
 Red Skelton Whistling Collection p8
 Son of Samson and Son of Cleopatra p9
 Stormy Monday p2
 Tiger Shark p9
 Too Hat to Handle p9
 Underworld Blood Wars p4
 Whistling in the Dark p8
 (Whistling in Brooklyn) p8
 (Whistling in Dixie) p8
 (Whistling in the Dark) p8

Woman against Woman p10

BDs

Beauty and the Beast p2
 Dheepan p3
 Doberman Cop p7
 Holiday in Spain p5
 The Hunting Party p3
 Kong Skull Island p1
 The Mad Magician in 3D p4
 The Manchurian Candidate p5
 A Midsummer Night's Dream p6
 The Night Evelyn Came Out of the Grave p8
 Ophelia p6
 The Red Queen Kills Seven Times p8
 S.O.B. p6
 Seven Days in May p5
 Shalako p6
 Spencer's Mountain p6
 Stormy Monday p2
 The Three Stooges in 3D p4
 Zaza p7

Current Attractions

The following titles recently appeared for the first time:

Alien Arrival (Lionsgate)
 Alive and Kicking (Magnolia)
 American Fable (MPI)
 Another Evil (MPI)*
 Beaches (Lionsgate)
 The Beast (Mill Creek)
 Before I Fall (Universal)
 Beyond the Darkness (CAV)
 Billy Jack Complete Collection (Cinedigm)*
 Birdy (Mill Creek)
 Black Butterfly (Lionsgate)
 Bloodrunners (Speakeasy)
 The Boss Baby (Fox)
 Bug Boy/Lover Boy (CAV)
 Buster's Mal Heart (Well Go)
 Colossal (Universal)
 Contemporary Colors (Oscilloscope)
 Coronet Blue The Complete Series (Kino)
 The Country Doctor (Icarus)
 The Daydreamer's Notebook (Michael Saul)
 Diana Queen of Hearts (Mill Creek)
 Diff'rent Strokes Season 6 (Cinedigm)*
 Displacement (Platform)*
 Do You Take This Man? (Breaking Glass)
 Dominion Creek (Acorn)
 Dragon Wars D-War (Mill Creek)
 Duck Dynasty: The Final Season - Last Call (Lionsgate)*
 800 Words Season 2 V.1 (Acorn)
 Emerald City Season 1 (Universal)
 The Expanse Season 2 (Universal)
 Facing Darkness (Virgil)
 The Fate of the Furious (Universal)
 The Final Master (Well Go)
 The First Churchills (Acorn)
 Fort Buchanan (Grasshopper)
 Free Fire (Lionsgate)
 Freeway (Kino)
 Gardens of Stone (Mill Creek)
 Ghost in the Shell (Paramount)
 Gifted (Fox)
 Girls Season 6 (HBO)
 Hearing Is Believing (Gravitas)
 The Hippopotamus (eOne)
 Homeland: Iraq Year Zero (Kino)
 The Horse Dancer (Lionsgate)
 The Hunting Party (Kino)
 Kansas vs. Darwin (Kino)*
 King Solomon's Mines (Mill Creek)
 Kong Skull Island (Warner)
 L'Argent (Criterion)
 The Last of the Finest (Kino)
 Legion of Brothers (Gravitas)
 LEGO® Scooby-Doo!: Blowout Beach Bash (Warner)
 The Lemon Drop Kid (Kino)
 Life of Significant Soul (Candy Factory)
 Llama Nation (Kino)*
 London Heist (Lionsgate)

The Lost City of Z (Broad Green)
 Lost in America (Criterion)
 Lust of the Vampire Girls (MVD)
 The Magicians Season 2 (Universal)
 Mali Blues (Icarus)
 Merlin (Mill Creek)
 The Missing Season 2 (Lionsgate)
 My Favorite Brunette (Kino)
 Night People (Kino)
 91 Bullets in a Minute (Indican)
 No Man's Land (Kino)
 Nocturne (Monarch)
 Norman: The Moderate Rise and Tragic Fall of a New York Fixer (Sony)
 The 100 Season 4 (Warner)
 Pray for Rain (Lionsgate)
 Pretty Little Liars Season 7 (Warner)
 The Promise (Universal)
 A Quiet Passion (Music Box)
 Rake Season 2 (Acorn)
 Resident Evil Vendetta (Sony)
 Road to Bali (Kino)
 Road to Rio (Kino)
 Roberto Rossellini's War Trilogy (Criterion)
 Sensation (Mnibus)
 Sex Doll (Cinedigm)
 Shakes the Clown (Mill Creek)
 Shalako (Kino)
 Shark Week Shark N' Awe Collection (Cinedigm)
 Silkwood (Kino)
 Sleeping Beauties (MVD)
 Smurfs The Lost Village (Sony)
 Songwriter (Mill Creek)
 Spark A Space Tail (Universal)*
 Stalker (Criterion)
 Star Crystal (Kino)
 Star Slammer (Kino)
 A Stork's Journey (Lionsgate)*
 T.J. Hooker Complete Series (Cinedigm)*
 Teen Wolf Season 6 V.1 (Fox)
 Their Finest (Lionsgate)
 Three Sisters (Icarus)
 Tom & Jerry Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory (Warner)
 Tommy's Honour (Lionsgate)
 The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson Johnny and Friends (Time-Life)
 Trust Fund (NA)*
 2017 Stanley Cup Champions (Cinedigm)*
 Ukraine on Fire (Cinema Libre)
 Under the Turban (Cinema Libre)
 Underground Season 2 (Sony)*
 Unforgettable (Warner)
 The Untouchables The Scarface Mob (Paramount)
 Wheels (Loaded Dice)*
 White Raven (Invincible)
 Who's Crazy? (Kino)*
 With Great Power The Stan Lee Story (Well Go)
 You Can't Escape Lithuania (TLA)
 The Zodiac Killer (MVD)

*Did not appear on last month's *Coming Attractions* listing