

# THE DVD LASER DISC NEWSLETTER

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## The way of 3D

The least beloved of all the boxoffice champions, James Cameron's original **Avatar** (May 10) succeeded in surpassing the previous champion, Cameron's **Titanic**, by creating a moderately thoughtful, highly imaginative, and relentlessly energetic, Yessongs-album-cover-brought-to-life science-fiction adventure, and then presenting it in a technologically advanced 3D format, thereby creating something that rarely occurs, an entirely new motion picture theatrical experience. Although he took his sweet time about it, Cameron finally put together an equally imaginative sequel, the 2022 **Avatar The Way of Water**, which has been released as a four-platter *Blu-ray 3D + Blu-ray + Digital Code* by 20th Century Studios (UPC#786936899467, \$40). This time, however, the 3D was no more advanced than it had been the last time out, and so while the sequel was a decent-sized hit, it did not break the championship bar set by its predecessor (although, thanks to inflation, it did surpass **Titanic**).

When villains from Earth return across the galaxy to the planet or moon or whatever it is to extract revenge for the whumping they received at the end of **Avatar**, the tall, bluish humanoid heroes from the previous film relocate their family from their idyllic jungle home to hide among people living on an archipelago. The people of the archipelago communicate with the many sea creatures in the same way that the heroes had communicated with the sky and jungle creatures, and they learn how to live in their new environment as they overcome petty resentments and bond with their new hosts. And then the bad guys find them.

The film runs 193 minutes, and while it fits onto one Blu-ray platter, it has to be split in two for the 3D platters. The movie is a grand entertainment on the standard Blu-ray. While it does not explore the concepts of identity and consciousness as elaborately as the first film did—the heroes are partly human but share most of the traits that the planet's indigenous human-like beings possess—it does build upon that movie's basic concepts, and reinforces the sense of a greater physical and spiritual entity, of which all the 'living' beings on the planet are a component. The film revisits and then builds enthusiastically upon the designs of the first movie, both in the hardware that the human villains bring with them (among other things, facilitating a futuristic form of whaling), and the flora and fauna of the planet—notably, the many different sea creatures. The climactic battle is especially thrilling for the variety of situations and perils it is able to encompass utilizing all of these factors.

The 3D presentation does more than just add to the thrills. Carefully composed, the imaginative and cluttered environments are ideal for the 3D playback, but as the film goes along, it seems like it is what is now a typical 3D blockbuster feature, interchangeable with the 2D presentation except for a few key moments. Until the heroes dive underwater. Then, the 3D really comes into its own. There is a genuine 'weight' to the environment surrounding the characters underwater, as the entire image takes on a texture that is missing when the characters just have air around them, something that the 2D playback cannot replicate. And the 3D also adds to the drama at a very key moment. When one of the heroes dies, his entire body stiffens in lifelessness, an effect that can be observed in a palpable perspective with the 3D. In 2D, it's just another movie death.

Along with Sam Worthington and Zoe Saldana, Sigourney Weaver and Stephen Lang reprise variations of their roles from the initial film (Weaver actually plays an adolescent thanks to the complex computer imaging through which most of the actors are masked), while Kate Winslet and Edie Falco have been added to the cast, among others. Michelle Yeoh, David Thewlis, Wes Studi, CCH Pounder, Giovanni Ribisi, Oona Chaplin, Joely Richardson, Jack Champion and Cliff Curtis are also featured, and Cameron favorites Linda Hamilton, Edward Furlong, Billy Zane, Michael Biehn and Lance Henriksen are also in there, somewhere.

The film is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1. The transfer is, of course, impeccable on either playback. What can be said for the advantage of the standard 2D presentation, in addition to not having to swap out platters halfway through the film, is that without the 'distraction' of the 3D playback, a viewer can better appreciate the incredible detail that has gone into the special effects, particularly in the backgrounds and away from the center of the action. The 5.1-channel DTS sound has a sweeping dimensionality of its own and adds to the excitement of every sequence. It is elaborately designed, so that thumps, cries and other audio details are very specific in their location and purpose, adding to the essential, overwhelming wealth of sensory in-

put that the entire film conveys. The Simon Franglen musical score is serviceable to the film's emotions, but unmemorable. There is also an audio track that describes the action ("In the floating mountains, Spider leaps nimbly between the formations as he leads the Blue Team."), an audio track that has been altered to protect younger ears from some grownup expressions, a Spanish audio track and optional English and Spanish subtitles.

The fourth platter contains a terrific 180 minutes of production featurettes, going over the many innovative technical accomplishments that led to the creation of the film's realistic animation (it was shot entirely on soundstages and in tanks in New Zealand, and although the filmmakers went around the world first to grab examples of sea life in natural elements for reference, the artists were obviously inspired by the landscapes adjacent to their commute). The majority of the stars had to act with dots attached to their faces and small cameras attached in front, pointing at them. Indeed, one of the younger stars, Britain Dalton, would be a full blown teen heartthrob by now if he hadn't had to appear throughout the film with a blue face, a blue body and a tail. For anyone who enjoyed the feature, the programs are highly entertaining, giving the viewer a feel for the people who collaborated on the project, the spirit and drive Cameron brought to everyone involved, and the incredible scope that the production represented. The only thing that is missing from the presentation is any mention whatsoever of 3D. Also featured on the platter are two trailers and an overly vague 5-minute music video from The Weeknd. Although the film itself picks up where it left off if playback on any of the first three platters is terminated, none of the programs on the fourth platter do so.

Except for instances where a change in ownership has facilitated an alteration in packaging, so far as we know, the first 3D film to be sublicensed and reissued in the modern 3D format is Martin Scorsese's wonderful 2011 celebration of motion pictures, **Hugo**, which was initially released in 3D by Paramount (May 15) and has now been re-released in a two-platter 3D Blu-ray set by Paramount and Arrow Video (UPC#760137127253, \$40). That said, there appears to be no difference in the quality of the 3D playback between the two releases. The colors are identical and the 3D effects have the same precise sharpness. The 7.1-channel DTS sound is also of equal strength and separational delights. What Arrow does have to offer, however, is a viable array of new special features.

While the film has many purposes, it was clearly created for the 3D format, and you can feel Scorsese, a lifelong 3D fan, chomping at the bit to play with the format's potential from the very first frames. Like Cameron, he never relinquishes the format's possibilities even as he recognizes the importance narrative and drama have over gimmicks. Set in the early Thirties in a Paris railway terminal, where the great but long forgotten inventor of fantasy cinema, Georges Méliès, runs a toyshop, the story is about a young boy who lives in the terminal's attic and inevitably has a run-in with Méliès. With the input and assistance of others, their meeting eventually cures the heartbreaks that had been weighing heavily on both the old man and the boy. The film's effects are not just constantly inventive and engaging, they underscore the conflicts and emotions of the movie—the terminal environment feels like an enormous clockwork—so that what can seem like a sweet movie geek concoction in 2D becomes, in 3D, a glorious celebration of what motion pictures have accomplished for the human soul.

The film runs 126 minutes and is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1. Both the 2D presentation and the 3D presentation appear on a single platter. There are optional English subtitles, and along with a trailer, the film has been provided with a terrific commentary track from Méliès biographer Jon Spira. He talks extensively about Méliès, of course, but he also talks about the artists contributing to the film and the quality of their work, Scorsese's motivations for creating the film and his choices within it, and many other related topics, including 3D. "I think you really have to see it in 3D to really appreciate the fantastic work that the whole crew did on that. James Cameron actually told Scorsese apparently that **Hugo** was his favorite of all the [3D] films."

The second platter holds the rewarding featurettes that had accompanied Paramount's original Blu-ray release, running a total of 58 minutes, along with a brief collection of promotional materials in still frame and an eclectic collection of new featurettes, befitting the film's own celebration of clutter and history.

### 3D (Continued)

The author of the (large) source novel/picture book, Brian Selznick, explains his thought process behind creating the tale in an excellent 55-minute interview. He also talks extensively about the film, contemplates the art of cinematic adaptation, and shares some nice anecdotes about his cameo part and his involvement with the shoot. He found that Scorsese had been so meticulous in copying his own original artwork that he felt like he had "accidentally" storyboarded a Martin Scorsese film. "It's a really, really faithful adaptation of a book. It's perhaps the most faithful adaptation of a book I've ever seen."

In a 40-minute interview with cinematographer Robert Richardson, he speaks in great detail about how he works with Scorsese (who knows what he wants with each shot), the problems accompanying enhanced frame rates (we certainly don't like looking in the mirror with our reading glasses on, and that is the same sort of effect that high-speed frame rates generate on actors' faces), the color 'temperature' choices for the film and the specific challenges of shooting in 3D (how to judge which distances will work the best in a specific shot). "I found that 3D was immensely successful at showing the expression of an actor in a way which was completely different from doing it in 2D. There was a difference in 2D versus 3D. You can feel more of the human being in 3D, because you do have [a sense] of the whole body, of the whole face. It's not as flat. It just takes on this depth, and that depth brings you closer. It would be very easy to overact in 3D." He also says that the learning curve was so steep, he wished very much he could have gone back and shot half of the movie again.

A 10-minute piece that is designed for younger viewers uses the displays of a British film museum to go over the predecessors to film, such as shadow plays and zoetropes, while a 38-minute piece in French uses the displays of a museum in Paris dedicated to Méliès to present his biography and explain the importance of his accomplishments as the founder of many aspects of cinema and its grammar. There is an 8-minute look at Méliès' later years, a very good 14-minute interview with composer Howard Shore about the various influences that guided his score, a potentially rewarding 18-minute appreciation of Scorsese's artistry that unfortunately spends at least half of its running time on un-narrated clips from the film, and a much better 23-minute reflection on the film's themes and dynamics, as well as its production history.

Readily appearing on many lists of the 'Worst Movies of All Time,' the cheaply but gamely staged 1953 **Robot Monster** celebrates its dimensional resurrection with a lovingly executed 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Restoration in 3D on a single-platter Blu-ray from 3-D Film Archive and Bayview Entertainment (UPC#012233538939, \$35) in three formats—2D, Polarized 3D and red/blue shift 3D. For the latter, which can be watched on any monitor, a pair of red/blue glasses is included. Since the film is in black and white, the replication of its 3D effects in the red/blue format is essentially as good as the Polarized 3D version (which requires a special player and monitor, as it did for **Avatar The Way of the Water** and **Hugo**).

