

# THE DVD LASER DISC NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY  
2024  
Issue #474  
\$5.00

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## Warriors come out in 4K-yay...

The 4K format continues to surprise us in the ways it can enhance a film's ability to enthrall and entertain a viewer. Walter Hill's 1979 Paramount cult classic, **The Warriors**, was superbly edited by Billy Weber, and it is that editing that is sharpened to razor precision on the Paramount Arrow Video two-platter 4K UHD Blu-ray release (UPC#760137141488, \$60). The film's cinematography, by Andrew Laszlo, has a gritty realism that is softened by the glow of the film's lighting. Set entirely over the course of a single night and early the following morning, a handful of shots are grainy, but the film's transfer is very careful in its precision so that the original image is preserved without distortion. Paramount and Arrow have also released a standard two-platter Blu-ray (UPC#760137141495, \$50), and the cinematography is accurately replicated there. The film, a quasi-fantasy about a street gang from one end of New York City that must make it back to their home from the other end with every other gang in the city looking to waste them, effectively blended the griminess of the film's world (it was as if New York's efforts to pull itself back from economic disaster in the early Seventies had failed) with the ever-so-subtle neon and soft fluorescents that convey its dream and nightmare milieu. Hence, the standard Blu-ray is perfectly acceptable (the color detail in the crowd scenes near the beginning is fantastic even on the standard release), but the reason the film has endured is that its fantasy absurdities are backed up by solid technical filmmaking, and this applies as much to the editing as it does to Hill's original direction. Every scene in the film is exhilarating because of the mix and pace of the shots, and it is those individual discoveries, as one shot flips to the next, that cut right to the viewer's subconscious on the 4K playback. From the gradual exposition of each environment, to the emotions of the characters (and the cast's wonderful performances) and to the frantic action of the fight scenes, it is the crispness with which the 93-minute feature plays out on 4K that makes an old, out-of-date and likely over-watched movie not only fresh, but worth watching many times again.

We reviewed Paramount's *Ultimate Director's Cut* DVD release in Aug 06. That release presented both the theatrical version of the film and an alternate presentation, and it is those two versions that are split onto the two platters of the two releases. At the time, Paramount was basically trying to accelerate the film's growing reputation as a cult favorite, and the additions to the film in what is identified on the Arrow releases as the *2005 Alternate Version* play to that aspect of its popularity. Running 94 minutes, there are a number of graphic art insertions, like comic book panels, and an introduction explaining the film's roots in ancient Greek literature. The theatrical version remains the preferable presentation format, but, as usual, if there is an excuse to watch a beloved movie more times, why not take advantage of it? Colors and shadows are better detailed on the new releases in comparison to the DVD.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1. The sound on both standard versions defaults to the original mono track, but there is an alternate Dolby Atmos track that basically boosts an envelopment of the film's environment without creating any particular distortions or directional distractions. There are optional English subtitles. Both *Alternate Versions* do not have the mono track, and only have a standard stereo and a 5.1-channel DTS track. The theatrical version also has an alternate audio track isolating the awesome late Seventies Barry De Vorzon musical score in 5.1 DTS. Michael Beck, Deborah Van Valkenburgh, James Remar, Dorsey Wright, Brian Taylor, David Harris and David Patrick Kelly star. Mercedes Ruehl also has a small but memorable part.

Both the standard BD and the 4K release come with the same special features. The *Alternate Version* is accompanied only by a minute-long introduction from Hill that was shot in 2005. In addition to the 63 minutes of excellent retrospective pieces that were included on the DVD, the theatrical version comes with a trailer; an 8-minute montage of memorabilia, production, promotional stills and production photos; a 16-minute interview with Hill from 2023 ("Nothing has stuck with me more than **The Warriors**."); an 84-minute podcast discussion about the film that doesn't provide too much in the way of fresh insights but reinforces an understanding of the film's strengths and how those strengths were achieved; a pleasing 8-

minute interview with Weber from 2023 talking about the challenges he faced and how he approached various scenes; a great 9-minute interview with costume designer Bobbi Mannix (gang member extras would walk onto the shoot with their own clothes, but leave with the 'costume' clothing) and an additional 6-minute snapshot montage of her notebooks, drawings and the clothing; an interesting 10-minute then-and-now 2023 look at the Coney Island locations used in the film with Coney Island historian Adam Rinn; and an excellent 25-minute piece on the film's musical score.

Finally, there is a very good commentary track by Hill expert Walter Chaw, who approaches the entire film from Hill's perspective, including his work with the cast and crew as well as the movie's production history. When he goes over the backgrounds of the cast members, for example, it is to explain why Hill hired them, and then how they went on to work with Hill in later features, mentioning only in passing other work they have done. Nevertheless, his enthusiasm for the film, his understanding of its intricate dynamics, and his appreciation of Hill's artistry are rewarding. "I want to note here not only the train that provides refuge for them for a while, but the energy of these sequences. There's so much life here. There's so much joy of being young in this movie. You remember what it was like to run all day? Where every romance was a great romance? Where every offense was the worst thing that anyone had ever said? Everything was the most 'thing' that had ever happened because for you, it was true. [Hill's] movies are about what it means to be young. A lot lingers about it, but for me, nothing so much as the exhilaration of its youth—its hellish lows and its unimaginable highs. It functions, I think, as an old Hollywood romance. It functions as an explanation of what I think you could call Hill's social progressiveness, his belief in and maybe even fixation on masculinity as overwhelming any nuance of cultural or racial difference. And Hill is capable of kindling in old men, like me, that pang of longing and regret and melancholy for the age of romance and revolution, and how I've let it pass me by."

## Modern Tomorrow

A film more modern than most movies being made today, Robert Wise's 1959 **Odds against Tomorrow** has been released by MGM and Kino Lorber Incorporated as a *KL Studio Classics* title (UPC#738329265090, \$25). Abraham Polonsky wrote the script for the United Artists production about the preparations and execution of a bank robbery, which has an impressive cast, including Harry Belafonte, Robert Ryan, Ed Begley, Shelley Winters and Gloria Grahame. Before he became well known, Wayne Rogers has a small but recognizable part and Cicely Tyson can also be spotted. Shot in black-and-white and letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1, the film makes excellent use of its locations in New York City and upstate, and is accompanied by a captivating John Lewis jazz score. The performances are uniformly outstanding, and it is on the strength of those dramatic portraits that the film systematically works its way to a wonderful, era-appropriate apocalyptic finale. Begley's character is the leader of the group, persuading the other two men to join in his plan. Belafonte's character is a musician in hock for gambling debts. Ryan's character is an unabashed racist and has no compunction expressing his opinions, yet his scenes with the two female characters—one he is living with (this is not a movie where such couples slept in separate beds) and the other a neighbor—are incredibly sensitive and touching. As the stresses escalate and emotions are bared, regardless of whether you feel for Belafonte's character or can at least understand the dogmatic animosity of Ryan's character, it is Begley's character who elicits the most sympathy, continually afraid that his painstaking planning is going to be upended by, well, the inherent flaws of American society.

As for Wise, not only does he guide the performances masterfully, but every obtuse camera angle and seemingly street-grabbed moment compiles the suspense, tension and even romance in the 96-minute feature with compelling precision. He had the ironic misfortune, in the second half of his career, to direct an enormous boxoffice and popular culture success, and it undercut his critical standing—the knives already out because of his history with **The Magnificent Ambersons**—but **Odds against Tomorrow** is proof positive that he belongs in the pantheon of American film directors. He was one of the best.

### Tomorrow (Continued)

The source material has some speckling and occasional stray vertical lines, but the tone of the film is such that the flaws almost add to the generally grimy mood. Otherwise, contrasts are very sharp and the image is finely detailed. The monophonic sound is invitingly strong and there are optional English subtitles, along with a trailer, an excellent 49-minute interview with Belafonte about the film (even he says Wise was especially proud of what had been accomplished in it), his life and race relations in America, shot in front of an audience in 2009, and a similar interview from 2007 with co-star Kim Hamilton (who plays the wife of Belafonte's character) running 19 minutes, talking about the film and her career (and her marriage to Werner Klemperer). Film historian Alan K. Rode supplies a reasonably good commentary track, going over why the film is an exceptional accomplishment, breaking down some of the sequences and providing thorough profiles of Belafonte, Ryan and Polonsky. He also talks about Begley, Winters and Grahame, but has surprisingly little to say about Wise.

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Not as good as **Odds against Tomorrow**, the 1961 independent thriller distributed by Universal and released on Blu-ray by Universal and The Criterion Collection, **Blast of Silence** (UPC715515290517, \$40), is good enough to accompany it on an ideally atmospheric double bill. Shot in black-and-white on location in New York City, the film follows a hitman played by director Allen Baron as he waits over the Christmas holidays (yep, it's a Christmas movie) for a chance to kill a mobster. Much of the film was shot without sound and has an elaborate and omniscient voiceover narration by Lionel Stander that embellishes the killer's psychological conflicts while he explains the steps being taken to ambush the victim. The narration was written by Waldo Salt, whose **Midnight Cowboy** script provided the same feelings of wintry isolation and despondency. The present may seem dreary, but the past, with its retro décor, always looks drearier, and that is the film's primary appeal. Running just 77 minutes, the story provides a straightforward momentum to hold a viewer's attention while the atmosphere revels in the loneliness and emptiness of the protagonist's seedy surroundings. Like **Odds against Tomorrow**, there is an engaging jazz score by Meyer Kupferman that works as an excellent counterpoint to the destitute locations, while underscoring the idea that there is beauty and harmony even in the decorations of despair.

The picture is offered both letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1 and in a squared full screen format. The letterboxing adds a bit to the sides of the image and masks picture information off the top and bottom. While the letterboxing is better suited as a match to **Odds against Tomorrow**, the full screen version offers a greater alignment with the film's era and pushes the viewer further into the past it has so effectively captured. The monophonic sound is reasonably strong and there are optional English subtitles. Along with a trailer and a 5-minute montage of snapshots taken during the shoot, there is an excellent 60-minute piece with Baron from 1990, visiting the film's former locations as he talks about the production, how he ended up playing the lead (Peter Falk dropped out) and the path his career has followed since the film's release. Although he identifies each location clearly, there is also an 11-minute then-and-now collection of photos of the locations taken in 2008 that feature detailed historical facts about each site.

### **French paranoia thrillers**

Vincent Van Gogh walks into a wheat field and sets up his easel, yet what he paints isn't reality but a deliberate exaggeration of his emotional response to what he is seeing, hearing and feeling that is far more compelling than what any photograph of the scene could render. For ages, storytellers have taken real events and altered them to create enduring fantasies. What is especially fascinating is living through such an event and then watching the storytellers grab hold of it and begin altering its components to create compelling, perpetual myths. American presidents James Garfield and William McKinley were assassinated and nothing came of it. Abraham Lincoln was murdered and his life was mythologized because of the timing of his death, but the murder itself was generally accepted as having happened the way it happened. John F. Kennedy's death, on the other hand, has become an amazing cauldron of mythological invention. Part of that is because of how it coincided with advances in information technology, not just because facts and non-facts could be disseminated more efficiently than in the past, but because that technology presents a 'front' behind which is an unseeable force, something people subconsciously want to understand and equate with authority. Following the lead of novels, storytellers in film have used the Kennedy assassination in the same way that Van Gogh used the cornfield, as a starting point of expression and a search for greater emotional truths. From films based partially on history, such as **JFK**, to movies that are entirely fictional, such as **The Parallax View**, there looms as an unseen villain, an all-powerful entity capable of controlling if not our actions, then the actions of everyone around us. Despite the despair that such films embrace, they still make for compelling entertainment because, like the mythmakers of old, the filmmakers tap into a subconscious desire for authority and, counterintuitively, the affirmation of existence that such authority provides. In effect, Zeus has been replaced by the military-industrial complex (a word coined by Kennedy's immediate predecessor), but the power of the tale remains.

Hence, there is Henri Verneuil's engrossing 1979 Gaumont thriller, **I... For Icarus**, which has been released as a *KL Studio Classics* Blu-ray by Gaumont and Kino Lorber Incorporated (UPC#738329265113, \$30). We will not spoil things but the mere casting of the primary star in the film, Yves Montand, makes its conclusion entirely predictable. Still, despite its inevitabilities or, for that matter, its outright ludicrous turns of plot, it remains a wholly entertaining and involving drama precisely because it is deliberately patterning itself after—and then elaborating upon—the JFK assassination. Set in a make-believe country that has an American-like flag but people speak French and have French payphones, the president, running for a second term, is assassinated by three rifle shots during a campaign visit. A commission with an impressive array of government officials is convened and after an extensive compilation

of evidence, their determination is that a single rifleman, acting alone, shot the president from a rooftop skyscraper balcony. Montand's character is a prosecutor and member of the commission who disagrees with their findings...so he is given *carte blanche* to reopen the investigation, and he immediately starts looking at very obvious evidence that was entirely ignored the first time through. No matter. As he and his team systematically work their way from one revelation or witness to the next, the film is fully entertaining—but then something unexpected happens. At a point where the excitement in a regular movie would be ramping up to popcorn-missing-your-mouth levels, Montand's character visits the psychology department of a university and is treated to a demonstration of the famous—maybe it wasn't as famous in 1979—psychological test where the person being tested believes he is inflicting pain upon another person, but is persuaded by the parameters of the test to continue inflicting the pain, and even increase it. The turn does not stop the movie dead, however. Instead, it casts everything in an entirely different perspective, so that a viewer can indeed step back and accept the ludicrous story details as part of the entertainment because the film, which then proceeds to conclude just as one expects it to conclude, is not about the myth itself, but about mythmaking and why its authoritarianism is so universal.

