

THE DVD LASER DISC NEWSLETTER

MARCH
2023
Issue #463
\$5.00

PO Box 382, Glen Cove, NY 11542-0382 • (516) 594-9304 • www.DVDLaser.com

Enduring masterpiece

The best films are poetry. Images and sounds resonate with harmonic purity in a viewer's thrall. With or without a narrative, poetry is a melodic swirl of ideas that accumulate to a common purpose or instill within the reader that same swirl of thoughts, comparisons and enlightenment. In film, narrative often fuels momentum, but it is the fusion of those images and sounds that, when they are forged and fashioned with artistic skill, blend to create a greater and complete work, one that implants itself in a viewer's consciousness as a multitude of ideas, and lingers in its beauty long after the film is ended, like a spirit. William Shakespeare wrote poetry, and the dialog in his plays are poems, words that flow so smoothly that one is barely conscious of the rhymes or the meter when one hears the characters exchange them. When masterful filmmakers have adapted Shakespeare plays for the screen, they have brought with them the added artistry of image and sound design to underscore and embellish the profound impact of Shakespeare's words, while utilizing the storytelling advantages of cinema to crystallize his narratives.

Franco Zeffirelli's 1968 masterpiece, **Romeo and Juliet**, originally produced by Paramount, has been released on Blu-ray by The Criterion Collection (UPC#715515281614, \$40). We reviewed Paramount's DVD in Jan 01. The monophonic sound has recording limitations, including an occasional scratchiness in the dialog, that cannot be overcome, although the solidity of the BD playback is a strong improvement over the DVD's audio. The picture, letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1, is considerably improved over the DVD, which was nice looking but inconsistent. The image on the Blu-ray is solid, pure and accurate from beginning to end. Running 138 minutes, the presentation has an Intermission card at its halfway point. There are optional English subtitles.

Zeffirelli was still just beginning his film career when he made **Romeo and Juliet**, his second film and his second Shakespeare adaptation, but he never improved upon what he achieved with that film and, at his best, only came close to equaling its beauty and impact a handful of times—which is no small accomplishment, to be sure. Having previously made the Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor **Taming of the Shrew** (Apr 00), he had a comfortable familiarity with the basics of making a Shakespeare film—not just in managing the dialog and truncating the narrative to accommodate the demands of a popular motion picture, but embracing the value of the period detail and dressing. He also employed Nina Rota for the music, which became not just a cornerstone to both movies, but a blood flow, as critical to the life of the films as Shakespeare's dialog.

Yes, you won't get an 'A' on the test if you only watch the film to study for your English exam on the play. A major character—Juliet's other suitor, Paris—does not get into a scuffle with Romeo at the end, nor is he killed, because Zeffirelli recognized that for a modern boxoffice, the focus had to be on the two youngsters, Leonard Whiting and Olivia Hussey, without distraction, so that—spoiler alert—they can both die without undermining or disappointing the expectations of the audience. Perhaps more disconcerting, because we have contemplated it for decades and still do not know the answer other than the possibility that the scenarists, Zeffirelli, Franco Brusati and Masolino D'Amico, did not grow up in an English-speaking environment and thus did not comprehend its importance, Juliet's lament, "Parting is such sweet sorrow that I shall say goodnight till it be tomorrow," was left either penciled out or on the cutting room floor.

And yet, the film's richness is enduring, and offers more pleasures with every viewing. When it came to the period details of the time and the place that were to be included, Zeffirelli excelled. Because so many of the filmmakers on his team were Italian and the production was staged in Italy, even though the cast and the script were English, the film is a comprehensive realization of Shakespeare's vision. The details are the ideas (we never noticed it before, but mister and missus Capulet can't stand each other—no wonder they only had one child—and every chance he gets, Zeffirelli includes bits of business that enforce their animosity or mister Capulet's roving eye)—from the fabrics and the

costumes, to the beauty of the dialog and how it has been transposed from page to enactment, underscored by the unendingly sweet redolence of Rota's compositions. At its center are the youthful actors and the thrilling humanity of their performances, preserved in time not on a page but on a seemingly living screen that, thanks to the Blu-ray, will never age or wither.

Speaking of aging, Whiting and Hussey sit for a wonderful 2016 screening appearance, answering questions about their experiences making the film (this was before they filed a recently publicized suit against Paramount about their underage nude scenes—in every interview they do, they claim the nudity was fine) and how their lives have unfolded. Running 33 minutes, the interview is wonderful not just for the information they share and the clear indication that they are still very close friends, but for the contrast they provide to their younger selves, in a fervent demonstration of where life can take you. Also featured is a somewhat more tense 1967 interview the two sat for in England before the film came out, running 17 minutes, in which the interviewer badgers them about what they are expecting from that same life, along with a 5-minute clip from a documentary about Zeffirelli that includes behind-the-scenes footage, and a trailer.

Love to love you, Lovecraft

American International Pictures' 1970 answer to **Rosemary's Baby** with the inspired insertion of H.P. Lovecraft's mythology, **The Dunwich Horror**, has been released on Blu-ray by Arrow Video (UPC#760137117209, \$40). Dean Stockwell is a shifty occult worshiper who hypnotizes a college student played by Sandra Dee and spends the entire 88 minutes of the movie getting her ready for the ceremony they are going to perform to either open a passageway to an evil dimension or let the monster who resides there get his groove on. The elderly Ed Begley is of all things the hero, an occult professor who gradually pieces together what is going on and acts to prevent Stockwell's character from succeeding (in that sense, the film is also similar to **Dracula**). Lloyd Bochner, Sam Jaffe and Talia Shire (back when she was still a Coppola) co-star. The film has glimpses of nudity and solarized images of monsters (if you can't see them clearly, they don't look fake, except that everybody watching knows that), but is rather slow moving. This is compensated with a reasonable effectiveness, however, through its subliminal messaging. Essentially, what happens at the end is that Stockwell's character and Dee's scantily clad character are on an altar, getting ready for, let's say, spiritual intercourse, and down below, not just Begley's character and the cops, but the townspeople as well, are scrambling up the hillside to stop them. As the prominently phallic logs behind them suggest, the adults want to stop the kids from having sex, and if that isn't the core of an AIP drive-in horror film message, we don't know what is. The film was directed by Daniel Haller (from one of Curtis Hansen's first significant screenplays), and was produced by Roger Corman, who understood such filmmaking very well.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1. The color transfer looks lovely, with bright hues and accurate fleshtones. Here and there a faint line or scratch is visible, but it is fleeting. The monophonic sound is okay, and there is one of Les Baxter's formulaic but energetic musical scores, along with optional English subtitles.

We've worked our way through a lot of supplements in our time, but we don't ever recall a collection of special features that was, in total, as gloriously geeky as the group of features accompanying **Dunwich Horror**. Sure, here and there you get one enthusiast who is overly passionate about an artist or a particular film on a disc, but that will usually be counterbalanced by a more academic piece of some sort. Not here.

The closest to a normal segment that the disc offers is an excellent 32-minute deconstruction of Baxter's musical score by film music expert David Huckvale, who plays Baxter's specific motifs on the piano between the appropriate clips from the film and explains how and why each was developed, as well as going over Baxter's biography and career. He never mentions, however, how suspiciously close Baxter's central theme is to what John Williams would later use for **Jurassic Park**.

Lovecraft (Continued)

Otherwise, the supplements are dominated by Lovecraft lovers, who love the film not so much for its craft as for its acknowledgement of authorship. Indeed, the previous Lovecraft story that AIP brought to the screen was unduly credited to Edgar Allan Poe because he was hotter boxoffice. Anyway, the big kahuna here is an absolutely wonderful 130-minute Internet conversation between two lifelong Lovecraft fans, film expert Stephen R. Bissette and horror author Stephen Laws. Artwork and other inserts accompany the talk. Tinging each other's memories and emotions, they go into everything about the film, from Lovecraft's legacy, to AIP's history, to the Variety articles that tracked the film's creation and production, and on to the contributions and expectations of the cast and the crew—how, while fulfilling the desires of AIP's management to ripoff *Rosemary's Baby* as closely as they could, the filmmakers still managed to squeeze a lot of Lovecraft into the movie's details—and how the film has played to audiences and viewers over the years. Of course, they share their personal experiences with the film and with Lovecraft, as well. Perhaps the most interesting material they come up with involves Hansen, who wrote about film and edited a film magazine before he transitioned to screenplays and went on to become a successful director. One of his earliest articles was about the 1932 version of *The Mummy*, and lo and behold, the ending of *Dunwich Horror* appears to draw its structure directly from that film, for which Hansen had professed a special affection.

After that marathon, it might seem anticlimactic to turn to Lovecraft expert Ruthanna Emrys, whose talk about the film lasts just 16 minutes, but she is so personable and so blatantly absorbed in the topic—of all the experts, she is clearly the geekiest—that her segment, along with being informative even after you've heard everything else, is as captivating as it is charming.

Finally, two more Lovecraft scholars, Guy Adams and A.K. Benedict, supply a commentary track, reacting to specific scenes in the film with further Lovecraft arcana and lore. They also talk about the careers of the cast and the crew, the film's artistic strengths ("People don't talk about this film anywhere near as much as they should. It's got so much in it. It's a rich and unusual adaptation of Lovecraft. It has moments that feel genuinely Lovecraftian, all amongst the various paraphernalia that couldn't be further away. That doesn't matter. It still is a horror cinema experience. It's fun, it's clever, it's beautiful to look at.") and delve into such important matters as how one should pronounce, 'Dunwich.' It's not as easy as it looks, or is it?

Exquisite ghost story

An exquisitely composed romantic ghost story made in 1987 during the explosion of the Hong Kong New Wave, Stanley Kwan's *Rouge*, has been released on Blu-ray by The Criterion Collection (UPC#715515273114, \$40). Anita Mui plays a prostitute who toys with her suitor, played by Leslie Cheung, but gradually falls for his persistence. Their period story is then intercut with that of a newspaper reporter researching their relationship during the present day. The film unfolds with a calm and steady pace that keeps a viewer involved with the characters and compelled to follow each plot advancement. Running 96 minutes, what happens is best left to be discovered, but it is as thematically rewarding as it is beguiling. The pull of the story is enhanced by the attractiveness of the performers and the elegant, glossy imagery, and it is touched, every once in a while, by a wisp of humor.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1. Although faintly grainy at times, the color transfer is fresh and sharp. The monophonic sound is consistently strong, with fully defined tones, but there is also a remastered 5.1-channel DTS track with directional effects and a playful dimensionality that some viewers may find is more in keeping with the luxurious images. The film is in Cantonese with optional English subtitles, and comes with a trailer.

