

THE DVD LASER DISC NEWSLETTER

JUNE
2023
Issue #466
\$5.00

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

All noise on the Western Front

The Oscar-winning Netflix 2022 German adaptation of the World War I classic, **All Quiet on the Western Front**, has been released on Blu-ray by Netflix and Capelight (UPC#030306226392, \$30) with an exceptional audio track—actually, it has seventeen exceptional audio tracks, but we'll get to that in a bit. The intuitive way to mix a war film is to make the explosions as loud and earth-shaking as possible, but this film, directed by Edward Berger, smooths everything out so that nothing is sheer, nothing will leave smoke coming out of your speakers, and nothing relents. The noises are always there, haunting the characters when not assaulting them directly. The Oscar-winning musical score, by Volker Bertelmann, has a strange, two-level design, with a traditional orchestral presence often giving way to a modernist electronic buzz that quickly becomes associated with death. The film's sounds are warm, soft and intricately constructed, and the BD directs each noise to its appropriate position in the sound field. The audio delivery has plenty of power, but it also has beauty, like a perfect blossom in the middle of a battlefield.

Running 147 minutes, the film is mercifully brief in establishing the naïve, gung-ho students eager to sign up and fight as the war approaches its final year, and after presenting their first exposure to reality and winning substantially the number of central characters, the narrative advances to the war's final months, as those who are left, while compelled to follow orders, are hoping to hang on long enough to survive. It can be felt, at least upon an initial viewing, that the final act is drawn out, but that is necessary in order to convey how truly hopeless war can be. Although it is set a century ago, one cannot help but identify immediately with war now, because while the technology may have advanced, the devastation and horror created by destruction and the essential fragility of the human shell remain the same.

In addition to its Foreign Language win, the film also won an Oscar for James Friend's cinematography, and it, too, is as lovely and as graphic as the film's sound. Letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1, the image is exquisite in its chromatic detail, and darker areas of the screen are carefully defined. One way to make a war film is to make it look like it was shot on the fly, in order to convey the immediacy of the terrors of battle, but in creating a film as compositionally formalized as **All Quiet on the Western Front**, Berger seeks and achieves a greater message about the randomness and futility of existence and the price that is always paid by some for the follies of others.

While we preferred the original German Dolby Atmos track, there is also a carefully recorded English DTS track, as well as nine other alternate European language tracks in 5.1-channel Dolby Digital. There are also six different audio tracks that describe the action, including one in English ("A thick fog obscures the landscape ahead. A large object appears through the fog. Behind them, the sun hangs low in the hazy sky. The object comes nearer, revealing a French tank. More tanks emerge from the fog."), and eighteen subtitled tracks, including English. Along with four trailers, there is an excellent 18-minute production featurette seeming to touch upon everything that went into conceiving and executing the film.

Berger also supplies a superb commentary track, in English, going over his experiences making the film, what he wanted to accomplish and how elaborate his effort had to be. From his work with Bertelmann and Friend, to the intricacies of costume designer Lisy Christl's needs to sustain precise levels of mud on the clothing, he goes over every aspect of the film's creation. He explains in careful, technical detail how the star, Felix Kammerer, was able to modulate his performance while shooting his scenes out of chronological order, and he describes the orchestral coordination that is required for every practical and special effect. "He stuffs this guy's mouth with earth. Obviously, he couldn't. All these little details that you have to work out. You can't put real earth in this guy's mouth, so there was a little

box with clay, sort of edible, basically, hidden in the earth and Felix had to grab exactly that to stuff in his mouth. So all these details take a long, long time to work out and to shoot. There's a blood pump underneath this guy's uniform that is hidden in the crater, and that's complicated, too, to shoot."

All noise on the home front

We reviewed the Criterion Collection's Blu-ray release of Wim Wenders' awe-striking 1987 **Wings of Desire**, a depiction of angels walking around Berlin before the Wall fell, in Mar 10. That BD platter is included with a 4K platter on Criterion's new 4K Blu-ray release (UPC#71551528-2918, \$50), but the 4K platter has a brand new transfer that was taken from a 2017 restoration. With additional logos and the opening text explaining what went into the restoration, the 4K platter runs 130 minutes, while the standard BD platter runs 127 minutes. Solveig Dommartin's bright cherry red dress near the end of the standard BD becomes a slightly less attention-riveting orange-red on the 4K presentation, but the texture of the fabric is so much better detailed on the 4K version that it looks more realistic and more accurate, even if it isn't as immediately crowd pleasing. The film is mostly in black and white, with a few color inserts, until the end, when the color takes command. There is mostly a logical reason for this, but it is best left to be discovered. The black-and-white sequences are much sharper and cleaner on the 4K presentation, and overall, the film's image is substantially improved. On any film, that would be an advantage, but on **Wings of Desire**, it has an even greater impact. Bruno Ganz and Otto Sander portray angels walking among the populace. The film is a mesmerizing rumination upon the interior, exterior and spiritual third state of each of us, and since its ideas depend upon fantasy to be conveyed, the improvement the 4K presentation provides to the film's careful cinematography enhances not only a viewer's concentration, but acceptance of what is being presented. The film was already spellbinding, but the 4K presentation enhances its profound effects exponentially.

The 5.1-channel DTS audio was already outstanding and while its detail is a little clearer, there is no significant improvement. The film's sound mix is amazing—this is the only movie in the world, except maybe **Ghostbusters**, where the separation and directional effects in the library scene are as pulse-quickening as those in the subway scene—and is an intricate component in the film's array of amusements. The audio is mostly in German, but there is quite a bit of English, too (Peter Falk has an amusing supporting part), and French (Dommartin's language). Optional English subtitles on the 4K platter translate the German and French dialog, but not other languages that pop up in its stream-of-consciousness miasma, even when such passages are given a brief emphasis in the sound mix. The commentary that appeared on the standard BD platter featuring Wenders, Falk and producer Mark Rance has been carried over. The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.66:1.

The standard BD platter also has the commentary, along with a trailer, a still frame collection of production designs, a 43-minute retrospective documentary, 39 minutes of deleted footage, a 9-minute behind-the-scenes piece, two profiles of cinematographer Henri Alekan that total 37 minutes, and a 30-minute profile of supporting actor Curt Bois.

The importance of noise

Even very recently, when a woman accuses a prominent public figure who once employed her of sexual harassment, the question immediately arises, "Why didn't she just quit?" If more people had seen the excellent 2022 Universal feature about how the New York Times first broke the story of Harvey Weinstein's shenanigans, **She Said**, a Universal release (UPC#1913-29238448, \$20), they wouldn't be asking that question. One of the points that is made very clear in the film is that the problem is so systemic, the personality and even the motivation of the individual woman who finds herself compromised or abused by her employer is irrelevant.

Noise (Continued)

Directed by Maria Schrader, the film begins flaccidly. It is immediately apparent that the two stars, Carey Mulligan and Zoe Kazan, are not Robert Redford and Dustin Hoffman (nor is Patricia Clarkson Jason Robards), and while the production design replications of the New York Times offices and so on are impressive, the narrative appears to be more interested in the personal lives of the reporters and the minutia of their initial steps. But as the story builds over the film's 129 minutes, it becomes riveting entertainment. It isn't just gossip about Weinstein, it was an entire method of conducting business, and it was emblematic of what women had been complaining about in general for decades beforehand. Despite the supposedly enlightened era of the new Teens, it was still happening—and it is still happening, although thanks to the reporters, and those who were emboldened enough by their writing to stand up and speak truth to power, maybe it isn't happening quite as much any more.

Along with what sounds like actual audio recordings of Weinstein, Ashley Judd, bless her heart, plays herself. The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1. The image is reasonably sharp and colors are fresh. The 5.1-channel Dolby Digital sound has an uninteresting dimensionality. There is an alternate audio track that describes the action (“At the New York Times office, Jodi dials her phone and walks down a staircase. At her home, Megan answers her phone.”), alternate French and Spanish audio tracks, optional English, French and Spanish subtitles, a trailer and a great 7-minute promotional featurette centered on interviews with the actual reporters.

Gathering Storm

It begins like a horror movie. It's night. The blonde heroine gets off a bus, but as soon as the bus pulls away from the station, the station shuts down, as does the diner across the street, and suddenly, she is all alone. She starts to walk into town, but the streets are empty, until she hears noises and turns a corner, to see a crowd of figures in white sheets. The Ku Klux Klan—it is a horror movie. The 1951 Warner Bros.' feature, Storm Warning, directed by Stuart Heisler and released on Blu-ray by Warner as a *WB Warner Archive Collection* title (UPC#810103689381, \$22), is a terrific suspense film, even as it awkwardly avoids—and therefore invites—political condemnation by ignoring the inherent racism that is central to the Klan's reason for being. That said, it does score a major point that is rarely discussed even today, that the leaders of the organization are primarily using it to scam the rubes and line their pockets.

Anyway, the heroine, played by Ginger Rogers, witnesses the murder of a white reporter and slips away unnoticed, and then the film turns into an intriguing variation on A Streetcar Named Desire. She has come to town to visit her younger sister, played by Doris Day. She learns that her sister is expecting, and meets her lug of a husband, played by Steve Cochran, only to recognize him as one of the Klansmen involved in the murder. For the sake of her sister, she agrees to keep things to herself, but tension rises in the home, especially after a local persevering prosecutor, played by Ronald Reagan, determines that Rogers' character might have been a witness. The film is expertly directed. There are sequences in a crowded bowling arcade in which the viewer can follow the principal characters and understand their actions despite the shoulder-to-shoulder masses around them. And every man is wearing a different hat, which immediately identifies and stratifies his social standing, economic standing and educational background. But then, later on, at the Klan meeting, everyone is wearing the same white hoods...

Running 93 minutes, the film, as we said, is an excellent suspense feature, but it is even more worthwhile—and worth considering as a sole reason—for the terrific performances by Rogers and Day. It has long been established that Day was woefully underrated by critics for her acting abilities and Rogers, even though she won an Oscar, was often discounted as well. Watching the two of them work together is movie star heaven at its finest, and it is only because of the film's political context that their wonderful and outstanding collaboration has been so largely ignored.