The film itself runs 62 minutes, but the presentation is expanded with a lengthy 1953 opening prologue short entitled *Stardust in Your Eyes* in 3D by standup comic (tolerable imitations and lame jokes), Slick Slaven, in front of an inert flat background, and an extended epilog montage of memorabilia stills (along with some sort of music video), to create a feature running time of 73 minutes. Shot in the dusty California outdoors at the broken down foundations of a building, the dry, undeveloped hillsides and the oft-used Los Angeles Bronson Caves, the film, after a further preamble, is about the last family on Earth, who are protecting themselves from an alien in a gorilla suit with a space helmet. Given the film's dream logic, this all makes perfect sense, and given the limitations of the production—a half-dozen cast members, the least expensive props imaginable—the narrative conveys wisps of legitimate science-fiction thoughtfulness amid its reinforcement of Fifties social conformity. Directed by Phil Tucker, there are two child performers whose skills are limited, but the adult actors, including George Nader and Claudia Barrett know what they are doing and give it their best shot, despite some memorably awkward dialog ("I cannot, yet I must. How do you calculate that? At what point on the graph do 'must' and 'cannot meet?'").

But we are not here to debate what makes a movie 'bad,' particularly when that badness is of itself entertaining. No, we are here to assess the quality of the 3D effects, which are, by the standards of even the dumbest 3D movies, also 'bad'—and yet there is something utterly enchanting about watching the film in the 3D format. One of the props the filmmakers did manage to spring for, or at least rent, was a bubble machine, and so there are flurries of bubbles floating both closer and farther away from your nose with a delightful profuseness. And then there are the characters, standing amid the scrub brush and occasional rocks. They are almost always presented with a distinct dimensionality, perspectively placed against the rocks and against one another. But that is it. There is nothing waved, tossed or flung at the camera, and nothing elaborately dimensional happens. Nevertheless, except for the flat stock inserts of lizards pretending to be dinosaurs, you are always aware of, and even pleased by, the 3D effects, and the film, already endearing for its let's-put-on-a-show spirit, becomes even more charming.

The picture is presented in a squared full screen format and looks terrific, with no discernible wear or compromised cinematography. The monophonic sound has some slight background noise and, hang on to your hat if you are not steeped in Fifties film arca, there is an amazing musical score by Elmer Bernstein. Not only is the music succinct and suitable to the tone of the film, but it seems almost as if it is clear enough and simple enough to serve as a primer on how to score a movie. There are optional English subtitles. Juvenile star Greg Moffett and restoration experts Mike Ballew, Eric Kurland and Lawrence Kaufman supply a commentary track over just the film itself. It is a fairly conversational talk, with some information shared, speculation over different aspects of the shoot, and a celebration of the film's many quirks, but overall, its value is limited.

Because of the different formats available on the platter, the menu can be a bit confusing. In 2D there are 38 minutes of various supplements, including a trailer for **Robot Monster**; wonderful 2D trailers for other 3D movies from the era; an alternate opening title card in which the film was called *Robot from Mars*; a 3-

minute appreciation, or anti-appreciation, of the film by Joe Dante; a fascinating 4-minute look at the cinematic experimentation that was done during the film's production, including a discarded day-for-night sequence (hence, the characters all appear to fall asleep in the afternoon) and shots in the film that are genuinely different depending upon which eye you close; and 13 minutes of wonderful reflections with 3D Archive's Bob Furmanek, not only about rescuing **Robot Monster**, but also about tracking down Slaven. Additionally, there is a terrific 8-minute 2D clip of Bela Lugosi on the 1953 TV show, *You Asked for It*, doing his Dracula shtick and also plugging an upcoming 3D movie. The piece is accompanied as well by a succinct commentary from Lugosi biographer Gary Rhodes, who talks about Lugosi's career as Dracula in an informative and engaging manner.

In 3D, there are 64 minutes of supplementary features that are not broken down any further on the menu, but include a 3D trailer for the film; a nice 18-minute interview with the elderly Moffett talking about his career as a child actor, his memories of making the film, and his experiences with its subsequent notoriety (although a lot of what he has to say is repeated in the commentary); a terrific 21-minute insightfully narrated montage of 3D snapshots from a variety of locations, times and sources; two black-and-white 3D shorts from 1953 featuring undulating women, *Dance of the Blonde Slave's Revenge* running 4 minutes and the somewhat more dimensional *Madonna and Her Bubbles* running 5 minutes; a terrific 2-minute montage presentation of a Harvey *Adventures in 3-D* comic book that encourages you to freeze each page for extended viewing; a jokey 4-minute modern visit to the Bronson Canyon site; a jokey 'interview' with someone pretending to be the monster from the film that does including the only 3D glimpse you will ever get of the monster from **Invaders from Mars** (see page 7); and a brief, side-by-side before-and-after presentation of the film's 3D restoration.

With many classic 3D features begging for restoration it is a challenge to justify the effort 3-D Film Archive put into restoring the 1972 softcore feature, **Prison Girls**, although the transfer is fairly impressive, all things considered. The Archive, MGM and Kino Lorber Incorporated have released the film as a single-platter *KL Studio Classics* 3D Blu-ray (UPC#73-8329262785, \$30), in the dual format Polarized 3D and red/blue shift versions, as well as a 2D version. A pair of red/blue glasses is included.

Running 88 minutes, the film is about a half-dozen female inmates who are given weekend furloughs, and is therefore broken down into respective erotic vignettes with each actress. There is an overriding narrative, enabling a valid closing moral (undercut only because the actress is clearly reading from the script on the desk below the bottom of the image—like everything else, an awareness of it is enhanced by the 3D, in this case, the tilt of her head), but there is only so much that can be done in the sex scenes, and as much as the filmmakers attempt to provide variables, it gets stale fairly quickly.

What doesn't get stale is the absolutely wonderful set dressing. Shot in Los Angeles, whether it is a fancy house in the hills or a derelict garage in midtown, the Seventies décor is exquisite. Sure, instead of working hard to recreate an era, the designers were just grabbing whatever was around and taking advantage of it, but now that accumulated effort becomes a glorious time capsule of bad taste at its finest. When you get tired of seeing naked bodies writhe on the floor, for example, your 3D gaze turns to the portion of the shag carpet that is not being defiled, with every gold thread standing upright, as if the entire rug were excited by what was going on.

Letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1, the color transfer, as seen on the included 2D presentation, as well as the Polarized 3D presentation, is very good, with reasonably bright hues and accurate fleshtones. The cinematography is less consistent in its lighting and focus, and the film has a worn and battered look to it most of the time, but the clarity of the image is still advantageous. Despite the different types of breasts on display, it is not the naked bodies so much as simply the contours of a face and the round softness of a shoulder that benefit the most from the 3D playback. There are sporadic attempts to lunge objects at the camera—which also get beer spit on it in the one 3D moment that can actually make you duck—and while the objects placed in the foreground are not as creative or as large as they are in the more energetically composed 3D features, there is often a little doodad of some sort protruding at the bottom of the screen. Whether any of this will be enough to justify obtaining the feature will be up to the individual collector, although the sense that there is only a finite number of such programs available, and that the effects, regardless of their spiritual banality, can be so much fun that even leaning over to scrape the bottom of the barrel is a temptation that is difficult to resist.

The alternate red/blue process is fantastic on black-and-white 3D films, such as **The Diamond Wizard** (Dec 22) and **Robot Monster**, but color films have always been compromised by the technology, even theatrically. While the 3D effects are excellent—and you can watch them on any TV hooked up to a Blu-ray player—the film is presented in a virtual black and white, with no more than a vague, pale hint of the film's strongest primary hues. Nevertheless, although the colors are missing, the 3D effects are just as much of a kick as they are on the Polarized version, since the image is still very sharp and effectively detailed.

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Along with subtitles, there is a 2D trailer and a 5-minute extension of one of the erotic scenes, also in 2D, which, for all of the additional variety in positions that it provides, demonstrates how some of the other scenes could have stood a little judicious trimming. Every version of the film is accompanied by a commentary track from fans James G. Chandler and Ash Hamilton, who share a few tidbits about the cast members, drop snide remarks about the quality of the production (during a prison shower melee: “There seems to be an awful lot of water not draining, getting pretty deep there, so I kinda wonder if its, you know, ‘Let’s just fill it up and use it for the fight here.’” “In my experience, in prison showers, there’s not a lot of standing water.”), discuss Seventies aesthetics (“There seemed to be an attempt to mix a lot of art from different cultures into America at that time. See, we’re getting things sometimes that seem sometimes very African, Egyptian, but it was still Americanized.”) and the Darwinian shift in pornography that would happen later, during the Eighties (“Women here were much more organic, much more natural.” “Not so much silicone enhancement.” “It was not, you know, the Age of Augmentation.”). Nevertheless, the talk doesn’t really have much to offer.

A black-and-white film that was released by 3-D Archive and Kino as a 3D Blu-ray before they started doing the titles in dual 3D formats, the 1953 Paramount Korean War docudrama, **Cease Fire** (UPC#738329216429), is just available as a Polarized 3D program, albeit with an alternate 2D playback. Directed by Owen Crump with a prominent producer’s credit for Hal Wallis (the film’s title card reads, *Hal B. Wallis’ Cease Fire*), the film uses real soldiers for its cast as it tells the story of a platoon sent to secure a hill position on the eve of the cease fire, while cynical reporters waiting at the negotiation site find it hard to believe that a deal is actually going to be reached. Running 75 minutes, with an intermission, some of the actual documentary footage is flat, but most of the film, including the staged combat scenes, is fully dimensional. Additionally, the film has a 3-channel stereo track, with directional dialog, great firefights and a fully orchestrated and dimensional Dimitri Tiomkin musical score. As for the visual effects, nothing really beats the opening moment when the camera looks down the barrel of an artillery gun (how did it ever duck in time?), but the 3D environment, while never going out of its way to prod a viewer, is consistently engaging, even when it is just the bodies of the men passing through the landscape. The plot is fairly simple and the cast is not asked to do much in the way of dramatics, but the personalities are developed to a certain extent and the basic suspense of the mission is enough to keep a viewer intrigued. Highly derogatory references are made toward the unseen Chinese enemy, but that is an accurate measure of the times, and the unit does have one African-American soldier, who is treated no differently than the others and has his fair share of dialog, such as it is.

The presentation is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.66:1 and the film is accompanied by optional English subtitles. The film itself has an introduction by General Mark W. Clark in 3D, and there are two alternative introductions by Clark, in 3D, in the supplement, running a total of a bit over a minute. Also featured are two trailers (one in 2D promoting the film as a 3D release) and a minute-long radio ad accompanied by a still photo montage of memorabilia, and rather disappointingly, a menu option that only brings up a website address where the viewer can access an essay about the film.