In addition to the outstanding feature film, an excellent documentary about sexuality and family in Chinese movies, which Kwan made in 1996 for the British Film Institute, *Yang & Yin Gender in Chinese Cinema*, is also presented. Running 79 minutes and loaded with great and fascinating film clips, Kwan begins the movie autobiographically, talking about the films he saw as a child and how he related to them, and then gradually expands to talk about everything from the intense male bonding in many kung fu and gangster films (he has a terrific interview with Chang Cheh, getting him to talk about the rampant male imagery in his features), to the long traditions of crossdressing and gender switching in Chinese performances, including the intriguing story of a pair of actresses from Fifties and Sixties, Pak Suet-sin and Yam Kim-fai, who spent a very open life together while pairing on the screen, with Kim-fai appearing in the 'male' roles. But Kwan continually circles back to the concepts of family relationships, searching specifically for how the Chinese culture sifts through the family dynamic to take the different paths in sexuality that are depicted in film. He also has interviews with his own mother, with John Woo, with several Hong Kong critics, and with others. The picture is in a squared full screen format and the program is in Cantonese with permanent English subtitles.

A 44-minute autobiographical documentary put together by Kwan in 1997, *Still Love You after All These*, explores both his life and the Hong Kong environment, combining 'city symphony' images of Hong Kong with clips from his films and home movies, and from a brief autobiographical stageplay he put on as part of a stage anthology. Nothing in the documentary is presented directly, however. Instead, it is an impressionistic blend of glancing images and ideas, with bits of dialog, ruminating upon the big topic in 1997—'should we stay or should we go'—as China was about to absorb the city, but also about the city's heritage and what he has absorbed from it.

Finally, there is a straightforward 40-minute interview with Kwan from 2022, talking about his life and his career, going over his films, his approach to filmmaking, and his views on what he has accomplished, which includes an extensive history of how *Rouge* came to be made and what it achieved.

And the Oscar most definitely doesn't go to...

The amazingly and compellingly bad 1966 Embassy Films Hollywood drama about a cranky actor who is too big for his britches from the get go, *The Oscar*, has been released by Kino Lorber Incorporated as a *KL Studio Classics* title (UPC#738329242619, \$30). As awful as the movie is, from its acting and its staging to its costumes and its production design (although we did appreciate that the fruit in the basket on the mostly unused yacht was starting to spoil), you just can't take your eyes off of it. And every time you do blink, there's another cameo appearance by somebody or other (including Joseph Cotten, Broderick Crawford, Walter Brennan, Peter Lawford, Merle Oberon, Bob Hope and even Frank and Nancy Sinatra).

Stephen Boyd stars as the dislikable hustler who wangles his way into Hollywood and up the marquee billing, spending more than he is making, irritating the people he is working for and on the verge of crashing back down to where he started when his nomination comes through. The film begins with the ceremony and then flashes back to tell the story until the specific award is announced. If you see the film even just once, you will likely remember what happens at the awards, but running 121 minutes, it is getting to that point that is the film's strange torture. There are more bad performances than there are good ones (Milton Berle gets by well as a talent agent, Ernest Borgnine is decent as a scuzzy private detective and Edie Adams is a breath of fresh air in her all-pink apartment), with Tony Bennett, Jill St. John, Elke Sommer, and Eleanor Parker grinding out their dialog as if it hurt when they talked. Worst of all is Boyd himself. He was a decent movie star when he had the right part, but he is just irredeemably grating from beginning to end, as if he'd lost the sense of irony he often brought to his role playing. Directed by Russell Rouse (who collaborated on the script with Harlan Ellison of all people), it is almost as if the film is purposely off kilter, not lampooning Hollywood, but more interested in undermining its unspoken conventions and dishing imaginary dirt than it is in conveying a successful drama. It's a car wreck, and rubbernecking is inevitable, so in that sense it does succeed in demonstrating how terrible Hollywood can really be, not through the film's content, but through its very existence.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.66:1. The color transfer looks great, and with every newly decorated set presenting a new hokey mishmash of colors (there is an all-green restaurant!) and strange decorations. The monophonic sound is okay, and there are optional English subtitles.

Three Ellison experts, Patton Oswalt, Josh Olson and Erik Nelson, provide a marvelous commentary track, raking the film over the coals ("This movie is why you can't actually make movies about the Oscars ever, even again.") as they share tales about Ellison's troublemaking, describe (and even perform passages from) the enormous script that was eventually whittled down to the movie at hand, and itemize its many artistic anomalies. They have a virtual drinking game with Boyd's once-you-see-it-you-can-never-not-see-it constant hand gestures, and otherwise deconstruct the film's inanities with robust enthusiasm (their comments on the set designs are not only hysterical, but you start to look forward to them as the movie goes along, so that when it finally gets to the green restaurant...). But they also offer more thoughtful insights, such as during an outdoor Hollywood party sequence, shot in a soundstage:

"Okay, so after you watch this movie, if you haven't seen it, please, please, please. Go watch *A Boy and His Dog*. Because there is Harlan Ellison movies out there that are genuinely great, and what's fascinating is that both movies have scenes set in this weird, underground world where people are trying to recreate a fantasy version of America. Because this is clearly set three hundred miles below the surface. It's obvious."

"The sky's dark, but they're overlit. It's just creepy."

Pulling you back from the precipice, there is a second commentary track with Sixties film enthusiasts Howard S. Berger, Steve Mitchell and Nathaniel Thompson, who give a far more forgiving (they even praise Bennett's near amateur performance) and enthusiastic talk about the feature. "This movie actually, if you break it down, is really, really fair to everyone who basically isn't an actor." They talk a lot about how similar this film is to Martin Scorsese's movies, particularly *Casino*, and at one point they wish that Scorsese would remake *The Oscar*, not recognizing that in many ways he did, with *The King of Comedy*. They speculate that Hollywood's studio films at the time were reacting unconsciously to the effects of World War II and the disintegration of normalcy. They also talk more than the first commentary did about the backgrounds of the film stars, although they miss an opportunity to point out a J&B Scotch bottle, and they get a few minor details about the plot

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

wrong (contrary to what they say, Boyd's character is not considered a particularly good actor, he just has scored the right parts to accelerate his stardom). Still, they go to great lengths to argue, sensibly, why the film should be appreciated.

"This film took on the reputation as being a quote unquote bad film or a camp film, although the reception among critics was actually pretty split at the time. Some people really liked it if you take it in the right spirit. It's a kind of overwrought, soap opera-type film, but it's not supposed to be realistic."

"You're going to see a lot of people calling this either 'It's so bad it's good,' or that, 'It's the worst movie I've ever seen but somehow I can't help watching it.' There's something that indicates to me if you are able to compulsively watch something more than once or thinking that you've decided that it's supposed to be terrible and you've acknowledged it's terrible in some undefined way, but yet you are drawn to it. Whatever. Whether you are laughing at it or just shocked, the film is pressing buttons. It's doing its work, the way it was designed. Whether consciously people thought it was being supposedly serious and it's backfiring, I don't know about that. I think that you are supposed to react to sensationalism and to in your face, I just think you're supposed to react. So I don't see this film as being necessarily a failure of any kind. I come out pretty much understanding what it is. It's pulp soap."

Heston adventure and Sumac concert

Dressed like Indiana Jones, Charlton Heston stars in the marvelous 1954 Paramount adventure film, **Secret of the Incas**, released on Blu-ray by Paramount and Kino Lorber Incorporated as a *KL Studio Classics* title (UPC#738329261870, \$25). Set in Peru (with some guy also dressed like Indiana Jones doing the many long shots on location while Heston remains comfortably on the Paramount lot), Heston portrays a tour guide who is after an Inca treasure and uncovers a clue to its location that sends him hustling for a way to get to Machu Picchu. Nicole Maurey is a refugee from Eastern Europe who helps him steal an airplane. Thomas Mitchell, delivering the film's most entertainment performance, is the rival of Heston's character, and Robert Young is a naive archeologist working the site who becomes a competitor for the interests of Maurey's character. Most importantly, one of the natives at the site is played by Yma Sumac, who sings several numbers during native ritual sequences that don't so much stop the show as justify it. Directed by Jerry Hopper and running 102 minutes, the film is good basic fun, with Heston's character, as he often did, teetering on the cusp between hero and villain, and between nice guy and snot, while the film takes the viewer to a far away place and explores the potential dangers awaiting there.

As for Sumac's scenes, they are wonderful, but the audio recording quality was just not up to the job at the time. The lip synching is extreme, with the sound field of her recorded voice coming across as if it is a substantial distance away from where she is standing. Otherwise, the monophonic sound is okay, so it is just the challenge of doing justice to her voice and its amazing range that the filmmakers fell short of achieving. The segments are still utterly captivating, but that is primarily because Sumac just didn't show up in very many movies, and it is truly inspired to have placed her amid what is otherwise a matinee escape, becoming, figuratively for the film's enduring appeal, the equivalent of the golden jeweled doodad Heston's character is chasing after.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1. The color transfer looks terrific, despite some incidental grain and some fleeting moments of wear. Hues are fresh and fleshtones are accurate. There are optional English subtitles. Film historian Toby Roan supplies a standard commentary track over the first 89 minutes of the film, detailing the backgrounds and careers of the cast and the crew, describing the film's production history (Heston did go on location for a week, they just don't sell it all that well), presenting a thumbnail overview of the discovery of Machu Picchu, and summarizing the film's boxoffice success and its influence on George Lucas and others.

