

## The Phantom's VAN DAMMAGE REPORT

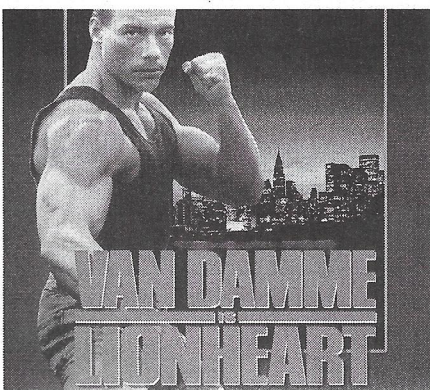
### MVD REWIND COLLECTION

(\$39.95 2-disc Blu-ray + DVD) 6/18

LIONHEART (1991) ♂♂1/2

D: Sheldon Lettich. Jean-Claude Van Damme, Deborah Rennard, Harrison Page, Lisa Pelikan, Ashley Johnson, Brian Thompson. 104 mins./110 mins.

Earlier titled both **A.W.O.L.** and **Wrong Bet**, **Lionheart** opens with our hero (who also receives a story credit), cast as Lyon, a soldier who deserts the French Foreign Legion to avenge the Stateside death of his drug-dealing brother. J-C arrives penniless in cold, cruel NYC but is soon rescued by street-fight promoter Joshua (Page, perhaps best remembered as the black militant in Russ Meyer's **Vixen!**) who steers him to ruthless blond martial-arts mogul Cynthia (Rennard) and her hulking bodyguard Russell (Thompson). J-C next journeys to warm, cruel L.A., where he participates in gladiatorial free-for-alls for the amusement of degenerate high-rollers while secretly turning his earnings over to his brother's widow Helene (Pelikan) and five-year-old daughter Nicole (Johnson), who supplies the pic with a marginal Kindergarten Kickboxer angle. J-C shows he's learned how to cry on cue and apparently taught the same tearful trick to the rest of the cast, resulting in more on-screen bawling seen in any actioner since **Cage**, when Reb Brown and Lou Ferrigno let the ocular moisture flow. The kickboxing choreography is first-rate, especially during J-C's climactic bout with an impressive kung-fu killer named Attila (Abdel Qissi), who's fond of literally breaking his opponents in half. MVD's Rewind Collection edition kicks in both the Original Theatrical Version and Extended Cut, the new making-of documentary **Lionheart: The Inside Story** featuring interviews with Van Damme, director Lettich, actor Page and more, the featurettes **Inside Lionheart with the Filmmakers and Cast** and **Lionheart: Behind the Fights**, an archival Lettich and Page track, interviews and featurettes, TV spots, photo gallery, trailer and collectible mini-posters. ♂