### 1992 crime thrillers from Criterion

Carl Franklin’s exquisitely crafted 1992 crime thriller, **One False Move**, has been released by The Criterion Collection as a two-platter 4K Blu-ray (UPC#71551528-5711, \$50). Running 105 minutes, the film has two plotlines that barrel toward one another. Michael Beach, Billy Bob Thornton (who also collaborated on the screenplay) and Cynda Williams play thieves that rob and kill a drug dealer in Los Angeles and then take off across the country. The two cops in charge of the case, played by Jim Metzler and Earl Billings, determine that the trio are headed for a small town in Arkansas, and contact the Good Ol’ Boy sheriff there, played by Bill Paxton. As the film cuts back and forth between the cops and the robbers, the psychologies and the emotions of the characters are gradually revealed so that the climax has a dramatic power on many different levels. Every moment in the story has a compelling logic—some of which is not clear until the end—and so the viewer is pulled along by a mixture of momentum and intrigue, engaged by the performances and intoxicated by the suspense. The film has a masterful screenplay that has been beautifully executed, hiding the film’s true narrative within the distraction of its plot, and its resonance lingers long after its conclusion.

The feature is presented on both a 4K platter and a standard Blu-ray platter. Letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1, the differences between the two presentations is barely discernible, if at all. The 4K image may be a little smoother, and the 2-channel DTS surround sound may be a little sharper, but the differences are negligible. The color transfer is faultless, with the cinematography perfectly capturing the atmosphere of every environment. The separation mix is highly detailed and adds continually to the film’s pleasures. There are optional English subtitles. Both presentations have a very good commentary track by Franklin, who describes his thought process step-by-step through the film while also sharing many background anecdotes about the shoot and the players. “The gentleman playing the harmonica was simply someone who had come by the set and wanted—he had played with a lot of the blues guys in the Fifties and the Forties, I believe his home was in Memphis Tennessee, and he heard we were shooting. He came by, and he asked me to hear him play and I did, and then we used him for the score for the final sequence of the movie because it was the voice of that area.”

The standard BD platter also has a trailer and a fantastic 27-minute conversation between Franklin and Thornton from 2012, talking about writing, acting, and directing, as well as sharing more details about the production.

Directed by Bill Duke, Laurence Fishburne plays a cop posing as a drug dealer in the 1992 **Deep Cover**, a New Line Home Entertainment Criterion Blu-ray (UPC#715515261616, \$40). Compared to the refined and elegant construction of **One False Move**, **Deep Cover** is a baroque hodgepodge of political paranoia and flamboyant exploitation, but it sustains an intensity that keeps a viewer hooked on the characters and their choices. Set in Los Angeles, Charles Martin Smith is wonderful as the hero’s supervisor, and Jeff Goldblum is game as the drug lawyer Fishburne’s character teams up with to climb the organization. Yvette Heyden is compelling as an erotic interest, and Clarence Williams III has a very nice turn as another

cop. Running 107 minutes, the story has a suspiciously upbeat ending, but it plays out with plenty of suspense and a classy sense of design that separated it from the many other drug dealing thrillers of its day.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1. The color transfer is faultless and the image is slick. The stereo sound mix does not have the delicate detail that was applied to **One False Move**, but separation effects are distinctive and impactful. There are optional English subtitles.

Along with a trailer, the supplements include a poorly staged 18-minute interview with Duke in which only his answers are presented—it becomes a jumpy talk that would work much better as a longer conversation touching on the same topics—speaking about his career as a African-American performer and director, and his understanding of how the drama in **Deep Cover** unfolds. There is a much better 57-minute discussion of the film in front of a live audience with Duke and Fishburne talking about the art of acting and directing, the production, reactions to the film (Fishburne takes issue with a Brian De Palma movie that he claims was a direct copy of their effort) and other interesting anecdotes (Marlon Brando was a big fan). A 36-minute appreciation and analysis of the film by critics Racquel J. Gates and Michael B. Gillespie does a good job at dissecting the movie’s themes and placing it within not just the history of black cinema, but the continuing saga of American race relations. “What I really love about **Deep Cover** is that we get these fascinating and flawed characters, and we get to sit with them and be made uncomfortable by them throughout the duration of the film. And even though we get some kind of resolution at the end, the issues that it opens up, the questions that the film asks are still lingering, even after the credits roll.” Finally, there is an enlightening 18-minute appreciation of Snoop Dog and Dr. Dre’s title song for the film (aka *187*), looking not only at how the rise of hip-hop in the late Eighties and early Nineties dovetailed the explosion of mainstream films about the black American experience, but the political awakening that was occurring simultaneously with these events.

### Know it for the first time, again and again

An amazing actor gives an amazing solo performance of one of the greatest writings of the Twentieth Century in the Westend Films Kino Lorber release of **T.S. Eliot’s Four Quartets** (UPC#738329263331, \$20), featuring Ralph Fiennes. Alone on a stage for 88 minutes, barefoot in a brown corduroy jacket (removed after the first quartet, donned again during the last), dark grey pants and a lighter grey shirt (the stage lights do alter the clothing’s hues now and then), accompanied only by two simple wooden chairs, a small four-legged wooden table (holding a microphone, a glass and a carafe of water) and very tall walls, Fiennes essentially lifts dry words from the page and embodies them with life. He performs them with such precision that there is no embellishment to his embodiment, only the bedazzling humanization of Eliot’s conversational adventures.

The poem is Eliot’s elliptical rumination upon existence, with strong ecological undertones, inevitable references to faith, an oblique acknowledgment of history, an unhindered embrace of quantum mechanics, an agonized lament of aging (and its contradiction in the unrealities of time), and England, old and New. Eliot’s poems are voices, strewn together in a high-speed blender, and Fiennes brilliantly explicates each and every one in **Four Quartets**, so that he is a bank clerk at one moment and then, with a shift of lights and against the tall stage walls that take on the feel of Stonehenge, a wild Celt chanting over a fire. An overriding interest in circularities draws the piece together, but you don’t have to understand it all at once. Every little segment—every line from the poem—is brought to life by Fiennes and is fully understood in that moment, even if it is then forgotten with the distractions of the next moment. That is why Fiennes’ accomplishment is so remarkable—he didn’t just memorize the poem, he memorized the emotional and physical meanings of every word, and their progression. It is the compelling design of the presentation and the cerebral wealth of its source that makes the DVD so irresistible, because it can be watched over and over, with new discoveries made (and sometimes forgotten, and sometimes made again) during every viewing.

Fiennes conceived and directed his performance and the staging, and toured Britain with the show (during the pandemic), which was then shot in 2022 by his sister, Sophie Fiennes. The images of Fiennes on stage are squared in the center of the screen and are a little smeary when the lighting diminishes. Surrounded in darkness, in the best of conditions the hues and fleshtones are subdued, but crisp. The camerawork is judicious, altering angles and sizes, but not so aggressively as to distract from the flow of Fiennes’ presence. She also made a decision, however, to illustrate the piece with cutaways to the biographical locations Eliot evoked in the poem’s four sections—an autumnal garden, a pastoral landscape, a rocky shore, the inside of a church—which are brighter and are letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.78:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback. Their use is also judicious, for the most part, and do not detract from the program, at least at first. But as the show goes along they become more and more of an annoyance, because the viewer becomes more and more invested in Fiennes’ sculpting of his expressions and his body language to accompany his words. Especially during the final quartet, you feel robbed every time you miss his business.

There are two stereo options, a 5.1-channel Dolby Digital track and a standard stereo track. We began with the 5.1 track, but very quickly switched over to the other, which we found to be fully satisfying and dimensional. There is music at times, and there are environmental sound effects. On the 5.1 track, the sound designers toy a bit too much with Fiennes’ voice, swinging it back and forth within a line, which becomes another needless distraction. Optional English subtitles and a trailer are included. Sophie supplies a commentary track in conversation with poetry expert Hari Kunzru. They discuss the poem’s meanings, the interpretations being presented and Eliot’s background. She reveals that her camera strategies honed to Eliot’s repeated variety of forms within the poem, marvels at the artistry she was capturing (“Extraordinary complexities within simplicity.”), explains how Ralph dropped six lines that she had to add back in later on, shares a fascinating treatise on the relationship between consonants and vowels and emotion, and admits that thanks to her parents’ enthusiasms, both her and her brother grew up with the LP of Eliot himself reading selections of the poem. “We had a shared love of the poem and it links us back to our crazy childhood.”

### Damiani masterworks

The first time we sat down to watch Damiano Damiani's 1974 **How to Kill a Judge** (Nov 09), we thought we were going to see an Italian police thriller, with lots of car chases, gunfights and so on. We were astounded, however, by what we discovered. If anything, the film was more of a giallo, as a murder mystery—who killed the judge—runs through its spine, but above all else, it was a political thriller, one so rich in complexity and resonance that we placed it on our list of favorite films, something that rarely ever occurs. Franco Nero plays a leftist filmmaker whose most recent production—which has the same title as the film at hand—has caused a scandal in Palermo for questioning the honesty of a prominent jurist. When the man is killed, Nero's character takes it upon himself to prove that it was not his movie that led to the assassination. Meanwhile, since the judge was indeed corrupt and was working on an important case involving a major bank, everyone is scrambling to find an appropriate killer. Even the mafia bosses search for a scapegoat among themselves, having assumed that it was one of them who pulled the trigger. So, the film is entertaining on a basic, murder mystery level, supplemented by the wonderful Sicilian locations, and has an involving emotional throughline as Nero's character falls into an uneasy relationship with the judge's widow, played by Françoise Fabian (sporting a strong affinity with Jeanne Moreau), who initially blames him for the death, but then comes around to assisting him in finding the killer. But at the same time, Damiani meticulously lays out the different levels, or pools, of corruption and selfishness that permeate Palermo's society from the lowest to the highest strata. Running 111 minutes, the film is utterly engrossing and enlightening, teaching the viewer how to observe political power and understand the machinations behind it.

What we have now belatedly (to our shame) discovered is that **How to Kill a Judge** was not the only densely constructed, masterful political thriller that Damiani made with Nero, because Radiance has released that film with two other features in an outstanding three-platter Blu-ray set, **Cosa Nostra** (UPC#760137118725, \$80), which is subtitled *Franco Nero in Three Mafia Tales by Damiano Damiani*. It is suggested in one of the supplements that Damiani is sort of a 'missing link' between the highly artistic crime films of Francesco Rosi and Elio Petri and the more exploitative crime genre features of filmmakers such as Enzo G. Castellari and Umberto Lenzi, but his films can also seem to be taking advantage of the 'best of both worlds.' Letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1, each film is presented separately in both an English language version and an Italian version, with optional English subtitles available only on the Italian versions for two of the films. On all three, and on both the English and the Italian versions, the picture transfers are excellent. The images are smooth and colors are finely detailed. The monophonic sound is reasonably clean.