Poetry in action

As joyous as it is clever, a 1938 Paramount swashbuckler, **If I Were King**, has been released on Blu-ray by Universal and Kino Lorber Incorporated as a *KL Studio Classics* title (UPC#738329260309, \$25). Drawn from genuine Fifteenth Century historical characters, Ronald Colman, with his dashing looks and melliferous voice, plays the poet and thief, François Villon (Coleman even recites some of Villon's poetry), and in a wonderfully counterintuitive performance, Basil Rathbone is the weasly Louis XI. Paris is under siege and people are starving when the King overhears Colman's character boasting about what should be done and, as a gag more than anything else, puts him in charge. Running 101 minutes, the film is based upon a stageplay that was turned into a smart, literate and jaunty script by Preston Sturges and then directed with equal panache by Frank Lloyd. It is by equal measure a classic black-and-white action film and a unique tale filled with unexpected plot turns. From the unusual bas-relief opening credits through the resplendent (even in black and white) costumes to the charming final scene, the film is pleasing and rewarding from beginning to end.

The full screen picture is a little grainy at times and has occasional scratches and speckles, but is generally crisp, with well-defined contrasts. The monophonic sound is clear. There are optional English subtitles and a trailer. Film historian Julie Kirgo supplies a decent commentary track. Once in a while she describes what is happening on the screen, but she discusses the story's historical background, goes into rewarding detail on the contributions and talents of the cast and the crew, and talks even more extensively about Sturges (pointing out the lines of dialog that were clearly penned by him) and his career.

The inopportune nature of death

Medical dramas are one of our least favorite genres, not so much because we don't like them, but because we like other genres so much more. Nevertheless, wishing to maintain a wide playing field, we decided to take a look at the 2021 French drama about doctors and patients, **Peaceful**, a *Distrib Films Collection* title released by Distrib Films and Icarus Films Home Video (UPC#854565003941, \$27), and found ourselves deeply moved by its presentation. Benoît Magimel is an acting teacher who has terminal cancer, and Gabriel Sara is the jovial, folksy doctor treating him. The film opens with Sara's character—balding with a mustache and a propensity for wearing amusing neckties—coaching his staff on how to interact with dying patients and their families, a session that he apparently holds on a regular basis. Soon after that, the film moves on to the acting teacher, as he guides his students through their presentations, and the parallels in the levels of emotional investment felt by the teacher and by the students are very clear. Hospice care is quite a bit like acting. The doctor puts the full force of his inner self into his attitude and actions, with absolute sincerity, but then when he leaves the patient, it is like an actor leaving the theater and moving on to the demands of his own life, or on to the next role.

Running 123 minutes, the narrative has other complexities—Catherine Deneuve plays the mother of Magimel's character, attempting to organize his final months, and there is a son he has never met, who gets word of his approaching death. All of the performances are terrific. The film explores the nature of hospice, offering everything from deep thematic parallels to plain, solid advice about facing death. Directed by Emmanuelle Bercot, there are a number of memorable moments, others that generate a great deal of laughter, and a final scene—after you think everything is over—that is remarkably cathartic. We would not necessarily recommend the DVD to people who are themselves immediately facing the same situation the characters face—as a family member or as a patient—as it might be too much to bear, but we would wholeheartedly recommend it to people who will find themselves facing that same situation someday in the undetermined future—which is, basically, everybody.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback. The color transfer is lovely and the cinematography is smooth and elegant. The 5.1-channel Dolby Digital sound has an enveloping dimensionality, and there is a variety of music to enhance and underscore the entertainment—indeed, the hospital ward where Magimel's character ends up has a musician on staff. The film is in French with permanent English subtitles, and the English language passages have no captioning.

Yep

A monster movie with enough good frights to justify its excesses, Jordan Peele's **Nope**, has been released by Universal Studios (UPC#191329-226124, \$20). The jury is still out as to whether Peele has more than one masterpiece in him, but the 2022 film is a significant improvement over his woefully poor *Us* (Jul 19). It is set on a remote ranch in the Southwest that is basically being plagued by a UFO. When the rancher, in a brief appearance by Keith David, is killed, his son, played by Daniel Kaluuya and his daughter, played by Keke Palmer in a lively performance, hope to score some cash by getting footage of the alien object that hides behind a permanent cloud. Other things also happen, and to ramp up the thrills, there is a frightening flashback involving a secondary character in which a chimpanzee turns homicidal. Running 131 minutes, the design of the monster is iffy, seeming to have been constructed from billowy fabric, and that may have undercut the film's payoff for some viewers, but all of the performances are engaging, the narrative is exceptionally intelligent and deliberately opaque to keep a viewer intrigued (even on multiple viewings), and there are plenty of excitements and unsettling moments as the film progresses. It isn't perfect, but it isn't bad, either.

What seems to be a trend these days, the letterboxing has two aspect ratios, with some footage coming in at about 2.35:1 and other footage at 1.78:1, all with an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback. The 2.35 footage looks great. Colors are bright and the image is sharp. The 1.78 footage, particularly when it is darker, tends to look a bit smeary, although overall the presentation is fine. The 5.1-channel Dolby Digital sound is marvelous, with lots of good dimensional effects and a decent amount of power. There is an audio track that describes the action ("O.J. leads Lucky inside the park. Em follows, glancing around at the Old West-style buildings. Employees in costumes interact with guests. A gigantic, winking cowboy balloon towers over the nearby buildings."), alternate French and Spanish audio tracks, optional English, French and Spanish subtitles, 9 minutes of sensibly deleted scenes, 5 minutes of enjoyable bloopers and a very good 6-minute piece about Eadweard Muybridge (Oct 90) and the unknown black jockey who rode the horse in his most famous photos, which is pertinent to a plot point in the film.

Finally, a 14-minute production featurette about the alien, presented with great enthusiasm, goes right to the heart of the film's shortcomings. It is not just Peele, but more than a dozen very creative and intelligent artists collaborating to build a unique, out-of-this-world design, but in their overthinking of the details, they never stop to question whether or not it will be cinematic. On the most technical level, the design is valid, sure. But does it scare the pants off of you the way something more derivative, like say the umpteenth replication of an H.R. Geiger monster, would? Nope.

Four from Truffaut

Some movies play better in a group than on their own, because even though, individually, they may have rewarding aspects, the investment of time and emotion required to watch them exceeds the return, whereas if one makes a slightly larger investment to watch a group of films, the rewards of each contribute to the greater, accumulated satisfaction of the whole.

Four of François Truffaut's less prominent films from the Seventies have been combined on two Blu-ray platters for the MGM Kino Lorber Incorporated *KL Studio Classics* release, **Francois Truffaut Collection** (UPC#738329261825, \$60). All four are letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.66:1. On all four, the monophonic sound is adequately conveyed. The films are in French with optional English subtitles, and each is accompanied by a trailer. Although the films are not as significant as Truffaut's best-loved features, it is still quite a bargain to have them all in one easy bundle.

And that would even apply to the most problematic of the four, his vaguely comical 1977 feature, *The Man Who Loved Women*. Running 119 minutes, the film is comprised mostly of brief interludes depicting the protagonist's not so much seductions as passing flirtations, which for some reason succeed on a fairly consistent basis. Charles Denner is an unprepossessing bachelor engineer who mildly but determinedly talks up every woman he sees, eventually writing a book about his experiences, like Casanova. The film's problem is obvious, as it is presenting a male fantasy that is rather disconnected from social sensibilities, particularly in our modern, raised-consciousness world. On the other hand, the film is exceedingly respectful of women—Brigitte Fossey co-stars, with Leslie Caron, Nelly Borgeaud, Nathalie Baye and numerous others—and explores the psychological impulses and frailties of each one, so that Denner's character is less of a hero and more of a guide, never going where he is not ultimately wanted. Some viewers will find the film's attitude exasperating, but it sustains a kind of analytical tone that Truffaut brought to many of his features, distancing himself just enough that the viewer feels like a fellow observer in the field, taking notes and gathering information without having to draw conclusions or take sides. When Blake Edwards remade the film in 1983 with Burt Reynolds, he threw in too much of his signature slapstick and completely missed the delicate balance that Truffaut achieves, exploring how a man can become confused between the joy of a woman's desires and the simpler pleasure of her company.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.66:1. Nestor Almendros' cinematography looks okay. The colors are reasonably fresh and fleshtones are accurate, but the source material does have a mildly worn appearance, with occasional speckles and tiny scratches. Nevertheless, Truffaut's careful framing of his characters, often in the center of still backdrops, adds to the movie's guise of a sociological study.

The film is paired with Truffaut's 1978 adaptation of a Henry James story, *The Green Room*, which is an ideal demonstration of a movie that plays better in the company of other films than it plays on its own. Not only is the film chained to the leaden aspects of James' writing, but Truffaut cast himself in the lead, his performance replicating the stodgy limitations of James' prose. A more practiced actor would have brought more humanity to the part and made the story, about an obituary writer who becomes obsessed with a chapel he has constructed to remember the dead, more intriguing. Set in the Twenties, however, the film has many things going for it, not the least of which is its restrained sense of design and Almendros' captivating cinematography, sometimes lit by candles alone. Baye co-stars as an auction clerk that Truffaut's character persuades to collaborate in his endeavor, and she brings life to her side of the screen even as Truffaut brings lifelessness to the other side. Finally, the 95-minute film was directed by Truffaut, so that even though his performance is bothersome, his presence, as a reminder of who is guiding the film's exploration of loss and retention—and who is exploring the trickles of cinema that can be drawn from James' well—is uplifting, particularly when it is not the only Truffaut film you've committed to watching.

The picture quality is much stronger than the quality of *The Man Who Loved Women*. The image is consistently solid, and the delicate hues and shadows of the cinematography are stable and finely detailed, with no significant presence of even minor wear.

The two films paired on the other platter are generally more crowd pleasing. Indeed, it is impossible to watch Truffaut's delightful 1976 depiction of childhood, *Small Change*, without smiling. Set in a small town in the center of France, the film is a mostly episodic depiction of the last month in the school year for a group of pre-adolescent boys, although the narrative also stretches out to include their families, their teachers and many other townspeople, in a place where everyone pretty much knows everyone. The vignettes are charming and explore many different aspects of a child's existence, from breakfast and boredom to learning and companionship. The primary adult star, Jean-François Stévenin, is absolutely wonderful as the boys' teacher. Normally cast as a villain, his heartfelt speech at the end could easily be seen as the film stopping for moralistic preaching, but instead he conveys the words while never letting go of his character or his character's presence in the classroom, so the message gets through without the brakes being hit. Running 106 minutes, the film is primarily populated with reasonably happy youngsters living, growing and being themselves. While it carries a justifiable exploration of the town's social and economic dynamics to validate its dramas, it can also be fully savored without paying a mind to any message it has. More than anything else, it's a great excuse to escape for a while with the kids.