The full screen black-and-white picture is spotless. Once in a while the cinematography will look a bit soft, but when the focus is sharp, so is the image, and contrasts are finely detailed. The monophonic sound is solid and there are optional English subtitles, along with a fascinating 21-minute black-and-white documentary from 1951 entitled One Who Came Back that appears to follow a genuinely wounded serviceman from the Korean battlefield to a MASH unit to a field hospital to hospitals in Tokyo and Hawaii and then on to the States for rehabilitation, and an inexpensively animated 7-minute color Merrie Melodies cartoon from 1950 entitled Bunny Hugged in which Bugs Bunny gets the best of a professional wrestler.

Not fade away

Peter Bogdanovich's remarkable and captivating debut feature, Targets, released on Blu-ray by the Criterion Collection (UPC#71551528-3519, \$40), retains elements that will clearly never seem outdated, even as it both deliberately and inadvertently celebrates the passing of eras in American culture. Still underappreciated, the 1968 film brilliantly takes two separate narrative lines and brings them to the perfect crossroads. In one, an aging horror film star, readily embodied by Boris Karloff in one of his final roles, contemplates retirement as arrangements are made for his promotional appearance at a now faded American tradition, a drive-in theater. In the other, Tim O'Kelly gives an equally precise and gripping performance as a young man who is

maintaining the veneer of sanity on the outside, but has snapped inside, plotting and then following through with an American tradition that has never faded away, a mass shooting. We reviewed a Paramount DVD in Nov 06 and would refer readers there for more information, except to add that along with everything else, the 90-minute film's attention to the details of how a drive-in theater functioned are joyfully atmospheric and exact, capturing a true aspect of Americana as the movie so adeptly embraces its more obvious intentions.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1. The DVD looked terrific, so there isn't much room for improvement, but the additional color accuracy and detailed crispness offered by the Blu-ray playback, along with the meatier monophonic sound mix, makes the film even more gripping than it was before. Along with the optional English subtitles, the 13-minute introduction by Bogdanovich and his commentary have been carried over from the DVD, both of which contain a wealth of information about making the film and the people who were involved. Additionally, Criterion has included a terrific 27-minute appreciation by Richard Linklater and an excellent 30-minute audio-only interview with Bogdanovich's principal collaborator, production designer Polly Platt, about the creation of the film (and the shelved movie she and Bogdanovich made before that one, which became Voyage to the Planet of Prehistoric Women) and some secrets to quick and dirty production designs.

Ophüls classic

A 1939 Gaumont film that would have given the American censors conniptions, Max Ophüls' There's No Tomorrow, has been released on Blu-ray by Gaumont, Kino Lorber and Kino Classics (UPC#738329262549, \$30). Edwige Feuillère is a topless dancer in a Parisian nightclub, earning enough money to keep her young son in a boarding school away from the city. She meets an old flame, played by Georges Rigaud, who is visiting from Canada, and she tries to hide her life from him by taking a fancy apartment, but everything eventually unravels. There are moments of Ophüls' cinematic mastery within the film and indeed, running just 82 minutes, the romantic melodrama would not amount to much were it not for his assured hand in guiding the performers and the narrative. From the perspective of Ophüls' accomplishments, it is a minor work, but from the opposite perspective of movies as a whole, it is an outstanding motion picture, a smoothly executed and captivating examination of the unpleasant compromises that life can force upon the innocent of heart.

The full screen black-and-white picture looks lovely. It may be a little soft around the edges, thus belying its age, but the transfer is immaculate, which adds significantly to the impact of Ophüls' visual choices. The monophonic sound is a bit worn, but workable, and the film is in French with optional English subtitles. An interesting original French trailer is also included. Suggesting that the film is one of Ophüls' greatest works, film scholar Adrian Martin supplies a very good commentary track, going over the ups and downs of Ophüls' career, comparing the movie extensively to Blonde Venus (Aug 18), and carefully analyzing each sequence in an enlightening manner. “Now any moment now we're going to have the aesthetic shock of the lights. There it is. Absolutely great, you know, what a thing to plant. Now this is the thing. Ophüls worked a lot with his scriptwriters, particularly on the question of structure, and on all levels, making sure, of course, that events are explained and motivated. Another aesthetic aspect of the way he films and the way he cuts is often he'll use a very powerful—it's not just shot/reverse shot—it's like field/reverse field. Like it's the whole body of one actor intercut with the whole body of another actor, and also, almost the different worlds that they inhabit. [Feuillère's character] there, with all of her knowledge, and internally, of what's going on, sort of lives in a different world to the more gullible and the more innocent [Rigaud's character]. And so simply to cut back and forth, with a slight difference in the emphasis, and in the framing and in the lighting, is enough to give you this sense of, within the world of the story, even when two people in love are talking to each other, there are two perspectives, and often two perspectives that are really at odds with each other, that do not align at all.”

The only Ophüls film with a joyful conclusion for both the characters and the audience, his 1932 The Bartered Bride, a Triad Productions release (UPC#83765411378), has, unfortunately, a terrible transfer. Looking like it is the umpteenth generation copy of a copy, the full screen black-and-white image is smeary and hazy on large screens and incoherent on smaller ones. The monophonic sound is also scratchy and strained, but nothing can stop those Bedřich Smetana earworms from lifting your spirits and encouraging you to look past the presentation's shortcomings. The image is clear enough to make out the characters once the story gets underway. Between the music and Ophüls' cinematic liberation of the source opera's narrative, it is far more rewarding to sit through the program's wonderful 76 minutes for what it has to offer than begrudge it for its failures.

The DVD-Laser Disc Newsletter is published during the first week of every month. Subscription prices are \$47.50 for one year or \$75 for two. Beyond the U.S.: \$70 for one year or \$130 for two. MC, VISA, Disc. & Amex: Provide acct# and expir. date. PAYPAL: DVDlaserdisc@gmail.com. Address all letters: To the Editor, The DVD-Laser Disc Newsletter, PO Box 382, Glen Cove NY 11542 or e-mail to dpratt@DVDLaser.com. Letters may be edited for length. All contents are copyright 2023 The DVD-Laser Disc Newsletter and may not be copied or reprinted without written consent. ISSN 0749-5250

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

A couple who are being forced into an arranged marriage each fall for an itinerant visitor (a coachman, and a member of a decrepit but spirited traveling circus) to their small town, and it is up to the wits of the four lovers to confound the parents and the town so they can secure the desires of their hearts. Smetana's music continually unleashes Ophüls' tracking shots and meticulous editing. While his lighting effects are more challenging to judge given the state of the transfer, that, too, appears to be guided by the music. Ophüls is not exactly famous for his comedic touches, but he embraces the story's comical underpinnings with an assured hand. There is a point, fairly early on, where you forget about the transfer and just savor what is being offered, as if you had bought a cheap seat for the opera itself and were taking everything in from the very back of a theater with lousy acoustics, and no one in the audience in front of you had taken off their hats. That's the reason you're there in the first place, because seeing and hearing what you can is more rewarding than any drawback. The film is German with permanent English subtitles that contain a few typos.

Sciamma's Maman

Céline Sciamma's [Petite Maman](#), a Criterion Collection Blu-ray (UPC#715515283915, \$40), runs 73 minutes. The 2021 feature begins as a straightforward tale about two young girls who meet in the woods behind their houses. One girl is there temporarily as her parents clean out the house, which is where her grandmother has passed away. They become friends and build a shack of sticks and dead branches in the forest. The film is in French, with optional subtitles, and seems to be a simple but charming story about a budding friendship—ideal not only for nostalgic adults, but for precocious children who can read subtitles or grew up understanding French. There are a few occurrences and images that nag at your subconscious, but you don't really pay attention to them on the first viewing because you are focused on the story at hand. And then, at the 48-minute mark, there is a whopper of a spine-tingling plot twist that leaves you realizing you are going to have to allot twice the film's 73 minutes, in order to watch the movie a second time. We wouldn't dream of spoiling it any more, even though we have already been unable to avoid sharing a few clues, but the film remains a terrific children's story while doubling as an equally compelling tale for a viewer of any age—and indeed, the older, the better.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1. Darker shots are a little smeary here and there, but otherwise the image is fresh and sharp, with nicely detailed hues. The DTS sound has a compelling dimensionality and crisp definitions. There is a trailer that gives away the store, a much better trailer that does not, and a good 22-minute interview with Sciamma (in English) about the film, its psychology and the paths her creative drives are taking her.

Finally, Sciamma wrote the script for the 2016 Oscar-nominated claymation-style animated feature, [My Life As a Zucchini](#), directed by Claude Barras, which has been included, as well. Running 67 minutes, the film is at times creepy and at times touching, eventually coalescing around a feel good story about orphans living in a benign orphanage and two who are lucky enough to find a new home. Presented in French with optional English subtitles, the playful animation is effective, particularly with the slick, spotless transfer, which is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1. The sound has a workable dimensionality. Don't quit when the credits start, because there is a fantastic little segment buried within them that takes audio from the vocal audition of the young boy, Sixtine Murat, voicing the lead character and builds more animation around it as he opens up to questions about his own life.

Exquisite mystery

Murder mysteries use the puzzle of the mystery as their entertainment, executed by intriguing characters who bring personality—more entertainment—and humanity to the narrative. Having captivated attention with these factors, the best mysteries then surreptitiously teach at the same time, thus providing knowledge and enrichment to swell their value all the more. An exquisitely executed Italian murder mystery from 1975, [The Sunday Woman](#), has been released on Blu-ray by Radiance (UPC#760137-123705, \$35). Directed by Luigi Comencini, the victim moseys around during the first 10 minutes of the 109-minute film being awful to everyone he meets, so the only surprise when he is finally bludgeoned (by a stone phallus!) is that it took so long for someone to get around to it. Set in Turin, Marcello Mastroianni is a detective, transferred from Rome, who is assigned to the case, and Jacqueline Bisset (whose performance is excellent even though she is dubbed—she put her all into it) and Jean-Louis Trintignant are among the upper class suspects who had plenty of motive and no alibis. Set to an entrancingly repetitive Ennio Morricone musical score, the film has humor, nudity, suspense, and intricately knit stories represented by the various suspects. At the same time, however, the film provides a real feel for what Turin is actually like (the architecture of its downtown can come across as monolithic) and part of the mystery actually plays out on Mastroianni's character not understanding the local dialect. In other words, the film delivers everything such a story is supposed to deliver—puzzling, thrilling, amusing and teaching—and is, in its own way, utter perfection.