**How to Kill a Judge** is accompanied by two trailers; a great 34-minute summary of Damiani's career (although its comparisons to the American **Dirty Harry** films are misguided), filled with terrific clips, which explains how the movie was his reaction to his previous film, when its release had coincided with the murder of a corrupt judge; a great 13-minute interview with Nero talking about his relationship with Damiani, his own career, and what he remembers about the people he worked with on the film; and an excellent 22-minute deconstruction of the film and its artistry ("While he could certainly be flamboyant, turning the camera upside down [for example], these tricks always have a clear purpose. What gives his films their verve is his refusal to settle for shots that just sit there, doing one thing. He likes them to develop, move, so that a close-up of one character becomes a close-up of someone else, whether by movement of the camera or the actors, or both. His people are always on the move, and the world around them doesn't stand still. If he resorts to the zoom at times, that was the fashion of the day and he blends it with strong, almost aggressive movement that bristles with energy and tension.")

A procedural set in Sicily, the 1968 *The Day of the Owl* takes place in a smaller town than Palermo. On one side of the village square, the local Mafia boss, superbly embodied by Lee J. Cobb, sits on his balcony and holds court with his confederates. On the other side, the police captain, played by Nero, stands on the much smaller balcony of his office, watching what goes on across the way. In the film's opening, a truck driver is assassinated, and Nero's character tries to get to the truth of who did the killing, knowing full well that it was done under the instructions of Cobb's character. He systematically works his way up the ladder, not so much turning suspects as just tricking them into confessions (or usable false confessions). The ending is inevitable, but the process of getting there is not only fully involving, it is also, as with the other films, an education in how power wields its control over forces supposedly outside of its grasp. Claudia Cardinale also delivers a terrific performance as the victim's very innocent widow.

The English language version runs 103 minutes, while the Italian version runs 109 minutes. There is a significant sequence near the end in the Italian version that is substantially shortened in the English version, but unfortunately, there are no subtitles for that additional footage. Cobb's voice is used on the English version, but not on the Italian version, and neither Nero nor Cardinale provide their voices for the English version. Otherwise, optional English subtitles support both versions. Along with a trailer, there is an excellent 20-minute summary of the development of the modern Italian crime genre and how it all can be traced back to *Day of the Owl*; a 17-minute interview with Nero, sharing more insights about Damiani and some wonderful anecdotes about shooting the film and the reactions to it; an equally

rewarding 27-minute interview with Nero, screenwriter Ugo Pirro and production manager Lucio Trentini about making the film and other topics (Nero has a marvelous story about giving Laurence Olivier a piggyback ride); a wonderful 22-minute interview with Cardinale from 2017 talking about her career as a whole and the people she worked with (she really seems to have her act together); and a lovely, comprehensive, heartfelt 33-minute appreciation of Cobb that takes his Italian films as seriously as his American films.

Although it is set in a prison, the 1971 *The Case Is Closed, Forget It*, is not so much a prison genre film as it is another penetrating political drama, this time using the prison as a representation of society as a whole. Nero (clean cut and barely recognizable, until his character gets beaten and thrown into solitary—after a couple days beard grown and some bruises, the Franco Nero you are familiar with suddenly appears) is a wealthy architect who is tossed (thanks to Italy's screwy prison system) into a penitentiary while a car accident he may or may not have been involved with is being investigated. Running 106 minutes, the film is about his brief stay there as he befriends his cellmates and finds himself emmeshed in some sort of conspiracy that has targeted one of the prisoners. In a way, the story disguises its action by concentrating on character development, but that leads to a rewarding climax, because the personalities and motivations have been so industriously defined. At first the film seems a little surreal, yet that must also be how Nero's character feels. When the suspense gradually increases, the drama takes on a compelling political and social resonance, one that the viewer, identifying so closely with Nero's character, experiences as well. While the film is less expansive than the other two movies in the collection, the quality of its construction and execution makes it just as satisfying.

Even though the budget is limited to a few sets and the prison yard location, Claudio Ragona's cinematography is highly captivating. If the prison itself is 'a character,' that is because the cinematography is so effective at giving it dimension and nuanced design. Along with a trailer, there is a nice 14-minute interview with Nero about the film, his costars and his long relationship with Damiani; a very good 28-minute interview from 2015 with costar Corrado Solari, editor Antonio Siciliano and assistant director Enrique Bergier, talking extensively about the production and the people who worked on the film; and an excellent, full-fledged 35-minute profile of Damiani and his films, with many more terrific clips.

### Imprudent subtitle writers would go on our 'Little List'

Gastone Moschin is a gangster who was arrested the same day his gang misplaced a large bundle of cash, and so the day he gets out of jail they are there to pick him up, demanding to know where the money is, in the enjoyable 1972 Fernando Di Leo crime film, **Caliber 9**, a Raro Cinema Art Visions Blu-ray (UPC#738329262907, \$30). Originally titled *Milano Calibro 9*, Moschin's character insists he did not take it, and has to figure out which of his confederates is the thief as they ratchet up the pressure on him to confess. At the same time, the police are watching over him as a parolee, and are attempting to breakup the gang, while the head of the investigation and his leftist deputy argue about the true causes of crime and injustice. Barbara Bouchet costars as an exotic dancer who has been patiently waiting for Moschin's character to get out of the clink, and Lionel Stander is the head of the gang. Luigi Pistilli, Philippe Leroy and Mario Adorf are also featured. Running 103 minutes, the story has some good twists and turns, and is anchored by Moschin's wonderful tough guy presence as the hero.

On the whole, the film is so good it is a shame there is a crime-doesn't-pay ending that also goes so far as to ship the thoughtful deputy off to the boondocks. We also have two minor complaints. There is a continuity error in the editing. Near the end of the film, there is a large garden party where all of the gangsters are in attendance. The film then shifts to a quick scene of the gangsters back in town, and then cuts right back to them at the party. It makes no sense. The monophonic film is in Italian with optional English subtitles, and has a second audio track that is dubbed in English, with Stander doing his own voice, although on the whole the audio is much weaker and you can't get the full effect of the wonderful Luis Bacalov musical score unless you go with the Italian track. Anyway, Stander's character is called 'the Americano,' but not only do the subtitles irritatingly swap that out for 'the Mikado,' they even use the 'Mikado' name in the English dubbing. Not only is it ridiculous, because you can hear quite clearly on the Italian track that it is 'Americano,' but although Stander only has three speaking scenes, his character is referenced constantly in the film, and in each instance the 'Mikado' thing becomes more irritating.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1, and the color transfer looks super. Even though the film has deliberately grimy sequences, hues are fresh and are finely detailed. The Milan locations are terrific. Along with a pair of trailers, there is a 3-minute phone interview with Moschin sharing recollections over a montage of promotional stills, a good 26-minute profile of author Giorgio Scerbanenco (a crime writer who was typically shunned by academia) and the films that have been made from his stories, an excellent 39-minute profile of Di Leo going over a number of his films and including archival interviews (they also get 'Americano' right in the subtitles), and a terrific 30-minute retrospective documentary (among others, Bacalov is interviewed) that includes a wonderful anecdote about a skimpy outfit that Bouchet wears and how a photo of it got into the newspapers (to great publicity success). Film expert Rachel Nisbet supplies a dry but densely informative commentary track, going over the accomplishments of the cast and the crew, the significance of the film in the advancement of Italian crime movies, the effectiveness of the locations and many other insights to the movie's artistry.



### More Spaghetti, please!

In that Italy produced hundreds of westerns during a very short time frame in the Sixties and Seventies, home video companies have come nowhere near yet to gathering the dregs of the genre, and indeed, the lesser known films that are finally starting to emerge are often as invigorating and memorable as the best known titles. Arrow Video has released several less heralded efforts on Blu-ray in a four-platter set, **Blood Money: 4 Classic Westerns** (UPC#76013712-3842, 100), and if they are serving up all-you-can-eat Spaghetti westerns, they can keep these collections coming so far as we are concerned. Each monophonic film in the set has both an English presentation and an Italian presentation (hence different opening and closing credits, although otherwise there are no significant alterations beyond the dialog except for a song on one film), with optional English subtitles. Each film also comes with a trailer (except one) and a modest collection of memorabilia in still frame.

Opening with the hero relaxing leisurely on a beach, the camera pulls back to show that he is just pausing for a moment, as there is a corpse nestled in the sand next to him. Not only is Gianni Garko's character (he's billed as 'Gary Hudson') called 'Django' in both the Italian track and the English version of Romolo Guerrieri's 1967 *\$10,000 Blood Money*, but it was shot on several of the sets used in the original *Django* (May 21). While the plot seems completely different in the film, it is less different on paper—Garko's character (a total dreamboat, like Franco Nero) is a bounty hunter who bonds temporarily with a wanted bandit to rob a shipment of gold, only to be betrayed after the robbery succeeds. But the film, which also has echoes of **The Professionals**, still feels fresh and running 97 minutes, it is entertaining from beginning to end. So entertaining, in fact, that it is worth watching the movie twice, since the English dubbing is excellent and the Italian version is irresistible—a song at the end is in Italian on the one presentation and in English on the other, as well (the monophonic sound is equally strong on both tracks). There is a pleasing musical score by Nora Orlandi, some terrific shootouts, and even a couple of surprisingly compelling romantic subplots. Letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1, the color transfer is gorgeous from beginning to end, without a blemish. Decently paced, the film has no political resonance, but it is otherwise absolutely everything you hope for when you settle down with a Spaghetti western.

Also featured is a 10-minute overview of the film (which does offer it as a *Django* sequel) that also provides portraits of several bit players; a great 22-minute interview with Guerrieri and Garko about the film and their careers, except that the subtitled disappears about halfway through the piece; a nice 14-minute interview with producer Mino Loy, who is frank in his opinion of westerns (despite the profits), praises the various people he worked with, and talks about how difficult horses could be because they could hear when the cameras were running and when they weren't; and a decent 19-minute interview with screenwriter Ernesto Gastaldi (who hadn't called the hero, 'Django,' in his script), admitting that he did lift a bit of the story from **The Professionals** and talking about the people he worked with.

Film expert Lee Broughton spends much of his commentary citing and comparing other films to the movie at hand. He does it so profusely, in fact, that it is still entertaining to hear him reel off titles and point out various similarities. He also covers the film's production with a reasonable thoroughness, and even talks about the three different ways in which the name, 'Django,' was utilized in an Italian western, such as this case, where the character had the same name, but had nothing to do with the original Nero character. "It's hard to fathom why the producers of this third type of Django film would neglect to include the name, 'Django,' in their film's title since doing so was obviously understood to be a useful marketing tactic. Maybe they got last minute jitters, or maybe their distributor overruled them because too many pseudo-Django films were in circulation at the time and there was a fear that the market could become over saturated."