Oh, and there is also a fantastic Ennio Morricone musical score. Letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.66:1, the color transfer has a vivid immediacy that makes some sequences look more like high definition video than film. Overall, the image quality is excellent. The monophonic sound is also strong and delivers Morricone's music effectively. The film is in French with optional English subtitles, and comes with a trailer.

Film historian Samm Deighan and assassination buff Rob Skvarla supply a fairly rewarding commentary track. They begin by diving straight into the movie's plot and its relationship to the theories behind the Kennedy assassination, but after they go through that a while, they gradually expand to focus more on the social history of Europe ("The more times you watch this film and the more you learn about French history, you start to see all these threads tying this back to the Algerian War and back to World War II.") and America in the Sixties and Seventies, and how the movie reflects the widespread pessimism that the assassinations in the Sixties instilled and how it eventually led to the radical uprisings in the Seventies, even pointing out that this film sits at a sort of halfway point between the paranoid assassination thrillers that came out in America in the Seventies and the police conspiracy thrillers—which were just as pessimistic—that came out of Italy in the same era.

Verneuil's 1982 **Mille Milliards de Dollars** (it's the weird French way of saying 'a trillion dollars') is a more audience-pleasing journey into the same world of political paranoia, and has also been released by Gaumont and Kino as another *KL Studio Classics* Blu-ray (UPC#738329265120, \$30). Patrick Dewaere is a journalist (for a newspaper called 'La Tribune'—viewers will be excused for momentarily thinking the movie is set in Los Angeles rather than Paris) who gets a tip about a wealthy executive laundering money through the sale of an office building (there are a number of story points in the film that remain relevant to the present day). As he digs deeper, he discovers that a multinational conglomerate is trying to take over the executive's company, and soon after that there is a suspicious death. Maybe Verneuil got the fantasies out of his system with **I... For Icarus**, because the film is much more level headed and believable as it weaves its conspiratorial suspense, and there is even a happy ending (like **Three Days of the Condor**), although things look bleak for the hero until the finale arrives, and if you just got finished watching the other movie, you are cringing the whole time at what might happen to him. Running 131 minutes, the film is again systematic as the hero works his way through the leads he gathers and the various (nicely composed) characters he meets, building his story. The movie is also quite instructive in deconstructing how multinational organizations work—in one example, the hero learns that the company buys raw materials at a low price in Hong Kong, importing them to Switzerland, and then raises the price substantially before selling them again to its own sister company in France, because the Swiss tax breaks for the transaction are greater than the loss in profit that the French company experiences from the deal—and exploring the inherent 'neutrality' of such corporations in worldwide military conflicts. Mel Ferrer has a pleasing turn as the scary head of the conglomerate, and Jean Moreau and Anny Duperey also have enjoyable extended cameo parts as fragile wives, with Michel Auclair, Caroline Cellier and Charles Denner.

Again letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.66:1, the color transfer is not quite as fantastic as the color transfer on **Icarus**, but it is otherwise excellent, with bright, fresh hues and accurate flesh tones. There is another terrific musical score, this time by Philippe Sarde, seeming to react to the emotions of a scene on a piano keyboard as other instruments fill in behind him. The monophonic sound is bright and clear, and there are optional English subtitles, along with a trailer. Deighan supplies another commentary, this time on her own, and she uses it to fill in the gaps she left out of the talk on the other feature, supplying a detailed summary of Verneuil's career and exploring her treatise on the relationship between postwar politics and crime films more elaborately, while also talking about the other cast and

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



crew members—both films had the same cinematographer, Jean-Louis Picavet, which is another reason they play so well as a double bill—and other aspects of the film's artistry. At one point she seems to imply that Costa-Gavras directed **Battle for Algiers** rather than Gillo Pontecorvo, but given how rewarding and extensively knowledgeable her talk is as a whole, we can let it slide.

### Irishman vs. submarine

Although its popularity may have been impacted by its bittersweet ending, Peter Yates' 1971 World War II action drama, **Murphy's War**, is a superb film, featuring a commanding performance by Peter O'Toole as the title character. Shot in Venezuela, the film is set on the Orinoco River, where O'Toole's character, an Irish airplane mechanic, washes ashore after his ship is sunk by a German submarine and the rest of the crew is massacred in the water. The submarine has gone up river to perform repairs and O'Toole's character, when he recovers, is bent upon revenge. Philippe Noiret is a local merchant and Sian Phillips is the Quaker missionary doctor who nurses O'Toole's character back to health. Of course, the film immediately brings to mind such features such as **The African Queen**, **Heaven Knows Mr. Allison**, **Father Goose** and **Shout at the Devil**, but what sets it apart is its single-mindedness. There is, thank heaven, no scene where O'Toole's character pauses to get drunk, and despite Phillips' character's continual urging that he take his quinine pills, which he constantly ignores, he never succumbs to malaria. Instead, he works to devise one method to take out the submarine, and when that backfires, he immediately begins another. The film runs 107 minutes. While Phillips' character espouses a sensible, conscientious attitude, she otherwise has a minimal part, which she fills with the same moving effectiveness that the other performers fill their roles. Yates and cinematographer Douglas Slocombe get the most out of their fantastic locations, and they also get the most out of O'Toole, often just pushing in on his face and letting him do everything else. There are some marvelous action scenes, but in between those, there is just O'Toole, bringing a vivid character to life and engaging the viewer in that character's adventures.

The Paramount production has been released on Blu-ray by Paramount and Arrow Video (UPC#760137142447, \$40). The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1. The color transfer is beautiful and some of the location shots are heart stopping. And yet, the color transfer is so nice that the brief but necessary rear projection inserts where one must see O'Toole instead of his stunt double are not disorienting, even though they are fairly well delineated by the change in tone, because the colors remain so strong. The monophonic sound also has a very strong presence, lending itself not only to John Barry and Ken Thorne's musical score, but to the deep, richly textured sounds of old boat engines. We reviewed a Paramount DVD in Apr 05, which was passable, but had wear, lighter colors and a less present audio. Along with a trailer and small collection of promotional photos in still frame, there is a very good 20-minute history of the production and its various problems; a 17-minute piece that goes over the reasons the film came up short at the boxoffice and with some critics; an informative 31-minute interview with assistant director John Glen about a number of production details (as well as how Yates had landed **Bullitt**); and another engaging 17-minute interview with focus puller Robin Vidgeon, sharing stories about the production, working with Slocombe and life in the wilds of Venezuela.

### Italian costume drama

Marcello Mastroianni stars in the lovely period drama set in the early Nineteenth Century, **Allonsanfàn**, a 1974 Paolo and Vittorio Taviani feature released on Blu-ray by Radiance (UPC#760137144946, \$40). Mastroianni plays an aristocrat who has become involved with a group of his peers, wishing to be revolutionaries and spark a peasant uprising. As they travel down the length of Italy attempting to buy arms and otherwise create a movement, the peasants generally ignore them. Mastroianni's character quickly decides that he should run off with the money that has been collected and travel to America with whatever woman he is currently sleeping with instead, but every plan he makes to do that is upended by a chance encounter with one or more of his compatriots. Lee Massari and Mimsy Farmer co-star. The use of genuine locations for the period setting is consistently captivating, thanks to Giuseppe Ruzzolini's lovely cinematography. The film also features a sporadically applied but magnificent Ennio Morricone musical score. Running 112 minutes, the film is a viable adventure tale. The story is somewhat episodic, and once you get the gist of it you know it is not going to end well, but it also has a wry sense of humor—there are dance numbers, only some of which are imaginary—aided immeasurably by Mastroianni's exquisite performance, which enables the film to explore the foolishness of men with noble ideas while also bringing life and empathy to individuals caught up in unending foibles.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.66:1. Contrasts are a bit weak at times, and Ruzzolini does not shy away from intense granularity here and there, but overall the hues are accurate and the image is nicely detailed. The monophonic sound is strong enough to withstanding raising the volume to undue heights for the sake of the music. The film is in Italian with optional English subtitles. Along with a trailer, there is a 57-minute audio-only discussion (with a black screen and optional English subtitles) among several Italian filmmakers from 1966 about film, ideology and social responsibility. One of the Taviani brothers is there (the subtitles only identify the surnames of the speakers), although it appears the other is not, and Dino Risi and Florestano Vancini appear to be there, too. The talk will be interesting to some (they anticipate the advantages of home video and how it might relate to a more 'private' cinema experience—"We're veering into science-fiction."), but there are a lot of redundant opinions batted back and forth, and others may find it too filled with generalities and dogma to be worthwhile.

On the other hand, film expert Michel Brooke supplies an excellent commentary track, thoroughly going over the history of the film and the careers of the Taviani brothers (and how they share their directing responsibilities), expertly dissecting the narrative and the movie's individual components ("If we interpret this choreography

as two steps forward and one step back, the saltarello neatly serves as a metaphor for the typical course of left wing political progress, very much exemplified by this entire film, as well as the Tavianis' own personal experience."), and continually entertaining the listener with insights and observations. The film's title is derived from the name of one of the secondary characters, which itself comes from the first two words in the lyrics of the *La Marseillaise*, which Brooke gleefully points out is the, "Ridiculously catchy French national anthem," going on to provide a quick history of it, as well, and pointing out that those two words, 'Arise, children,' readily describes the characters in the film and the impulses the Tavianis follow in their filmmaking.

### Kill the bad guys

About as far away from the Home Depot in the first film as you can get, **The Equalizer3** is set on the Amalfi Coast of Italy, south of Naples, where the hero, played by Denzel Washington, recuperating from a bullet wound, settles into a small town nestled in the rocks next to the sea, only to learn that organized crime (the 'Camorra,' according to the subtitles) is putting pressure on the locals because it is a nice spot for a casino. Dakota Fanning is a CIA operative that he enlists for assistance. And, the Antoine Fuqua film is pretty much perfect. Running a brisk 109 minutes, it is everything you could want in an action film, with the addition of the Italian locations making all of the alteration that is necessary to freshen the experience after the film's two predecessors. We recently reviewed the outstanding action series, **Reacher** (Feb 23), but if you don't have the hours and you want the same fix—a hero with incredible skills is minding his own business, but has to step in when bad guys are picking on innocent people—the film delivers it all, with gorgeous Italian locations to boot.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback. The color transfer is smooth and details are clear in the darker portions of the image. The 5.1-channel Dolby Digital sound is terrific, with a very nice bass that kicks in to keep your adrenaline up and plenty of good separation effects. The film is in English, but there are passages in Italian that are automatically supported by English subtitling. There are also optional English subtitles for everything, French and Spanish subtitles, an audio track that describes the action ("Marco runs to the van. The driver lies against the airbag with a bloody temple. Marco gazes at the wreckage. In a close view, a man flips a wine bottle in his hand, while walking. He slams the bottle into Viking's face, knocking him over. He tosses the bottle aside. Marco opens his switchblade. McCall emerges from the darkness with arms upraised. Marco swings his blade at him. McCall grabs his arm and displaces it. He forces Marco to stab himself multiple times in the chest. He takes the blade and thrusts it into Marco's neck."), a French audio track, a French audio track that describes the action, a Spanish audio track, an entertaining Jacob Banks karaoke music video, a trailer and 30 minutes of enjoyable promotional featurettes, particularly the piece about the town, Atrani, where much of the film was shot.

### No There there

A 1983 Paramount 3D film, **The Man Who Wasn't There**, has been released by Paramount, 3-D Film Archive and Kino Lorber Incorporated as a *KL Studio Classics* 3D Blu-ray (UPC#738329265175, \$30) in standard 3D format, with the now common additional red/blue shift 3D format for fans who do not own a 3D viewing system. A single pair of red/blue glasses is included with the platter. As usual, the red/blue process suppresses the film's other colors, so such a presentation comes across as fairly monochromatic (yellows and greens are vaguely discernible). The colors on the standard 3D delivery, however, are excellent, with bright hues and accurate fleshtones, as is the 2D version, which is included as well (not on the initial menu screen, but when you select the standard 3D choice). For all three, the source material is sharp and has no wear, and the presentation is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1. The monophonic sound is strong and clear, and there are optional English subtitles.