The film was originally presented in full screen format for television broadcast but was photographed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1, and both versions have been provided. The letterboxed version adds a little bit of picture information on the left side and masks quite a bit off the top and bottom of the image in comparison to the full screen version. Each version brings a fresh perspective to the film and justifies seeing the movie more than once. The color transfer looks fine. The image is a little soft in darker portions of the screen, but is otherwise in excellent condition. The monophonic sound is okay and worth amplifying to drive your neighbors nuts with incessant Morricone riffs. The film

is in Italian with optional English subtitles and comes with a trailer; a welcome promotional interview with Trintignant (who says there are actually more Sicilians living in Turin than there are natives, as it were) that is combined with a lengthy film clip to run 4 minutes; a passable 18-minute overview of the film's dynamics; a very good 22-minute interview with cinematographer Luciano Tovoli reminiscing about the production, Comencini and the stars; and a good 36-minute interview with the son of screenwriter Furio Scarpelli, who talks about his father's entire career and creative circle of collaborators, and also deconstructs the aspects of the script that did not appear in the source novel.

American demagogue

America has a long tradition of demagoguery, but like popular entertainers of the day, they tend to drop out of the sight of prevailing history once the generation they inflamed has passed. Thus, when another appears, he seems fresh and new. Huey Long died in 1935, but in the Fifties, people still remembered him vividly, and there were movies inspired by some of his and others' populist antics, notably the 1957 [A Face in the Crowd](#) (May 19). Raoul Walsh's 1953 ["A Lion Is in the Streets"](#) also seems to have been inspired partly by Long (the setting, although deliberately generic, has a strong Louisiana vibe), with James Cagney as a traveling salesman who parlays his extensive community connections into a political career, focusing his ire on the corrupt businessmen who run the state. Based upon a novel by Adria Locke Langley, the film was produced by Cagney's brother, William—it kind of feels like Walsh was a hired hand—and was distributed by Warner Bros., which has now released the film as a [WB Warner Archive Collection](#) Blu-ray (UPC#810103689350, \$22).

Cagney is the same bundle of energy he almost always is, and the story is carried along by his character's adventures and schemes, from a nicely composed romance with a schoolteacher played by Barbara Hale to the complexities of a murder trial where his character tries to help the defendant. The film runs a brief 88 minutes, which also suggests that it has a number of panic trims—Anne Francis begins as a major character and then just disappears, although her performance is super—after the film's creators discovered that the movie had too much political resonance to succeed as a contemporary entertainment. The thing is, the film's political resonance is now downright unnerving, because America has entered another era where demagoguery is having its way with her once again. As the film builds to its mob rebellion crescendo you cringe not because its sentiments are falsely executed, but because it looks and sounds all too real, and you realize that the specific dynamic that the film captures in its portrait of untamed media power is never going to go away—except that it isn't lions, it's hyenas.

The full screen picture looks gorgeous, with vivid hues and accurate fleshtones. There is not a flaw to be found. The monophonic sound is strong—there is an aggressive Franz Waxman musical score—and there are optional English subtitles, along with a trailer and the highly amusing 1953 7-minute [Merrie Melodies](#) color cartoon, [Duck! Rabbit, Duck!](#), one of the five from the classic era of Warner cartoons to use the 'Duck Season'/'Rabbit Season' gags.

Woo, Chan and Hung collaborating

Jackie Chan and Sammo Hung both have significant supporting parts in John Woo's 1976 Golden Harvest period martial arts feature, [Hand of Death](#), released on Blu-ray by Arrow Video (UPC#760137123743, \$40). With occasional Woo embellishments that make it worth considering, the story has a standard template. Tao-Liang Tan is a martial arts student who has been assigned to help a group of rebels. He goes to the bad guy's lair (Sammo is a primary henchman), gets captured, manages to escape (thanks for the help, Jackie!), trains harder with a group of collaborators and then returns for the final battle. Almost as if he is surreptitiously upping his game, the film has periodic touches that are distinctively part of Woo's arsenal. Deaths are sometimes accented in an unusually vigorous manner, and the homoeroticism underneath the male bonding is more pronounced. At the very least, however, the fights are always efficiently and adeptly staged, so that while the film, on the whole, is unmistakably a studio product similar to many, many others, it is also one of the better ones.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1. Some shots are grainy, but overall the image is very crisp and colors are fresh and bright. There is an array of language options, supported by optional English subtitles, but the best is the Mandarin with a later 5.1-channel mix that brings in some cute directional effects and more dimensionality to the musical score. The other tracks include the original mono English track, a better dubbed English 5.1-track (which isn't as nice as the Mandarin, however), a mono Mandarin track, and a stereo Cantonese track that comes on a bit too strong. Also featured are two trailers, a passable collection of memorabilia in still frame, a 5-minute alternate opening credit sequence (this and the original versions display both titles of the film, [Hand of Death](#) and [Countdown in Kung-fu](#), they just reverse the 'A.K.A.' order), a 6-minute interview with Hung about the film (he was also the stunt director) and working with Woo, a 30-minute interview with Tan about his various films and martial arts skills, and a good 23-minute piece about Woo's career in Hong Kong and Hollywood that includes a thoughtful interview and lots of action clips.

Finally, there is a very good commentary track with Asian film experts Frank Djeng and Michael Worth, going over the legacies of the cast and crew, translating the swear words and other idiomatic expressions, discussing the martial arts on display, providing details about the film's production history, breaking down Woo's techniques, and pointing out other details about the feature. "If you watch closely, you notice that some of the stunt people who play the bad guys also play the good guys in the same scene."

Rockin' Rivette

One of the three female protagonists in Jacques Rivette's 1995 Up, Down, Fragile works as a delivery person, so the film's title can readily be seen as referring to how packages are marked, but it can also be taken as descriptions of the three principal characters, played by Nathalie Richard, Marianne Denicourt and Laurence Côté, and their emotional states. Richard is the delivery girl, who has a kleptomania streak and is generally happy go lucky. Denicourt's character, recovering from a major illness, has inherited a house from her aunt and is taking her time settling into a fresh life as she uncovers details about her past that she was not aware of before. Côté's character works in a library and obsesses over having been adopted as a child, believing that she has uncovered a vital clue to the identity of her birth mother. The film runs 170 minutes and over its course, the lives of the three characters periodically intersect, particularly in regard to the men that they meet, including characters played by André Marcon and Bruno Todeschini. Although it takes a very long time to get to the first musical number, the film is also an impulsive homage to movie musicals—and to that end, the star of Jean-Luc Godard's **A Woman Is a Woman**, Anna Karina, is also featured, as a nightclub singer—much in the way that Woody Allen's Parisian **Everyone Says I Love You** was the following year, with the cast members suddenly moving in rhythmic harmony and occasionally breaking into song. The viewer is obligated to fill in the endings to the three interlocked stories, but the guidelines to those endings are clear, and building up to that point, the characters are engaging and the narratives are intriguing. Hence, the film is way more up than it is either down or fragile.

Enzo Enzo guest stars as another nightclub singer. The film has been released as a Cohen Media Group Kino Lorber Incorporated *Cohen Film Collection Classics of French Cinema* Blu-ray (UPC#73832926242, \$30). The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1. The color transfer looks fine, with solid colors and a sharp focus. The sound is mildly dimensional, but most of the music feels centered. The presentation is in French with optional English subtitles and is accompanied by two trailers. Film expert Richard Peña supplies a periodic commentary track, giving a little bit of background information but primarily explaining the obvious, particularly when it comes to the oblique narrative. "The films rarely have what you might think of as a traditional structure, one in which there is cause and effect, one scene following another. Many things tend to go on almost simultaneously in a Rivette film, dramatic things, musical things, performative things. And Rivette works them out into a complex kind of montage, a way in which all of them have their sort of moments, but not really form into what you might think of as a strict, integral whole."

One of Rivette's very best films and one of our favorites, his 1997 **Secret Defense**, another Cohen Kino *Classics of French Cinema* Blu-ray (UPC#738329261948, \$30), is, on the one hand, a very simple murder mystery, but it is also a glorious rumination upon the thriller genre that savors, exquisitely, the application of suspense in cinema. The premise it reveals is also simple. So long as there is a 'mystery' that is satisfactorily resolved by the film's end, the filmmaker can do virtually anything and still hold a viewer's attention. **Secret Defense** runs 174 minutes. In the first scene, a medical researcher played by Sandrine Bonnaire is working late at night when she hears odd noises coming from another room. Your pulse quickens, and continues to do so as she creeps down the semi-darkened hallway to investigate. The viewer's adrenaline begins pumping, and with it, satisfaction. That satisfaction must be justified, of course, or the viewer will dismiss the subsequent proceedings, but Rivette's handoff to the next point in the narrative is adept, and so the film's atmosphere of mystery and danger is sustained and the viewer is floating on that adrenaline-pumped mystery movie *Cloud Nine*. Later on, there is an even longer and more daring sequence. Bonnaire's character goes to a train station, buys a ticket and gets on a train that takes her out of Paris. The camera angles are perfect. You feel like you are right next to her as she walks through the station and as she rides on the train, and so her experience becomes your own. She gets up from her seat a couple of times and goes to other cars, and you follow along. After traveling for a while, the train comes to a stop and she gets off, looks at a schedule board and transfers to a slightly older local train. Again, you ride with her, as the scenery changes. By the time she gets off of the second train, the evening light is beginning to take over from the day. She enters a parking lot and begins walking toward a bus, so you expect her to take the bus, but no, she walks past it and continues to walk, leaving the populated areas of the town and strolling along emptier and darker roads. She seems to know her way. This is quite a long sequence and it would be frustrating to viewers if nothing came of it, but there is, eventually, a death, and so you continue to be satisfied with the vector of the narrative, and accepting of its pace. And if you enjoy the art of motion pictures, you savor every moment along the way.

Jerzy Radziwilowicz co-stars, with Laure Marsac and Grégoire Colin. The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.75:1 not the 1.85:1 that is listed on the jacket. We reviewed an Image Entertainment DVD in Dec 02, suggesting that the story is somewhat reminiscent of **Hamlet**, another murder tale that accomplishes other things as the plot unfolds. While the image at first can seem a little soft, it is very smooth and more intricately detailed than the outstanding DVD's presentation is. Once the interior lighting gives way to the outdoors, the picture's clarity and sharpness are distinctive. The DVD conveyed the film's atmosphere effectively, while the Blu-ray puts you inside of it. The meticulously dimensional DTS audio track is also much stronger than the excellent audio on the DVD. The film is in French and has permanent English subtitles, the same subtitles that appeared

on the DVD, with the same typos. A trailer is included.