Directed by Giovanni Fago, the 1967 *Vengeance Is Mine*, also known as *\$100,000 for a Killing*, has a stronger dramatic content and is a wonderful film, but it is not quite as entertaining as *\$10,000 Blood Money*, entirely because the drama intrudes too often on the stylistic perfection of the Spaghetti western constructs. Garko is again a bounty hunter, who is seeking his half-brother, played by Claudio Camaso. The brother pulls off a gold robbery not realizing that Garko's character is shadowing him, but soon discovers, much to the consternation of his partners, that the gold has disappeared. Running 92 minutes, there is also another romantic subplot—which is generally rare in Spaghetti westerns beyond, for example, the flashback sequence in **For a Few Dollars More**. The film explores the bonds of brotherhood (When one brother protests that the gold is stolen, the other brother replies, "What difference does it make? All gold has been stolen at least once.") and sibling resentments, and it has another terrific Orlandi musical score, so perhaps the film plays better if it is watched before *\$10,000 Blood Money* or after a longer pause between the two.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1, and again, the widescreen framing is highly pleasing. Except for just two or three speckles, and a hair sticking up from the bottom of the screen in one scene, the picture transfer is excellent, with rich fleshtones and accurate hues. Included is a 13-minute introduction to the film that goes over the personalities of the cast and the crew and also provides a summary of Camaso's tragic life; 25 minutes of passable interviews with Garko and Gastaldi; a great 16-minute interview with Orlandi; and a 17-minute interview with Loy. Italian western fans Adrian J. Smith and David Flint supply a nice commentary, summarizing the film's strengths, discussing the various artists that contributed to its creation, and comparing aspects of it to other Italian westerns. They also remark upon the sudden popularity of the genre in Italy just as it was beginning to fade in America, and that at one point in the Sixties more than half the films being produced in Italy were westerns.

It is a real shame that Jeffrey Hunter died so young, because he was just coming into his own, transitioning away from his youthful heartthrob persona when he made his first scruffy-cheeked Spaghetti western, the 1968 *Find a Place to Die*. It would be just a couple of years later, when a stunt gone bad on another

European feature left an undetected injury, that he would pass away, and you wonder what might have happened if he had gone on instead to work with some decent American action directors like Robert Aldrich. Anyway, he has such a compelling presence in *Find a Place to Die* that the film, directed by Giuliano Carnimeo, thrives entirely on his image and performance. Running 89 minutes, the plot, an unofficial remake of *Garden of Evil* (Jun 08), is succinct—after a rockslide pins a gold miner, his wife, played by Pascale Petit, rushes across country to get help, with the nearest town several days away. There she meets Hunter's character, drowning in alcohol. While he is reluctant to help her, the others in the cantina are less gallant toward both her gold and her body, and he sobers up quickly to come to her aid. They form a group, travel back to the mine, and then have to chase after bandits who got there first. As clear-stated as the story is, either Carnimeo (or the less experienced producer, Hugo Fregonese, who is said to have done most of the directing) did not get the coverage he should have, or the editing is second rate. In any case, despite continuity confusions, especially during the last act, the story has a steady momentum and a couple of passable twists, with plenty of gunfights and even some brief moments of female nudity, while Hunter is right up there with Clint Eastwood and Franco Nero when it comes to commanding the screen. Once again, we were awash in Spaghetti western bliss.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1 and again, the color transfer is excellent. All the better to swoon over Hunter's beautiful blue eyes. The musical score, by Gianni Ferrio, is not exceptional, but it has guitars and brass, so it does its job. A trailer is not included, but there is a good 12-minute overview of the film; an 18-minute interview with Carnimeo, who talks about the movies he made, the people he worked with and Italian westerns in general, but doesn't ever actually seem to mention the film at hand; and a very good 31-minute analysis of Ferrio's career and score. Italian westerns enthusiast Howard Hughes provides a decent commentary, talking about the backgrounds of the cast and the crew and analyzing the narrative and filmmaking as the movie unfolds.

Very little dialog occurs in the 1970 *Matalo!*, directed by Cesare Canevari, so it doesn't really matter if you watch the English language version or the Italian version. Enlivened with wild camera angles, the film is nevertheless padded with extended and repeated business to reach its 94-minute running time. After a lengthy opening in which a character is rescued from a hanging and then kills his rescuers so he can keep the money he promised them, the film then meanders to an empty ghost town, where that character and his confederates take refuge after pulling off a stagecoach robbery. A couple of other characters wander into town, including the nominal star, baby-faced Lou Castel, who gets beat up a lot and then takes revenge using the handful of boomerangs that he carries with him (the film is so wild that the boomerangs have a POV as they fly through the air, which is especially impressive since it was long before the time that a genuine Boomerang Cam could be a thing), but the story doesn't really amount to much. For a while, the cinematography, the unpredictable camera and the occasional eruptions of violence can hold one's attention—and the characters do get developed a little even if they don't talk very much—but at some point you realize that the movie isn't really going anywhere, and by the end, you turn out to be right.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1. Again, the color transfer is flawless, held back only by the grain that seeps in with some of the lighting choices. At first we thought they were lifting tracks from Emerson, Lake & Palmer, including Greg Lake-like vocals, but it turns out to have all come from composer Mario Migliardi. Like everything else in the movie, the music is in some ways obnoxious, but invigorating, and contributes to the film having the reputation of being a headtrip movie. An excellent 39-minute piece in the supplement goes over Migliardi's impressive career and also deconstructs the music effectively, noting that as the film shifts to its dream-logic ridiculousness, the music creatively follows suit. Also featured is a very good 16-minute introduction to the film and a fairly dry but extensive 45-minute summary of Canevari's career and the brief rise of the film industry in Milan.

Sixties film experts Troy Howarth and Nathaniel Thompson supply an enthusiastic and consistently engaging commentary track, often digressing from the film at hand but always in touch with its eccentric spirit, as they talk about the late Sixties transition to 'psychedelic westerns' and the way in which the genre was beginning to disintegrate into comedy because it had nowhere else to go. They do discuss the accomplishments and legacies of the cast and the crew and do their very best to persuade listeners that the film is better than it seems. Indeed, we would have to acknowledge that their talk is so worthwhile, it must have been inspired by something more than just the boomerang shots.

### 4K Waterworld

We reviewed the highly satisfying three-platter Blu-ray presentation of **Waterworld** from Universal and Arrow Video in Feb 19. Arrow has retained the second two platters from that set, but has replaced the first platter with a 4K Blu-ray platter in a new three-platter release (UPC#760137124238, \$60). All of the special features that appeared on that first platter have also been retained. The platter features the 135-minute 'Theatrical' cut of the film. It was already terrific entertainment on the earlier Blu-ray, but it has an even sharper and more transporting impact in 4K. The image is consistently smooth and more finely detailed than it was on the earlier release, and the Dolby Atmos sound has a wider and more comprehensive surround mix than the standard BD's 5.1-channel DTS sound. Directed by Kevin Reynolds, the 1995 science-fiction action adventure, which stars Kevin Costner and, as the villain, Dennis Hopper, was already a rousing and stimulating experience. With the added veracity provided by the 4K playback, the film becomes even more exhilarating and transporting.

As we detailed in our previous review, the second two platters contain an expanded TV version of the feature, running 176 minutes, and that same version with additional violence and eroticism, running 177 minutes. The special features include 133 minutes of decent retrospective and analytical featurettes, a bevy of designs, photos and memorabilia in still frame, two trailers and fourteen TV commercials.

## Pre-code Garbo

Some movies have a scene nowhere near their end that is so pleasing a viewer floats through the rest of the movie on the endorphins that one scene generated (one of the best examples of this is the *Edelweiss* sequence in **The Sound of Music**). Such a scene occurs in the pre-Code 1933 MGM costume romance, **Queen Christina**, which has been released by Warner Bros. as a *WB Warner Archive Collection* Blu-ray (UPC#810134940314, \$22). Directed by Rouben Mamoulian, Greta Garbo stars as a Seventeenth Century Swedish queen who falls in love with a Spanish ambassador played by Robert Taylor. The scene in which Taylor learns her true identity—having already slept with her—is executed with perfection and is so joyously entertaining that the rest of the movie, which ends in tragedy, after all, can do no wrong. Running 99 minutes, the costumes are gorgeous even in black and white, and Garbo's performance is filled with life, thus making her own, unforced retirement less than a decade later another tragedy, which again does nothing to negate the immense satisfaction of her accomplishments.

The full screen picture is spotless. The film has an age-related softness that is unavoidable, but otherwise the transfer is impeccable from beginning to end, adding significantly to the dazzle of the jewels and the coziness of the wintry Swedish setting. The monophonic sound is also limited only by the unavoidable shortcomings of the era's recording equipment (how soon before artificial intelligence starts tackling that?) and is otherwise free of distortion. There are optional English subtitles, a trailer and an excellent 29-minute episode from the 1956 MGM promotional TV series, *M-G-M Parade*, which includes, along with nostalgic commercials for Pall Mall cigarettes, a wealth of clips from Garbo's later films, hosted by Walter Pidgeon, and a fantastic only semi-rehearsed conversation between Pidgeon and George Cukor about working with her and what she was like on the set (regal, but without nonsense).

If you have a thing for Garbo you won't want to miss the Warner Home Entertainment Blu-ray release of the 1932 MGM extravaganza, **Grand Hotel** (UPC#883929265091, \$20). While the transfer is not as nice as **Queen Christina**, it is an admirable effort for the film's age. There is a basic softness, and grain, but otherwise the full screen black-and-white image is fully serviceable, and its essential sharpness and accuracy comes to the fore near the end, when Garbo dons a sheer chemise that is essentially, thanks to the clarity of the Blu-ray, tantamount to wearing nothing at all. Be still our beating heart! To be able to peer into the past and celebrate Garbo's divine beauty in all of its naturalness can counteract the film's all-star superficiality. Because of the general weakness of projector lamps, it is doubtful that theatergoers in the Thirties were treated to such vivid detail. The film runs 113 minutes and interweaves three fairly separate stories, with John Barrymore providing the only complete link between all three, during a couple of days of coming and going in the posh Berlin hotel. In one story, Wallace Beery is a businessman desperate to pull off a merger to save his company, and Joan Crawford is the secretary he has hired for the day. In another story, Lionel Barrymore (you savor the scenes he has with John and wonder if they had the same relationship as children) is an impoverished clerk who has discovered he is dying and takes all of his savings to live it up one last time. Garbo is a famous but burnt-out ballerina, struggling with depression until she meets Barrymore's character (who is pilfering her suite) and falls in love with him. Because her actual screen time is so limited, she cannot build her character incrementally the way she could in **Queen Christina**, and so her performance can come off as being over-the-top and spoofable ("I want to be alone!"). That is where the Blu-ray comes to the rescue, because when her vulnerability is so viscerally underscored, her character's desperation is more readily acceptable.