As for the 111-minute film, it is generally clownish and juvenile. Much of it was shot in Washington D.C., so there are a few tourist spots that are replicated in 3D. On the whole, there are only a handful of moments that really emphasize the 3D effects, although the dimensional process is so effective that standard shots of car interiors, girls' shower rooms (the film does have a fair amount of nudity), stairwells and so on convey enough virtual perspective that enthusiasts should be satisfied. Steve Guttenberg is a State Department assistant about to be married, who is handed vials of an invisibility formula by a dying agent, asking that they be delivered to a specific contact. With the help of an enthusiastic maid of honor, played by Lisa Langlois, who appears to be far more enamored with him than his actual fiancée, the two run around D.C. trying to find the contact and avoid the bumbling foreign agents who want to grab them. In order to get out of jams, they start sampling the vials, but of course, they also have to be naked for it to be effective. Jeffrey Tambour, Art Hindle and William Forsythe co-star. Directed without sophistication or even maturity by Bruce Malmuth, the film has too much slapstick to be taken seriously and too little actual comedy to be funny. As the painfully accurate 3D trailer that has been included puts it, "Soon to disappear from a theater near you!"

3D movie experts Paul Corupe and Jason Pichonsky supply a commentary track, explaining the background of the film's production (Paramount wanted to piggy-back onto the brief enthusiasm for 3D that arose in the early Eighties) and how some of the effects were achieved, going over Guttenberg's career, discussing the history of 3D movies and movies about invisibility and so on. They also digress from time to time on no more than vaguely related topics, and while we would take issue with their assessment of the film's climactic plot revelation, which we feel is pretty much the only original and nicely logical twist in the entire script (and they don't, saying that critics at the time weren't happy about it, either), for the most part we would concur with their opinion of the film as a whole. "It's kind of juvenile. It has moments to not be juvenile and it seems to always want to go for something a little more juvenile."

### The Fellini binge box

The career of the great Italian film director, Federico Fellini, can be divided into three very distinctive phases. The first was his neorealist phase, from 1950 to 1957, as he conformed to the general parameters of the other great Italian filmmakers working at the time, emphasizing stories about working class characters in genuine environments, while bringing a gentle sense of humor and a pronounced tenderness to his dramas. His wife, Giulietta Masina, appears in each of these movies except one. The second was his superstar phase, from 1960 to 1978, as he shifted to working almost entirely at Rome's Cinecittà studios, making one international blockbuster hit after another while his name became synonymous not only with Italian movies but with foreign films as a whole. The final phase, from 1980 to 1990, came with the 1979 death of his composer, Nino Rota, who had scored every movie after the first one. Although the orchestrators, many of whom were prodigious composers in their own right, and who had worked closely with Rota before, took over his duties, and in some cases even utilized Rota's compositions, the collaborative magic was gone. Fellini still made some very fine films during this timeframe, but his weakest movies also come from this period.

The Criterion Collection does not have the rights to every one of Fellini's twenty-one movies, but they do have the rights to all of his features from the first phase and many from the second phase, as well as a couple from the final phase, and those fourteen films have been gathered in a tantalizing Blu-ray boxed set—at 12 inches by 11.5 inches, it is actually more like an album than anything else—**Essential Fellini** (UPC#715515252515, \$250). The fifteen platters also have oodles of supplements, and all of the feature films are in mono and are accompanied by optional English subtitles. The films are in Italian, with additional variations where noted.

The set is not really 'essential,' because it is missing a couple of key movies—and the only reason we bought it in the first place was that we were desperate to obtain a Blu-ray copy of **Juliet of the Spirits**—but in any case, the collection is an ideal one-stop way to absorb the brilliance of Fellini's artistry and to savor his progressions and discoveries. We have reviewed every film before on DVD or even on Blu-ray. Nevertheless, the temptation to settle back and journey through this partial but substantial two-thirds chronology of Fellini's filmmaking career was much too tempting to resist.

The first film in the set is Fellini's first film as a credited director, co-directing with comedy actor Alberto Lattuada in 1950, **Variety Lights**. Lattuada plays the manager and top-billed attraction of a struggling nomadic stage troupe. When an eager fan played by Carla Del Poggio joins the group to get out of her tiny hamlet, and then demonstrates a viable level of popularity as a performer, he breaks with the troupe to manage her career. Lattuada's appeal is kind of an Italian thing, generating humor from his sad sack demeanor and hapless efforts to succeed that are clearly doomed before they begin. Masina plays the companion of Lattuada's character, abandoned when he starts looking after Del Poggio's character.

While it is probable that Lattuada was in charge of the scenes that emphasize his character's tribulations, it is the balance brought by Fellini to the other characters in the troupe (one player has a trained goose that goes everywhere with him) and to the delicate shifts in the emotional temperament of Masina's character that makes the film exceptionally rich and enduring. Part of the 98-minute film is set in the countryside and part of it is in a less glamorous neighborhood of Rome, so that the variety of locations, combined with the variety of quirky characters, creates a delightful backdrop upon which the central narrative can take all of its time (and all of the hero's disappointments) to unfold.

The squared, full screen black-and-white picture looks exquisite, a substantial improvement over the Criterion DVD we reviewed in Dec 00. The image is spotless and contrasts are finely detailed. Felice Lattuada's musical score, while not Rota, is reasonably appealing and is not overly distorted. In the supplement, a 2002 interview and portrait of Fellini running 104 minutes has been included, which we reviewed in Feb 18 as a free-standing DVD released by First Look, **Fellini: A Born Liar**. Directed by Damian Pettigrew, the program includes an interview conducted with Fellini in 1992, the year before he passed away, and also features interviews with others who worked with him. As with the DVD, the image transfer looks very nice and the stereophonic audio track has a wonderful dimensionality.

Another interview that Fellini participated in for a Belgian TV program, **Second Look**, in 1960, is broken up into four parts on four different platters. The first part appears with **Variety Lights** and runs 35 minutes, in which he talks about his childhood and his life as a gag writer and caricature artist (he made a fortune from American servicemen doing the latter) before he started working on films.

As Fellini matured in his filmmaking, like so many artists, he started treating his characters badly, because happiness is boring, but he made his second film, **The White Sheik**, before anyone informed him of that dictum. It is one of our favorite of his films and indeed, one of our favorite films. And it is most certainly never boring. Remade by Gene Wilder and again by Woody Allen, the story is sweet and simple. Two newlyweds, played by Leopoldo Trieste and Brunella Bovo, arrive in Rome on their honeymoon, and their marriage comes perilously close to not surviving the trip. Bovo's character is obsessed with photo-comic books, and seeks out her idol, visiting the publishing house and then getting whisked away to an outdoor shoot at the beach where the latest installment is being staged. Her husband, baffled by her absence, has to stave off his curious relatives as he becomes more and more desperate to find her. In a brief cameo part, Masina plays a cheerful prostitute. More on that, later. Running just 86 minutes, every moment of the 1952 film is a discovery, as Fellini toys with motifs that he sampled in **Variety Lights** and would continue to develop in later films, the most significant of which is placing the viewer within a parade of clowns. As he creates these playful moments, however, he also pays close attention to the narrative and the drama, something that would start to concern him less and less later on, but in **The White Sheik**, that drama forms the perfect counterpoint to the movie's frisky devilment. Indeed, it is that very counterpoint, within the film, that defines the soul of love.

The full screen picture has a couple of hiccups and a couple of lines running through it, but is otherwise immaculate and once again improved over the Criterion DVD we reviewed in Apr 11. The monophonic sound is reasonably strong for the film's age. This was Rota's first score for Fellini and it also wavers between playful and traditional, the film receiving a boost of energy every time the playfulness kicks in. Indeed, while Bovo's final line of dialog makes an ideal punchline to the film, that is followed by another punchline when Rota unleashes his jaunty melody one last time for the film's closing shot. Like many Italian features of the day, the film had an intermission point, and its notation has been restored. The 31-minute retrospective piece included on the DVD has been carried over. There is also a 31-minute audio-only interview with Fellini (mostly in English) accompanied by a montage of memorabilia from many of his films and his life. During the fascinating talk, he genuinely attempts to discuss how he forms his art within the filmmaking process. Finally, there is another audio-only segment running 59 minutes that features marvelous interviews with Fellini's family (including his mother) and boyhood friends (and girlfriends), accompanied by a montage of scrapbook photos from his life.

Fellini's maturation comes into focus with his lauded 1952 feature, **I Vitelloni**, which has a number of impressive crowd scenes as he tracks the interactions of a dozen different characters amid various bustling activities. Set over the course of a year in a seaside town large enough that not everyone knows everyone, the film follows the lives of five young men who are past school age but not emotionally mature enough to have jobs. These are not the desperate hustlers that Pier Paolo Pasolini would portray a decade later. They are still partially ensconced in the cocoons of their families waiting, if one wants to look at the bigger picture, for Italy's delayed post-war boom to catch up with them. Repeating his obsession with empty streets after dark, Fellini also laces with the film with a sense of nostalgia that in some ways defies its contemporary setting, a wistful longing for the days when one could walk around all night long and not be concerned about the consequences. The flagrant comedy in the first two features is replaced by a subtler humor. The young men are all fools, but the actors are not playing for the balcony. Franco Interlenghi, Alberto Sordi, Franco Fabrizi, Leonora Ruffo, Leopoldo Trieste and Riccardo Fellini star (this is the one film that does not feature Masina).

Running 107 minutes, the film's primary focus is on Fabrizi's character, who has to marry Ruffo's character after she becomes pregnant, but takes substantially longer to live up to the responsibility he has acknowledged. Again, it is not a flagrant romance, but it does explore the gradations of love and the delineation between impulsive desire and enduring companionship, often in a very touching manner. As an early girlfriend of Fellini's recalls in the **White Sheik** supplement—"The world he showed in [**I Vitelloni**] was precisely the world we lived in."

The full screen black-and-white picture is again in excellent condition, with minimal wear and smooth contrasts, a mild but distinctive improvement over the Criterion DVD we reviewed in Nov 04. Again, the monophonic sound is solid and clear. Another intermission has been restored. The film is in Italian and comes with a nice collection of production photos in still frame, a trailer, the 35-minute retrospective piece Criterion included on the DVD, and the next 31-minute segment from the Belgian **Second Look** TV interview, in which he talks about his early love of film, his work on Roberto Rossellini's early films and his first features, while interviews with others talk about his efforts on **I Vitelloni**, **Variety Lights** and **White Sheik**, including a terrific talk with Michelangelo Antonioni, who was initially planning to direct the latter (how different, really, is **La Notte**?).

Fellini's next work, a segment in the 1953 omnibus film **Love in the City** (Nov 14) entitled *Agenzia matrimoniale*, which may be the most neorealistic piece he ever made, has not been included in the set.

Masina became an international star with her indelible performance as a young mentally challenged ragamuffin who is coerced into becoming the assistant to a traveling strongman performer played by Anthony Quinn in the 1954 **La Strada**. Richard Basehart co-stars as another performer who takes delight in teasing Quinn's character, setting off tragic consequences. We recently reviewed a Criterion Blu-ray in Dec 21, and the transfer appears to be the same. The picture is spotless and vivid—again magnifying, in particular, the atmosphere of the 'empty streets at night' scenes—and the monophonic sound is solid. There is an Italian track, but there is also an English track featuring Quinn's voice (but not, contrary to some of Criterion's notations, Basehart's), which has a serious dropout near the beginning, but is otherwise a workable alternative. The performances of all three leads are utterly captivating and running 108 minutes, the film's journey is both unique (it is actually difficult to imagine Masina's character existing in the real world, but for the film, it doesn't matter) and enduring. Film historian Peter Bondanella provides a passable commentary track, along with a trailer, a 14-minute appreciation of the film by Martin Scorsese and a well-made 55-minute compilation of Italian TV interviews with Fellini from 2000 that contains wonderful clips from the Sixties and Seventies in which he talks about his films and his life as you watch him age and mature.

The Image DVD release of **Il Bidone** ran 91 minutes, which was the standard release version seen in revival houses and so on (it also had lots of speckles). The restored version not only has an immaculate full screen black-and-white image, but the 1955 feature has regained scenes and shots that were removed after the film didn't do well at a festival screening before its general theatrical release, so that it now runs a full 114 minutes. That alone would seem to be a justification for getting the boxed set. Broderick Crawford stars as a conman living in Rome but earning his living scamming peasants in the countryside. Basehart and Fabrizi play his partners, and Masina is Basehart's wife, believing that he is a traveling salesman. Despite the Italian dubbing, the performances are outstanding, as both Crawford and Basehart convey the innermost feelings of their characters through their stances and expressions, and the urgency with which they deliver their dialog. Even with the added footage, both Masina and Basehart sort of disappear before the last act, as the film shifts to focus entirely upon the well-deserved



but still lamented downfall of Crawford's character. Perhaps the film is frustrating or a downer to some viewers when seen on its own, but seen in the company of Fellini's other features, it blossoms. From Rota's jaunty music to those empty night streets, the movie mixes its 'Felliniesque' familiarities with fresh perspectives and new pathways. Where a couple of the previous films sort of wiggle their toes in the edges of Rome, this film jumps right into the fountain, as it were, expanding the range of Fellini's exploration and palette in the bustle of the city. But for all of the embellishment it achieves with its atmosphere, the film's greatest accomplishment is the depth and feeling it has for its characters. Indeed, it is perhaps the film's most glaring failure that Fabrizio, Basehart and Masina just disappear from it, because their characters are so richly developed and magnificently acted that they deserve more than to just be discarded when Crawford's character goes in another direction.