Peña supplies another leisurely commentary. Given the length of the film, there are longish pauses at times, especially after the first hour, but he covers the artistic skills of the cast and the crew, explains key points in the narrative and how the film is deconstructing its own genre as it proceeds. (There is also an error that we have never come across before in all of the commentary tracks we have listened to—the audio leader, in which Peña reads the time coding of his position in the talk before proceeding with his next comment, has accidentally been included with the comment at one point.)

Rivette's first feature length film, the 1961 **Paris Belongs to Us**, released on Blu-ray by The Criterion Collection (UPC#715515169813, \$40), also has a murder thriller template, although the narrative becomes a little too clever for its own good, deflating the overall impact of the film, a fault that does not recur in **Secret Defense**. Betty Schneider is a college student who attends a party with her older brother one evening and becomes swept up in a social circle of actors and artists. A musician who was supposed to score a forthcoming stage production of a Shakespeare play has committed suicide, causing tension in the group, and the recording he made of his intended music has been lost. Schneider's character starts playing a detective of sort, flitting around Paris from one character to the next, like an insect collecting pollen, in an attempt to track down the tape. She also lands a part in the stage production when another actress quits. Eventually, the musician's suicide comes into question, with the real reason for his death ranging from an international conspiracy of some sort to monetary grapples over the play's production or to just plain jealousy. Running 141 minutes, most of the film has a pleasant atmosphere and a reasonable amount of intrigue, as Schneider's character amiably interacts with each person, and the sums of their personalities are embellished as a result, while she continually uncovers romances, resentments and other guarded emotions (some of the performances are good, but some are a little too defined and inflexible). It also feels like a once-removed portrait of the French New Wave film community—the play's director, played by Giani Esposito, comes across quite a bit like Françoise Truffaut. The characters are all distinctive, and as a celebration of ambiguity, the film invites endless revisits even though in the rush to wrap things up, there are more deaths and convoluted explanations of what occurred. While an attention to the film should remain upon what it accomplishes as it plays out—particularly since it was all shot outdoors and in locations around Paris—it is also worth viewing as a sophisticated and impressive freshman effort, and the exemplary beginning of a sometimes quixotic but eventually masterful directorial career.

The full screen black-and-white picture is generally in very good condition. Once in a while there is a stray marking or a little grain, but the film was shot in a kind of guerilla environment and it always looks crisp and immediate. The monophonic sound is also clear and strong. The film is in French with optional English subtitles, and is accompanied by an excellent 25-minute overview of how Rivette got started, how the film got started (they began shooting in 1958, which would have made it a premiere New Wave feature, but by the time the post was done a number of other films beat it to the door) and what the film's inscrutable intentions are.

Also included is one of Rivette's initial short features, which he concocted with Claude Chabrol, the 1956 *Le Coup du Berger*. Running 29 minutes, it is a succinct—almost to the point of predictability—and satisfying tale about a woman who receives a lovely fur coat from her lover and attempts to find a way she can bring it home under the nose of her husband, outthinking herself in the process. Virginie Vitry and Jean-Claude Brialy star. The full screen black-and-white picture is a bit soft but is in adequate condition, and the film is in French with optional English subtitles.

Japanese gangsters

The 1976 Japanese Toei crime film directed by Kinji Fukasaku and released on Blu-ray by Radiance, **Yakuza Graveyard** (UPC#760137125259, \$35), begins as if it is **The Battle of Algiers**, with a meeting of police commissioners plotting the systematic elimination of warring yakuza factions that are bringing random and uncontrolled violence to their city. But that turns out not to be the case, since what is actually happening is that the establishment law enforcement is entirely under the control of the establishment gangsters, and all they really want to do is to eliminate an upstart group that is impinging upon allotted turfs. The hero, played by Tetsuya Watari, is a cop brought in from another district to help re-establish order, but once he starts upsetting apple carts, he discovers what is really going on and ends up himself aligning with the rogue criminal group to undermine the establishment. It cannot end well, of course.

The film runs an energetic 96 minutes and punches its way through the narrative with coherently incoherent action scenes and gritty views of the city's undersides. Genuine Japanese rock 'n roll plays in one sequence, which is an awesome enough moment to justify the entire film, and the rest of Toshiaki Tsushima's musical score, while more traditionally brassy, is still rousing. The Blu-ray's audio levels are pushed as close to the red as possible, but the monophonic sound is still smooth, and riveting. Letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1, the color transfer is fresh and accurate, although the film has a deliberately grungy Seventies look. The presentation is in Japanese with optional English subtitles, and comes with a trailer, a modest collection of memorabilia in still frame, a 15-minute piece about Fukasaku and the maturation of yakuza films (as well as the film's inclusion of police characters), and a 12-minute analysis of the films Fukasaku made with co-star Meiko Kaji.

Many wonderful, messy murders occur in Hideo Gosha's 1974 **Violent Streets**, a Film Movement Classics Blu-ray (UPC#850021115937, \$40). Noboro Ando plays the former head of a yakuza family who was obligated to retire and was given control of a nightclub in compensation. When the younger members of his former gang try to enable a resurgence by kidnapping (and accidentally killing) a young pop singer, he gets pulled into the larger battle between the two corporate organizations that are using the gangsters to solidify their control over Japan's economy. Running 96 minutes, it can be challenging at first to keep track of who the characters are, but that is really irrelevant to the film's primary appeal, which is its eccentric settings (the entire opening credits play over performing flamenco dancers) and unrestrained blood spilling. Ahead of its time in many ways, there is a genuine transgender hitman (played by 'Madame Joy'), who likes to use a razor, and there are knives, guns and blunt objects slashing, dicing and pulverizing gangsters left and right. Once the film gets going, it becomes a giddy festival of crime and violence, anchored by Ando's becalmed, world-weary performance and the always just slightly eccentric view of aspects in Japanese society that are normally and politely kept out of sight.

Akira Kobayashi, Isao Natsuyagi, Bunta Sugawara and Tetsuro Tamba co-star. The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1. The images are not exceptionally stylized, and the cinematography sometimes has a soft focus, but the color transfer is decent and when possible, the image is sharp. The monophonic sound is crisp and the film is in Japanese with optional English subtitles. Along with a trailer, there is a passable 9-minute introduction to the film and a really good 20-minute interview with Gosha's daughter, Tomoe, about his life, his career and the film. She also shares an impressive photo of the very elaborate tattoo he had on his back.

"This has to be a joke!" a character says at one point in Seijun Suzuki's abstract 1967 satire of gangster films and hitmen, **Branded to Kill**. Indeed it is, and the more one watches the film, the more one imagines Suzuki laughing uproariously as he concocted each absurd scene, not just turning the normal tropes about hired killers and mob wars on end, but pretzelizing them, over and over. We reviewed the Criterion Collection's Blu-ray release in Apr 21, but the film then underwent a 4K restoration in 2022, and that is the version that Criterion has now issued in a two-platter 4K Blu-ray set (UPC#715515283410, \$50).

Joe Shishido plays a hitman whose accelerating success is destroyed by a butterfly. The film is a sequence of action scenes and ostensibly romantic/erotic interludes. He receives several assignments and then becomes a target after failing to complete one of them. Each sequence is expressionistically designed and is so disconnected from the next that the film can seem ridiculous (the hero times one killing so he can jump out of a window afterwards just as a balloon passes underneath) if the viewer is expecting a normal movie. Indeed, the film turned out to be the butterfly that upended Suzuki's wonderful career. But in 4K format, each sequence is so exquisitely composed and amusingly irrelevant that the black-and-white feature becomes the masterpiece its diehard fans have always claimed it is. Letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1, the image is absolutely smooth, crisp and unfettered from beginning to end. You may start ignoring the plot (the story mechanics are explicit, but cynical) and focusing instead upon Suzuki's continually witty challenges to the Japanese film nudity constraints, or his equally irreverent upending of the intense neorealism that filmmakers such as Fukasaku had brought to the gangster genre. But that is how a true cult classic is born, appealing not to viewers who want good stories, but to viewers who have entered the next level of cinema appreciation and are enthusiastically flattered by a director acknowledging their own artistic perceptions.

The standard Blu-ray that has been included in the set is an exact replication of the older release, with the older transfer. It is softer, less detailed and more speckled than the 4K image. While it still looks pretty good—the speckles are few and far between—the 4K version is more involving and more exhilarating. The monophonic sound on the 4K version is solid and almost noiseless, and its differences from the standard BD are minimal. The film is in Japanese and comes with optional English subtitles. The standard BD has a trailer, an 11-minute interview with Shishido from 2011, and two interviews with Suzuki, one running 12 minutes from 2011 and one running 14 minutes from 1997.

The inevitability of **Branded to Kill** taken to extremes can be found in the marvelous series of three Toei features directed by Tôru Murakawa and being issued on a two-platter Blu-ray set by Arrow, **Game Trilogy** (UPC#760137127260, \$40). As ultra-cool as it is ultra-silly, the first feature, which appears by itself on a platter, *The Most Dangerous Game* from 1978, stars Yûsaku Matsuda as an unkempt and apparently inattentive assassin who is hired by the head of a corporation to eliminate the leader of a competing firm. On every level, the film is deliberately sloppy. The plot has huge gaps in its logic, the camera angles are hazy and cluttered, the hero gets shot and apparently fails to kill his target and so on down to the smallest detail. On the other hand, there is a totally awesome jazz score, Matsuda wears nifty dark glasses—no matter how much light there is or is not in a room—and he does end up killing all sorts of ruffians, often sensing their presence behind objects preternaturally, and scoring a great deal of cash, so that the film, which runs 89 minutes, is irresistible despite its apparent shortcomings. When he rapes a girl, she immediately falls in love with him, and that sort of sets the tone for the entire movie. Those were the Seventies for you.