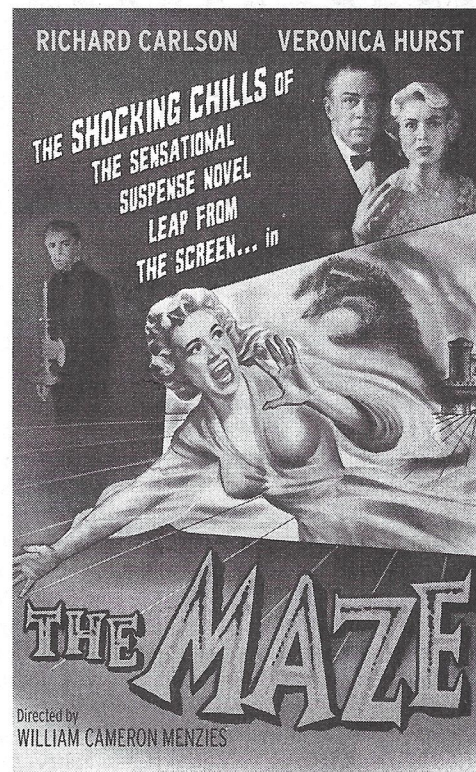
28 VideoScope

## The Phantom's JOY OF SETS

### FILM FINDS

Before he became horror-dom's gimmick guru and master of suspense, William Castle labored long as a contract director for producer Sam (Jungle Sam) Katzman at Monogram and, later, Columbia Pictures. Mill Creek Entertainment assembles an eight-pack of those early WC works with **The William Castle Western Collection: The Fastest Guns of the West** (2-disc DVD \$19.98). The set kicks off with the fun 1943 black-and-white B western **Klondike Kate**, repping a pre-**Detour** pairing of Tom Neal and Ann Savage, seen here in a far less toxic relationship, and packing the proceedings with a slew of bouncy original saloon tunes. The action segues to several color 1950s adventures highlighted by **Masterson of Kansas** (1954), a typically fictionalized but lively Dodge City account starring a strapping if small-voiced George Montgomery and easily stolen by underrated shifty character thesp James Griffith's portrayal of Doc Holiday as a smooth, supremely sicko sociopath. Two Indian-conflict capers, Robert Stack in **Conquest of Cochise** (1953) and Montgomery again in **Battle of Rogue River** (1954) supply their fair share of old-school action, as does the change-of-pace 1825 New Orleans-set **Duel on the Mississippi**, with Lex Barker and Patricia Medina. The manic **Jesse James vs. The Daltons** (1954), lensed in 3-D, hurls all manner of actors and objects at the camera and features a couple of surprisingly brutal moments. **The Gun That Won the West** (1955) and the oddball contemporary non-western **Uranium Boom** (1956), both starring Dennis Morgan, complete the essential octet.

In other oater news, Film Movement Classics issues a deluxe 50th Anniversary Restoration edition of a spaghetti western giant, the snow-bound and ultimately ultra-bleak **The Great Silence** (\$39.95 Blu-ray), a major inspiration for Quentin Tarantino's equally icy **The Hateful Eight** (VS #99). Jean-Louis Trintignant stars as Silence, a mute gunslinger who protects a motley band of wanted men and women from blood-thirsty bounty hunters led by Loco (the ever-flamboyant Klaus Kinski at his cruelest). Extras include an appreciation of **The Great Silence** auteur Sergio Corbucci by filmmaker/fan Alex (Repo Man) Cox, a 1968 documentary **Western, Italian Style**, two alternate endings, original Italian and English-language versions, theatrical trailer and **Ending the Silence**, a new essay by film critic Simon Abrams. Kino Lorber, meanwhile, likewise releases a bonus-laden Blu-ray of an even earlier pasta prairie pioneer, Sergio Leone's crossover hit **Fistful of Dollars**, the film that made American ex-pat Clint Eastwood an international star and spread the spaghetti western craze Stateside.



3-D or Not 3-D? Kino answers in the affirmative with its gala new release of William Cameron (Invaders from Mars) Menzies' offbeat 1953 three-dimensional chiller **The Maze** (\$34.95), starring Richard (It Came from Outer Space) Carlson and Veronica Hurst in a macabre tale centering on a strange figure rumored to dwell in a gothic castle in the Scottish Highlands. Restored in association with The Film Foundation (with a special thanks to Martin Scorsese) from the Paramount Archive's original camera negative and scanned in 4K with three-channel stereophonic sound by Eckhard Buttner, Kino's Blu-ray arrives complete with a group audio commentary by 3-D expert Bob Furmanek, prolific author and sometime *'Scope* contributor Tom Weaver, film exhibition historian Dr. Robert J. Kiss and soundtrack scholar David Schecter, along with a new interview with costar Hurst, and the original 3-D trailer.

Criterion Collection resurrects a long sought-after title with Frank Borzage's moody Southern gothic **Moonrise** (1948), based on the Theodore Strauss novel and starring Dane Clark as Danny, a perpetually bullied angry young man who can't escape the taint of his father's hanging death. Gail Russell, Ethel Barrymore and Rex Ingram costar. Extras on Criterion's 4k restoration include a conversation with Borzage biographer Herve Dumont and film historian Peter Cowie, along with an essay by critic Phillip Kemp. Criterion likewise rolls out the extras-enriched Blu-ray carpet for Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger's 1946 celestial fantasy **A Matter of Life and Death** (aka **Stairway to Heaven**) and John Schlesinger's Times Square-set 1969 classic **Midnight Cowboy** (\$39.95 each), starring Dustin Hoffman and Jon Voight.