Lewis Stone and Jean Hersholt are also featured. The monophonic sound is fine. There are alternate French, Spanish, Italian and German audio tracks, optional English, French, Spanish, Italian, German and Korean subtitles, an original trailer, a trailer warning people that the film is going to disappear soon, a trailer for a 1945 remake (*Week-End at the Waldorf*), a marvelous 9-minute news clip of the film's star-studded Los Angeles premiere, a passable 12-minute overview of the film's production, and an amusing 18-minute Vitaphone musical parody of the movie, *Nothing Ever Happens*, from 1933 (in verse).

Two experts on the film, Jeffrey Vance and Mark A. Vieira, supply an excellent commentary track, sharing every bit of pertinent information about the production, discussing the narrative and its alterations from the stageplay that inspired it, and deconstructing not only the artistry of the direction, but the manner of the various performances, the nature of the camerawork and sound recording, and other minutiae. They explain that the movie was the first drama to combine big stars in a single film, something that upset the standard Hollywood business model that required each movie to have just one significant star for its marketing.

They even point out the advantages that the clarity of the Blu-ray enables. "The squeaky noise your gonna hear is the wheel of the camera dolly, which evidently needed to be oiled. For years I would hear this on a 16mm print of this movie and I'd go, 'What is that noise, is someone talking in the next soundstage?' But in this very clear soundtrack, you can hear it." Although they also dispute the possibility that even a Blu-ray can convey the film's real impact. "[This film is] designed and timed for the big screen and a large audience. I don't think Greta Garbo works very well on a small monitor. She is operatic, oversized. Put her in the correct proportions and you see all sorts of eye movement, of small things that are lost on a small monitor. Put her in a proper presentation and these oversized performances take on the correct proportion, and they're magical that way."

But they also just adore the movie, perhaps more than other viewers will, or perhaps not. "**Grand Hotel** is my favorite film because I think it fulfills what a great work of art should do. It transports you to a place that you've never been before, a place that does not exist outside its boundaries and a place that you want to go to. It's just so pervasive, so strong, so effective in its artistry that it does that."

## Foolish filmmaking

The same fascination that draws people to gawk at automobile accidents and buildings on fire turns them to an obsession with big budget motion picture flops. The more money that was spent on a movie that flat out didn't work with audiences, the more people keep coming back later on to watch it again and again, marveling at the mistaken assumptions, the unrestrained indulgences and the rampaging egos that led to the disaster in the first place. D.W. Griffith's **Intolerance** (Feb 03) was overly ambitious and did not earn back its investment, but no one can deny it is an audience pleaser. The entertainment within its gargantuan spectacle is palpable. In 1922, however, Erich von Stroheim got Universal to invest in a major production, and then continue to throw more good money after bad when the stress of coping with unfortunate weather and the possibilities of translating his ideas to film caused von Stroheim to keep shooting and shooting until Irving Thalberg stepped in and yelled, "Cut!" When put together, his massive production of an adult-themed drama, **Foolish Wives**, started out at 6 hours and was eventually trimmed to half that length. Unfortunately, all we have of the carcass today is 147 minutes, but it is more than enough to see what a folly the film was conceptually, and why, over a century later, its excess is still irresistible to motion picture connoisseurs.

Released in a two-platter DVD & Blu-ray set with a brand new restoration by Sunrise Foundation and Flicker Alley (UPC#617311688294, \$42), von Stroheim not only wrote and directed the film, he also stars as its central character, an aristocratic con artist preying upon wealthy Americans in Monte Carlo. Hence, the film's protagonist is also its villain, which would not necessarily cut into the appeal of a smaller film, but unquestionably harms the potential of an expensive movie to recoup its investment, and at the time **Foolish Wives** was made, it was the most expensive movie ever attempted. Another problem is that while the movie does have narrative momentum, the cuts created continuity problems that were never entirely rectified. The villain's schemes are unclear and never become clear. He is working with a counterfeiter, and laundering the money not only at the local casino, but in a private casino he runs out of the mansion he is renting. He has targeted the wife of the American ambassador for both seduction and an elaborate scam, and almost gets away with it were not for the retributive anger of a pregnant maid. There is an exciting storm sequence, and another exciting fire sequence, but even with that, this is not a movie that silent film audiences would ever think of rushing to see with their children. As fine as von Stroheim's performance is, the nature of his persona almost dictates that he is best savored in small amounts, like a strong pepper, and his presence in the film is overbearing and relentless. Hence, it is simply not a mass audience attraction, but as a famous curiosity of the past for intelligent and discerning adults who want to widen their exposure to the history of motion pictures, it is almost made to order.

Although there is no cast list on the jacket, an actress known as Miss Dupont co-stars, with Rudolph Christians, Mae Busch, Maude George and Dale Fuller. From what is in the disc's supplements and can be researched on line, it does not appear that von Stroheim ever personally visited Monaco before he made the film. Instead, he constructed several huge outdoor and indoor sets, replicating the Casino de Monte-Carlo and other structures, on the coast of California near Monterey. The primary set, with functioning streetcars and so on, is enormous, and von Stroheim has the wherewithal to capture it in long shots so the viewer can take it all in. Freshly restored from what materials still exist, the full screen picture shifts a little bit in quality from one moment to the next, but is always in nice condition and is sometimes in very nice condition. The movie is mostly in black and white, but there is periodically appropriate tinting and something quite impressive and elaborate in the finale involving colors that is best left for the viewer's own discovery and surprise. A piano and orchestral musical score, by Timothy Brock, has a subdued dimensionality and is very effective without being detrimental to the entertainment. The film's intertitles are supported by optional French, Spanish, Italian, German and Galician subtitling.

A terrific silent 2-minute newsreel promotion from 1922 for the film features behind-the-scenes footage of von Stroheim at work. A 15-minute piece provides a general overview of the original production and how it got out of hand. A 38-minute segment goes over the locations von Stroheim used in several films, how those places look today and what brought him to use them. It also contains a great deal of photographs from the shoot, shares the stories of how the extras were persuaded to appear, and tells how the elaborate sets remained standing after the production concluded, gradually being pilfered by the local populace. Also featured is an overview of the restoration and demonstrations of how the presentation quality was improved, running a total of 20 minutes, along with still frame presentations of production photos, press materials and a French photo magazine adaptation of the film.

As is often the case with Flicker Alley's releases, the DVD included in the set looks and sounds almost as good as the Blu-ray. The image is a little softer in key moments, and the squared image has not been given an accommodation for 16:9 enhancement, but generally, the DVD is as impressive as the BD.

## Shiny side up

Lovely performances coupled with lovely cinematography can take a western a long way. The 1968 Paramount production directed by Tom Gries, **Will Penny**, which has been released on Blu-ray by Paramount and Kino Lorber Incorporated as a *KL Studio Classics* title (UPC#738329263133, \$25), begins exquisitely, on the range. Charlton Heston, Lee Majors and Anthony Zerbe are among the cowboys bringing a herd to a railroad spur for pickup. J.D. Spradlin, in an early role, is tone perfect as their boss, and even Slim Pickens, as the cook, has a familiarity that is subdued but colorful, with just the right mix of humor and historical enactment. Letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1, Lucien Ballard's camerawork is gorgeous, and the Blu-ray's image transfer is faultless. The



western vistas are breathtaking, and the close-ups of the stars are captivating. The film runs 109 minutes. After they drop the cattle off, the three cowboys part with the group and leave to find more work as winter approaches. They have a run-in with a very nasty preacher, played by Donald Pleasence, and his sons, one of them played by Bruce Dern, but they get the better of them thanks to the skills of Heston's character. Throughout the film, Heston's performance is excellent. Although his character is simple and guarded, his feelings are palpable and seemingly genuine. To top it off, he's not the bigheaded jerk he usually plays. He conveys vulnerability, empathy and a sweet sensitivity to his character's shortcomings.

He eventually parts ways with his companions, takes a winter job in a line cabin and meets a pioneer woman played by Joan Hackett who, with her son (the director's son, Jon Gries, who is quite good in the part), has been abandoned by their guide. Staying in the cabin, the three bond as a family, and then the nasty preacher shows up. And at this point, with only a quarter or so of it left to go, a film that seemed to be doing everything right starts doing everything wrong. Sure, the bad guys always let James Bond live when they ought to kill him right off, but why Pleasence's character allows Heston's character to survive when he has the upper hand is particularly ridiculous because he doesn't just do it once, he does it twice. The nadir of the film occurs at its climax. To evict the villains from the cabin, Heston's character, along with help that has somewhat miraculously appeared, pours sulfur down the chimney, smoking them out, and then picks them off rather easily. Fine, but just a few minutes later he has a long, romantic interlude with Hackett's character inside the same cabin, which must have one heck of an air filtration system, to be sure. It throws you out of the movie, which then concludes with a sensible but downbeat finale that is also emotionally alienating. Because the BD looks so nice, because the cast is so terrific—Ben Johnson, Clifton James, Luke Askew and William Schallert also show up—and because, as a wintry western, it has a delectable atmosphere from beginning to end, the film is still worthwhile, but it would probably be even better if you could somehow watch it in reverse.

The monophonic sound is fine and there is a viable musical score by David Raskin. Along with optional English subtitles, there is a trailer, 17 minutes of wonderful intercut interviews about the film with Heston and the grown Jon Gries, and a very good commentary track featuring film historians C. Courtney Joyner and Henry Parke, who spend the entire time interviewing and chatting with the film's script supervisor, Michael Preece. Both Preece and Tom Gries had worked for Sam Peckinpah—the story is in fact an expansion of an episode from *The Westerner* (Jul 23), and while Heston's character has a different name and doesn't drink as much, he is basically the Brian Keith character from the show—and so Preece, along with sharing many memories about shooting the movie and working with the cast, also has many great anecdotes about the other projects he worked on with both Tom Gries and with Peckinpah.