The second film, from 1978, *The Killing Game*, has more traditional camera angles and lighting, and a simpler, clearer narrative, although the gaps in logic, particularly in how he finds out the information he

needs to locate his marks, continue their fragrance, as do the abnormally unmanicured urban locations. He is hired by the head of one yakuza gang to eliminate the boss of another yakuza gang and then, unwittingly, the other boss hires him to eliminate the first boss. The whole time, we were partially distracted by the excessive brown makeup that Matsuda has on his face, not to mention his excessively curly hair, and then it dawned on us—he's supposed to be black. Not really, but evocatively. The films are Japanese Blaxploitation-sploitation movies, which accounts for the hero's hygienic irreverence, his lack of manners, his magnetism with the ladies, his dark glasses and everything else that is so cool about him. Running 92 minutes, the action scenes are punchy and direct, and the film serves as the ideal center of a trilogy—it gives you another taste of what you enjoyed in the first movie and leaves you longing to see one more.

The final film, from 1979, *The Execution Game*, is the slickest of the three, and hence, the least jokey, although it also seems to have the highest body count (again endowing the hero with an apparent sixth sense to know where every bad guy is hiding—constructed with long takes and minimal editing, it's like playing the same passage of a first person shooter game for the thousandth time), which is very much a part of the gag. Matsuda's character is hired to take out another hitman, which he does with relative ease, but on his subsequent assignment he realizes that he is being set up for assassination, and so he has to turn the tables on the organization that hired him. The cinematography is more formal and the story has the more traditional twists and turns of an action thriller (at 100 minutes, it is also the longest film in the group), but it is enough to keep a viewer hooked on Matsuda's character and his bored nihilism. This time, he doesn't even bother to walk off with the money at the end.

All three films are in Japanese with optional English subtitles, and all three are letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1. The color transfers on all three are fresh, and while there is smearing in darker sequences from time to time, it is fleeting. The only reason that the last film looks so good is because it has the most formalized cinematography, but all three presentations are essentially faultless. The monophonic sound is a little noisy from time to time on all three films, but the Yuji Ohno jazz scores are so compelling and constant that you don't mind if there's a bit of background rustle with them.

Each film comes with a trailer and a collection of memorabilia in still frame. *Most Dangerous Game* is accompanied by a commentary from Japanese film enthusiasts Chris Poggiali and Marc Walkow, who provide decent background information about the cast and crew, and characterize the hero as a sort of cross between **The Big Lebowski** (he even lives above a bowling alley) and **Dirty Harry** (he carries a .357 Magnum). They readily point out how illogical the story turns are and how little it matters, and read the film as an evocation of western private eye tales, deliberately giving the hero un-Japanese attributes (he blows his nose in public, an apparent no-no) while sustaining an admiration for his every bad habit. Also featured is a good 20-minute interview with Murakawa talking about all three films.

Matsuda died at a relatively young age, but there is an interesting 18-minute interview with the owner of a jazz bar where the actor always hung out, Yutaka Oki, accompanying *Killing Game*, talking about their times together, the drinks he liked and the last stages of Matsuda's life. There is also a commentary with film historians Earl Jackson and Jasper Sharp, who deconstruct Murakawa artistry, talk about Matsuda's career and point out the plot's idiosyncrasies.

Execution Game has a 22-minute interview with screenwriter Shoichi Mara, who had been working with Matsuda on a TV series and was pulled in to write the third film, describing the different paths his earliest drafts took, along with a commentary by Asian film expert Tom Mes, who argues that the movie is the best of the three (we prefer the first one, but all three are unique and different from one another in distinctive ways) and goes over the artistic forces that came together in order to create it.

Those people were a kind of solution

A run-of-the-mill thriller, **Barbarians**, from IFC Midnight and RLJ Entertainment (UPC#014381148091, \$28), lasts precisely 90 minutes, and the first half of the 2021 film, set in a stylish house in the country that is intended to be the flagship for a real estate development, depicts a celebratory dinner between the two couples who are spearheading the development. Letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback, the film itself is stylishly decorated and composed, with formal camera angles that center the young characters amid the luxuries they have created. But as the evening wears on, animosities arise, secret relationships are revealed and the pleasant dinner starts to really go downhill. Just as things come to a head, however, the doorbell rings, masked intruders enter and suddenly the previous conflicts seem completely irrelevant. The intruders are there for a logical reason, and for an equally logical reason they make mistakes that allow the heroes to get the upper hand. There are a few scares, a little blood and a lukewarm ending where some problems are solved and some are not. Directed by Charles Dorfman, Iwan Rheon, Catalina Sandino Moreno, Tom Cullen, and Inês Spiridonov star. The color transfer looks nice, although when darkness falls the image becomes rather smeary. The 5.1-channel Dolby Digital sound has a passable dimensionality and adds to the thrills at a couple of points. There is an audio track that describes the action ("Adam looks in the direction of the noise. He takes small steps towards the noise. He walks through wooden barn doors towards the bush. A bird flies out of the bush. Adam ducks."), and optional English and Spanish subtitles.

Black-and-white samurai adventures

Two wonderful black-and-white samurai movies from Toei are sensibly paired on the Film Movement Blu-ray, **Samurai Wolf 1&2** (UPC# 850021115951, \$50). Isao Natsuyagi plays the young, bearded itinerant swordsman who is something of a vagrant. Although he is always willing to work for his meals, he just doesn't mention that he doesn't have the money to pay for them until after he has eaten. Both movies, which feel very much like westerns, are letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1 and both are in Japanese with optional English subtitles.

The first film, *Samurai Wolf*, from 1966, directed by Hideo Gosha, is set in an outpost town where a blind woman owns a transportation hub (i.e., the stagecoach franchise if it were a western) that the villains want to absorb. A large shipment of gold is coming through, and they hope to dislodge her and swipe the gold in one fell swoop, but the hero mucks up their plans. Running a brisk 74 minutes, there are a number of good plot turns and betrayals, as well as other unexpected occurrences, which keeps the viewer involved with the characters and engaged during the few lulls between the vigorous action scenes. Gosha uses all sorts of flashy techniques to enhance the action, including odd angles, slow motion and fountains of blood, and in black and white it is particularly effective, perhaps because it evokes the beloved samurai features from an earlier, more traditional era, while keeping the gore and confused moralities up to date.

In Gosha's 1967 *Samurai Wolf II Hell Cut*, Natsuyagi's character finds himself on the same road as a group of swordsmen transporting several prisoners, and sure enough, it isn't long before they need his help. One of the prisoners knows the location of a secret gold mine, and others are trying to kill him before he is released. Needless to say, by the end of the 72-minute feature, the fighting is taking place around the gold mine. While the film reiterates some of the strongest ideas from the first feature—again, the hero also has a duel with an appropriately skilled opponent that peripherally affects the primary plot but is otherwise separate from the other action, and he is also saved at the final moment because something is attached to his forearm—for a lone sequel such moments are more of an enthusiastic encore than any sort of desperate repetition. Again, the film has the feel of a western, down to the harmonica used in Toshiaki Tsushima's musical score, although the complexity of the loyalties, both permanent and temporary, are purely Japanese. Like the first movie, it is an ideal mix of inspired cinematic technique, aggressive storytelling and boundless blood.

On both films, the picture is in very good condition, with no overt flaws. The image may be a bit soft at times, but it is consistently solid and clean. The monophonic sound is reasonably strong. Along with a trailer for each movie, there is a 16-minute discussion of Gosha's samurai films by his daughter, Tomoe. She explains that he was the first Japanese director to make the transition from TV to feature films (having come from radio, he also instigated a number of sound effects during the fighting that hadn't been utilized before) and she describes 'practicing' sword fighting with Natsuyagi when he came over to the house to prep for the film. Japanese film expert Chris Poggioli supplies a pretty good commentary track for the first film. He starts by describing what is happening on the screen, but pretty soon he delves into a history of Toei (it was the only Japanese film company for a while that continued to turn a profit after television took over), an extensive admiration of Gosha and Natsuyagi, backgrounds of the other players, the film's historical context, and other odds and ends, including a detailed description of the American distribution of Japanese films in the Sixties (Hawaii was the number one market for them outside of Japan).

Yeoh go, girl!

Two Hong Kong cop films starring Michelle Yeoh and then two more starring a similarly designed character played by Cynthia Khan are bundled together in the terrific four-platter 88 Films Asia Blu-ray set, **In the Line of Duty I-IV** (UPC#760137118572, \$100). Each film appears on a separate platter with a separate jacket inside the box, which also has a glossy booklet and a pair of two-sided posters. None of the platters can start up where they left off if playback is terminated. All of the films are letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1 and come with optional English subtitles.

In the first film, from 1986, *Royal Warriors*, Yeoh and two male passengers played by Hiroyuki Sanada and Michael Wong break up a plane hijacking and kill the hijackers, thereby incurring the wrath of the hijackers' friends. The remainder of the 96-minute film is a series of shootouts and chases as the other villains try to do the heroes in. Directed by David Chung, while the stunts are not as elaborate as what you might find in a Jackie Chan movie or some of the other top-tier Hong Kong productions, it is succinct and efficiently paced, with expertly staged and often reasonably inventive action scenes. The presence of Yeoh also enables a readily discernible romantic subplot that is largely unavailable, at least in an obvious manner, in the male buddy-buddy Hong Kong action thrillers. For what it wants to accomplish, mixing a simple but potent drama with readily energetic suspense, it is perfect, and you can't really ask for anything more from it.

The color transfer is fine, with reasonably fresh hues and relatively sharp details. The mono sound is adequate. The film is in Cantonese with optional English subtitles. There is also a Mandarin track and an English track. There is an alternate English dubbed track in 5.1-channel Dolby Digital, but the dubbing isn't much better than the mono English track, the dimensionality is limited and we found the film flowed better when left in Cantonese. Also featured is a half-minute of additional action footage, a 3-minute title sequence for an English language release where the film was indeed titled *In the Line of Duty*, and two trailers. Hong Kong film expert Frank Djeng supplies a solo commentary track, covering the backgrounds of the cast and the crew, identifying the locations and the film's cultural quirks, and pointing

out specifically skilled examples in both the fighting and the filmmaking.

Yeoh's character and her team chase a villain through a crowded airport during the first act of the 1985 *Yes, Madam!*. When the villain feels like they are closing in on him, he gets desperate and grabs what appears at a distance to be a middle-aged woman dressed like an executive. But a closer angle reveals that the villain made a big, big mistake, for the woman that he has grabbed is played by Cynthia Rothrock, whose character was actually arriving to join forces with Yeoh's character, and with one quick over-the-shoulder-to-the-back kick, the villain is sprawled on the floor. The scenes with Yeoh and Rothrock are terrific, but a lot of time in the 94-minute feature is taken up with comical characters, so the film does not have the steadily involving energy that *Royal Warriors* created. Tsui Hark co-stars, and Sammo Hung has a brief appearance, as well. It is still an exciting action film with great stunts, but the comedy slows it down and it never entirely lives up to its promise.