The color transfer is precise and accurate, and the source material is free of wear. Pierre-William Glenn's cinematography is more straightforward and brightly lit than Almendros' work, but for the purposes of the film and its orientation toward an elementary presentation, it is ideal.

Truffaut's employs his clinical tone to great effect in his excellent 1970 black-and-white feature, *The Wild Child*. Set in the Eighteenth Century, Truffaut has the starring role but in this case he is immensely effective. He portrays an emotionally distanced doctor who takes on the experimental responsibility to teach a feral child communication skills instead of locking the boy away in an institution. Running 85 minutes, the narrative is highly compelling, drawing an unspoken parallel between the child's limited learning abilities and the shortcomings of mankind's knowledge in the era. The film is as fascinating as it is compelling, and is aided immeasurably by Almendros' transfixing cinematography. The image has a natural grain, but the transfer is meticulous, and it is the beauty of the images combined with the intrigue of the story that demonstrates, as well as any film he made, the genius of Truffaut's artistry.

Humorless despair

Two films by Marguerite Duras are presented on two platters in the Criterion Collection Blu-ray release, **India Song / Baxter, Vera Baxter** (UPC#715515281713, \$40), which is advantageous to having the films separately since each, on its own, is a less compelling attraction.

In a 7-minute interview from 1977, Delphine Seyrig describes how Duras was tentative in her approach to directing *India Song*, lacking the full confidence to guide her crew. The crew wanted to make a normal movie, and Duras wanted to do something different. The result runs 119 minutes, and feels lengthy, with periodically repetitive passages. It is different, and at times poetical, so some viewers will appreciate what Duras sought to accomplish, but others will be less accommodating.

Most of the film is set within an embassy in India in the Thirties, during and after a cocktail party. The images often show the characters in repose, or dancing, or crossing the room (which has a large mirror) with a methodical slowness. All of the dialog is presented as voiceover, so that it becomes a sort of stream-of-consciousness of what is heard there, rather than what is said. When the characters are seen, they do not speak, and they move so slowly that they almost appear to be posing, although usually, not quite. Seyrig plays the wife of a vice-consul played by Michel Lonsdale. She has been having affairs with the younger guys at the consul and the tension with her husband comes to a head at the party, where he essentially has a nervous breakdown and leaves the building screaming at the top of his lungs. There is a bookending framework to the tale, about a Laotian immigrant singing outside of the building, and a few other odds and ends, but that is the extent of the narrative. When the Laotian is not singing, the music from the cocktail party dominates the audio track, along with other outdoor environmental sounds and the dialog.

There are two monophonic audio tracks, one in French with optional English subtitles, and one in English, with both Seyrig and Lonsdale doing the English dialog as well as the French. The recordings, however, are different at times. Lonsdale's screams are very immediate on the French track, but muffled and further away on the English track, appearing on the English track, however, in places where they don't appear on the French track. Generally, the French track is crisper and brighter, but there are times when the English track is sharper, particularly during a few music passages. The full screen picture is slightly grainy now and then, but otherwise the colors are very fresh and nicely detailed. A 47-minute collection of interviews and archival footage is included, describing how Duras approached making the film, what it was like working with her and what she wanted to express through the feature.

Although *India Song* is looked upon as her masterpiece, Duras' 1977 *Baxter, Vera Baxter* is a better film. The cinematography and editing are excellent, and the camera does observe characters as they are talking, although there are still plenty of times when the characters are speaking off screen. Running just 95 minutes, the film is still exasperating, but it is not excruciating the way *India Song* is. After what one might characterize as a prolog featuring Gérard Depardieu and Seyrig talking in a bar, Claudine Gabay is the title character, spending an afternoon in a large house near the ocean that she wants to rent for the summer. Seyrig's character joins her and offers to drive her back after they realize that the rental agent is not going to show. The talk is repetitive but one gradually absorbs the key details—that the heroine's husband is a bit of a philanderer and that her children are pretty much grown, so that the house is really too big. Also, she doesn't have much reason to live any more. Nevertheless, her husband has already paid the money to rent it and just didn't get around to telling her. In the meantime, however, the house is architecturally stylish, so that every camera angle and every cut is stimulating and pleasing (there are appealing shots of the beach and other outdoor locations, as well). What isn't pleasing is the music, which is said to be coming from a nearby 'party,' but is in fact a constant, endless loop of flute and percussion that seems pleasant at first but becomes an irritant well before the film nears its conclusion. Again, the narrative is unimportant and the personalities of the characters are developed enough that they do not seem like the mannequins that plodded through much of *India Song*. The women remain humorless, however (in the total of both films, only Depardieu appears to possess wit), and as compelling as the film's montages are, particularly as an indication of Duras' confidence and poetic spirit—and even if Seyrig's character doesn't really exist and Gabay's character has already done herself in—the work's accomplishments seem limited.

Letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.66:1, the color transfer is excellent, adding to the film's appeal. The image is fresh and finely detailed. The monophonic sound is okay, and the film is in French with optional English subtitles. There is a 4-minute 'explanation' of the film's plot in a 1977 interview with Duras (where, by contrast, the clips from the film have very pale, bland hues). Finally, a full-fledged 63-minute profile of Duras is presented, featuring extensive interviews with her, sharing her philosophies and reflecting back on everything she has experienced. There are also many home movies, including some taken on the sets of her films, and some of her writing is read between the interviews. Even though she recognizes that her life has been rather unique (she grew up on the Mekong Delta), she still has a tendency to make generalizations in her philosophies, and speak disparagingly about what she sees for the world. She also talks about her kitchen and cooking, which is pretty much the only time she seems to perk up.

Rediscovered French thriller

An independent French production shot and apparently edited in 1968 but left on the shelf until it was dusted off in 2010, ***A Woman Kills***, has been released on Blu-ray by Luna Park Films and Radiance (UPC#76013711-5618, \$35). Directed by Jean-Denis Bonan and running a quick 69 minutes, the black-and-white film is pretty messy and, while somewhat incoherent, is basically about a copycat serial killer who begins murdering prostitutes after the original killer is executed. There is a lengthy chase in the finale through abandoned buildings and decaying factories that has one praying the cast members had their tetanus shots. A troubadour sings about the story on the soundtrack in places, but fortunately he never steps into the film with his guitar. The primary significance of the film, however, is its portrayal of a transvestite as the villain, essentially diving wholeheartedly into a Parisian sexual underground to an extent that, even if the story doesn't make much sense, a viewer is still apt to remain attentive to the film's explorations.

The picture quality is fine, as the transfer is clearly as good as it is going to get, including the occasionally inconsistent monophonic soundtrack. The film is in French with optional English subtitles. Also featured is a 5-minute introduction to the film, a trailer and a really nice 38-minute interview with Bonan and others about his films—how they came to fruition, disappeared, and then arose once more.

Film historian Kat Ellinger and French film expert Virginie Sélavy provide a very good, conversational commentary track, talking about how the film was made, the specific dynamics of various scenes, the ways in which the film compares to giallo features and other genres ("There's a weird sentimentality to it that you don't find in a political film of that time."), Bonan's circle of filmmakers (including Jean Rollin), and the state of French films in the late Sixties. "The second 'New Wave' was much more underground, using maybe more genre and things like that to make very experimental films, and yet this sort of second New Wave has remained very obscure—very, very obscure—which seems like a shame. You still see a lot of concentration on the bigger names throughout this period in French cinema. Very little mentioned about these more obscure figures. I think they're really fascinating because they were working at a time that was I guess more difficult in commercial terms. The New Wave had been and gone, and it's like cinema has almost gone back to wanting that commercial viability—not that they ever lost it. They were able to market the New Wave to a certain extent, they were able to package it, whereas this other new garde, these more anarchistic experimental filmmakers, they couldn't. They couldn't label them or package them, so a lot of this stuff remains obscure."

Bonan was primarily a news and documentary filmmaker, who dabbled in narrative filmmaking, as did his close companion, Rollin, but never managed to make the transition to features that Rollin (who appears in the film and also in several of Bonan's shorts) was able to achieve. Bonan's five shorts are also collected on the disc, significantly improving its value.

The first film Bonan composed is a fairly cute 1962 black-and-white short entitled *The Short Life of Monsieur Meucieu*. Although the image is ragged, the sound is not only vivid, but stereophonic, suggesting that it has been added well after the fact, even though the brief snippets of dialog usually match the lip movements of the actors. Part of the film was shot on the streets of Paris and part in a park. In the park scenes, the protagonist crawls around a lot on the grass and is said to be escaping, while in the city, he sort of bounces down the street, carrying a long but skinny pole. There are other characters and there is romance. It is weird enough and humorous enough to hold a viewer's attention for its 13 minutes.

A 7-minute fragment of an unfinished 1965 film, *A Crime of Love*, turns into sort of a rural **Postman Only Rings Twice**. Bonan narrates the story (he can't remember the name of the actress although she was also his girlfriend at the time) and again, sound effects and a bit of music have been added, in stereo. Even though there is a brief rape sequence, the presentation works as an entertaining short film, a mix of intriguing plot turns and potential images.

The justification for the entire Blu-ray is not necessarily the feature film, but rather Bonan's 24-minute *Sadness of the Anthropophagi* from 1966. In the spirit of **L'age D'or** and other surreal shorts, the film's purpose is to cause trouble and raise a ruckus, which it does with the same enthusiasm that drives a giggling adolescent boy to leave a bag of manure on the doorstep of a crotchety elder and then ring the doorbell. The film is indeed partially about manure, which is being fed to patrons in a fancy restaurant as the latest

gourmet craze, but it is also razzing many other social niceties, from romance to religion. Indeed, France was so embarrassed that they actually banned the film from export for several decades. On its surface, the film is childish, and much of it just depicts one person (the identity occasionally changes) being chased around the city and the countryside by a group of people, but the cinematography and the editing are reasonably sophisticated, and the film tosses out irreverent images and ideas with steady abandon. Rollin collaborated with Bonan extensively on the short. Letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.66:1, the black-and-white image is usually quite clean and sharp, and the transfer looks terrific. During the few instances of dialog, the voices match the lip movements, but otherwise the music and the sound effects are stereophonic.