Along with a great 40-minute interview with assistant director Dominique Delouche who worked with Fellini in the late Fifties and vividly describes some of the shooting, there is a commentary by Fellini expert Frank Burke. He primarily but methodically steps the viewer through what is happening in the film and its symbolic meanings, drawing upon the script (which explains a bit more about what happened to the other characters) as well as a thorough examination of each scene. Although his memory shortchanges him at one point—when Crawford's character is roughed up by his associates near the end, Burke says, "This is by far the most violent scene in Fellini's work," apparently forgetting the amputation that would occur later in **Fellini Satyricon**—most of the time his insights are worthwhile and bring a greater understanding not just to the film, but to Fellini's work as a whole. When Crawford's character and his companions enter a slum with a scam involving deposits on new housing, for example, he delineates the many different aspects of Italy's predicaments that are at work in the scene. "In the course of the sequence, Fellini highlights the thought-provoking simultaneity, the quotidian normalcy of women hanging laundry and singing, while older children shout in exuberant play, the cynical predation of [Crawford's character's] gang, the poverty of the Roman underclasses, the failure of public policy and implementation, the aspirations of people seemingly on the verge of a major life upgrade and the fact that housing allocations exacerbate rather than eliminate economic disparity—only those with a certain amount of money can sign up."

That cameo appearance in **White Sheik** led Fellini and Masina to develop the prostitute character into a tragic-comic figure worthy of a film of her own, and in 1957 **Nights of Cabiria** won the Oscar for best foreign film. In terms of narrative, the plot has a symmetrical gimmick so that its opening sequence anticipates its devastating end, with the rest of the story amounting to little more than episodic adventures on the part of the heroine to fill the time (most memorably, she spends the night in the bedroom bath of a famous movie star when his girlfriend shows up unexpectedly shows up), but over the course of the movie's 118 minutes, her personality and emotional architecture are carefully and thoroughly built upon. Where the cameo character, also named 'Cabiria,' in **White Sheik** was a playful imp, Masina, without losing that impishness, turns her into a fully conceived human being, one who gets angry, jealous, resentful, empathetic, sad, happy, eager and every other emotion you can think of. The film quite good naturedly never gets anywhere near the actual necessities of her profession—she just walks around a lot at night (those empty night streets, once again...) and occasionally climbs into the front seat of a car or the cab of a truck—but focuses quite a bit upon the milieu of her favorite stomping grounds, thus presenting women with alternative personalities to hers, so that we can see that despite her flashes of despair she is much less burnt out or hard-edged than they are. It should be noted that Pasolini worked for Fellini on the production, and likely added a sense of verisimilitude to the locations and the characters. To look back across these half-dozen films, however, one can see the growth of Fellini's artistry in each one and how, with **Nights of Cabiria**, he moved past protagonists with rich but relatively simplistic constructs—Quinn's strongman and Crawford's aging crook—to create a truly complex and realistic character and environment, one that is fully realized thanks to Masina's outstanding performance.

Criterion's DVD (Oct 99) looked great for its day, but had accentuated grain, while the BD's full screen black-and-white picture is smooth and spotless, with not a granule in sight. The film's final sequence is a particular marvel of light and darkness, giving way to the precision of Masina's smile, and on the Blu-ray the transition is as pure as its metaphorical representation of compartmentalized emotions. The sound is reasonably strong. Along with two trailers, a 4-minute audio-only interview with producer Dino De Laurentiis and a 31-minute interview with Delouche, all of which appeared on the DVD, there is a great 53-minute profile of Masina that was included on Criterion's freestanding **La Strada** Blu-ray. Also featured is the third installment of the Belgian *Second Look* program, running 53 minutes, which focuses mostly on the creation of **La Strada** and **Nights of Cabiria**, including interviews with Fellini, Masina, Pasolini and others about Fellini's filmmaking techniques.

And it was only after those initial half-dozen steps that Fellini was ready to take on the world with **La Dolce Vita**. You can see the specific preparations for **La Dolce Vita** in **Nights of Cabiria**, not just in the interlude with the 'famous' actor, but in the use of the Via Veneto location, which Fellini partially reconstructed on the soundstage for the 1960 production. Running 176 minutes and presented in letterboxed format with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1, **La Dolce Vita** is a thrilling artistic epic. From the characters to the locations to the artistry, Fellini's previous films flow into **La Dolce Vita** like tributaries to the Tiber. The previous films are consistently intimate, so the impact of the film's sweeping opening shot of the helicopter and the statue is especially liberating. Unlike any other grand film of its day (its only competition, **L'avventura**, was, by design, not 'epic'), it appears at first to be an episodic exploration of life among the upper classes in Rome as seen through the eyes of a randy journalist played by Marcello Mastroianni. After the depths of character growth experienced in all of the previous films, however, you begin to look past the superficial façade of Mastroianni's character and see the emotional undercurrents in more detail, from his impulsive infidelities to the poignant sequence (our favorite in the film) where

he spends the evening in a nightclub with his father. What becomes clear—and not to spoil things too greatly—is that he drops into a serious funk after his friend's ghastly suicide, to the point where he transforms into a nastier, less playful version of his former self, manifested metaphorically in the 'monster on the beach' at the end.

We reviewed Criterion's Blu-ray in Nov 14 and the transfer is identical. The picture is spotless and smooth. The monophonic sound is reasonably strong and has fewer drawbacks than its predecessors. The film has the greatest 'empty streets at night' scene ever, as Mastroianni and Anita Ekberg search for some milk to feed a kitten and come upon the Trevi Fountain, and every moment of it is spine-tingling thanks to the beauty of the image and sound delivery. In addition to Ekberg, the cast includes appearances by Anouk Aimée, Yvonne Furneaux, Nico, Nadia Gray, Lex Barker, Alain Cuny and Walter Santesso (whose character name, 'Paparazzo,' coined the word, 'paparazzi'). The special features carried over from Criterion's original BD include a decent 14-minute overview of the film by David Forgacs, a more abstract appreciation running 10 minutes, a 16-minute summary of the film's production history, a 7-minute appreciation of Fellini by Lina Wertmüller, a 30-minute NBC interview with Fellini from 1965, and a collection of memorabilia in still frame.

Also featured is a very nice 2009 French television retrospective running 52 minutes that goes over not just the creation of the film but the relationships that Fellini had with the actors and other collaborating artists; and the final 31-minute installment of the Belgian *Second Look* program, which is all about **La Dolce Vita** and the scandal it caused at the time of its release (which is why it so clearly feels like a film ahead of its time now), featuring interviews with Fellini and many members of the cast and crew.

Fellini's next work was another chapter in an omnibus film, the delightful *Le tentazioni del dottor Antonio* that was part of the 1962 **Boccaccio '70**, which we reviewed in Nov 11 and is not included here. So he did indeed make seven feature films, and then two shorter works which, one supposes, could count together as a 'half' since each of those omnibus features had several other chapters to them (on the other hand, a poster for **Variety Lights** that appears during the audio interviews on **White Sheik** claims that the co-directed **Variety Lights** is, "The 1/2 of 8/2," so go figure). Some look upon his eighth feature as the peak of his filmmaking prowess, while others look at it as the rollercoaster already starting slide down the other side of the mountain, but from whatever perspective one takes, the 1963 8 1/2 is among Fellini's best and most dazzling accomplishments.

If his other films hinted at autobiographical components, whether it was the theater life in **Variety Lights** or youthful life in a seaside town in **Il Vitelloni**, or even the milieu of the rich and famous in **La Dolce Vita**, then 8 1/2 is a full-fledged straight-on autobiography about a film director played by Mastroianni who has no idea what to make his next movie about and is increasingly frustrated in his attempts to juggle his wife, his mistresses and pretty much every woman in his life and his memories. There's gotta be a movie in all of that, somewhere, right? Claudia Cardinale has a wonderful role as herself, and Sandra Milo plays his mistress. Annibale Ninchi, who played the father of Mastroianni's character in **La Dolce Vita**, plays the father of his character in dream sequences in 8 1/2. Aimée is also back, playing a deviously staged version of the hero's 'wife,' and even the circus of **La Strada** is reconfigured for a metaphorical return engagement. Since most of the film is set in a spa, there is less opportunity for it to visit empty streets at night, but just when you've given up hope, Mastroianni and Cardinale do indeed find themselves in such a location.

What Fellini accomplishes quite brilliantly, even before 'meta' was a word, was to integrate the narrative—Mastroianni's character is visiting the spa ostensibly for his health while a massive outdoor science-fiction set for his next project is being completed nearby and his producers and staff are also at the spa, pestering him for details about what needs to be done—with the meta-narrative—the film he is planning to make ends up being the film at hand, replete with criticisms about its potential philosophical and metaphysical shortcomings, so that, even with dream sequences, there is no point where one stops and the other starts. They are just both there, simultaneously. Since that is the structure, then the hero's inept management of his romantic interests fills in the entertainment for the 139-minute production. It is within this meta configuration that the film's surprisingly substantial spiritual component—several high-level members of the clergy are at the spa, as well, and the hero seeks an audience with them for guidance—takes on a devious presence. The more arcane or vacuous the advice he receives, the more his life begins to fall apart because he is not following it and yet, since the real film at hand is a roaring success, where does that place the church in the continuum?

We reviewed Criterion's Blu-ray in Jan 10, but the picture, letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1, has since undergone a fresh transfer. The differences are very slight, but the **Essential** version is a tiny bit sharper, which is enough to focus a viewer's concentration a little bit more on the entertainment. There is no particular difference in the monophonic sound. Many people regard Rota's score to be one of his finest, but we believe that he incorporates too many standard classical music pieces (performed by a band at the spa) for the music to feel fresh, although his final suite for the film's amazing finish is truly grand.

The commentary, a combination of several different experts, has been carried over from the initial BD, along with a 7-minute introduction by Terry Gilliam; an interesting 50-minute retrospective from 2003 that is about the movie as a whole but focuses quite a bit on an initial ending—in an all-white passenger train dining car—that Fellini discarded in favor of his 'circus' ending ("This film was tailor made to his own crisis. The fact that he chose to stay on this side was a great and positive act of love for life. It became the start of another game instead of the end of a crisis. I think that's wonderful because he managed to recover. In psychoanalytic terms, to use an ugly word, it was the solution to his crisis, the crisis he tells about in 8 1/2. He didn't choose the other ending that smelled of 'death.' He chose a different one with the scent of life that said, 'Life is a celebration. Let's live it together.'"); a great 47-minute profile of Rota; an amazing 27-minute interview with Milo about her 2-decade affair with Fellini; an informative 17-minute interview with production assistant Wertmüller; a 17-minute analysis of the film's cinematography by Vittorio Storaro; a trailer; and a large collection of production photos and promotional materials in still frame.

## Fellini (Continued)

The way the **Essential** album is laid out, the first eight platters are set in the first two (opposing) cardboard pages, so when it is opened, they appear as the 'black-and-white' section. When you turn over that second page, you get the final seven platters, which appear as the 'color' section. Although the **Boccaccio '70** segment was in color, Fellini's first full color feature was (at the moment) our second favorite film of all time, **Juliet of the Spirits**, from 1965. Why it is our second most favorite film probably has more to do with the circumstances under which we first encountered it than an aspect of its artistic quality, but it is an excellent film, with beyond-fabulous colors, and it rather specifically points to the direction where Fellini's subsequent films would follow, thus erasing the writer's block problems that **8½** was depicting. At the same time, just as there were components of **Nights of Cabiria** that pointed straight toward **La Dolce Vita**, so, too, are there components in **8½** that point straight to **Juliet of the Spirits**. Quite specifically, an elaborate reference to the 'spirits' of the title and their function, whispering guidance (or distractions) to the heroine, Masina, who in many ways was essentially shamed in public by Aimée's depiction of her fictional stand-in in **8½**, plays a woman who once again must cope with her husband's infidelity.

