



I, Monster tries hard, but nothing much comes of the effort

I, Monster
 ★★ (out of four)
 RetroMedia Entertainment (Image Entertainment)

Robert Louis Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* gets a reworking in this 1971 chiller reuniting the dynamic duo of Christopher Lee and Peter Cushing. It's always great to see them together, but this rendition of the oft-told tale doesn't live up to its potential — nor up to the efforts put forth by Lee, especially good in the pivotal dual (and title) role. Although producer Milton Subotsky's script sticks close to the source material, retaining nearly all the original character names, for some reason *Dr. Jekyll* is now *Dr.*

Charles Marlowe and Mr. Hyde is now Edward Blake. In an effort to prove his Freud-inspired theories regarding personality disorder, stuffy Dr. Marlowe develops a serum that brings out the beast — and the worst — in man. When he unwisely experiments on himself, he becomes the sadistic, demented Mr. Blake. As Marlowe's suspicious but sympathetic lawyer Utterson, Cushing has plenty of screentime but little to do until the inevitable showdown with Blake. The film was initially to have been shot in 3-D, hence some very odd camera angles, but the process was abandoned midway through the production, and the sets were left over from the Oscar-winning *Oliver!* (1968). Everyone gives it the old college try, but *I, Monster* misses the target. Still, for Cushing and Lee completists — and we know who we are — you can't really go wrong. (PG; violence and sexual innuendo)
 — Mark Bürger
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Except for die-hard fans of stars Christopher Lee and Peter Cushing, 1971's *I, Monster* is less than stellar.

Coming to video

Here is a partial list of movies scheduled to be released on video in the coming weeks. Release dates are subject to change:

- Tuesday:** *Catwoman*, *Cellular*, *The Cookout*, *The Forgotten*, *Friday Night Lights*
- Jan. 25:** *Alicia vs. Predator*, *First Daughter*, *Head in the Clouds*, *Mean Creek*, *Metallica: Some Kind of Monster*, *Pauly Shore is Dead*, *Seducing Doctor Lewis*, *Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow*, *When Will I Be Loved*
- Feb. 1:** *The Grudge*, *Mr. 3000*, *Ray*, *Shall We Dance?*, *Yankee Fair*
- Feb. 8:** *Bright Young Things*, *Eulogy*, *Fade to Black*, *The Grid*, *The Kiss, Kiss the Bride*, *The Life*, *The Notebook*, *P.S.*, *Shark Tale*, *Zelary*
- Feb. 15:** *Control*, *Frostbite*, *Into the Sun*, *The Motorcycle Diaries*, *Raise Your Voice*, *Saw*, *Taxi*

— relish staff and wire report



Peter Sarsgaard (from left), Natalie Portman and Zach Braff perform in *Garden State*. Braff also wrote and directed the film.

also in stores this week

- New releases**
Anchorman — The Legend of Ron Burgundy: Will Ferrell stars as a self-absorbed, '70s-era newscaster in this generally amusing comedy also featuring Christina Applegate and the inimitable Fred Willard. (PG-13) ★★½
Angelito Mio: Enrique Plineda Barnet's family fantasy about a young angel trying to sort out Heaven's problems. In Spanish with English subtitles. (Not rated) (Not reviewed)
The Exploited — Beat 'Em All: A concert documentary showcasing a British punk band in concert in Poland in 2003. (Not rated) (Not reviewed)
Garden State: Zach Braff scores big as writer, director and star of this perceptive comedy about a disaffected actor who returns home to New Jersey for his mother's funeral. (R) ★★★
Harold & Kumar Go to White Castle: Witless stoner comedy with John Cho and Kal Penn as basking buddies. (R, also available in an unrated version) ★
Legong — Dance of the Virgins: Henry de la Falaise's 1935 pseudo-documentary about tribal customs in Bali. Long thought lost, the film has been restored to its original version. (Not rated) (Not reviewed)
The Lost Treasure of Sawtooth Island: Dull children's adventure, with top-billed Ernest Borgnine departing the proceedings far too early. (PG) ★
Open Water: Effectively manipu-

lative thriller, loosely based on fact, in which a young couple (Blanchard Ryan and Daniel Travis) is left adrift in shark-infested waters. (R) ★★½
The Other: Youssef Chahine's 1999 drama examines globalization and terrorism from an Egyptian perspective. (Not rated) (Not reviewed)
Teenage Cavewr: Soft-core silliness with Jezebel Bond, Nicole Sheridan and Kennedy Johnston the resident babes on board. (Not rated) ★½
Wild Things 2: In-name-only follow-up to the 1997 box-office hit, once again depicting sexual treachery, betrayal and murder — which have rarely seemed more dull than they do here. (R) ★½

Rereleases
Blackbelt II — Fatal Force: Low-rent chop-socky from 1992, with karate champ Blake Bahner as a maverick cop named Spyder. (R) ★
Deathstalker IV — Match of Titans: Light-hearted touches and beautiful Maria Ford elevate this low-budget 1992 time-killer, in which Rick Hill reprises the title role. (R) ★★
Gone With the Wind: Arguably the most beloved Hollywood film in history, Victor Fleming's 1939 adaptation of Margaret Mitchell's best seller won nine Academy Awards including best picture, best director, best adapted screenplay, best actress (Vivien Leigh) and best supporting actress (Hattie McDaniel). Other nominations included best actor (Clark Gable) and best sup-

porting actress (Olivia de Havilland). It's long, it's colorful, it's entertaining. (G) ★★★½
Gothika: A "special edition" of the 2003 shocker starring Halle Berry. (R) ★½
Is There Sex After Death? Jeanne and Alan Abel's rambling but sometimes hilarious 1971 comedy takes an ironic look at the sexual revolution. An eclectic cast includes Buck Henry, Holly Woodlawn (of the Warhol gang) and The Amazing Randi. (R) ★★½
The Matrix: What's being called "the Ultimate Matrix" collection consists of a 10-DVD boxed set that includes the Wachowski Brothers' sci-fi trilogy *The Matrix* (★★½), *The Matrix Reloaded* (★★½) and *The Matrix Revolutions* (★★½) — and features some 35 hours (!) of bonus material. (R)
Physical Evidence: Burt Reynolds and Theresa Russell — neither at their best — star in this routine 1989 thriller, to date the last film directed by Michael Cimino. (R) ★★
Scarlet Sails: Alexander Ptushko's 1961 adaptation of an Alexander Grin fairy tale. In Russian with English subtitles. (Not rated) (Not reviewed)
Wild Things: An unrated version of John McNaughton's uproariously trashy 1997 thriller, most famous (or infamous) for the three-way love scene between Matt Dillon, Neve Campbell and Denise Richards. (Not rated) ★★★