Another rural **Postman Always Rings Twice**, the 1967 *Crazy Matthieu* may have different actors, but it appears to be a full realization of the fragmented *Crime of Love*, and manages to tell a reasonably complete and dramatic story in 17 minutes, using colorful paintings in one montage to advance what is otherwise a black-and-white piece in which the wife of a farmer encourages a farmhand to get rid of her husband so they can be together. It doesn't go well, of course.

Bonan took advantage of his primary vocation in his excellent 1967 black-and-white short, *A Season with Mankind*, running 19 minutes, gathering unused footage from his various news assignments to create a lovely, eclectic and vaguely biographical rumination on life and the state of the world. Shot in France and French Africa, the footage is continually captivating, and includes an intriguing sequence with Salvador Dali, clearly a Bonan idol.

Criterion takes Arsenic

Suave and urbane Cary Grant pushes his maniacal id to the limit in Frank Capra's expertly directed 1944 Warner Bros. adaptation of the Joseph Kesselring stageplay, ***Arsenic and Old Lace***, which has been released on Blu-ray by The Criterion Collection (UPC#715515277716, \$40). While his performance may have irritated or unnerved some viewers, it was absolutely necessary that he push everything to the limit, from his bulging eyeballs to his quadruple double takes, to glue the rest of the craziness in the story together. He is, you see, the sane one.

The film is remarkable in a number of ways, not the least of which being that it broaches a number of Production Code no-no's that may not have been allowed if a less respected industry giant than Capra had been overseeing it. And despite its magnified artificiality—from the lovely fake subway train that crosses the back of the soundstage to the amplified performances of everyone on that stage from Grant on down—the film, under Capra's superb and precise execution, not only worked in its time, it continues to sustain a viable entertainment amid its dated silliness today. Indeed there is a scare cut that would generate just as many screams in a contemporary slasher thriller as it does here, and had us leaping out of our seat even though we've seen the movie plenty of times before (most recently on Warner's DVD in Oct 00). In fact, in some ways, the film works better now—it is set on Halloween, but opens on a Brooklyn baseball game (in those days, unlike today, the season was over by the beginning of October). In any case, the cast, which includes Raymond Massey (in a rare but inspired comical performance), Peter Lorre, James Gleason, Edward Everett Horton, James Gleason, Priscilla Lane, Jack Carson and plenty of others (it becomes quite populated toward the end), are all such great fun that every individual scene is delightful, gluing the viewer to the screen as the complexities of the plot build and build.

Running 118 minutes, Grant's character discovers that his two aunts have been poisoning their elderly male boarders and burying them in the cellar, and that he needs to have his uncle, who also lives in the house and believes himself to be Teddy Roosevelt, committed to an institution because of the ruckus the uncle causes blowing a trumpet in the middle of the night. All of this occurs on the same evening that Grant's character is leaving for his honeymoon (a shot near the end includes the longest kiss he's ever sustained on screen this side of **Notorious**). And on that evening, his brother and a henchman show up, on the run from the police for another murder, body in tow. None of it is the least bit believable and everybody knows it, which is why Grant, whose character would normally be the straight man to all of the wackiness going on around him, becomes instead the most animated, wacky character of all. He sells the movie's fun and lets the viewer—and even the censors—know that it is time to relax and enjoy the show.

The full screen black-and-white picture looked terrific on the DVD and looks even better on the BD. The image is solid, crisp and spotless. The monophonic sound is reasonably strong, and there are optional English subtitles. Along with a trailer, there is a 1952 episode of a radio program, *Best Plays*, running 59 minutes and starring Boris Karloff and Donald Cook in an adaptation of the stageplay.

Criterion does not really include a commentary on its programs unless the commentary is exceptional, and that is the case with Charles Dennis, who wrote a book on the history of the story (it is helpful to listen to the radio play before the commentary, since Dennis talks about the changes that were made from the stage for the film in detail) and provides a meticulous report not just on the tale's conception, its acquisition and the day-to-day production events, but also delving into pertinent biographical points regarding the cast and the crew. Grant, for example, often disparaged the film, and while Dennis accounts for the most obvious reason—even Grant cringed at his performance—he also uncovers aspects of Grant's biography regarding his own mother's hospitalization that merged a bit too closely with the story's subject matter.

Italian costume adventure

A slow moving but relatively unique adventure film from 1962, the Italian production of **Marco Polo**, originally distributed in America by American International Pictures, has been released by Kino Lorber Incorporated as a *KL Studio Classics* title (UPC#738329261665, \$25). Rory Calhoun stars as the title character, who is a bit more of a ladies' man and uses his head more than his muscles, but is otherwise fairly similar to the title character in **Samson and the 7 Miracles of the World** (Oct 22), which was shot on some of the same Chinese-themed sets and had pretty much the same plot. The hero befriends a Chinese emperor but must help rebels who recognize that the emperor's advisor is the evil guy that is actually running things. He also romances the emperor's daughter, although the evil guy, of course, has his eyes on her to legitimize his reign. Running 104 minutes, there are a few action scenes, but the film really depends more on its relatively fresh productions designs, its intermittent stock footage of China, and the constant posturing of the stars. Directed by Piero Pierotti and Hugo Fregonese, if a viewer approaches the film with patience and an open mind, then its mix of nostalgia, gorgeous costumes supported by a solid color transfer, and periodic fights and chases will be enough to sustain interest while waiting for the inevitable big battle at the end.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1. The image is consistently crisp and accurately colored. The monophonic sound is passable. The film is in English, with optional English subtitles, and comes with a trailer. Italian film expert Tim Lucas supplies a commentary track. He explains that AIP cut the film down from the version being presented, presumably to make it play more briskly, but that he has never seen that cut (which is saying something), and the relative rarity of the film's availability under any circumstance is another checkmark in the favor of the Blu-ray. Going over the careers of the cast and the crew in an informative manner, he also covers the history of the production, its strengths ("In nearly all of the film's master shots, it's obvious that a lot of time and concentration went into the composition of the film's space. In nearly every master shot, we get variety of texture, variety of color, action in depth and width, and the sources of light are fascinating in themselves.") as well as its weaknesses, and how it fits into the general scheme of Italian costume features. "This Marco Polo is anything but a faithful retelling of Marco Polo's actual travels. Instead, [as with **Samson and the 7 Miracles of the World**], it takes a real but larger than life individual with a known, real life history, and equates them with the great mythological characters of ancient Greek and Roman literature. The story seems to follow a basic template for historical costume fantasies. A wandering man, strong and intelligent, encounters avatars of good and evil wherever he goes. Everyone he meets is a test of his strength and personal mettle. He meets corrupt and broken kings, ambitious knaves, seductive women, but also, the common folk, and brings his personal gifts to bear in settling unfair and uneven scores, as well as thwarting those who would try to own, control or even punish him."

German musical

If you think that a 'lighthearted German romantic musical' from the early Thirties sounds like an oxymoron, you would be right. They have no idea what they are doing. F.W. Murnau Murnau Stiftung and Kino Lorber Incorporated have released the 1932 German musical directed by Erik Charell, **Congress Dances**, as a *KL Studio Classics* Blu-ray (UPC#738329260057, \$30). Set during the early Nineteenth Century (it should be remembered that the Napoleonic wars were to these guys what WWI is to us in terms of perspective—and perhaps what the conflict in Ukraine will be a century from now), the film is set in Vienna where the leaders of Europe have gathered for a meeting regarding their mutual defense. Looking like a young Laurence Olivier, Conrad Veidt plays Klemens von Metternich, who has organized and is chairing the meeting. Lilian Harvey is an industrious glove shop clerk who meets the Czar of Russia, played by Willy Fritsch. Fritsch has a dual role, also playing the Czar's double, and it is the confusions caused by the presence of the double that provide the film's humor, as the atmosphere in the Viennese evenings provide the music. Harvey is supposed to provide the romance, with Veidt's character scheming to distract the Czar, but since the Czar, although he spends a couple of pleasant evenings with her, doesn't really care much about her, it is a one-way street. The music sequences are large and well organized—the sets are also impressively sized—so all of the components for a classic film are in place, but they never really gel together, as if the 100-minute movie could be satisfied by just having them there. For the performances, the production designs, the audacity of its historical interpretation and the mere idea that it is a nearly lost German film, the feature is worth seeing, but it is more of a curiosity than an enduring classic.

The full screen picture has undergone an elaborate restoration. It is heavily grainy and battered with minor scratches and speckles, but allowing for the film's age and production history, the transfer is still admirable. The film's presentation is clear and stable. The monophonic sound also keeps the distortion of the music to a minimum and the dialog is reasonably clear. The film is in German with optional English subtitles.

Film expert Eddy von Mueller supplies a good commentary track, explaining the film's rickety historical basis and providing a worthy overview of the film's production history. There is in an audio editing error, where one line from his talk is immediately repeated before the talk continues, but he has plenty to say about the backgrounds and skills of the players, the skills of the

film's crew ("This is another tour de force camera tour of some lovely scenery. The amount of camera movement [cinematographer Carl] Hoffmann manages and Charell's mastery of space in this film are really impressive. There's a misapprehension that the transition to sound robbed cinema of much of the mobility it had obtained by the late 1920s. But it's clear from films like this that filmmakers still had plenty of moves."), the strengths of the movie's artistry, and its place in German film history ("The heyday of the waltz was also a period during which the German-speaking world was a musical superpower. So the waltz could be a source of intense cultural and also national pride, and even a little bit of chauvinism. Still unpolluted by ideas of militarism or fanaticism or ethnic superiority, 'Waltzploitation' films were a huge part of the German cinema.").

Menkes movies

Experimental filmmakers are regarded with great awe, in the same manner that novelists regard poets. Whether or not that reverence is deserved, however, is another question. The rules of normal filmmaking to do not apply to experimental filmmakers, of course. But in a my-kid-could-draw-that fashion, there can be a blurred demarcation between a film created by an experimental filmmaker who understands the dynamics of motion pictures and one by a filmmaker who is just learning what works and what doesn't work. One filmmaker who has stepped squarely into that blur is Nina Menkes, whose 40 years of obfuscated cinema are gathered in the two-platter Arbelos Blu-ray release, **The Films of Nina Menkes**, subtitled *Cinematic Sorceress* (UPC#663390004524, \$50). Bereft of significant narrative, her movies are intended to convey impressions and emotions, but the challenge within them is that Menkes tends to just point her camera wherever and let it run for a while, subsequently including what seems like everything she shot in her editing. Almost every movie could be trimmed down by at least a third and still provide the viewer with all of the images, ideas and feelings that it has to offer.

