

Margaret Rutherford, this is one of the most interesting and unique Shakespeare adaptations ever made. Beautifully restored from the surviving 35mm negatives and other original sources, this Criterion edition features extras including audio commentary by film scholar James Naremore, new and archival interviews, and a booklet. Highly recommended. **Editor's Choice.** (S. Axmaker)

The Commitments

★★★1/2

RLJ, 118 min., R, DVD: \$14.99, Blu-ray: \$29.99

Based on the 1987 novel by Roddy Doyle, director Alan Parker's story of the rise and fall of a Dublin R&B band is brought to life by a cast of unknowns, with passion, soul, and a superb soundtrack of classic American songs. Robert Arkins stars as would-be impresario Jimmy Rabbitte, who decides to create an R&B band in Dublin out of working-class singers and musicians he scouts from the streets. Jimmy tells them: "The Irish are the blacks of Europe. Dubliners are the blacks of Ireland. North Dubliners are the blacks of Dublin." Set and shot in the slums of Dublin, where poverty and unemployment are endemic, the film has a shaggy quality, buttressed by salty and witty language, as this volatile mix of personalities clashed offstage but comes together to create amazing music onstage (the actors do their own singing and playing, adding to the film's authenticity). Andrew Strong is a revelation as the ruffian lead singer (he went on to a solo career), guitarist Glen Hansard later starred in the 2007 hit *Once*, and Maria Doyle Kennedy and Colm Meaney are able costars. It's one of the great films about the creation of a band (and its ultimate demise), featuring a bestselling soundtrack that spawned a follow-up album and a concert tour. Bowing on Blu-ray, extras include audio commentary by director Parker, cast and crew interviews, behind-the-scenes featurettes, photo galleries, and a booklet. Highly recommended. (S. Axmaker)

Dead End Drive-In

★★★

Arrow, 88 min., R, Blu-ray/DVD Combo: \$29.95

George Miller's 1981 cult classic *The Road Warrior* clearly serves as inspiration for Australian genre filmmaker Brian Trenchard-Smith's 1986 film *Dead End Drive-In*, a film that mixes sci-fi, gearhead action, and social commentary, set in a near future in which economic collapse has driven the rich into isolated gated communities while everyone else scrambles to survive in a culture of crime and unemployment. With society on the verge of collapsing (or worse, rising up in rebellion), the authorities hit upon a brilliant solution to contain the frustrations of the



young and aimless: turn the local drive-in into a concentration camp. Jimmy (Ned Manning) takes his girl (Natalie McCurry) on a drive-in date but finds the gates locked when he tries to leave. This popular teen destination becomes a witty metaphor for society, with the cars turned into homes and the inmates seduced into compliance with a steady diet of junk food from the snack bar and nightly movies, with only Jimmy actively plotting an escape. When the residents grow restless, the authorities bus in Asian immigrants and stir racial tensions among the white youth, who protest the invasion of their community. The sociopolitical messages and exploitation movie metaphors aren't subtle but they are witty and effective, although the film can also be enjoyed simply as a colorful sci-fi drive-in movie with terrific car action and stunt work. Based on a story by Booker Prize-winning Australian novelist and screenwriter Peter Carey, this is a stand-out example of "Ozploitation" low-budget genre films from Australia in the 1970s and '80s. Extras include audio commentary by Trenchard-Smith, and bonus short films by the director. Recommended. (S. Axmaker)

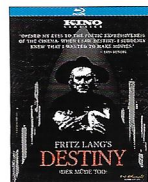
Destiny

★★★

Kino Lorber, 98 min., not rated,

DVD: \$24.99, Blu-ray: \$29.99

The 1921 silent drama *Destiny* was the breakthrough film for great German director Fritz Lang (*Metropolis*). Originally titled *Der Müde Tod* in Germany, which translates to "Weary Death," *Destiny* is a mix of supernatural drama and mythic parable created in the shadow of World War I. A young woman (Lil Dagover) finds her fiancé (Walter Janssen) suddenly gone, dead before his time (as were many young men in the war), and she appeals to Death (Bernhard Goetzke) to bring him back. Death (who is indeed weary of his toils) gives her three chances to stop the candle of life from going out, which becomes the framework for an anthology of stories of love and death through the ages: a commoner is condemned by a Caliph for wooing his daughter in ancient Baghdad, a jealous man plots the murder of a romantic rival in 17th-century Venice, and a wizard plays games with an abducted couple for the amusement of the Emperor in Imperial China. Dagover and Janssen play the roles of the doomed lovers in each story, which inevitably end in tragedy, yet Lang also finds redemption in love and sacrifice. Along the way, Lang creates fantastical sets for each story and for Death's domain, a mythical realm built on an epic scale. Remastered from a new restoration by the Friedrich Wilhelm Murnau Foundation in Germany, extras include audio commentary by film historian Tim Lucas, a featurette on the restoration, and a new orchestral score. Recommended. (S. Axmaker)



Fixed Bayonets!

★★★

Kino Lorber, 92 min., not rated,

Blu-ray: \$29.95

Writer-director Samuel Fuller's 1951 Korean War platoon drama is a small-scale production that focuses on a squad of American soldiers ordered to hold a snowy mountain pass while their division retreats. Richard Basehart stars as Corporal Denno, a soldier who can't bring himself to fire his rifle at the enemy and bristles at the thought of having to take command, and Gene Evans is Sgt. Rock, a grizzled veteran who passes on his wisdom to Denno as senior officers are killed and he becomes the highest-ranking soldier. Their only hope is to create the illusion of a much larger force hidden in the mountains (Rock has a few tricks up his sleeve) in this story of ordinary men rising to the occasion when the situation demands. Fuller draws on his service as a soldier in Africa and Europe in World War II to create the platoon dynamics (the squad is filled with all sorts of types), along with the tactics and battle action. The entire film is shot on soundstages, with sets recreating the wintry mountains, forests, and the caves in which the soldiers take refuge. The artificial setting gives the film a kind of abstracted, theatrical quality that eschews sentimentality and melodrama for a blunt portrait of men facing death (James Dean is an uncredited extra, but he's hard to pick out). Debuting on Blu-ray, extras include audio commentary by film historian Michael Schlesinger and the widow and daughter of Fuller. Recommended. (S. Axmaker)



The Immortal Story

★★★

Criterion, 58 min., not rated, DVD: 2 discs, \$29.99; Blu-ray: \$39.99

Based on a short story by Isak Dinesen and adapted to the screen faithfully by Orson Welles with only minor changes, *The Immortal Story* aired on French TV in 1968. Running just under an hour, the film stars Welles as Mr. Clay, a rich, misanthropic merchant in Macao who becomes obsessed with turning an old seaman's legend—about a rich man who hires a sailor to impregnate his young wife—into a dramatic reality. Clay tasks his clerk (French actor Roger Coggio) with finding a woman (Jeanne Moreau) to play his wife and then hires a sailor (Norman Eshley) off the streets to be the young man, and he takes the role of the rich old codger himself. Like many of Welles's films, this one is about a powerful figure who uses his money and influence to attempt to control those around him, and it is equally about stories and storytelling, with Clay himself taking the role of director. Welles's stylistic approach, however, is very different. It's his

