

to suggest an automated, austere world. It's a classically Godardian mix of poetry, philosophy, film history, pop culture, politics, and romanticism, a minor sci-fi movie classic, and a major title in Godard's filmography. Presented in a 4K restoration, extras include audio commentary by film historian Tim Lucas, an introduction by film historian Colin MacCabe, and an interview with Karina. Highly recommended. (S. Axmaker)

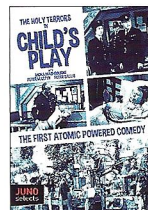
Blackmail ★★½
Kino Lorber, 85 min., not rated,
DVD: \$19.99, Blu-ray: \$29.99



Alfred Hitchcock made a confident and impressive transition from silent cinema to the sound era with this 1929 thriller. Based on the titular play by Charles Bennett, *Blackmail* stars Czech-born actress Anny Ondra as Alice White, a young woman who kills a man in self-defense. John Longden stars as her fiancé, Frank Webber, a police detective who tries to protect Alice when she's blackmailed by a petty criminal. Begun as a silent film, it was also reworked for the new sound technology, becoming England's first all-talkie feature. The striking dialogue-free opening sequence was shot and edited as a silent film with music and sound effects added later, but Hitchcock

experimented with sound for dramatic effect in other scenes, such as using source music and emphasizing the word "knife" in the dialogue of gossiping neighbors to express the torment of the heroine. The simultaneously produced silent version is a tighter, more fluid, and more dramatically exciting film but the sound version remains a landmark for Hitchcock's creative approach to the then-new medium. Previously only available on poor home video versions, Kino presents remastered editions of the sound version in two different aspect ratios, plus the silent version with a musical score by Mont Alto Motion Picture Orchestra. Extras include an introduction by film scholar Noël Simsolo, audio commentary by film historian Tim Lucas, Ondra's screen test, and an audio clip from the "Hitchcock/Truffaut" interviews. Highly recommended. (S. Axmaker)

Child's Play ★★★
MVD Visual, 68 min., not
rated, DVD: \$19.99



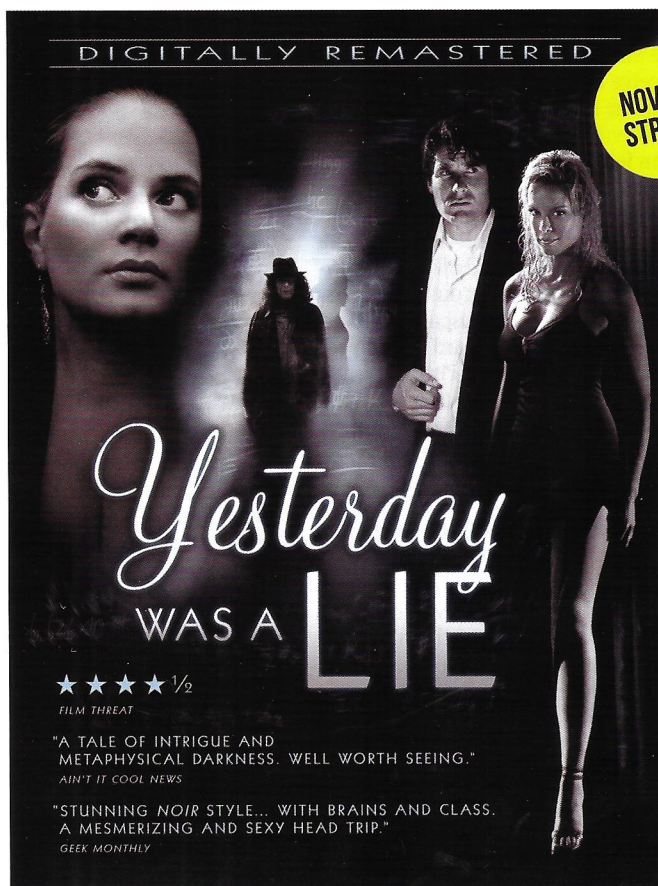
No, there are no killer Chucky dolls in filmmaker Margaret Thomson's good-natured, slightly daft 1954 comedy. Instead, we have a pack of young British kids (identified in the credits as "The Holy Terrors")

who discover how to split atoms and raise a mushroom cloud using only a few boxes, pipes, twirling gizmos, and (naturally) a rock from the volcanic island of Krakatoa. What do these not-so-terrorizing scamps do with their sudden nuclear ambitions in a small rural village? They channel radioactive energy into making a particularly tasty popcorn they call "bang corn," and then partner with the charming proprietor (Mona Washbourne) of a local sweets shop to sell the delicious snack. The story's villain is an overzealous constable who is determined to give everyone a bad time and catch the children at their explosive new hobby. *Child's Play* could easily be dismissed as an oddball family comedy satirizing (of all things) the Atomic Age less than a decade after Hiroshima and Nagasaki. But there is also an instructive element of surreal humor that resonates with such mid-century British comedy juggernauts as *The Goon Show*, *A Hard Day's Night*, and Monty Python. Recommended. (T. Keogh)

The Cloud-Capped Star ★★½
Criterion, 127 min., in Bengali w/English subtitles,
not rated, DVD: \$29.99, Blu-ray: \$39.99

Set in the aftermath of the 1947 partition of India, which displaced over 10 million people, Ritwik Ghatak's 1960 drama tells the story of a middle-class Bengali family living

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Hoyle, a girl with a sharp mind and a weakness for bourbon, finds herself on the trail of a reclusive genius. But her work takes a series of unforeseen twists as events around her grow increasingly fragmented... disconnected... surreal. With a sexy lounge singer and a loyal partner as her only allies, Hoyle is plunged into a dark world of intrigue & earth-shattering cosmological secrets.

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