The first film, from 1983, is *The Great Sadness of Zohara*, which runs 40 minutes and basically depicts a young woman who is apparently feeling depressed. She cuts her already short hair to a near buzz and colors it first pink and then blue. She wears different outfits and wanders around a Jewish city for a while before making her way to an arid wilderness where she wanders some more before returning to the city. The city footage looks as if it has been captured mostly on the sly, with people going about their business and, once in a while, recognizing the camera. A few guys also check out the heroine as she passes them. The non-city footage is more formally composed and, as a result, more compelling. Do the images reflect the heroine's troubled psyche? Perhaps. Presented in a squared full screen format, the colors are a touch light and the image is a little soft, with occasional evidence of wear, but hues are generally fresh and details are clear. On the audio track, there is music and recitation of enigmatic poetry with obscure meaning, as well as nicely detailed environmental sounds. The audio quality is excellent, and if it is not in stereo, it is as vivid as if it were, which adds to the immediacy of the images.

Menkes' sister, Trinka Menkes, who plays the central figure in *Zohara*, also stars in the 1986 film, *Magdalena Viraga*, which runs a full 91 minutes. Her hair is grown back, albeit to a modest length, and is dark. Instead of looking sad, she maintains a sourpuss expression through the entire film, but that is understandable, since she is portraying prostitute in an American border town who has men huffing and puffing on top of her day in and day out. The film's chronology is deliberately jumbled, but it does have a narrative of sorts, since there is a murder and the film cuts between her doing her job—which she declares incessantly that she hates—and sitting in jail (playfully, there is one scene where she walks into a room with her arms behind her back and you have no idea if she is handcuffed until the reveal). With long static shots and the dialog recited in monotone (some of it lifted from the writings of Anne Sexton and Gertrude Stein), the film can be taxing, and it should be noted that there is no eroticism in the sex scenes. Viewers who accept the film's basic constructs and have patience, however, are rewarded with a cute surprise in the finale, as the movie's themes concerning female exploitation are brought to an energetic summary. Again, the full screen picture is aged and grainy, but the colors are fresh, while the monophonic sound has a vivid presence.

Her dark hair flowing over her shoulders, Trinka Menkes stars in the 1990 *Queen of Diamonds* as a Las Vegas blackjack dealer. Letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.66:1, the film is a breath of fresh air only in that it looks super, with bright, glossy, sharp colors and no wear. The end credits claim the sound is in stereo, although the audio feels no different than the audio on the first two films, delivering a lovely sense of environment and a subdued delivery of the dialog or anything central to the action. Running 76 minutes, there is no narrative. Along with dealing cards, Menkes' character takes care of an elderly man who eventually dies, attends a wedding, and visits a few decrepit sites on the outskirts of Vegas. The film's one indelible scene, which is replicated as a riveting background for the disc's menu, has two women in midday watching a palm tree burn like a torch. It's neat, but like the rest of the film, it doesn't take things further than that.

The first two films are accompanied by commentaries from Nina Menkes, describing how they were shot (with virtually no crew—it was little more than her and her camera, so she could go places and do things that larger film crews could never get away with doing), how pretty much each scene or sequence was staged, why Trinka (who also helped with the editing) became

so involved with the productions, what happened during the shooting (“This guy. When we were not shooting, when we were standing around on the set like before or after shooting, he kept talking about Godard and how great Godard was. I remember that and I was like, ‘Please shut up and don’t talk about Godard while I’m trying to focus and do something different.’”), what she wanted to convey and, such as it was, the narratives. She expresses a tone of resentment about not getting better gigs even though her films have been honored at festivals, but she can complain all she wants about a lack of interest in women’s issues on film. If a filmmaker disregards the basic concepts of coherence and pacing, investors are not going to be enthusiastic.

Also featured on the platter is a 26-minute talk by Menkes about *Queen of Diamonds*, again sharing how the film was staged (including how she landed access to a busy casino and how much she had to pay to burn down the palm tree) and generally what the narrative was about, along with a trailer for *Queen of Diamonds* and a 12-minute piece that compares passages from all six films in the collection to various taro cards and their interpretations.

Her hair cropped short again, Trinka Menkes plays a Captain in charge of a group of Marines securing a crime scene somewhere in the Californian desert until other authorities arrive in the 1996 *The Bloody Child* on the second platter. Running 86 minutes, the film jumps back and forth in time, although it generally seems to work its way backwards, also using multiple takes to show the same scenes over and over again with minor variations. The nature of the variations could suggest that what is occurring is a dream of some sort, particularly since Menkes is also seen in civilian clothing in the Middle East, almost as if the film was leading into *The Great Sadness of Zorah*. The primary action is intercut with what appears to be documentary footage of Marines relaxing in a bar, evocative images of a wood nymph reciting poems and Shakespeare, and other activities. Menkes is not all that persuasive as a Marine, and the film, although it looks terrific, letterboxed again with an aspect ratio of about 1.66:1, is a bit of a letdown after *Queen of Diamonds*. The stereo sound is really nice again, with a terrific surround presence.

Along with a trailer, there are two interviews with Nina Menkes about the film after screenings of it, one running 31 minutes and the other 28 minutes, although they cover much of the same material and she repeats many of the same points. She explains how the film came to fruition and her thought process during its creation, as well as the film’s meanings and some things that occurred during the shoot.

The final two films are letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.78:1 and are in black and white. Trinka Menkes was not involved with them. Both edge closer to having genuine narratives, and while footage is still repeated or extended (characters spend an awful lot of time just walking from one place to another), there is, on the whole, less that feels like fat which needs to be trimmed. This far along in her career, Nina Menkes still seems to be flailing about in some ways, but scoring more often than she did in the past. There are some terrific, surreal images in *Phantom Love* from 2007 (including a boa constrictor moving across an apartment hallway; in another shot, a woman levitates in a room, and then explodes), which recalls *Queen of Diamonds* in several different ways. Marina Shoif plays a croupier in a casino in what appears to be India, which caters to a mostly Asian clientele. She has a disruptive relationship with her sister, and then becomes worried when the sister goes missing. Running 87 minutes, the film is promising for a while, but never gets beyond establishing an atmosphere.

An unemployed Israeli lowlife played by Slava Bibergal wanders around his mostly Arab neighborhood during the day, drinks at night, and even commits a murder at one point to scrape together some cash in the 2010 *Dissolution*. There is less surrealism and more effort expended on developing Bibergal’s character, but running 89 minutes, there still isn’t all that much to the movie beyond the portrait of the less fashionable neighborhood where Bibergal’s character is residing. The situations and explorations are varied enough to hold a viewer’s attention better than the other films do, the performances are more natural, and there is a greater confidence in both the cinematography (which Menkes operated in all six films, even when she employed another cinematographer) and the editing, but the film still demonstrates more potential talent than it does a realization of talent, as if after so many decades Menkes is still just learning how cinema should work.

On both films, the black-and-white imagery looks crisp and spotless, and the stereo sound continues to be fully dimensional and satisfying. *Dissolution* is in Hebrew and Arabic, with white subtitles identifying the Hebrew dialog and yellow subtitles identifying the Arabic, something we wish would happen more often when a film’s dialog has multiple languages. Menkes supplies commentary tracks on both features, explaining the narratives (which, in the case of *Phantom Love*, is very much in her head rather than on the screen), explaining how the films were staged (she used black and white to better blend diverse locations and materials), recalling her production experiences and explaining her underlying meanings (*Dissolution*, inspired by *Crime and Punishment*, is an apt allegory for Israel’s political turmoil).

Also featured is a 2-minute piece Menkes made in 2022, *The Lioness*, depicting animals in a circus. Since it’s animals and circus performers, it is appealing, even though there isn’t anything more to it than that.

DVD News

CRITERION CORNER: The Criterion Collection is releasing a 4K presentation of Wim Wenders’ *Wings of Desire* with a commentary featuring Wenders and Peter Falk; *The Angels Among Us* (2003), a documentary featuring interviews with Wenders, Falk, Bruno Ganz, Otto Sander, Peter Handke, and composer Jürgen Knieper; an episode of *Cinéma cinémas* from 1987, featuring on-set footage; an interview with director of photography Henri Alekan; Deleted scenes and outtakes; and excerpts from the film *Alekan la lumière* (1985) and from Ganz and Sander’s 1982 film about actor Curt Bois. Ridley Scott’s *Thelma and Louise* will also be in 4K and come with two audio commentaries, featuring Scott, screenwriter Callie Khouri, and Geena Davis and Susan Sarandon; interviews with Scott and Khouri; a documentary featuring Davis, Khouri, Sarandon, Scott, Michael Madsen, Christopher McDonald, and Stephen Tobolowsky, and other members of the cast and crew; *Boy and Bicycle* (1965), Scott’s first short film; the original theatrical featurette; storyboards and deleted and extended scenes, including an extended ending with director’s commentary; and a music video for Glenn Frey’s *Part of Me, Part of You*, from the film’s soundtrack. Also in 4K format comes Seijun Suzuki’s *Branded to Kill* with interviews featuring Suzuki, Joe Shishido and assistant director Masami Kuzuu. Peter Bogdanovich’s debut, *Targets*, will feature a commentary from 2003 featuring Bogdanovich; an interview with filmmaker Richard Linklater; an introduction to the film from 2003 by Bogdanovich; and excerpts from a 1983 interview with production designer Polly Platt. Céline Sciamma’s *Petite Maman* will include a conversation between Sciamma and filmmaker Joachim Trier.