The color transfer is a little sharper than the transfer on *Royal Warriors*, with finely detailed hues. There are two monophonic Cantonese tracks, one which has embellished sound effects, and there is a 5.1-channel English track again, but we found ourselves once more preferring the original Cantonese track. A monophonic English-language version of the film that runs 88 minutes entitled *In the Line of Duty II The Super Cops* has also been included. The dubbing is workable and the color transfer is as good as the Cantonese version. Also featured is a 5-minute discussion of a specific fight scene with Rothrock, and a more general 18-minute interview with Rothrock about the film and her career.

Djeng supplies another solid commentary track over the Cantonese version, again profiling every significant member of the cast and fighting team, pointing out the Hong Kong locations (and the disorienting jumping that occurs during chases), and analyzing the filmmaking. "Note the way [director Corey Yuen] choreographed that scene and shot the action at this point in his career. It's very staccato, short and quick, with the camera being stationary, not moving, supplemented with quick cutting and editing." As his career advanced, Djeng explains, the takes got longer.

Cynthia Khan took over for Yeoh, playing a character who is brand new to the force but quickly proves her worth in *In the Line of Duty III*, which is also known as *Big Sister III*, since that is how her team refers to her in the previous two movies. Running 84 minutes, the 1988 film, directed by Brandy Yuen and Arthur Wong, is more crowded and bloody than the previous features, which weren't exactly bereft of violence. It begins with a spectacular jewel robbery in Tokyo, where the robbers mow down the security force and plenty of innocent bystanders at a fashion show and get away with all of the jewels. They then travel to Hong Kong to cause more mayhem. Hiroshi Fujioka co-stars as a Japanese cop seeking vengeance for his partner. The fights are sudden and fierce, the action is frantic and the film's momentum, especially in the second half, just accelerates and accelerates. It is a terrific action feature, and Khan has a solid presence in its center.

The color transfer looks fine. The mono Cantonese track has a solid punch and plenty of power. A mono English track is also included, which is somewhat less satisfying. Also featured are two trailers, a 2-minute clip of the opening and closing credits in English and a good 26-minute interview with actor and producer John Sham who talks about his career, how he gave Yeoh her start, working with Brandon Lee, and the many films he has been involved with. Djeng has a commentary for the film with Hong Kong action film expert Michael Worth. It is a little more conversational than Djeng's solo talks, but there is still full coverage of the cast and discussions about the fight scenes and action sequences.

With Vancouver subbing rather flagrantly for Seattle, an immigrant witnesses a murder among drug dealers and has to sneak onto a boat back to Hong Kong in the 1988 *In the Line of Duty IV (Royal Big Sister IV)*. Khan's character is in 'Seattle' at the time and also returns to find the witness before the mobsters do. Again, the action is fast and vicious (at one point, Khan—and it is Khan—dangles harrowingly outside of an ambulance as it barrels down the street), and while the 95-minute film begins a little more slowly than *III*, it quickly builds to an exhilarating pace of great fights and impressive stunts, including a terrific motorcycle chase. Donnie Yen, kicking one of the villains off of a motorbike in that chase, co-stars.

The color transfer looks good and the monophonic Cantonese audio track has a solid presence. There is also an English track. An alternate 96-minute English language version (*In the Line of Duty 4*) is also available, which has an extra scene at the beginning. The color transfer is equal in quality to the Cantonese version, and the dubbing is a little stronger than the dubbing on the standard version. Two trailers are included, along with an excellent 20-minute interview with Yen, who speaks specifically and extensively about the differences between fighting in competition (or real life) and fighting on film. He also discusses Khan's strengths and weaknesses.

Djeng and Worth went out to dinner and had a couple of drinks after recording the commentary for *III*, and then came back to do the talk for *IV*. It is a more relaxed conversation. When a new actor appears, Djeng fills us in on his background, but otherwise they just talk about the story, the non-Seattle locations (Djeng spots a Canadian flag flying in one shot) and the film's specific fights and stunts. Co-star Michael Wong and Asian film expert Stefan Hammond supply a second commentary track. Even though Wong was there, it takes quite a while for him to remember that he was in Vancouver and not Seattle. Nevertheless, they also supply insights about the actors, the fights and the stunts, and Wong (who plays the villain) talks about what it was like to get beat up by Yen (the director, Woo-Ping Yuen, was never happy unless the punches and kicks connected).

Hamm is Fletch

We would have preferred that he be cast as James Bond, but that's never gonna happen, so we will be content with John Hamm having been chosen to embody Gregory Mcdonald's irreverent modern day sleuth in the 2022 Miramax feature, **Confess, Fletch**, released on DVD by Miramax and Paramount (UPC#191329242940, \$26). Tracking down stolen paintings, Hamm's character arrives in Boston and discovers a fresh, dead body in the apartment arranged for his stay. The police immediately think he did it, while he meets a continual array of eccentric suspects as he hunts for the paintings and the murderer. Running 98 minutes, the mystery and its complications are clever enough to keep one in the dark, while the dialog and Hamm's delivery light up every scene with wit. Not only are Kyle MacLachlan and Marcia Gay Harden on hand to add some star-touched humor with totally off-the-wall performances, but Hamm's former **Mad Men** co-star, John Slattery, is brought in for several raucous dialog exchanges that only the two of them could ever have managed so gloriously.

Directed by Greg Mottola, Ayden Mayeri, Roy Wood, Jr., and Lorenza Izzo also contribute to the film's delights. The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback. The image is a touch soft in places, but colors are fresh. The 5.1-channel Dolby Digital track provides a satisfying dimensionality to environmental sounds and David Arnold's Lalo Schifrin-style musical score. There is an audio track that describes the action ("The sedan skids to a stop. The car behind it swerves as it brakes. Fletch gets out. He steps up onto a waist-high cement wall and walks along its narrow top in the opposite direction of traffic. As Griz drives, she spots Fletch walking towards her. He gives her a little shrug."), an alternate Spanish audio track and optional English, French and Spanish subtitles.

The amber spyglass, at last

The third and final installment of the HBO adaptation of the Philip Pullman fantasy trilogy, **His Dark Materials The Complete Third Season**, has been released on a two-platter Blu-ray HBO Home Box Office and WB Home Entertainment (UPC#8832929801350, \$30). Thank goodness! We were continually afraid that the **Third Season** would never be forthcoming, especially after the horribly compromised conclusion to **Second Season** (Jun 22), which appeared to have done away with an entire episode to save money. Whatever the reason, however, it ultimately appears to have been worthwhile, because **Third Season**, based upon Pullman's last novel in the trilogy, *The Amber Spyglass*, runs a full eight episodes and although the final episode is rushed, it is not compromised in any way that will harm a viewer's satisfaction with it.

First broadcast in 2022, the appeal of the series as a whole is compelling for the simple reason that it is different. It is so different that it is not tied down to recognizable adventure science-fiction fantasy tropes. Not only is it fresh, but Pullman's brilliant grasp of allegory and metaphor, establishing not just a single link but a complex, multi-layered analogy between quantum physics and Miltonian theology, creates a foundation of intelligence that will readily support its fanciful special effects and rousing action sequences. Fun for the whole family, as they say, but genuine, rewarding fun.

Dafne Keen plays the young heroine, although substantially grown from **First Season** (Sep 20). Accompanied by the young man she met in **Second Season** played by Amir Wilson, they journey into 'the Land of the Dead' to assist the soul of a departed friend. Here, the show does embrace a popular fantasy trope. In **Childhood's End** (Jul 16), Arthur C. Clarke once posited that mankind's image of the Devil actually had roots in a shared and anticipatory consciousness. Could our obsession with the depiction of purgatory as a bureaucracy be the same? The show presents it as a sort of bureaucracy that is falling apart or only partially functioning, but that is still the overriding idea of what happens after death regardless of where you look in films—no hellfire or pillow-like clouds until after you've stood in line and been checked off a list. Anyway, after that quest is completed, they return to the multiple worlds they had been traversing, just as a battle between humans and the controlling spiritual forces rises to a climax. James McAvoy and Ruth Wilson play the father and mother of Keen's character, both of whom are spearheading the battle.

As with the previous two seasons, the imaginative settings and intriguing metaphysical perspectives add greatly to the engagement of the narrative. The characters are also liberated by the environment, and the cast often makes the most of it. This miniseries format, of taking eight or so episodes to adapt a novel, is curtailed only by its potential profit margins, but it is a highly satisfying medium that enables motion pictures to reach for the depths that written literature has long achieved, and they are only really just getting started. While streaming is necessary to underwrite their creation, to have such works available in a compact set of Blu-ray platters is to have fantasy worlds at your fingertips.

Each platter has a 'Play All' option, but unfortunately, the discs do not pick up where they left off if playback is terminated. The program runs a total of 461 minutes. The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2:1. The colors are fresh and accurate, but the image is often smeary or suffering from displacement distortions. Some of it has to do with the deliberately murky lighting, but the problems carry over at times even when the light brightens. The DTS sound is more satisfying, with a strong dimensionality and a few vigorous separation effects. There is an alternate French audio track and optional English, French and Dutch subtitles.

DVD News

CRITERION CORNER: Filling in an overdue gap, the Criterion Collection will be releasing a four-platter set, **Bo Widerberg's New Swedish Cinema**. Although they are hardly new any more, the four films featured are *The Baby Carriage*, *Raven's End*, *Elvira Madigan* and *Adalin 31* and will be accompanied by an introduction to Widerberg by filmmaker Ruben Östlund; interviews with actor Tommy Berggren and cinematographer Jörgen Persson; *The Boy and the Kite* (1962), a short film by Widerberg and Jan Troell, with an introduction by Troell; Swedish television interviews with Widerberg from the 1960s; and behind-the-scenes footage from the making of *Elvira Madigan*. **Akira Kurosawa's Dreams** will be in 4K format and will include a commentary featuring film scholar Stephen Prince; a feature-length documentary from 1990 shot on set and directed by Nobuhiko Obayashi; interviews with production manager Teruyo Nogami and assistant director Takashi Koizumi; and a documentary from 2011 by Kurosawa's longtime translator Catherine Cadou, featuring interviews with Bernardo Bertolucci, Alejandro G. Iñárritu, Martin Scorsese, Hayao Miyazaki, and others. Wayne Wang's **Dim Sum A Little Bit of Heart** will come with a conversation between Wang and filmmaker and film scholar Arthur Dong, and an interview from 2004 with actor Laureen Chew. Cauleen Smith's **Drylongso** will have a conversation between Smith and film scholar Michael B. Gillespie, and short films by Smith, including *Chronicles of a Lying Spirit* by Kelly Gabron, *Songs for Earth & Folk*, *Lessons in Semaphore*, *Egungun (Ancestor Can't Find Me)*, *Remote Viewing*, and *Suffolk*, with an introduction by Smith.