#### 4K Invaders

At first glance it may seem like any other silly Fifties sci-fi feature, but *Invaders from Mars*, which was directed by the Oscar-winning production designer, William Cameron Menzies, is just different enough to validate its silliness, especially with the lovely 4K Blu-ray presentation from George Eastman Museum and Ignite Films (UPC#760137113973, \$50). Counterintuitively, Menzies' sets are spare. As the film, which only runs 80 minutes, advances from one scene to the next, the emptiness of the sets reinforce the psychological isolation of the characters in a way that rubs off on the viewer, especially with the fresh image transfer and 4K delivery. A young boy sees a UFO land in his backlot and tells his father, who goes to investigate and comes back with a different, emotionless personality. Intuitively, the boy senses what has happened, and even though other individuals in authority undergo the same alteration that the father did, he manages to sound the alarm that marshals a viable defensive effort (and finds viable substitutes for his parents at the same time). For a 1953 production, some of the movie's design ideas are innovative, and are certainly unnerving, conceptually, even if the images can also generate a chuckle in more sophisticated viewers. That was the power that Menzies brought to the movie, delivering the basic, cheap thrills that were expected of it, but also using his designs more subversively to undermine any sort of confidence a viewer might feel.

We reviewed an Image Entertainment DVD release in Jan 03 which was very nicely designed, offering both the American release version and the foreign release version, which had added footage that was shot a year later with three of the stars to pad the running time. That presentation, however, was typical of how the film usually appears. The colors looked decent, but the source material had plenty of scratches and fleeting shortcomings. The full screen image on the 4K Blu-ray presentation, on the other hand, is both vivid and spotless, not just presenting hues that are brighter and richer, but an image that is free from any sort of distraction. To pad the film's running time even more, the original release included substantial insertions of military stock footage, and these sequences are naturally a little more worn and damaged, but even they look terrific and are superior in presentation to the DVD. The monophonic sound is also stronger and clearer.

That extra footage that was incorporated in the movie on the DVD is presented separately in the supplement on the BD, running 12 minutes, and even it has been beautifully restored and enhanced. Along with two trailers and a great collection of memorabilia in still frame, there is a nice 7-minute live introduction to the film by John Sayles at a screening, a 7-minute segment on the effort that went into the film's restoration, a satisfying 22-minute appreciation of the film and the power it had over vulnerable young viewers in the Fifties and Sixties, a decent 16-minute profile of Menzies and his involvement with the film, and a cute 11-minute interview with the now senior citizen star of the film, Jimmy Hunt, reminiscing about the shoot and its impact on his life.

#### DVD news

**CRITERION CORNER:** The Criterion Collection will be celebrating Halloween by issuing Nicolas Roeg's *Don't Look Now* in 4K with a conversation between editor Graeme Clifford and film writer and historian Bobbie O'Steen; *Don't Look Now: Looking Back*, a short documentary from 2002 featuring Clifford, Richmond, and Roeg; *Don't Look Now: Death in Venice*, a 2006 interview with composer Pino Donaggio; a program on the writing and making of the film, featuring interviews with Richmond, Julie Christie and Donald Sutherland, and co-screenwriter Allan Scott; a program on Roeg's style, featuring interviews with Danny Boyle and Steven Soderbergh; and a Q&A with Roeg from 2003 at London's Ciné Lumière. David Cronenberg's *Videodrome* will also be in 4K and will have two commentaries, one featuring Cronenberg and director of photography Mark Irwin, the other with James Woods and Deborah Harry; *Camera* (2000), a short film by Cronenberg; *Forging the New Flesh*, a short documentary by filmmaker Michael Lennick about the creation of *Videodrome*'s video and prosthetic makeup effects; *Effects Men*, an audio interview with special makeup effects creator Rick Baker and video effects supervisor Lennick; *Bootleg Video*, the complete footage of *Samurai Dreams* and seven minutes of transmissions from *Videodrome*, presented in their original, unedited form, with filmmaker commentary; *Fear on Film*, a roundtable discussion from 1982 with Cronenberg, John Carpenter, John Landis, and Mick Garris; original theatrical trailers and a promotional featurette; and a stills gallery featuring rare behind-the-scenes production photos and posters. Alejandro Amenábar's *The Others* will be in 4K and will include a commentary featuring Amenábar; a conversation between Amenábar and film critic Pau Gómez; a making-of program featuring Amenábar, Nicole Kidman and Christopher Eccleston, and producer Fernando Bovaira; archival programs about the film's production, costume design, soundtrack, and visual effects, featuring interviews and footage recorded on the set; audition footage of actors Alakina Mann and James Bentley and photography from the *Book of the Dead*; and seven deleted scenes. Nikyatu Jusu's *Nanny* will contain a program featuring Jusu, actors Anna Diop and Michelle Monaghan, and director of photography Rina Yang. *Freaks / The Unknown / The Mystic: Tod Browning's Sideshow Shockers* will feature commentaries on *Freaks* and *The Unknown* and an introduction to *The Mystic* by film scholar David J. Skal; an interview with author Megan Abbott about Browning and pre-Code horror; an archival documentary on *Freaks*; a reading of *Spurs*, the short story by Tod Robbins on which *Freaks* is based; a prolog to *Freaks*, which was added to the film in 1947; a program on the alternate endings to *Freaks*; and a video gallery of portraits from *Freaks*.

**NEW IN BLU:** The following titles have recently been issued on Blu-ray—James Balsamo Knows How to Rock, The Litch, Mind Melters 12, Mind Melters 13, Slash Mates 3 (Acid Bath); Effects (Agfa); Moonhaven Season 1 (AMD); Black Birds in a Storm, Breakup Mountain, Convicted, Devils Lake, Howlin' Refrain, Jack and the Tree House, Night of the Insolent Vermin, Robot Monster, Strange Case of Normalcy (Bayview); Royal Edinburgh Military Tattoo Voices 2022 (BFD); Altered Innocence V.2, The Boogey Man, Night Screams, Undeatable, Villages of the Damned: Three Horrors from Spain (CAV); Team America World Police (Cinedigm); Blonde Ice (ClassicFlex); After Hours, One False Move, The Renown Westerns, The Watermelon Woman (Criterion); Prague Nights (Deaf Crocodile); Dark Nature (Epic); Graveyard Alive (ETR); Funny Ha Ha (Factory 25); Foolish Wives (Flicker Alley); Netherworld, Subspecies V Bloodrise (Full Moon); Party Girl (Fun City); Chop and Steele, A Life on the Farm, Nuclear Now (Giant); The Cramps and The Mutants The Napa State Tapes, Pacification (Grasshopper); Spacked Out (Kani); The Anderson Tapes, Audie Murphy Collection II, A Dandy in Aspic, Dead Heat on a Merry-Go-Round, Deliver Us, Douglas Fairbanks Double Feature Robin Hood and The Black Pirate, End of the World, 52 Pick-Up, Film Noir The Dark Side of Cinema XV, Human Desire, Gloria, Michael, Needful Things, Nevada Smith, Number One with a Bullet, Persian Lessons, Slava/Ukrani, Soundies The Ultimate Collection, Star Pilot, Tintin and the Mystery of the Golden Fleece/Tintin and the Blue Oranges (Kino); Are You There God It's Me Margaret, Beau Is Afraid, Foo's Paradise, My Best Friend Is a Vampire, Sisu (Lionsgate); Little Richard I Am Everything (Magnolia); Which Way Is Up? / The Bingo Long Traveling All-Stars & Motor Kings, White Noise/White Noise 2 (Mill Creek); Corsage, Paint, The Queen of Hollywood Boulevard (MPI); Big Time Gambling Boss, Fighting Back, Inferno Rosso Joe D'Amato on the Road of Excess, Invaders from Mars, The Iron Prefect, Johanna Enlists, Magic Cop, McBain, Shin Ultraman, Stooze-O-Rama (MVD); Beneath the Old Dark House, Rave (Nevermore); Face/Off, Scream VI (Paramount); At Dawn They Sleep (Saturn's Core); Emile, Fear Blood and Gold, Influence, Upstanding (Shoreline); Carmen, Knights of the Zodiac, Love Again, Resident Evil Death Island, Yogi Bera It Ain't Over (Sony); Inside Game (Stonecutter); Cube, End of the Line, Srigala, Welcome to Hell (Terror); Shame, (Umbrella); Hollywood Dreams & Nightmares The Robert Englund Story (Unannounced); Tom Mix Sky High/The Big Diamond Robbery (Undercrank); Book Club The Next Chapter, The Book of Henry, Come Out Fighting, The Express, Kandahar, Love Happens, Rush (Universal); Therapy Dogs (Utopia); To Catch a Killer (Vertical); The Broadway Melody, Cimarron, Doctor Who Jon Pertwee Season 3, Du Barry Was a Lady, The Fastest Gun Alive, Helen of Troy, Justice League Warworld, The Last of Us Season 1, The Last Time I Saw Paris, The Venture Bros. Radiant Is the Blood of the Baboon Heart (Warner); Day Zero (Well Go); How to Be Loved (Yellow Veil)

**NEW IN 3D:** The following titles have recently been issued in 3D format—Robot Monster (Bayview); Hugo (MVD)

**NEW IN 4K:** The following titles have recently been issued in 4K format—Effects (Agfa); The Boogey Man, Night Screams (CAV); The Burning, Upgrade, World War Z (Cinedigm); After Hours, Breathless, One False Move, The Renown Westerns (Criterion); Needful Things, To Live and Die in L.A. (Kino); Sisu (Lionsgate); Hugo, Invaders from Mars (MVD); M:I-3, M:I-4, M:I-5, M:I-6, Scream VI, Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, The Truman Show, The War of the Worlds (Paramount); So I Married an Axe Murderer, Resident Evil Death Island (Sony); Jaws 2, Les Misérables (Universal) Justice League Warworld (Warner)