NEW IN BLU: The following titles were recently issued on Blu-ray—Acid Bath Productions V.6 (Acid Bath); Attack of the Beast Creatures (AGFA); The Paradise Motel (All Channel); Dark Glasses (AMD); The Films of Nina Menkes (Arbelos); The Fall of Alejandro, Northern Shade, Spearphising 2 (Bayview); Black Panther Wakanda Forever, Empire of Light, Mickey & Minnie 10 Classic Shorts V.1, Strange World (Buena Vista); So-Called Leaders, Suburban Rebels (Burning Bulb); Kanehsatake (Canadian); Brother’s Keeper, Don’t Deliver Us from Evil, Frostbiter Wrath of the Wendigo, Julia (CAV); The Boxtrolls, Iron Monkey, Shepherd The Story of a Hero Dog, Zu Warriors from the Magic Mountain (Cinedigm); The Human Monster, The Night Has Eyes, Obsessed (ClassicFlix); Hollywood Shuffle, India Song/Baxter Vera Baxter, Romeo and Juliet (Criterion); Broker (Decal); The First VCR/Cassettes Go Hi-Fi (ETR); Actual People (Factory 25); Dear Zoe (Freestyle); Baby Oopsie 2 Murder Dolls, Giantess Battle Attack (Full Moon); Nocebo, Christmas with the Campbells (Image); Love in Country (Indie Nights); Find Her (KDMG); Arsene Lupin Collection, The Bliss of Mrs. Blossom, The Bride Wore Black, Congress Dances, The Crimson Rivers, François Truffaut Collection, The Hunter, If I Were King, Let’s Hope It’s a Girl, Love on the Ground, Maigret Season 3, Marco Polo, Mississippi Mermaid, Nudist Life/10 Days in a Nudist Camp/Shangri-La, Raw Wind in Eden, Secret of the Incas, Silent Avant-Garde, Sorrowful Jones, The Story of Adele H., That Man Bolt, The Werewolf of Washington, White Woman, A World Apart (Kino); B’Twixt Now and Sunrise, Detective Knight Independence, The Inspection, The Old Way, The Price We Pay (Lionsgate); Hunt (Magnolia); TFW NO GF (Massacre); Pinocchio 964 (Media Blasters); Requiem for a Heavyweight, Running the Bases (Mill Creek); Just Another Girl on the IRT (Miramax); God’s Country (MPI); Decision to Leave (Mubi); Lie Hard (Mutiny); .com for Murder, The Dogs, I Miss You Hugs and Kisses, Infernal Rapist, Magnificent Warriors, Made in Hong Kong V.1, Mardi Gras Massacre, Millionaires’ Express, MVP, Sappy Holiday, The Vagrant (MVD); Top of the Hill (Nathan Hill); Blades of Glory, Devotion, Joe Pickett Season 1, Jack Ryan Shadow Recruit, Station Eleven, Three Days of the Condor (Paramount); The Beast in Space (Peekarama); Werewolf Women from Outer Space (Pink Eiga); Enter Santo The First Adventures of the Silver-Masked Man (Powerhouse); A Woman Kills (Radiance); Raymond Lewis L.A. Legend (Ray Lew); Becky (Ronin); Lost Faith (Saturn’s Core); The Day of Destruction, Night Feeder (SRS); Indochine, Ring-a-Ding Rhythm, Salvatore Shoemaker of Dreams, Whitney Houston I Wanna Dance with Somebody (Sony); Attack of the Killer Refrigerator (Terror); Divide & Conquer, Waitress! (Troma); Undead (Umbrella); The Fablemans, Puss in Boots The Last Wish, Puss in Boots The Last Wish, Resident Alien Season 2, Spoiler Alert (Universal); Inbetween Girl (Utopia); Savage Salvation (Vertical); Carnal Monsters, Harvest of the Dead Halloween Night, It’s Not a Wolf, The Things We Cannot Change (VipCo); The Adventures of Batman, House Party, Legion of Super Heroes, Longmire Complete Series (Warner); Project Wolf Hunting (Well Go); When I Consume You (Yellow Veil)

NEW IN 4K: The following titles have recently been released in 4K format—Black Panther Wakanda Forever (Buena Vista); The Boxtrolls, Bubba Ho-Tep, Dragonheart, Kubo and the Two Strings, The Magnificent Seven, The Slumber Party Massacre/Slumber Party Massacre II (Cinedigm); Dazed and Confused, Three Colors Blue White Red (Criterion); Puppet Master III Toulon’s Revenge (Full Moon); Marathon Man (Kino); Running the Bases (Mill Creek); The Texas Chainsaw Massacre (MPI); Eugenie The Story of Her Journey into Perversion, From Beyond, Marquis De Sade’s Justine, The Return of the Swamp Thing (MVD); Devotion, Station Eleven (Paramount); The Remains of the Day (Sony); Legion of Super Heroes, Rocky The Knockout Collection, Training Day (Warner)

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Current Attractions

The following titles recently appeared for the first time:
Accident Man Hitman's Holiday (Samuel Goldwyn)
Acid Bath Production V.6 (Acid Bath)
Adieu Paris (Film Movement)
Adult Adoption (Freestyle)
The Adventures of Ozzie & Harriet Season 9
The Adventures of Ozzie & Harriet Season 10
American Gigolo Season 1 (Paramount)
American Royalty (Vision)*
Andromeda (ITN)
Are Crooks Dishonest? (Wowow)*
Are You Proud? (Indican)
Avatars of the Astral World Astral Projection (Wowow)*
Avatars of the Astral World Psychic (Wowow)
Ave's America (Passion River)*
Baby Fools 2 Murder Dolls (Full Moon)
Belle & Sebastian The Adventure Continues (Film Movement)
Big Sky River (Cinedigm)
Black Panther Wakanda Forever (Buena Vista)
The Bliss of Mrs. Blossom (Kino)
Blood and Steel (SRS)
Booksters Gross
Science Slugs Snails and Other Slimy Creatures (Wowow)
Brother's Keeper (CAV)
C.S. Lewis and The Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe (Wowow)
Calendar Girls (Kino)
Chasing Sundance (Freestyle)*
Children of the Mist (Film Movement)
Christmas with the Campbells (Image)
Crazylies (MVD)
The Crimson Rivers (Kino)
Cryptid (Universal)
The Cult of Humpty Dumpty (ITN)
Dark Glasses (AMD)
Dark Lies the Island (Indican)*
Daria's Book Club Black Beauty (Wowow)
Decision to Leave (Mubi)
Desert Shadows (Universal)
Detective Knight Independence (Lionsgate)
Devotion (Paramount)*
Dog Geniuses All about Pugs (Wowow)
Don't Forget I Love You/Mary Me in Yosemite (Cinedigm)
Empire of Light (Buena Vista)
Exporting Revolution The Formation of the Chinese Communist Party CCP (TMW)*
Exporting Revolution The Soviet Union Elevates Communism to Power in China (TMW)*
The Fabelmans (Universal)

Falling Higher The Story of Ampage (Freestyle)*
A Family for 1640 Days (Film Movement)
Father Stu Reborn (Sony)
The Fight Machine (AMD)
Find Her (KDMG)
Firenado (Uncork'd)
The First Fall (Dark Star)
Fish School Season 1 (Wowow)
Fred Heads The Documentary (Bayview)
Game On Season 1 (Wowow)
Game On The History of Tennis (Wowow)
Giantess Battle Attack (Full Moon)
A Gingerbread Romance (Cinedigm)
The Girl from Starship Venus (Cheezy Flicks)
God's Country Good Ol Girl (Bridgestone)*
Growing Pains Complete Series (Warner)
Happy Fkin Sunshine (Random)*
Health Hacks Easy Tips for a New You (Wowow)
Health Hacks Healthy Eating Habits to Change Your Life (Wowow)
High Expectations (Kino)
High Heat (Paramount)*
High Lonesome (Reel Vault)
Highway One (Indican)
House Party (Universal)*
How the Specter of Communism is Ruling Our World (TMW)*
The Human Monster (ClassicFix)
Hunt (Magnolia)
I Will Soar (Bridgestone)*
India Song / Baxter Vera Baxter (Criterion)
Infiltrating the West Communism Filters into the West (TMW)*
Infiltrating the West The Communist Party Attempts to Undermine Western Society (TMW)*
Infiltrating the West The Hidden Implications of Political Correctness (TMW)*
Infiltrating the West 1960s Hippies and Communist Idealism (TMW)*
The Inspection (Lionsgate)
JFK Conspiracy (Wowow)
Jim Button and Luke the Engine Driver/Jim Button and the Wild 13 (Cinedigm)
Joe Pickett Season 1 (Paramount)
Julia (CAV)
Kid Branica Constellations (Wowow)
The King of Laughter (Film Movement)
Life & Life (Indican)
A Life's Work (Kino)
Little Corey Gorey (SRS)
Little Dixie (Paramount)
The Long Dark Trail (MVD)
Love in Country (Indie Rights)
Love on the Ground (Kino)
The Man in the Basement (Kino)
Mandrake (AMD)

Marco Polo (Kino)
Mass Killing in the East The Final Solution The Elimination of the Jews (TMW)*
Mass Killing in the East The Great Purge and the Terror of Communism (TMW)*
Maverick Complete Series (Warner)
Medusa's Venom (Devilworks)
Miss Scarlet and the Duke Season 3 (Paramount)
The Mummy Resurrection (High Flyers)
The Musicians' Green Book An Enduring Legacy (Paramount)
MVP (MVD)
The NHP Diaries (Nathan Hill)
The Night Has Eyes (ClassicFix)
Nocobo (Image)
Nothing Is Impossible (Sony)
Obsessed (ClassicFix)
The O'Henry Playhouse V.3 (ClassicFix)
The Old Way (Lionsgate)
On the Come Up (Paramount)
The Paradise Motel (All Channel)
Paulo Coelho and the Alchemist (Wowow)
Pett Mal (Dark Star)
The Price We Pay (Lionsgate)
Pretty Little Liars Original Sin Season 1 (Warner)
Project Wolf Hunting (Well Go)
Puss in Boots The Last Wish (Universal)*
Rapture Director's Cut (Bayview)
Raymond Lewis L.A. Legend (Ray Lew)*
Resident Alien Season 2 (Universal)
Rogue Agent Romeo and Juliet (Criterion)
Running the Bases (Mill Creek)
ruth weiss One Step West Is the Sea (Indiepix)
Salvatore Shoemaker of Dreams (Sony)
Sappy Holiday (MVD)
Savage Salvation (Vertical)
Screamers The Hunting (Sony)
Secret of the Incas (Kino)
Shaping a Dream Unspersize Me in Cuba (Passion River)*
Shark Waters (Greenfield)
Shepherd The Story of a Hero Dog (Cinedigm)
Sleepless Nights (Leomark)*
So-Called Leaders (Burning Bulb)
The Split Season 3 (Warner)
Spoiler Alert (Universal)
Station Eleven (Paramount)*
Strange World (Buena Vista)
Suburban Rebels (Burning Bulb)
Super Z (Synergetic)
Sweet Carolina (Cinedigm)
Sweet Revenge A Hannah Swenson Mystery (Cinedigm)
The Tale of King Crab (Oscilloscope)
There There (Magnolia)