NEW IN BLU: The following titles were recently issued on Blu-ray—Acid Bath Productions V.7, James Balsamo's S.H.O.U.T., Mind Melters 8, Mind Melters 9, Sexy Time 5 (Acid Bath); Box 25, Zoom.mov (Adler); Lady Street Fighter, The Zodiac Killer (AGFA); V/H/S/99 (AMD); An Awful Thing Has Gone and Happened, Baby Gang, Caught in Time, The Empty Space, Evelyne, Forbidden Woman, Illegal Dreams, Jonah and the Pink Whale, So Vam, Sunod (Bayview); Taming the Garden (Big World); Ant-Man and the Wasp Quantumania (Buena Vista); Stand in the Gap (Burning Bulb); Speaking Parts (Canadian); The Battle of Shangri-La, Night Out (Capital Motion); Convoy Busters, Shanghai Joe (Cauldron); The Cat Creeps, Curse of the Blue Lights, Five Women for the Killer, Mahakaal, Toxic Zombies, Vacation of Terror I & II, The Wounded Man (CAV); Christmas Town, Christmas Waltz, The Collector, Conquest of Space/I Married a Monster from Outer Space, Endangered Species, Highwaymen, Love and Sunshine, The Magic Flute, The Morning After, Signed Sealed Delivered Complete Series, Skyline, Taking a Shot at Love, The Tiger Cage Collection, The Wedding Veil Expectations, Wrestlemania Goes Hollywood (Cinedigm); The Great Basin (Circle); Petit Maman, Targets, Thelma & Louise (Criterion); If He Hollers Let Him Go!, Whose Child Am I?/Weekend Murders (Dark Force); Forest of Death (DBS); Time of Roses (Deaf Crocodile); FIA Formula One World Championship 2022 The Official Review (Duke); The Lake (Epic); Vinyl Nation (ETR); Joe Swanberg Full Moon Trilogy (Factory 25); Samurai Wolf 1 & 2, Violent Streets (Film Movement); Sensitive The Untold Story (Filmhub); A House Made of Splinters (Giant); Through the Mirror of Chess A Cultural Experience (Ideas); Children of the Corn (Image); The Sorrow and the Pity (Film Movement); Fighting Olympus (Indie Rights); Bullets over Summer (Kani); Anna May Wong Collection, Everything Went Fine, The Experts, Film Noir The Dark Side of Cinema XIII, Film Noir The Dark Side of Cinema XIV, The Forger, Honey, Hustle, Joy House, Kamikaze, The Longest Yard, My Man Godfrey, On the Edge, Soundies The Ultimate Collection, Stone Cold, There's No Tomorrow, The Treatment (Kino); Moving On, Operation Fortune Ruse de Guerre, Supercell (Lionsgate); Baby Ruby (Magnolia); In the Cut, Miami Vice (Mill Creek); All Quiet on the Western Front, Consecration, Daughter, Kratt (MPI); Cosa Nostra, Danza Macabra V.1 The Italian Gothic Collection, Drowning by Numbers, Hand of Death, In the Line of Duty I-IV, L.A. Wars, La Petite Mort 2, Redline, Yakuza Graveyard (MVD); Dungeons & Dragons Honor Among Thieves, 80 for Brady, NCIS Hawai'i Season 1, Walker Season 2, Yellowstone Season 5 V.1 (Paramount); Black Lizard Tales, Decline, Family Home, Hosticide, Killing Zelda, Underneath An Anthology of Terror, The Unwanted, Zwtal (Rising Sun); The Killing Box, Opposing Force, P.O.W. The Escape, The Wicked Die Slow (Ronin); Absolute Beginners, I Could Go On Singing (Sandpiper); Red Cockroaches (Saturn's Core); 65 (Sony); Get My Gun, Horror Workout (Terror); Lust for Freedom (360); Champions, Inside, Knock at the Cabin, Of an Age, The Ritual Killer, Spinning Gold (Universal); The Civil Dead (Utopia); Last Sentinel (Vertical); Justice Ninja Style (VHSHitFest); Death Metal, My Cherry Pie (VipCo); A.K.A. Cassius Clay, The Addams Family, Border Incident, The Boy with Green Hair, Clash by Night, The Courtship of Eddie's Father, Creed III, Deal, A Good Person, Hey There It's Yogi Bear, King Solomon's Mines, Looney Tunes Collector's Choice V.1, Max Fleischer's Superman, Oleanna, The Playboys, Queen Christina, Shazam! Fury of the Gods (Warner); Fist of the Condor, The Siege, Unwelcome, Young IP Man (Well Go); Something in the Dirt (XYZ)

NEW IN 4K: The following titles were recently released in 4K format—Ant-Man and the Wasp Quantumania (Buena Vista); Brotherhood of the Wolf, The Haunting, The People under the Stairs (Cinedigm); Branded to Kill, Thelma & Louise, Wings of Desire (Criterion); The Night of the Hunter (Kino); Operation Fortune Ruse de Guerre (Lionsgate); The Last Starfighter (MVD); Deep Impact, Dungeons & Dragons Honor Among Thieves, The Italian Job, The Nutty Professor, The Running Man, Shooter, Star Trek Strange New Worlds Season 1 (Paramount); Cliffhanger, 65 (Sony); Knock at the Cabin (Universal); Creed III, Shazam! Fury of the Gods, Superman 5-Film Collection 1978-1987 (Warner)

An index to the reviews contained in this issue

BDs
All Quiet on the Western Front p1
(Big Sister III) p6
Branded to Kill 4K p5
(Countdown in Kung-fu) p3
(The Execution Game) p5
Game Trilogy p5
Hand of Death p3
His Dark Materials The Complete

Third Season p7
In the Line of Duty I-IV p6
(The Killing Game) p5
"A Lion Is in the Streets" p3
(The Most Dangerous Game) p5
(My Life As a Zucchini) p3
Paris Belongs to Us p4
Petite Maman p3
(Royal Big Sister IV) p6

(Royal Warriors) p6
Samurai Wolf 1 & 2 p6
Secret Defense p4
Storm Warning p2
The Sunday Woman p3
Targets p2
There's No Tomorrow p2
Up, Down, Fragile p4
Violent Streets p5

Wings of Desire 4K p1
Yakuza Graveyard p4
(Yes, Madam!) p6
DVDs
Barbarians p5
The Bartered Bride p2
Confess, Fletch p7
She Said p1

Current Attractions

The following titles recently appeared for the first time:
A.K.A. Cassius Clay (Warner)
Above the Rim How Elgin Baylor Became a Basketball Star (Warner)
Acid Bath Productions V.7 (Acid Bath)
Adam and the Water (Freestyle)
The Addams Family (Warner)
Adventures in Wild California (Warner)
The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet Season 11 (MPI)
The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet Season 12 (MPI)
After (Jing)
All Quiet on the Western Front (MPI)
All Wiggled Out The Musical (Community)
Amazon (Wownow)
Amy Wu and the Warm Welcome (Warner)
Ancient Builders of the Amazon (Paramount)
Ant-Man and the Wasp Quantumania (Buena Vista)
The Arctic Quilt (Warner)
Asbury Revival Desperate for More (Vision)
Assassin (Paramount)
Assassin Club (Paramount)
The Assistant (ITN)
Avichi (Warner)
Baby Ruby (Magnolia)
Backfired When Volkswagen Lied to America (Warner)
Bait (Decal)
Battle of Defense 2 (ITN)
The Battle of Shuang-Li (Capital Motion)
Bell Run (Yinfini)
The Best of B.L.A.C.C. Heart World Tour 2017 (360)
The Big House Reborn (Warner)
Billy Sunday 1962-1935 (Vision)
Binge and Purge (SRS)
Birthday (Yinfini)
Black History Aviators (Warner)
Black Lizard Tales (Rising Sun)
The Blue Caftan (Strand)
Bonanza Complete Series (Paramount)
Bonksters Gross Science The Movie (Wownow)
The Boomer Revolution (Warner)
The Borrowers (Warner)
Borrowed Time Falling Apart (ITN)
Box 25 (Adler)
Breaking the Silence (Bayview)
Bullets for the Bad (Magnolia)
Call Me Miss Hamilton (Warner)
Champions (Universal)
Children of the Corn (Image)
Close Encounters (Wownow)
Color My World with Love (Cinegrid)
Conception (MPI)
Creed III (Warner)
Danted & Majelita's BBQ Roadtrip (Warner)
Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood 20

1 (Paramount)
The New Abolitionists (Freestyle)
New Eye on the Universe (The James Webb Space Telescope) (Paramount)
Nifer (Warner)
The Night Bazaar Christmas (Warner)
The Nightingale (Freestyle)
Noor (MVD)
Not Your Romeo and Juliet (Bridgestone)
Oleana (Warner)
One Day As a Lion (Lionsgate)
One Day University A Different America How Our Country Has Changed from 1969 through Today (Warner)
Operation Fortune Ruse de Guerre (Lionsgate)
Otis & Lewis Lewis (Warner)
VHS/S99 (AMD)
Out and About (Freestyle)
Petite Maman (Warner)
The Playboys (Warner)
Please Baby Please (Music Box)
Powwow (Random)
A President Speaks (360)
Psychelic Phenomenon (Wownow)
Puppet Shark (SRS)
Purges (Leomark)
Purple Death from Outer Space (Chezy Flicks)
The Quiet Epidemic (Kino)
The Quiet Girl (Decal)
Raised Up West Side (Freestyle)
Ran Mi Low Help Me (Freestyle)
Red Latex (Jinga)
Recline (MVD)
Reflections of a Broken Memory (Indica)
River (SRS)
The Run (ITN)
Samurai Wolf 1 & 2 (Film Movement)
Satoshi Nakamoto (Wownow)
SEA Wrestling Season 6 (Paramount)
Secret CIA Project (Warner)
Sensitive The Untold Story (FilmHub)
Sexy Time 5 (Acid Bath)
Shabu (Indiepix)
Shazam! Fury of the Gods (Warner)
The Shifting (Yinfini)
The Siege (Warner)
65 (Sony)
Space Wars Quest for the Deepstar (Uncork'd)
Space Work The Outside (Paramount)
Speak (Warner)
Spinning Gold (Universal)
Stale Popcorn and Sticky Floors (Wild Eye)
Stand in the Gap (Burning Bull)
Star Chasers of Senegal (Paramount)
The Strange Case of Jacky Callou (Dark Star)
Super Sentai Complete Series (Cinegrid)
Supercell (Lionsgate)
The Swan Princess A Fairytale Is Born (Sony)
Sweetheart (Film Movement)
Taming the Garden (Big World)
Targets (Criterion)