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Alien Agenda Planet Earth The Cosmic Conspiracy (Alchemy)\*
Alien Chronicles Invaders Among Us (Alchemy)\*
Alien Enigmas UFOs on the Moon (Alchemy)\*
Already Dead (SRS)
Altered Innocence V.2 (CAV)
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Amor Bandido (Kino)
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Ancient Giants of North America (Alchemy)\*
An Angel for Satan (Sinister)
Archie and Zoey's Cool Facts Top 10 Incredible Animals (Wownow)
Are You Lonesome Tonight? (Film Movement)
Are You There God It's Me Margaret (Lionsgate)
Avatars of the Astral Worlds Supernatural (Wownow)
Avatars of the Astral Worlds Transformation (Wownow)
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Bad Guy (Stream Go)\*
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The Beast from the Beginning of Time (Sinister)
The Beatles An Unauthorized Story on Life after the Beatles (TMW)\*
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The Big Boss A 21st Century Criminal (Dreamscape)
Billy the Kid The Beginning (Parable)
The Black American Experience Ben Carson (TMW)\*
The Black Cobra (Sinister)
The Black Demon (Paramount)
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Book Club The Next Chapter (Universal)
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Brad Pitt An Unauthorized Tribute (TMW)\*
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Chop and Steele (Giant)
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The Day the Music Died (MVD)
Day Zero (Well Go)
D-Day The Price of Freedom (TMW)\*
Deadstream (AMID)
Demons from Hell (Wild Eye)
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Into Boating Safety Fun with Watercrafts (TMW)\*
Into Boating Safety How Life Jackets Save You (TMW)\*
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Mother Riley Meets the Vampire (Sinister)
Murder in Paradise (Dreamscape)
My Friend Dr. Jekyll (Sinister)
The Neighborhood Season 5 (Paramount)
Netherworld (Full Moon)
Night Blooms (Freestyle)\*
Nosferatu's Hero (Strand)
Noboday/Frankenstein (Stream Go)\*
The Novelist's Film (Cinema Guild)
Nuclear Now (Giant)
The Ogre of Athens (Sinister)
Old Bill and Son (Sinister)
One Million Trees (Dreamscape)
Only in Theaters (Kino)
Operation Camel (Sinister)
Oppenheimer Genius or Madman? (Wownow)
Pacification (Grasshopper)
Paint (MPI)
Pathfinders in Space (Sinister)
PBS Kids Get Up and Dance! (Paramount)
Persian Lessons (Kino)
Personality Crisis One Night Only (Paramount)
Pitch Perfect Bumper in Berlin Season 1 (Universal)
The Price of Silence (Sinister)
Rebound Sex (Random)\*
The Remarkable Life of John Weld (Dreamscape)
Resident Evil Death Island (Sony)
Revoir Paris (Music Box)
Rick Weiland Yes I Am (Kino)
Rich Kids (ITN)\*
Ricky Season 1 (Paramount)
Robin Redbreast (Sinister)
Robot Monster 3D (MVD)
Robert Edinburgh Military Tattoo Voices 2022 (MVD)
Safe-N-Smart Family Boating (TMW)\*
Savage Vengeance (SRS)
Saving the Right Whale (Paramount)
Scream of the Butterfly (Sinister)
Scream VI (Paramount)
Screening Skull (Sinister)
Secrets of the Red Orchid (Sinister)
Secrets in the Bones The Hunt for the Black Death Killer (Dreamscape)
She Wolves of the Wasteland (Cheesy Flicks)
Shin Ultraman (MVD)
Sisu (Lionsgate)
Slash Mates 3 (Acid Bath)\*
Slava Ukraini (Kino)
South Beach Shark Club (Vision)
Spells (Sinister)
Spoonful of Sugar (AMID)
The Spring Poem (Leomark)
The Starling Girl (Decal)
Stooge-O-Rama (MVD)
Subspecies V Bloodrise (Full Moon)
Super Sentai Complete Series (Cinedigm)
Supersore Complete Series (Cinedigm)
T.S. Eliot's Four Quartets (Kino)
Take the Ice (Freestyle)\*
Tarkan vs. The Vikings (Sinister)
The Little Mermaid

Tearsucker (ITN)\*
That Night (Freestyle)\*
This Body Is Mine (Sinister)
Tintin and the Mystery of the Golden Fleece/Tintin and the Blue Oranges (Kino)
To Catch a Killer (Vertical)
To Commit a Murder (Sinister)
WWE SummerSlam 2023 Assault on Hill 400 Sense Sensibility & Diamond Robbery Mavka The Forest Song Sesame Street Abby & Elmo's Amazing Adventures
Christmas in Evergreen Bells Are Ringing
What's Love Got to Do with It?
Linoleum
From Cinema Guild:
Dos Estaciones
From Criterion:
Diam Solongo EO
No Bears
The Innocent
Golland
Tori and Lokita
The Eight Mountains
Freaks/The Unknown/The Mystic: Tod Browning's Sideshow Shockers
Nanny
From Decal:
Who Needs H/TIN?
Sanctuary
God Is a Bullet
From Dreamscape:
The Love Destination Soothe Your Senses Guided Meditation In the Search of the Frog Boys
Party Hearty Kitty-Corn Killin Smalitz
How to Catch a Killer The Soham Murders
The Meddler The Real Nightcrawler of Guatemala City
Crime Science Season 1 Kissing
Tony Robinson's VE Day Minute by Minute
From Film Masters:
The Giant Gila Monster
Beast from Haunted Cove
The Scarlet Letter
From Film Movement:
Fission
Seire
Aloners
Malum
Personal and Political The Films of Natalia Alameda
From Flicker Alley:
Laurel & Hardy Year One
From 4Digital:
A Sunday Horse
From Freestyle:
Big Crow
From Gemini:
Reflections Samuel Eliot Morison
From Giant:
All Man
From Go:
Elemental Reimagined Wildfire
From Grasshopper:
Dry Ground Burning
From Green Planet:
Atomic Hope
From Ideas:
Pandemic Perspectives
From Image:
The Angry Black Girl and Her Monster
From Indican:
The Monsters Without Galatea
Kings of L.A.
From Journeymen:
Elemental: Reimagined Wildfire
From Kino:
The Melt Goes On Forever
The Art & Times of David Hammons
Scarlet Brightwood
Two Tickets to Greece
Madeleine Collins
Brightwood
Desperate Souls Dark City and the Legend of Kinoy
The Elephant 6 Recording Co.
The Latent Image

\*Did not appear on last month's Coming Attractions listing

Coming Attractions

The following select DVD titles are promised for the near future. How many of them will show up is never a certainty.
Logical subdivisions appear unmarked within each division. Titles which did not appear on last month's list are marked with an arrow (→) and are added to the bottom of subdivisions so that the longest awaited titles appear at the top within each grouping:
From Acid Bath:
Mark and Clark World Adventurers
Sexy Time 8
Mind Melters 14
From AMID:
Sorry about the Demon
The Brokenwood Mysteries Season 9 Leave
From Black:
Balthazar Season 5
Black Snow
The Walking Dead Dead City Season 1
Cannes Confidential
From Bow View:
VIPCOC The Untold Story
From Big World:
Rimini
From Bosko:
The Legend of Resurrection Mary
From Bounty:
Mad House
From Buffalo 8:
Magaodo
Unfair Exchange
Second Chances
Infinite Sea
From Buena Vista:
Guardians of the Galaxy V.3
The Little Mermaid

→Joyce Carol Oates
→Final Cut
→Between Two Worlds
→White Building
→Single Out Season 1
From Level 33:
→Montreal Girls
From Lionsgate:
Cannibal Cabin
About My Father Confidential Informant You Hurt My Feelings Dead Man's Hand
History's Greatest of All Time with Peyton Manning
→Corner Office
From Magnolia:
→Dalland
→Blue Jean
From Marshall:
→Lugosi The Curse of Dracula
Monsters Martians Mad Scientist
From Mill Creek:
Anelah Johnson-Reyes Stand-Up Spotlight
Gary Owen Stand-Up Spotlight
→God's Country Song
From MPI:
Broadway
The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet V.13
The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet V.14
BlackBerry
→Summoning the Spirit
The Abode
→Mother May I?
→Biosphere
From Music Box:
Other People's Children L'Immensita
From MVD:
Wrong Reasons
Broken Mirrors
The Thief Collector
Journey into the Beyond
Wrong Reasons
La Soldadera
The Only Thrill
Jane Eyre (1961 telefilm)
Paradise Calling
Cisco Kid Western Movie Collection 13 Movies
Scheme Queens
→El Gangster
→Ghoulies
→Ghoulies II
From Parable:
→Yellowstone
Redemption Road
From Paramount:
Dogs in the Wild
Hidden Volcano Abyss
Are You Afraid of the Dark? Ghost Island 1923 Season 1
Your Brain
PBS Kids Grandparents Are Great!
Monster High The Movie
CSI Vegas Season 2
NCIS Season 20
→NCIS Los Angeles Complete Series (81 platters)
→Infinite
→Human Footprint
→Blue Bloods Season 13
→Paw Patrol All Paws on Deck
→Star Trek Picard Final Season
→Poc & Ace Season 1
→PBS Kids 17 Puppy Adventures
→The Great American Recipe Season 2
→Buffalo Soldiers Fighting on Two Fronts
Fire Country Season 1
From Quiver:
The Wrath of Becky
→The Collective
From Sandpaper:
→Clambake
From Shoreline:
→Cold Moon
→Camera Obscura
→Monolith
→Cartel 2045
→Gehenna Where Death Lives
→Five Fingers for Marseilles
→Stand!
From Sol Deo:
Nefarious
From Sony:
Sun Moon
→Hotel Transylvania Transformania

→The Machine
→No Hard Feelings
→Spider-Man Across the Spiderverse
From SRS:
Super Legend God Hikoza Woke
→Devil Times Two
From Syndicado:
→Seeking Fire
From 109.1:
→Nox
From Lifetime:
Russell Simmons' Def Comedy Jam Collection (12 platters)
From Unkork'd:
Ghost Town
Scream of the Wolf
Tales from the Apocalypse
Operation Black Ops
Shin Ultraman
Scientific
In Its Wake
From Universal:
Maggie Moore(s)
The Man from Rome
Chicago Fire Season 11
→Chicago P.D. Season 10
→River Wild
From Utopia:
Holy Spider
From Vertical:
97 Minutes
→The Doctor's Daughter
From Vision:
→Angels of the Sky
→Breaking Bounds
→Jack Warner The Last Mogul
→Called to Duty
From Warner Bros.:
→Abbott Elementary Season 2
→Crooked Hearts
Father Brown Season 10
→The Flash
→The Flash Complete Series (41 platters)
The Flash Season 9
Go Tell the Spartans
→Harley Quinn Season 3
Metalocalypse Complete Series (8 platters)
→Mystery Date
Peanuts Deluxe Collection (6 platters)
→Rick & Morty Seasons 1-6
→Smiling Friends Season 1
→Succession Complete Series (12 platters)
Succession Season 4
→The Wild Party
→Young Sheldon Season 6
From Well Go:
→Night of the Assassin
→Kill Shot
→Evil Building
→Goodbye Monster
→Aporia
→Bad City
From Wild Eye:
Cody Back
Shockumentary
Mondo Shock
Evil Building
Oujia Shark 2
→Hi-Death
→Faces of Snuff
→The Beast Beneath
→I Drip Blood on Your Grave
→Mega Ape
From Wownow:
Health Hacks Smart Habits to Live and Myths about Your Health
Treasure Hunting and the Pirates of the Caribbean
Avatars of the Astral Worlds Fortune-Telling
Legal Ladies Pioneers of Law
Legal Ladies Pioneers of Law 2
Mermaids
The Galaxy
Fast Speed
From Yifinini:
→Mad, Badly Vegas Adventure
→Horror of the Dolls
→The Lost Number
→The Offering
→In the Closet
→Random 11
→Funny Little Cars 2
→Collapse
→Poetic
→The Muse
→Mythical Monsters
→From Sony:
Sun Moon
→Horror
From Yellow Veil:
→Falcon Lake