Everyone has the voice of their childhood in their head. That child's voice makes better choices as an adult—or at least, it ought to—but it has the same tone, the same feelings and the same core sensory resources that it has always had. As Masina's character comes to recognize the crisis she is facing, she begins to have visions of her childhood out of the corner of her eye, manifested from the 'spirits' that her emotions are unleashing. The film runs 137 minutes, but its narrative arc is fairly simple—she discovers her husband's unfaithfulness just before he takes the next step in separating from her. Technically, Masina, whose name appears above the film's title, had a more complex role in **Nights of Cabiria**—and, for that matter, Mastroianni had more complex roles in the two films that followed—but what she brings to this part is something not just more ethereal, but more tangibly iconic at the same time. Seeing the other five Fellini movies she was in immediately beforehand creates a contributive familiarity, but it is primarily the mastery of her screen presence that enables a rather amazing balancing act, presenting a passive character who constantly acquiesces to everyone around her, but imbuing that character with an inner illuminative beauty that communicates an impervious strength. After nearly 16 hours of black and white, the sudden appearance of color is mesmerizing, and as dazzling as the costumes and set designs are (no empty streets at night this time), it is Masina's lovely, soft complexion and the intricacy of her smile that underscores the power of her illumination. As Fellini moved away from narrative, he relied more and more upon the poetics of cinematic expression, and that is what **Juliet of the Spirits** achieves so resoundingly. From the lyrically dense exchanges of dialog, with people talking over people (sometimes in different languages), to the imaginative, playhouse-styled sets (the neighbor of Masina's character, played by Milo, has a slide in her bedroom and a tree platform outside that can only be reached by a rope basket; the trees in the forest have no low branches, making all of the characters seem more like children as they pass them), the film's excitement come from its physical presentation, while its haunting manifestation of how nostalgia, lurking in every waking or even sleeping moment, becomes indelibly entwined with the power of motion pictures and Fellini's art.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1. The colors are exact and solid, and look sharper than on the Criterion DVD (Apr 02), but the presentation is not the perfection we were hoping for. Darker areas of the screen have weak contrasts, allowing reds in particular to blend directly into blacks without a proper demarcation. It is a minor point, but if the film ever gets upgraded on home video we will have to invest in it again. The monophonic sound is stronger than it is in the films from the Fifties, though it is still somewhat limited in fidelity—the one film technology where Hollywood was beginning to advance significantly in comparison to foreign films. Since the sound is post-dubbed, there is no definitive language version and Criterion has only provided the Italian version, but while the English version enables you to absorb the conversations without having to stay glued to the subtitles, it does not convey the melodic joy that the Italian dialog achieves, or the counterpoint created by the other languages popping up at times (including English). Along with a trailer, there is a really good 21-minute BBC interview with Fellini from 1966 that originally appeared on the DVD and a 33-minute Italian television retrospective presentation of a wonderful 1965 production documentary entitled *Zoom on Fellini*, filled with behind-the-scenes footage of Fellini in action.

Fellini's next work was another chapter in an omnibus film, but this time, Criterion has secured the rights and so it has been included as a supplement on the **Juliet of the Spirits** platter. We reviewed Homevision's DVD release of **Spirits of the Dead** in Jan 02, but as much as the other chapters are entertaining, Fellini's riveting depiction of an alcoholic movie star, played by Terence Stamp, arriving in Rome, accepting an award at a ceremony and then going on a joyride, *Toby Dammit*, is such a pure, invigorating expression of his cinematic style (augmented, of course, by Rota's marvelous musical score) that it functions just as well or even better as a standalone work and, as we note below, a much better follow up to **Juliet of the Spirits** than his next full length feature. Like Masina's character, Stamp's character sees and hears a spirit, except that it turns out to be a demon. Like **8½**, people talk at him all at once, which is enough to send anyone to drink, and the final act takes place on empty streets at night. The transfer is said to be a restoration, but we can't get too excited about it. Not only are there hairs on the top and bottom of the screen in places, but fleshtones are pale and other hues are also soft and a bit light, pretty much like the DVD. Instead of being bathed in a hellish red, the opening airport sequence is more of a light orange. The film is in a mix of English and Italian, and the sound is adequately delivered.

Fellini then made a TV special in 1969, *NBC Experiment in Television Fellini: A Director's Notebook*, that was included on Criterion's DVD release of **8½** but, like *Toby Dammit*, has been properly and positionally included on the **Juliet of the Spirits** platter (along with a letter, presented in still frame, Fellini wrote to a producer explaining his mindset at the time). An eclectic gathering of discarded production ideas and glimpses of his next

feature, the 52-minute program is a crazy, witty, slightly incoherent but—especially if one is steeped in all things Fellini when one watches it—fully engaging tour of Fellini's late Sixties psyche. It may reek of NBC trying desperately to be hip (is that the first male-on-male kiss on American broadcast TV buried in the end credits?), but it succeeds more readily than a lot of the stunts the networks were trying at the time to hold onto their younger adult audiences. As he visits the unused set for an abandoned film (he had used part of it for **8½**), tours Rome at night amid transvestite hookers and other cruisers prowling the Colosseum, pops in on Mastroianni, lets Masina share a partially deleted sequence from **Nights of Cabiria**, shows what a typical day of casting is like in his office, and offers glimpses of the production preparations being made for his next feature, the viewer is made privy to his humor, his humanity and his own perplexity regarding art and life. The transfer is 'restored,' but the image is quite soft and often a bit blurry. The sound is adequate. The program is mostly in English or quickly translated Italian, with a few scattered subtitles, but there is no optional subtitling.

As we pointed out, the buffers of *Toby Dammit* and the trippy, partial promotional *Director's Notebook* assist significantly with the emotional pivot a viewer must take to appreciate the next feature film, particularly since, almost like a baton being passed in a race, Fellini once again anticipated his future with scenes and moments in his previous feature. **Juliet of the Spirits** has a surprising number of images and even references that look forward to Fellini's 1969 depiction of ancient Rome, known as **Fellini Satyricon** (the title card on the United Artists feature says, "Fellini-Satyricon"). Not only are there shots of primitive people mixed into the hallucinations that Masina's character has in **Juliet**, but she visits a psychic hermaphrodite, as characters do in **Satyricon**, and she also tells a story to her young nieces about a Minotaur, a Greek legend that is re-enacted in **Satyricon** by the Romans for their amusement (and the hero's misery). Fellini abandoned all but rudimentary character development for the 130-minute feature, but that was the theme—the exploration and embrace of early Roman literature and culture. And, well, he could also use the setting as a beard to depict gay relationships with the excuse that the film does not have a contemporary setting.

The story follows the wanderings of a student, observing his society while he continually has to explicate himself from one threatening situation after another. Because of the surreal antiquity and relative artificiality of its setting, the film was what was known in the day as a 'head trip,' and its abstract, vaguely historical images remain one of its most compelling attributes. The characters are just attractive enough to keep one interested in their fates, while the episodic events (the film has echoes of **La Dolce Vita**, too, including nocturnal adventures, high class parties and another family suicide) and fabulous visions provide the entertainment. Some would say that beginning with **Satyricon**, Fellini's audacity overwhelmed his art, and that was certainly the fear at the time, but taken in retrospective, it was a unique and viable choice for exploration, and the movie world, if not the world as a whole, would be much poorer without it.

The Blu-ray is an exact replication of the Criterion release we reviewed in Mar 15. The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1 and the color transfer is both solid and smooth, with accurate hues and clear details in the shadows. The film's archaic matte shots kind of stand out in a way that they maybe wouldn't if the image wasn't as clear, but that is the price you pay. The monophonic sound is also strong and solid, with well defined details. Again, Criterion has chosen to stick with the Italian language track only and not venture into an alternative English language track, even though that is the native language of the film's star, Martin Potter. Hiram Keller, Mario Romagnoli and Capucine are also featured. The supplement is also carried over, including a great commentary by reporter Eileen Lanouette Hughes based upon a journal she kept during the shoot; an exceptional 1970 production documentary running 60 minutes entitled *Ciao, Federico!*; a collection of promotional interviews with Fellini running a total of 14 minutes; an 11-minute interview with cinematographer Giuseppe Rotunno; a 13-minute interview with on-set photographer Mary Ellen Mark; a rewarding 24-minute look at how the film follows (and does not follow) the original fragmented story by Petronius; another collection of memorabilia in still frame; and a trailer.

Fellini's next work was a 1970 telefilm documentary celebrating one of his favorite subjects, **The Clowns**. We reviewed the Raro Video Blu-ray in Nov 11. The film is an essential work, but Criterion could not obtain it and it is not part of the collection.

And then came Fellini's wonderful 1972 love letter to Rome, **Roma**, which has two intercut components. One is about a young man growing up in the north of Italy (on a field trip, his teacher has his class 'cross the Rubicon,' where it is a small stream), who then moves to Rome as a young adult, just as WWII is getting underway, and experiences some of the life there, such as restaurants, a theater and two brothels. The second component is a contemporary faux—or at least thoroughly staged—documentary, with Fellini himself creating a travelog of the facets of Rome that interest him. His craftsmanship, particularly in the contemporary segments, is astonishing. Doubling down on the 'traffic nightmare' sequence in **8½** and the jazzy drive from the airport to the city in *Toby Dammit*, there is an incredible sequence in which his film crew, with a camera on a crane on the back of a truck, appears to brave rush hour traffic heading into Rome during a late afternoon downpour. The more often we see the sequence, the more we begin to believe that it out-does any over-budgeted highway chase scene we have ever seen (we're looking at you, Michael Bay). A pinnacle of satirical brilliance, there is also an 'Ecclesiastical Fashion Show,' with Rota's score in all of its glory as the combined lampoon of fashion extravaganzas and the church's decorative rituals seems to capture the heart of Rome's essence and excessiveness. Some might say that Fellini is embracing very basic, stereotypical views of Rome, but what he is really doing is exploring the foundation for those commonalities that are so closely associated with the city. There is also an



anticipation of the subway excavation sequence in *Director's Notebook*. Running 120 minutes, the film's one genuine flaw is the lack of closure for the portion of the film set in the past. If the young man played by Peter Gonzales is supposed to be Fellini, there is no clear link suggesting as much, or anything that gives a hint as to how his youthful experiences will develop him. As for the contemporary portion, it ends brilliantly with—what else—a trip around some of Rome's sites in the middle of the night on empty streets, following a gaggle of motorcycles.

Another United Artists production, we reviewed the Criterion Blu-ray in Jun 17, and the presentation in the set is again an exact replication of that release. Some darker sequences are a touch soft, but otherwise the picture transfer looks fine, with bright colors and accurate fleshtones. The monophonic sound is strong and worth amplifying for the score and for the sound effects (Rome's 'sounds'). Accompanying the film are the same special features that were on the BD, including another informative Burke commentary, a terrific 23 minutes of deleted scenes, a 15-minute appreciation by filmmaker Paul Sorrentino, a 16-minute reflection by writer Valerio Magrelli, a comprehensive 19-minute montage of production photos and promotional materials, and a trailer.

The charm of the portion in **Roma** set in the past, particularly the part that was set in a small town during the hero's childhood, clearly inspired his next film, **Amarcord**, from 1973, which brought Fellini back into the good graces of the critics and even won him another Oscar. Not only is the film the heartfelt pinnacle of Fellini's moviemaking endeavors, it also features Rota's very best musical score. The 126-minute feature is closely aligned with Fellini's own childhood experiences, memories and impressions, which also surfaced most prominently in **I Vitelloni** and **8½**. The film is a compilation of vignettes, as if it were the town as a whole, and not the individuals within, that was the film's central character. Since the film professes to be a memory piece, some of the vignettes are absurd or clownish, but not to a point of exaggeration that would spoil the overall mood. Crossing a single year, from the beginning of spring to the end of winter, a few pieces pass by very quickly while others are more drawn out, but nearly all of them are delightful, and even the many moments with darker tones have an underlying humor softening their shadows.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1. While the picture quality on the **Essential** release is generally similar to Criterion's previous Blu-ray (Nov 11), there are discernible differences. There is a bit more color detail, but also a bit more grain in the image. Overall, the picture is lovely, but a touch soft at times. The sound is solid. Like the earlier BD, there is an English dubbed track, which doesn't have much to offer, along with the Italian track. Carried over from the BD, there is a thorough commentary by Burke and film expert Peter Brunette that analyzes the film's various scenes; a 44-minute collection of interviews with Fellini and his friends about the movie and its biographical resonances; a 16-minute interview with co-star Magali Noël; a 3-minute silent deleted scene; a collection of Fellini's drawings in still frame; a collection of memorabilia in still frame; and a trailer. Also featured is a marvelous, lyrical, instructive and funny 1974 Italian (very Italian—it includes a lot of regional rivalries) TV 'production documentary' entitled *The Secret Diary of Amarcord* that runs 45 minutes (including a couple more deleted scenes—one may be offensive to Asians) and plays a lot like a Fellini movie itself.

We reviewed the Kino Lorber Blu-ray release of the substantially underrated **Fellini's Casanova** (it is basically a variation on **Satyricon**, except as a musical) from 1976 (in Jan 21; Rota's final collaboration with Fellini, the delightful 1978 **Orchestra Rehearsal**, released on an Arrow Video Blu-ray in Feb 18; and one of Fellini's weaker efforts, the 1980 **City of Women**, on a Cohen Film Collection Blu-ray in Jul 16. None of them are included in the **Essential** box.