Technocracy (Wownow)
Ten Killer (Buffalo 8)
A Thousand and One (Universal)
Through the Mirror of Chess A Cultural Experience (Ideas)
Tom Jones (Paramount)
Transformers EarthSpark Season 1 (Paramount)
Transhumanism (Synergetic)
Transhumanism (Wownow)
Twas the Night before Xmas (Warner)
UFOs Seasons 1 & 2 (Kino)
Under the Vines Season 2 (AMD)
Unexpected (Breaking Bad)
Unicom Yoga (Warner)
The Unseen Realm (Vision)
Unsub (Warner)
VHS/S99 (AMD)
Violent Streets (Film Movement)
Volendam A Refugee Story (Warner)
Walker Season 2 (Paramount)
Walking through History with Tony Robinson Season 1 (Warner)
Walking through History with Tony Robinson Season 2 (Warner)
Walking through History with Tony Robinson Season 3 (Warner)
Warm Water under a Red Bridge (Film Movement)
The Warrant Breaker's Law (Warner)
The Watchers Season 2 (Warner)
Wartime Girls Season 1 (Kino)
We Are Grateful (Warner)
The Wedding Veil (Warner)
Expectations (Cinegrid)
Werewolf Bitches from Outer Space (Warner)
Wild Scandinavia (Warner)
The Run (ITN)
The Worst Ones (Kino)
The Wounded Man (CAV)
Wrestling Goes Hollywood (Cinegrid)
Yellowstone Season 5 V.1 (Paramount)
You Buy Your Own Sex (Yinfini)
Young IP Man (Warner)
The Youngest Marcher The Story of Audrey Faye Hendricks (Warner)
Zoom (MVD)
Zwirl (Rising Sun)
*Did not appear on last month's Attractions listing
The following selected 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: Mind Melters X
From Alchemy: Ancient Artifacts Hunters
Ancient Origins Mysterious Lost World
Ancient Origins Artifacts and Anomalies
Paranormal World
Lady Terror
Brain Bases
Alien Contact Ancient Gods of Man
From AMD: Kinaramik
The Last Season 2
Holding
Tales of the Walking Dead Season 1
Spice of Sugar
Sadstream
Moonhaven Season 1
Gangs of London Season 2
From Bayview: VIPCO: The Untold Story
Eden's Last Chance
From Bounty: Mad House The Hunt for the Black Death Killer
Bridgestone: Horse Camp A Treasure Tail
Fire with Fire
From Buena Vista: Avatar The Way of the Water
From Buffalo 8: The Horror Crowd
Day of Disappearance
Normal.
Sasquatch
Odyssey The Hunt for Bigfoot
From Flicker: Foolish Wives
From Found: Footage: Creating Rem
From Digital: Bite the Dust
From Freestyle: Origami in the Garden
Necessity Climate Justice & The Thin Green Line
Necessity Oil, Water & Climate
From Giant: Peter Case A Million Miles Away
Unveiled
Survive
From Full Moon: SSSpecies V
Bloodyire
Netherworld
From Fun City: Movers Callar
From High Octane: The Spy Who Saved Christmas
Izzy Lyon The Unspun Truth
From Indian: A Briton Tale The New Hands
From Jingo: For the Hits
Match Struck
From Indie: Rights: Bang Bang Betty
From Jingo: Moko Jumble
In the Arms of Morpheus
From ITN: Island of the Dolls
From Jingo: The Ones You Didn't Burn
Midnight Son
Exodus
Onaw
From Journeyman: Elemental: Reimagine

Wildfire
From Kino: A Fever's Gifts
A Life of Service
Little Houdini
The Love Destination
Self-Esteem Boost
The Love Destination Confidence Boost
The Love Destination The Body Language of Sleep
The Love Destination Soothe Your Senses
How Do Satellites Stay in Space?
Feathers Together
Malaysia's Last Tiger
Murder in Paradise
Burnout The Truth about Work
The Remarkable Life of John Weld
Fighting for Yest
How Do Birds Sing a Duet?
One Million Trees
Llama Rocks the Cradle of Chaos
The Big Boss A 21st Century Criminal
Only in Theaters
Sang a Song into the Future
Aber Bergen Complete Series (9 platters)
→ 13. Eli's Four Cousins
From Level 33: Kubrick by Tux
Future TX
Ultra-Mountains
From Lionsgate: Cannibal Cabin
John Wick Chapter 4
From Magnolia: The Travels of Pope Francis
Little Richard I Am Everything
From Mill Creek: Battle Kaju V.1
Ultranman vs. Red King
Southern Gospel
From MPI: Rare Objects
Whisper of the Heart Broadway
Horseplay
Corrage
The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet V.13
The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet V.14
Paint
From Music Box: Other People's Children
Joy
Revoir Paris
A Question of Silence
Killzone
Project ALF
Wrong Reasons
Witchtrap
Shin Ultraman
Stioege-O-Rama
What the Waters Left Behind
Scars
Denver the Last Dinosaur Complete Series (6 platters)
From The Glasses: In Corpore
From 101: Fear The Invisible Man
→ 12 Dates
King Charles III
From Paramount: Dogs in the Wild
Sky Med Season 1
Tulsa King Season 1
Stalko
One True Loves
The L Word Generation Q Season 3
The Hummingbird Effect
Now Hear This Season 4
Criminal Minds Evolution Season 16
→ Marriage
→ Our House
→ Niagra
→ Personality Crisis One Night Only
→ Screen VI
→ Endeavor Season 9
→ Facing the Climate Challenge
→ The Black Demon
→ Casa Susanna
→ Ridley Season 1
→ Before We Die Season 2
→ Your Honor Complete Series (3 platters)
→ Saving the Right Whale
→ Buddy Games
→ Spring Awakening
→ D.I. Ray Season 1
→ PBS Kids Get Up and Dance!
→ Grantchester Season 8
From Rainbow: The Legend of Glynor Turman 2023
From Random: The Girl Who Left Home
→ Attic Truck
→ Persian Lessons
→ Close to Vermeer
→ Only in Theaters
→ Sang a Song into the Future
Aber Bergen Complete Series (9 platters)
→ 13. Eli's Four Cousins
From Level 33: Kubrick by Tux
Future TX
Ultra-Mountains
From Lionsgate: Cannibal Cabin
John Wick Chapter 4
From Magnolia: The Travels of Pope Francis
Little Richard I Am Everything
From Mill Creek: Battle Kaju V.1
Ultranman vs. Red King
Southern Gospel
From MPI: Rare Objects
Whisper of the Heart Broadway
Horseplay
Corrage
The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet V.13
The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet V.14
Paint
From Music Box: Other People's Children
Joy
Revoir Paris
A Question of Silence
Killzone
Project ALF
Wrong Reasons
Witchtrap
Shin Ultraman
Stioege-O-Rama
What the Waters Left Behind
Scars
Denver the Last Dinosaur Complete Series (6 platters)
From The Glasses: In Corpore
From 101: Fear The Invisible Man
→ 12 Dates
King Charles III
From Paramount: Dogs in the Wild
Sky Med Season 1
Tulsa King Season 1
Stalko
One True Loves
The L Word Generation Q Season 3
The Hummingbird Effect
Now Hear This Season 4
Criminal Minds Evolution Season 16
→ Marriage
→ Our House
→ Niagra
Turbo Complete Series (7 platters)
Quantum Leap Season 1
The Croods Collection (10 platters)
→ Johnny & Clyde
→ Come Out Fighting
→ From Utopia: Floy Spider
From Vertical: To Catch a Killer
From Vision: King Charles III The New Monarchy
→ Crossfire
→ From VMI: Junkyard Dogs Girls to Buy
→ Double Threat
→ From Warner Bros.: Best Seller Call the Midwife Season 12
→ City of Ghosts
→ DC's Stargirl Season 3
Dead Death in Paradise Season 12
→ Diary of a Hitman
→ Evil Dead Rise
→ Golden Gate
→ Guy Ritchie's The Covenant
The Handmaid's Tale Season 5
In Memory of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II Picturing Elizabeth Her Life in Images The Last of Us Season 1
→ Mayberry RFD Complete Series (12 platters)
→ Mood
→ Night Court Complete Series (26 platters)
→ Stormy Monday The Venture Bros. Complete Series
From Well Go: Sakura
Bone Cold
→ The Rank
→ The Tank
→ Day Zero
→ From Wild Eye: Jurassic Shark 3
Seavenge
Penny Pinchers The Kings of No-Budget Horror
Penny Pinchers 2 Scenes from the Underground
Cocaine Shark
Summerhouse Slaughter
Flesh City
Hi-Fear
Defenonads from Hell
From Wownow: Health Hacks
Wellness Tips for a Better You
→ Health Hacks Smart Habits to Change Your Life
→ Dino Rampage Hackers
→ Treasure Hunting and the Pirates of the Caribbean
→ Legal Ladies Pioneers of Law
→ Legal Ladies Pioneers of Law
→ Children's Literary Heroes Season 1
→ Train School Season 1
→ Terminator and the AI Apocalypse
→ France
→ The History of Magic
→ Avatars of the Astral Worlds Transformation
→ Avatars of the Astral Worlds Supernatural
→ Weight Loss Tips Simple Ideas to Help Lose Weight
→ M16 Invisible Missions
→ Oppenheimer
→ Genius or Madman?
→ From Yellow Veil: The Saragossa Manuscript

Coming Attractions

The following selected 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