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 Acid Bath:
→Slash-Mates 2
Second Semester (You're Melting/Slugs)
From Amcormi:
Left Behind Rise of the Antichrist
From AMD:
Christmas Bloody Christmas
Glorious Aftertaste 2
Doc Martin Season 10 Sissy
→Scare Package II
Rad Chad's Revenge
→The Suspect
→Midsomer Murders Season 23
From Ariztical:
→All Our Fears
From Breaking Glass:
Nana's Boys
From Bridgestone:
→Time Boys
From CAV:
→Wid Revels
→Amnesia
From Cheezy Flicks:
The Haunted Palace
→The Killing King
→The Lazarus Syndrome
→Idaho Transfer
→Wonder Who's Killing Her Now
From Cinedigm:
WWE Elimination Chamber 2023
Marry Go Round/ Wedding of a Lifetime
Romance in Style/ Road Trip Romance
→NFL Super Bowl LVIII Champions Kansas City
→When Love Is Not Enough The Lois Wilson Story
→Rip in Time
→Forever in My Heart
→Groundswell

→A Splash of Love/High Flying Romance
From ClassicFlix:
Trade Winds
Vogues of 1938
The Long Wait
From Criterion:
Triangle of Sadness
→Targets
→Petite Maman
From Dark Star:
Lonesome
→El Houb
→Punch
From Decal:
The Offering
→Infinity Pool
→Emily
From Devilworks:
→Alien Invasion
From Dreamscape:
Latin Lover
The Love Destination Courses Breathe
The Love Destination Courses Self-Compassion Meditations
The Love Destination Courses Sleep Meditations
The Love Destination Courses Understanding Attachment Styles
The Love Destination Courses Relaxation for Sleep
Stealing Chaplin Saving Lincoln
The Things We've Seen
Symphony for a Broken Orchestra
A Land of Books
→County Line No Fear
→We Are Grateful
→Guess How Much I Love Canada
→Guess How Much I Love Texas
→Fry Bread
→Ghoula and the Ghost with No Name
→Do Not Take Your Dragon to Dinner
→Do Not Let Your Dragon Spread Germs
→Do Not Bring Your Dragon to the Library
→Unicorn Yoga
→The Youngest Marcher The Story of Audrey Faye Hendricks
→Call Me Miss Hamilton
→Leila The Perfect Witch
→Backfired When Volkswagen Lied to America
→Going to Green V.1
→Going to Green V.2
→Going to Green V.3
→Going to Green V.4
→Going to Green V.5
→Edens Lost & Found V.1 Chicago
→Edens Lost & Found V.2 Los Angeles
→Edens Lost & Found V.3 Philadelphia
→Edens Lost & Found V.4 Seattle
→El Freeman
→Hutsulka Ksenya
→Garden Store V.1 Family Friend
→Garden Store V.2 Deserter
→Garden Store V.3 Sultior
→Volendam A Refugee Story
→Didi's Dreams
→Journey into Amazing Caves
→The Big House Reborn
→Fireseed Reading of Alice in Wonderland
→Fireseed Reading of Through the

Looking Glass
→Fireseed Reading of The Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde
→Fireseed Reading of The Story of Doctor Dolittle
→Fireseed Reading of Dracula
→Fireseed Reading of Black Beauty
→Fireseed Reading of My Man Jeeves
→The Arabic Quilt
→Julian at the Wedding
→The Night Baafore Christmas
→How Do Computers Follow Instructions?
→Love the Rim How Elgin Baylor Changed Basketball
→The Fabled Stables Belly of the Beast
→Lola Plants a Garden
→From Seed to Plant
→Twas the Night before Pride
→Hollywood The Great Stars
→Designing Healthy Communities V.1
→Designing Healthy Communities V.2
→Avichi (animated)
→The History of Flight
→Let There Be Light
→Highlights Holiday Fun!
→Highlights Healthy Living!
→Highlights Imagination Station!
→Highlights Zoom Zoom!
→Highlights Rhyme Time!
→How to Live to a Hundred
→Walking Through History Season 3
→Gustavo The Shy Ghost
→The Hanukkah Magic of Nate Gadol
→The Fabled Stables Willa the Wisp
→How Do Bridges Not Fall Down?
→How Do Molecules Stay Together?
→How Do Ants Survive a Flood?
→How Do Seesaws Go Up and Down?
→How Did Romans Count to 100?
→How Does Soap Clean Your Hands?
→Julian Is a Mermaid
→Mambo Mucho Mambo
→Love in the Library
→The Golden Acorn
→One Day University A Different America
→Clean Your Hands How Our Country Has Changed from 1969 through Today
→The Magic Sword
→Adventures in Wild California
→The Last of the Mohicans
→Daniel & Majella's B&B Roadtrip
→Walking through History with Tony Robinson Season 1
→Walking through History with Tony Robinson Season 2
→Mushroom Rain
→The Boomer Revolution
→Five Fables
→The Borrowers
→Black History Aviators
→Mother Father Deaf
→My Papi Has a

Motorcycle
→Dragons Love Tacos
→Llama Unleashes the Alpacalyse
→Dolores Theasaurus
→Lulu the Llamacorn
→Juneteenth for Maizie
→Lola at the Library
→Finn's Fun Trucks V.1
From Duke:
TT Isle of Man 2022 Official Review
→F1A Formula One World Championship 2022 The Official Review
From Eternal Flame:
The Residents Triple Trouble
From Eyes Wide Open:
Psychopaths Killing Spree Couples
From Film Chest:
→Mike Hammer Private Eye 1997-1998
From Film Movement:
Goliath
All Eyes Off Me
A Bag of Marbles
→A Family for 1640 Days
→The Mission
From First Run:
→Scrap
From First Line:
The Seven from Texas
From 4Digital:
The Beast Below
→Night of the Killer Bears
From Full Moon:
Giantess Attack vs. Mecha Fembot
Puppet Master Doktor Death
Femalien Starlight Saga
→Sorority Babes in the Slimeball Bowl-O-Rama 2
→Baby Oopie 3 Burn Baby Burn
From Fun City:
Party Girl
From Glasshouse:
→Head Rush
From Grasshopper:
Keane
From Gravitas:
Eddie and Abbie and Ellie's Dead Aunt
From High Filers:
→Ripper's Revenge
From Image:
The Apology
→A Lot of Nothing
→Kids vs. Aliens
From Indican:
→When Men Were Men
→Mantra
→Corp-E Diem
→Lovers in a Dangerous Time
From Indiepix:
Sadness and Joy in the Life of Giraffes
→Pilgrimage The Voyages of Fernao Mendes Pinto
→A Handful of Water
From ITN:
Easter Bunny
Massacre The Bloody Trail
Bloody Mary Returns
→Dinosaur Hotel The Next Level
→Meteor First Impact
From Kino:
In the Blood Cranked Up
The Super 8 Years Let It Be Monday
Dear Mr. Brody I Got a Monster
Burlesque Heart of the Glitter Tribe
Secret Defense (Rivette)
On the Line the Richard Williams Story

Filmmakers for the Prosecution/Nuremberg It's Lesson for Today
Paris Police 1900 Season 1
The Hunters Seasons 1 & 2
→Juniper
→Swim
→iMordicai
From Leda:
→Leda
From Lionsgate:
Hex
Nutcracker and the Magic Flute
The Walking Dead Season 11
→The Whale
→Alice, Darling
→Seriously Red
→Plane
→The Weapon
From Magnolia:
Joyride
→War Trap
From Mainframe:
→Weekenders
From Mill Creek:
Battle Kijai V.1
Ultraman vs. Red King
An Unlikely Angel
Dawson's Creek Complete Collection (20 platters)
Mike Birbiglia Stand-Up Comedy Collection
Jim Gaffigan Stand-Up Comedy Collection
From Miramax:
→Confess, Fletch
From Movie Time:
Basic Lessons for Babies & Toddlers V.5 Colors & Shapes
From MPI:
Arthur Malédiction
From Music Box:
Leonor Will Never Die
From MVD:
Anything Goes Tonight or Never
The Grand Tour John & Jen
The Snowball Effect
→The Five Days
→Birdemic 3 Sea Eagle
→The Swiss Family Robinson
→Film Hawk
From Oscilloscope:
→Stanleyville
From Paramount:
Rebuilding Notre Dame
PBS Kids Just a Little Bit Spooky!
All Creatures Great and Small Season 3
The Letter A Message for Our Earth
The Good Fight Final Season
Vienna Blood Season 3
Star Trek Strange New Worlds Season 1
The Amazing Race Season 34
Survivor Season 43
Ruthless Monopoly's Secret History
→Drillbit Taylor
→Babylon
→Rick and Morty Season 6
→Paw Patrol Aqua Pups
→Blue's Big City Adventure
→South Park Season 25
→Sanditon Season 3
→Marie Antoinette
→Zora of the Ocean
Dear Mr. Hurston Claiming a Space
Burlesque Heart of the Glitter Tribe
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→Bulletproof Monk
→The Quiet American
From Sony:
Father Stu Reborn
→A Man Called Otto
→Legacy Peak
→Moonrise
→5000 Blankets
→The Son
From SRS:
Solitude of the Tormentors
Ed Gein The Musical Night of the Zodiac
→Streets of Darkness
→Doll Shark
→The Hood Has Eyes
From Strand:
In From the Side
→Tony Taktiani
From Synergetic:
Junk Head
→Breakthrough The Kennedy Assassination Solved
→Oink
From Timelife:
Russell Simmons' Def Comedy Jam Collection (12 platters)
From Trialside:
→The Collective Movie
From Uncork'd:
Dawn
Of the Devil
The Killing Tree
→End of Loyalty
→Ghost Town
From Universal:
Gaslit Complete Series (2 platters)
→The Locksmith
→M3GAN
→Chucky Season 2
→Devil's Peak
→Wicked Games
From Vertical:
Lullaby
→Maybe I Do
Anything Goes Tonight or Never
The Grand Tour John & Jen
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