**Amarcord** has many indelible scenes, but even among those, one of the most memorable is the time when the townspeople all get onto boats to go out to sea and watch an ocean liner pass in the night. Although it is set a couple of decades earlier than **Amarcord**, the 1983 **And the Ship Sails On** seems to be taking place on that same ship, where a group of elite opera performers and aristocrats have gathered on a voyage to scatter the ashes of a famous opera singer. For some reason, there is also a rhinoceros on board. Running 127 minutes, the film is structured a bit like **Amarcord**, in that there is a narrator of sorts, who speaks directly to the camera and shares his impressions of the characters and the occurrences. The film begins (on the eve of World War I) with a great deal of promise. The staging is inspired (during the boarding, the characters all break out into song, as if this was an opera being performed) and the gathering of characters has wonderful potential. Sadly, however—and perhaps one can even read the death of the opera singer as representative of Rota—Fellini's heart does not seem to be in it and the third act just sort of unravels as it searches for a resolution. The musical score is sort of a 'classical greatest hits,' and while the opera passages, as replicated by the passengers, are pleasing, the Strauss waltzes and repeated renditions of *Clair de Lune* are less gratifying. For the potential that it offers and the magnificent stagecraft that is executed (like the boat sequence in **Amarcord**, the entire production was created in a studio, and the obviousness of this is part of its beauty), the film was a welcome step up from **City of Women**, but it remains among Fellini's least accomplished efforts.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1. After the somewhat dispiriting presentation of **Amarcord**, the color transfer is thrilling. Even though there are scenes that have a grainy texture, while others do not, the color transfer is so accurate and the color design—often giving the film an antique 'colorized' look—is so captivating that the image quality carries the viewer's pleasure along even after the narrative begins to lag. Criterion's DVD (Oct 99) was grainier and had less stable hues. The monophonic sound is also very solid and finely detailed. A very good 51-minute program from 1983 about the film's production and release is included, with a great deal of behind-the-scenes footage and extensive

interviews with Fellini both before and after the film was revealed to the world. One interesting point Fellini makes during the filming is that he was running into some minor difficulties because of stagnation within the Italian film industry. The Seventies were over.

Fellini's next film was a wonderful 1986 spoof of television productions with the dream casting of Masina and Mastroianni, **Ginger & Fred**. We reviewed a Warner Home Video DVD in May 07, and the film is not included in the set, but outtakes that were intended as peripatetic video feeds on various monitors during the course of the feature were compiled in 2003 into a single and rather amazing 35-minute montage entitled *Fellini's TV (La tivù di Fellini)* that has been included in the supplement of Fellini's following film, the 1987 **Intervista** (we originally reviewed that piece as part of the Koch Releasing DVD of **La Dolce Vita** in Dec 05). It has its original sound for some clips and added music on others, but what makes it riveting is the breadth of Fellini's imagination, making fun of everything from TV programs to news features to game shows to music videos and, most of all, commercials. One clip is a lampoon of *Goblin*, another has TV intellectuals arguing about the beheading of a woman (they only have 2 minutes to talk), another has people putting toothpaste back in a tube as a contest, another is a gangster's death scene from a show, and an ad for a watch, and on and on. We've seen enough films to know that while such television parodies are relatively common, within a single film, their scope is normally limited to a handful of inspired ideas. In *Fellini's TV*, this is just some of the stuff that didn't get used, and it could supply a dozen such features. The transfer quality is a little grungy, but that goes with the territory, and some of the sound is stereophonic.

As for **Intervista**, it is a viable return to the format Fellini used in **Roma**, with a few ideas turned inside out. Again, there is a component depicting a fictionalized version of Fellini's beginning days as an entertainment reporter in the Forties, visiting Cinecittà to interview a famous actress, except that the clips from this story are being filmed by Fellini himself at Cinecittà (before somebody put up the wonderful head of *Venus from Casanova* in the studio's front yard), while he talks about the studio 'then' and 'now,' drives around Rome looking for more locations, holds auditions (a segment that is strikingly similar to the 'reality' depicted in *Director's Notebook* and the **Amarcord** production documentary supplement), and even grabs Mastroianni, dressed as Mandrake the Magician and shooting a detergent ad at the studio, and takes him to what appears quite believably to be Ekberg's house, where they sit and chat and replay highlights from **La Dolce Vita**. The film is another lovely tribute to Rome and moviemaking, full of wry humor, intriguing perspectives and Fellini's prowess at being, well, that guy who stands in the middle of the circus ring, announcing and then seeming to conduct every act, with a megaphone and a wave of his wand.

Presented in a squared full-screen format, the picture transfer looks much nicer than the Choice DVD we reviewed in Mar 03. Colors are bright and smooth, and the image is sharp. Although the Dolby logo appears in the end credits, the sound is consistently centered. It is reasonably strong and again, much cleaner than the sound on the DVD. Additional supplements include a 47-minute audio-only interview (set to a montage of production photos from **La Dolce Vita** and **8½**) with Mastroianni from 1963 about working with Fellini, what the characters he plays represent, and what Fellini was like (asked to compare the three great Italian directors of the era, he says, "[Luchino] Visconti is the professor holding forth. Antonioni is the excellent student at the desk next to you. Fellini is your best friend in the class."); a rather profound 17-minute interview with Fellini from 1987 about the film; and a 52-minute 2000 compilation of interviews with Fellini from his later years, looking back on his life experiences, some of which also appear elsewhere in the set (including the previous 17-minute interview).

Fellini's final film, **The Voice of the Moon**, a 1990 dreamscape adventure with Roberto Benigni, has not been included, and we are lucky to have it at all, since it never made it to American theaters or home video until Arrow Video put out a lovely Blu-ray that we reviewed in Nov 17.

Finally, there is a what-else-could-we-do-with-it 194-minute interview, *Marcello Mastroianni: I Remember*, consigned to a fifteenth platter. Shot in 1997 in various locations around Italy (and a little bit in Portugal), Mastroianni speaks extensively about his professional career (and virtually nothing about his private life), accompanied by partially identified or unidentified (at least there is a comprehensive list in the end credit scroll) clips from his films and several of his stage appearances. The very first clip? Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire doing *The Carioca*. The presentation is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.66:1 and clips from widescreen features, such as **La Dolce Vita**, are cropped, but otherwise the quality of the clips is usually quite nice, and the interview footage is sharp and brightly colored. The 5.1-channel sound brings a pronounced dimensionality to the background music recorded for the program. Mastroianni speaks in Italian and there are optional English subtitles, including subtitles over a portion of *Fellini: A Director's Notebook* that did not appear on the program itself, revealing an even earlier desire on Mastroianni's part to portray Mandrake the Magician. Gosh, he just missed the comic book craze by a couple of decades (in his day, he would have been perfect). Despite its length and its back-and-forth leaps through time as Mastroianni drifts from one topic to the next, the program is fully captivating. Sharing anecdotes and experiences, the aging Mastroianni is charming as all get out, softly humorous and speaks without presupposition about his craft, the many great Italian directors he has worked with, the films he is proud of and the films he is not so proud of. He compares his life to that of his brother, Ruggiero Mastroianni—who was the primary editor on many of Fellini's films—and wistfully notes the while he had fame and fortune, his brother had a predictable routine and time to spend with his family. He also shares, having obtained it from a Neapolitan bellhop, as good of a theory about understanding and accepting existence as one is going to find—"Life is an appearance on a balcony."

### British war dramas

Two British Fifties WWII dramas directed by Lewis Gilbert are paired on the Cohen Media Group as a *Cohen Film Collection Classics of British Cinema* Blu-ray, **The Sea Shall Not Have Them / Albert R.N.** (UPC#73-8329265243, \$30). Both black-and-white films are presented in a squared full screen format and both have reasonably clear monophonic sound, although the optional English subtitles come in very handy at times if you don't speak British.

The 1954 **The Sea Shall Not Have Them** is a nifty little search and rescue tale about a bomber crew in a flimsy life raft floating in the English Channel in some not very nice weather while a bedraggled rescue cruiser looks for them. The film was made cheaply—there are plenty of rear projection shots—but running 92 minutes it builds a blend of suspense (the cruiser breaks down, and also has a fire, while the raft drifts through a minefield and ever closer to the Belgian coast) and character development effectively through its crosscutting and a basic, no-nonsense focus on the details of the operation. The film also has the advantage of having Dirk Bogarde and Michael Redgrave among the four men on the raft, which adds to the film's star appeal. Nigel Patrick and Anthony Steel are also featured. The source material is a little soft and has some wear at times, and the image quality is not aided by the storm and the fog that the raft must bobble through.

Based upon a stageplay, the 1953 **Albert R.N.** is set in a German prison camp and is about escape attempts, although, contrary to the jacket copy, the plot has nothing to do with an informer. Instead, after their tunnel is exposed due to an engineering error, the heroes come up with an ingenious alternate method for sneaking men out of the camp, and the several implementations of their idea is what takes up the 89-minute running time. Steel stars again, with Jack Warner, the American actor, William Sylvester, Robert Beatty and Geoffrey Hibbert. The picture quality is really nice, with smooth, effectively detailed contrasts and no wear. A reissue trailer is included that spoils the clever idea, which is better to discover as the film itself unfolds.

### Garbo talks

Greta Garbo's first talkie, the 1930 MGM romantic drama, **Anna Christie**, directed by Clarence Brown, has been released by Warner Bros. and Turner Entertainment Co. as a *WB Warner Archive Collection* Blu-ray (UPC# 810134947436, \$22). Based upon a play by Eugene O'Neill, the film is pretty much a collection of lengthy scenes of dialog, although there are a few efforts to open it up. George F. Marion is the captain of a large barge—he lives on it, actually—in the New York harbor, and Garbo is the daughter he hasn't seen since she was a child, showing up as an adult to escape the life she was living in the Midwest. At about the film's midway point the actual story begins, when they rescue a sailor played by Charles Bickford after a storm, and Bickford's character falls for Garbo's character, unaware of her sordid past. Then everything has to get worked out.

Garbo had certainly been speaking English for a while before she took the role, and while her performance is a bit overwrought at times, it is never embarrassing, particularly when one takes into account the technological restrictions of recording the sound and the staid manner of so many performances in early sound features. Bickford really isn't much better. The film runs 90 minutes and, as we intimated, it takes a while to set things up, but once the characters begin to have some decent emotional conflicts and interactions, the film's star power takes over and it becomes an entertaining endeavor. Marie Dressler is also featured.

Taking the age of the film into account, the picture and the monophonic sound are in very good shape. The film's foggy sequences are free of the blurring or displacement that could easily occur if less care was being taken with the transfer. The image is naturally a bit soft, but there is no significant wear and contrasts are reasonably detailed. The voices are consistently strong and relatively clear. There are optional English subtitles.

Garbo was also fluent in German and so an alternate German version was also staged on the same sets, directed by Jacques Feyder, with Theo Shall, Hans Junkermann and Salka Steuermann joining Garbo. Running 85 minutes, the camera angles are better chosen, the performances are better and even Garbo is more relaxed, her performance much more in line with what she would be doing in her subsequent features. Except for some bad splices that disrupt and even obscure the emotional transitions in the critical final scene, the presentation is preferable to Brown's effort.

If you are watching the movie and you think that it might have made a decent vehicle for Joan Crawford, well then you're in luck, because the disc also contains a 55-minute *Lux Radio Theatre* broadcast from 1938 featuring Crawford and Spencer Tracy (with Marion reprising his part), promoted by host Cecil B. DeMille as an adaptation of the O'Neill's play although he admits at the end that it is based upon the film. Since the O'Neill drama is pretty much all talk anyway, it fits very well into the radio format. As for who is better, it is probably more a matter of movie star preference, although Crawford is earthier and less exotic. As for Tracy, he kind of eats up everything with his accent. The audio is a little rough at first but then settles down and is reasonably clear.

Also featured is a 1930 Hugh Harman and Rudolf Ising black-and-white *Looney Tunes* cartoon running 6 minutes, *The Booze Hangs High*, that still seems intensely interested in the precise blending of images and sounds as it depicts the music-oriented antics of farm animals and the Bosco character at a farm, which are acerbated when the pigs get into some booze; and an earlier 29-minute episode in the same 1956 promotional series, *MGM Parade*, that was included on **Queen Christina** (Aug 23), this one looking at the first part of Garbo's career with MGM, hosted by Walter Pidgeon and filled with terrific clips from her silent features and early sound films (there are also a few minutes with Irene Pappas promoting **Tribute to a Bad Man**).

### Bankhead rocks

The too little seen Tallulah Bankhead stars with Robert Montgomery in the 1934 pre-Code Great Depression romance from First National, **Faithless**, a Warner Bros. Turner Home Entertainment *WB Warner Archive Classics* Blu-ray (UPC#810134949027, \$22). In the beginning of the 74-minute feature, Bankhead's character is a wealthy socialite and Montgomery's character is an advertising executive, while near the end they are long since broke, jobless and married, with him bedridden from an accident and her trolling the streets to get cash after dark. Hugh Herbert also has an exceptional performance, dropping the sillier parts of his usual persona to play a wealthy casino owner who keeps Bankhead's character for a while on her way down. It is a fairly basic drama, but Bankhead, stylish even when she is in disrepair, makes every minute of the drama worthwhile.

The full screen black-and-white picture looks gorgeous. The image is smooth and spotless, with vivid contrasts. The monophonic sound is adequate and there are optional English subtitles, along with three black-and-white Warner Vitaphone shorts, *Rambling 'Round Radio Row* (technically, *#1B* in a series, but that identification does not appear on the title card) from 1934 showing a postman delivering mail to various musical acts, each of whom then performs a brief piece, including Bonnie Poe (who voiced Betty Boop), Vera Van, Raymond & Rosalie and George Jessel; the 1932 *The Trans-Atlantic Mystery* (it appeared previously in Warner's **Forbidden Hollywood Volume Three** DVD collection), an S.S. Van Dine murder mystery directed by Joseph Henabery and featuring Ronald Meek and John Hamilton as the crime solvers, with Ray Collins delivering an engaging performance as a jewel thief traveling across the Atlantic to fence his stolen goods but encountering a murder as he hears his payoff (a really lousy mystery with no detection or deduction, just revelations when its 22 minutes are over); and a much better Henabery, Meek and Hamilton adaptation of a Van Dine tale running 21 minutes, *The Symphony Murder Mystery*, in which a cellist is shot in full view of an orchestra audience and no one is aware until the symphony is over (which was included previously on Warner's **"I Wouldn't Be in Your Shoes!"** Blu-ray).

### Whistling the costumes

Movies are not like live stage productions, but that can give them an advantage, because the start and stop nature of their construction allows them to do things that stage productions cannot do. This extends to costumes, which can be more elaborate than would be humanly possible in an actual live presentation. Hollywood costume design probably reached a pinnacle in the lavish 1936 MGM production and Best Picture Oscar winner, **The Great Ziegfeld**, a Warner Bros. *WB Warner Archive Collection* Blu-ray (UPC#81-0134947450, \$22). While MGM continued making elaborate costumes, and other movie companies have also contributed their share over time, it would be tough to name another film that was so extravagant, so ornamental and so comprehensive in how the characters are dressed. In presenting a biographical celebration of showman Florenz Ziegfeld, played by William Powell, the film does its utmost to do Ziegfeld one better, taking Ziegfeld's already legendary costume displays and enhancing them beyond the practicalities of stagecraft, as only the movies can do. This is the roadshow version of the film, running 183 minutes with an Overture, Entr'acte and Exit Music, attempting to create a narrative out of Ziegfeld's two marriages and his constant teetering on financial ruin, which was pushed over the edge by the Great Depression. Even when his shows succeed, the film is a little depressing because you know that he is spending more than he is taking in. Luise Rainer also won an Oscar for playing the first wife, Anna Held, but the film is rescued from the downward vector of its third act by the eventual appearance of second billed Myrna Loy as Ziegfeld's second wife, Billie Burke, obviously with the actual Burke watching very closely over MGM's shoulder. In any event, the long established chemistry between Loy and Powell is captivating, and brings the disappointments and setbacks in Ziegfeld's final years down for a very soft landing. Amid the generalities of the narrative, there are the musical numbers, including one amazing sequence that runs 6 minutes with a just a single cut in its middle as the camera moves around a carousel of performers (enacting a vague medley of classical music and opera to augment *A Pretty Girl Is Like a Melody*) and then climbing a spiral of more models and performers with a crane. While the costumes for the film's story sections are meticulous and accomplished, it is the costumes for the song numbers that achieve what really no other component of the film achieves, a zenith in Hollywood craftsmanship and extravagance.

A warning appears at the movie's beginning about black face segments in the film featuring an actor playing Eddie Cantor. Another actor plays Will Rogers, while Ray Bolger and, most significantly, Fannie Brice, re-create their own acts. The full screen black-and-white picture is in excellent condition. Sometimes edges are a touch soft and there was once when we noticed a vertical line on the far left of the image, but overall the presentation is sharp and clean, with finely defined contrasts. The monophonic sound is also strong, and there are optional English subtitles. Included as well is an excellent 13-minute summary of Ziegfeld's actual life and the film's production, a great 4-minute collection of apparent newsreel outtakes (with sound) from the film's New York premiere, a trailer for the film's general release (stating that the roadshow version had cost audiences \$2.20 a ticket, which in those days could feed you for a week), a 14-minute audio only radio promotion for the film, and a gorgeous 7-minute color Warner Bros. *Merric Melodies* cartoon from 1936, *Toytown Hall*, about a little boy in his bed at night, dreaming that his toys are radio performers come to life. Warner also misspelled Ziegfeld's first name on the back of the jacket.



### Hong Kong crime thrillers

A pair of films from the Eighties that reflect the agonizing that Hong Kong was going through as Chinese rule approached, **Long Arm of the Law Parts I & II**, have been released in a Blu-ray box set by 88 Films (UPC#760137128861, \$45). Each film is presented in a separate jacket within the box. Directed by Johnny Mak, the films are pretty much related in name and premise only, but the package is still a tempting bundle of energetic crime features. Both films are in Cantonese with optional English subtitles, and both also have alternate English language cuts with the same quality image transfers and slightly awkward dubbing. Both films are letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1.

In the wonderfully raw, immersive thriller from 1984, *Long Arm of the Law* (also known as *Red Guards in Hong Kong*), a group of yokels from Mainland China sneak into Hong Kong (a couple of them are killed crossing over) to pull off a jewelry store robbery. The staging of the action scenes in public places appears to have been done with as little cordoning or alerting of the public as possible, so that not only are the sequences thrilling, they have the feeling of being very, very real, even when the staging is obvious, such as when a gunshot victim goes sliding across an ice rink and bouncing off the sides to form a perfect 'X' pattern on the ice, in blood. The characters are naïve in comparison to the triad members they are working for, but that encourages the viewer to be sympathetic toward them, even as the mayhem and murders mount, and up to the very bloody finale. The rawness also carries over into what would, in normal glossy Hong Kong films, be the sentimental moments. Affections and emotions are exchanged between characters, but it always feels real and it is never a brake on the entertainment, which barrels ahead from one sequence and situation to the next, relentlessly. Starring Wai Lam, Ging Chan, Wai Shum, Lung Chiang, Kin Wong and Seung-Sam Lam, the 106-minute film is deceptively plain but continually riveting.

The picture has somewhat subdued but well-defined colors and grain in the darker sequences, but the transfer still feels reasonably fresh, as if the film can't really look any better than it does, and if it did, the realism effect would be spoiled. The monophonic sound is workable. The English version runs 105 minutes. Mak sits for a good 10-minute interview about different aspects of the film's production and what he wanted to achieve. There is also a nice 17-minute interview with Mak's brother, Michael Mak, who worked on the production and talks about the film's innovative staging and shooting ("All of the camera operators were in disguise, as a lamp post or a rubbish bin."); a very good 29-minute interview with screenwriter Philip Chan, who talks about his days as a cop, how he got into the movie business, his career as a whole and specific insights regarding the making of the film and the impact it had on Hong Kong; another 37-minute interview with Chan and second unit director Billy Chan talking more about the movie and cop films in general (Philip has also been typecast as a policeman throughout his career, and he complains the character is always called, 'Inspector Chan'); and a trailer.

Asian films expert Frank Djeng supplies a busy commentary, squeezing in everything he knows about the film's production, its cast and crew, the political landscape the film was reflecting at the time and the changes that landscape has since undergone, the Hong Kong locations (if part of the film reminds the viewer of *Algiers*, it is because Hong Kong had its own walled-off 'Casbah'), and the gnarly stunts that ended up blackmailing Johnny Mak as a director. "They are actually going to start a fire on the car. So, when they started burning the car, it burned up all of the oxygen inside, and so Shum Wai started suffocating and almost died. See, he's really fighting for his real life here because he's really scared, you know. And see look at all this smoke surrounding the parking lot, and so now, they're actually really putting out the fire with him in it, see? So after this was shot, the crew let him out, let Shum Wai out from the car, and Shum Wai was so mad, he actually ran after Johnny and wanted to beat the crap out of him. But he won the 'Best Supporting Actor' award at the Hong Kong Film Awards because of this scene!"

We hope it isn't spoiling too much to say that the possibility of doing a sequel to the film from a practical narrative point of view is very limited, but in 1987 the filmmakers came up with an inspired alternative for *Long Arm of the Law Saga 2*. Because actors refused to work with him, Johnny Mak had to step back and act as producer—at least, sort of—while Michael Mak took the director's reins. This time, three cops are caught crossing over into Hong Kong and agree to work undercover infiltrating the triads in exchange for not going to jail. Unfortunately, the film is not the exposed, breathless action drama that the first movie was, but is instead a bit more traditional and sentimental. The action scenes may not be slick, but they are staged in controlled environments, taking a bit of the edge off of their thrills. Running 90 minutes, the film is a perfectly decent thriller, but it is also a more normal one. Alex Man, Pauline Wong (in a very nice performance as a prostitute who was previously the girlfriend of one of the cops before she left the Mainland), Elvis Tsui and Stephen Chan star.

In that there is less from-the-hip cinematography, the lighting is better and so the image transfer is much nicer, with smooth hues and sharp details. The sound is also stronger. The English version runs 87 minutes and the dubbing is a little more sophisticated, making it a viable alternative to the Cantonese version. Along with two trailers, there is a good 25-minute interview with Michael Mak talking about how the film was conceived and executed; another 8-minute interview with Philip Chan about how he got roped into working on the sequel and how the plot was developed; a fine 25-minute interview with Stephen Chan about his career as fight trainer, stuntman and actor, and how he got pulled into working on the film; and a fun 16-minute interview with Ben Lam, another stuntman who found himself risking life and limb as a character in the film. Djeng provides another thorough commentary, talking about the cast, the production, the narrative and the locations, as well as explaining some of the expressions being employed in the dialog. He also explains why the film is a valid sequel even though it isn't really a sequel.

### Colorful Killers

If the transfer was of a normal movie, the Radiance Blu-ray presentation of Yasuharu Hasebe's 1966 **Black Tight Killers** (UPC#76013-7144939, \$40) would be fine, but the colors in the film are so purposefully bright and funky that anything less than perfection feels like a shortcoming. The film is not Seijun Suzuki's *Tokyo Drifter*, but it does seem to have been inspired by it, and its pop art décor and splashes of bright, solid hues often appear a little soft. The film still plays just fine, but every time one such color shows up, you wish it was just a little crisper than it is. Otherwise, however, the presentation looks great. Letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1, fleshtones are accurate and the image is free of wear. The monophonic sound, with its surges of Sixties faux rock 'n roll augmented by a steadier jazz underscoring, is solid and clear. The film is in Japanese with optional English subtitles.

Akira Kobayashi stars as a war photographer on his way home who picks up the stewardess on his plane, played by Chieko Matsubara, and has dinner with her. Part way through the meal, however, he steps away from the table and when he returns, she has been abducted by gangsters. He chases after them, only to run into the pack of female ninjas heralded in the movie's title. And it goes on from there. While the 87-minute film can feel a little confusing at first—the editing doesn't give you much time to breath between one plot advancement and the next—by the end the story turns out to be reasonably simple and easy to understand. There is no nudity, but there are constant intimations of nudity, which end up pretty much being as much fun as the real thing. On the whole, the film is playful and silly, but it is fully enjoyable, which is why it would be even more engaging if the image could sustain a consistent sharpness. Along with a trailer, there is a 9-minute interview with Hasebe from 2000 about his career and the movie, which was his debut feature, inspired by James Bond films (there is a girl in it painted gold, and the hero shoots down a helicopter). Japanese film expert Jasper Sharp provides a commentary track, explaining that Hasebe was an assistant director for Suzuki, and then going on to talk more about Suzuki than about Hasebe. He touches on the accomplishments of the cast and other members of the crew, and says a little bit about the film, but he also spends quite a bit of time just reeling off names and describing the plots of other movies.

### Cast of terror

Vincent Price, Christopher Lee, Peter Cushing, John Carradine and Richard Todd star in the 1982 reiterative thriller from the Cannon Group, **House of the Long Shadows**, an MGM Kino Lorber Incorporated *KL Studio Classics* Blu-ray (UPC#738329265198, \$25). Desi Arnaz, Jr. stars as an author who makes arrangements to stay in an abandoned Welsh mansion so he can work on a novel. It is a dark and stormy night, of course, and once he settles in, a parade of unexpected visitors shows up to disturb his peace. Mayhem follows. Directed by Pete Walker, the Menahem Golan and Yoram Globus production is reasonably clever and even has a relatively satisfying conclusion. Although its mise en scene is blander than the AIP and Hammer Films it wants to evoke, it proceeds in a clear and even compelling manner, and it gets the most from its iconic movie stars (does Lee even slip a pair of enlarged incisors into its mouth for a close up or two?) as its methodical narrative advances. Actual screams are minimal unless you've never, ever seen a horror movie before, but otherwise the film has enough wit and intrigue to satisfy fans and even casual viewers.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1. The color transfer is fairly solid and fleshtones are accurate. The monophonic sound is clear, and there are optional English subtitles and a trailer (narrated by Price!). Also featured is a 15-minute interview with Walker, who provides a succinct summary of what the production was like, and a monumental 108-minute retrospective documentary featuring Walker, Arnaz, screenwriter Michael Armstrong, cast members Julie Peasgood, Richard Hunter, Louise English and others—several of them returning to the mansion where the feature was shot and talking about the staging in various rooms.

Film enthusiast David Del Valle supplies a commentary, prompted by film expert Elijah Drenner. They discuss the dynamics of Cannon's production history, the film's obviously anachronistic premise (it is drawn from the various **Seven Keys to Baldpate** films we reviewed in Jul 13) and its very delayed reaction in the marketplace (it did much better on TV than in the theaters, and is an even bigger crowd pleaser now), the legacies of the cast members (Del Valle talks about the times he met Lee: "In private, he was kind of like a little boy in a way. He was very charmed by things and easy to talk to, and so knowledgeable on so many subjects. When two or three people would enter the room and he would get into a group, he would become a trifle pompous. It was a nervous reaction thing with him."), and their own interactions with both the cast and the crew over the years. It is a rewarding talk, particularly for the reminiscences regarding artists who are no longer around.

On another commentary track, Walker talks to film historian Derek Pykett, speaking in a little more detail about the production, what he wanted to accomplish (the film was quite different from the gorier horror features he had been making, but he couldn't resist working with the stars), and his memories of the cast. They shot the film in an actual mansion and while they were setting up in one particular room, an assistant warned him to be careful because a bat was flying around. Without missing a beat, Price, who was nearby, said, "Anybody we know?"

### More Corman classics

For a brief period, while he was flexing his motion picture prowess, Roger Corman expanded from directing and producing to distributing films, hoping to keep more of the cash he was generating from his efforts. He even picked up a few titles from other directors and producers. It got to be too much, however, and he let go of it, so among other things, the titles he controlled under his Filmgroup distribution company were left in the public domain. Although most have shown up many times before on home video, Film Masters appears to be systematically going through those features and creating definitive special editions for the often entertaining and efficiently staged programs. Their latest two-platter *Special Edition* Blu-ray release is Charles Rondeau's 1960 **The Devil's Partner** (UPC#760137140290, \$30), originally distributed by Corman, with the film appearing on one platter and Corman's 1961 *Creature from the Haunted Sea* appearing on the second platter. Both black-and-white films have undergone decent restorations and are accompanied by commentaries and other special features. Both have reasonably clear monophonic sound and optional English subtitles for both the movies and the commentaries. We reviewed Film Master's dual release of **The Terror** and **Little Shop of Horrors** last month.

Ed Nelson had his first major film role as the central character in **Devil's Partner**, although Edgar Buchanan, Richard Crane and Spencer Carlisle earned billing before his in the opening credits, and Jean Allison is also featured. Nelson's character arrives in a small town on a bus and learns that his uncle, something of a hermit, has passed away. Soon, other characters are meeting with accidents and death, and Nelson's character appears to benefit from every mishap, although he is nowhere near the occurrences. The film runs a brief 73 minutes, and it is fairly clear what is happening, but the appealing performances, basic suspense and relative intrigue make every moment of it reasonably engaging. Some inexpensively made films can be dull and bland, but this one has a decent pace, a nice atmosphere and is consistently entertaining.

The picture is available both letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1 and in a squared full screen format, masking picture information off both sides while adding some mostly to the bottom of the image. Generally, the letterboxed framing is preferable. The image has an inherent grain in some sequences, and a couple of stray markings and vertical lines, but is otherwise very sharp and nicely detailed. Also featured is a new trailer, a nice 11-minute interview with Corman talking about his early career, and a very enjoyable 21-minute segment about his Filmgroup movies and the many motion picture legends who got their start working with him.

The commentary, from an Internet podcast group, Monster Party, is reasonably satisfying, supplying thorough background portraits of almost every member of the cast and crew, while also going into detail about devil worship movies, describing what is known about the production of **Devil's Partner**, and pointing out its weaknesses and its strengths. "The filmmakers take the subject seriously. They're not sending up things, they're not making fun of the subject. They're playing it all straight. I'm sure we're not saying the film is a masterpiece, but for what these guys had, it's not a bad low-budget film."

*Creature from the Haunted Sea* is presented in its theatrical format, letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1 and running 60 minutes, and in its TV format, with a squared full screen image, running 74 minutes (again adding a little picture information to the top and bottom and losing some on the sides). Since there is substantial added footage in the TV version, including having star Betsy Jones-Moreland sing a title song that is not present on the other shorter feature, that is the preferred version. Like **Little Shop of Horrors**, the film, which was directed by Corman, has an animated opening credit sequence, setting a comical tone for the film, but unlike **Little Shop of Horrors**, the movie is never all that funny, just rather silly. Vaguely inspired by **To Have and Have Not**, down to lead actor Antony Carbone doing a Humphrey Bogart riff (and Jones-Moreland trying to be as Lauren Bacall as possible), gangsters and an undercover agent help a Cuban general transport a case of gold after the revolution, but the boat trip is interrupted by greed and a sea monster. An original trailer, a new trailer and a 2-minute demonstration of how thoroughly the source material has been scrubbed are included in the supplement. We reviewed the theatrical version previously, which was part of a very nice collector's package combining the three films Corman made in Puerto Rico, **The Roger Corman Puerto Rico Trilogy** (Mar 06), and while the picture was softer than the Film Masters presentation, it also looked a lot nicer than the 'before' version being shown for comparison.

The theatrical version has the commentary, presented by film historian Tom Weaver and including recorded interviews he conducted along with 're-enactments' of interviews he conducted with others. He actually spends the hour covering all three films Corman shot in Puerto Rico at the time, since their production was interwoven, and mostly shares stories about how the rascally Corman was trying to make the movies as cheaply as possible. He does take time to explain a few of the film's quirks, such how the ridiculous monster came to be, but the pleasure of the talk comes mostly from the stories about Corman's hustling and the joys of moviemaking. Weaver also recommends the commentaries on the **Puerto Rico Trilogy** discs, which featured a couple of the cast members who have since passed away.

### Cheap horror

Filling in the missing link between people who fantasize about making movies and the people who actually make movies, Wild Eye Releasing's *Visual Vengeance* has been putting out feature-length horror films made by beginners in the late Nineties and early Aughts when video stores were desperate to rent out anything that could be rewound. On the one hand, the films have a 'let's put on a show' spirit that can make them irresistible no matter how bad they are, but on the other hand, they are really, really bad by almost any measure put to them. Such disparities are only magnified by the fact that the films are being released on Blu-ray and have unquestionably been transferred in the best shape as is humanly possible, only to magnify the shortcomings of the films themselves all the more.

That said, **Vampires and Other Stereotypes** (UPC#76013712-4986, \$30) is an admirable production that is both reasonably intelligent and reasonably entertaining. Even the performances in the 1994 production are tolerable, and the transfer is workable, as well. After the set up, most of the film was shot in/takes place in an empty warehouse, where three young women and one of their dates enter, after having been given an address for a party. Two men who act like cops also arrive at the building, and once all of them enter, they cannot get out and there are demons behind various doors. Running 87 minutes, the performances are good enough that the characters are both interesting and playful. That you care about their feelings adds significantly to how much you accept everything else. There are plenty of gross occurrences, but they are by no means predictable, and as the story advances, it also fills in elaborate and even complex backstories about the characters and about why the demons are there. Some of the latex effects are dismissible, but most of the time the film is working well enough that you enjoy what it is tossing at you, even when it is a monster rat. Directed by Kevin J. Lindenmuth, the show has a grad student film feel to it, but on the other hand, it is good enough that some of the participants went on to have viable careers in the business.

The picture is in a squared full screen format and, all things considered, the transfer is reasonably nice. There are periodic fluctuations, but for the most part the image is steady and clear, and the colors are lit well enough to convey legitimate flesh tones. A few passages of the movie are even in black and white, and look quite nice. The sound is centered and fluctuates a little bit in volume, although it is generally in workable condition. In a link to an amusing scene where one of the characters meets Elvis Presley and Jim Morrison in Hell, the score plays a license-free variation on *People Are Strange*. There are optional English subtitles. Along with a trailer, there is a good 2-minute montage of production photos, a 3-minute interview with actress Laura McLaughlin about making the film and her subsequent career (she worked with Clint Eastwood and was in a lot of TV shows), a 10-minute interview with actor and set designer Mick McCleery about his experiences making the film and what he has been doing since, a 3-minute retrospective interview with actress Suzanne Turner, a nice 7-minute interview with Sally Narkis sharing her memories of working with the filmmakers and what she has been doing since, a good 18-minute talk with makeup man Ralis Kahn, a 7-minute interview with Scott Slinger about the special effects and makeup that he worked on, a 9-minute reminiscence by Sung Pak about taking photos on the set and what he recalls of the shoot, and a cute 24-minute interview with publicist Joe Mauerci, talking all about the low budget horror scene, how the film fit into it, and delivering a pointed chastisement of 'Millennial' film critics who have no appreciation of film history before the Eighties.

Lindenmuth supplies two commentary tracks, one by himself and one with McCleery. He also sits for a 25-minute interview. There are redundancies in the three talks, as he has a number of stories that define the nature of the production—he didn't realize his cinematographer couldn't read English, one of the actors got hot and bothered wearing a phony head all day long, and so on—but through the course of the three talks you get a good idea of how he managed to put everything together on a limited budget, what he wanted to accomplish and how he overcame problems that popped up during the shoot. (He also repeats an error twice—New York's Cowgirl Hall of Fame restaurant is in the West Village, not the East Village.) A 26-minute compilation of four well made silent films Lindenmuth created when he was a teenager is included with his optional commentary (otherwise, it is accompanied by a selection of heavy metal music), *Wake the Dead* in color from 1981 (an attack of zombies with primitive but creatively impressive animation effects), *War* in color from 1982 (a fully animated outer space battle with aliens), *The Check-Up* in black and white from 1983 (a young man goes to the doctor for his injured hand and has hallucinations about amputation—"It's really like your typical student film."), and *Helping Hand* in color from 1984 (an impressively small animated stop-motion monster battles the disconnected hand of a college student in his dorm room).

The best feature commentary, however, comes from horror expert Tony Strauss, who does also share some of the primary stories that Lindenmuth supplied about the shoot, but goes into greater detail about the careers of other members of the cast and crew, delivers a more objective assessment of the film's strengths and weaknesses, and even provides an extensive and interesting history of the depiction of Hell in literature and film.

A werewolf movie made in New Hampshire (around Nashua) in 2006, another *Visual Vengeance* title, **Lycan Colony** (UPC#760137112952, \$30) was conceived and directed by Rob Roy, who also stars, did most of the effects and makeup, and so on. The ambitious story has several different plot elements, but focuses primarily on a doctor and his family who have just moved to a small, woodsy town, a young man and a young woman who are driving through town looking for their missing father, and the town itself, which has been inhabited by werewolves for hundreds of years, although supposedly they are capable of living in harmony with humans. The problem is that one rogue lycan, who runs the local roadhouse, has acquired a taste for human meat. Hence, the missing father.



On paper, it is a viable premise—probably too much of one—and running 88 minutes, the film breezily leaps from one plot strand to the next as it slogs through its narrative. One of its few attractions is that there is so much story you don't really know what the next turn in the plot will be—you want to keep watching to see what will happen next, regardless of how erratic, inept or hazy 'next' turns out to be. The special effects range from primitive video art to costume rentals, to they could only rent the heads, to quick gore effects and stabs at animation. Your next-door neighbors could probably give better performances than the actors who barely memorized their lines, so that you spend much of the film not fantasizing about battling werewolves, but fantasizing about how you yourself would have read this or that piece of dialog more convincingly than the person on the screen. Some of the individual scenes work reasonably well—the doctor's teenage son is seduced in a graveyard by a local lass; the sister steps up when her brother is apparently killed and takes one of the townspeople hostage—while other scenes might have worked too if they had more coverage or the editing wasn't in such a hurry to jump to something else. The bottom line is that if you live and breathe werewolf movies then you will definitely want to add this one to your pack, but if blatant metaphors for puberty are not your thing, then you can safely pass it by.

The picture is in a squared full screen format. Naturally the source material is all over the place. What you come away from, as a whole, is that much of the movie is rather dark and sometimes so dark that you can't make out what is going on, but when there is enough light, the bland colors are as fresh and sharp as the cinematography allows. The sound has sporadic stereophonic surges and other volume fluctuations that made the optional English subtitles a very handy extra. Roy also participated in the heavy metal band that did much of the film's rousing music. There are optional English subtitles, 3 minutes of cute, unrestrained bloopers, a passable music video (the film actually has a soundtrack album), a trailer, and perhaps more entertaining than the film itself, a 74-minute *Rifftrax* presentation of the movie that judiciously abridges it while scoring one amusing voiceover comment in about every six or seven attempts.

There are also two regular commentary tracks. One, by genre enthusiasts Sam Panico and Bill Van Ryn, is fairly dry. They don't really have much to say about the film and lack even the wit of the *Rifftrax* crew, so they end up doing things like discussing the menu offered by the restaurant where the film had its premiere screening, at length and more than once. Roy's own commentary is much better, going over the effort that was made to put the movie together and recalling specific details of the staging as each scene comes up (for a scene where a character is given a shot with a hypodermic needle, the actor actually allowed his arm to be pierced by a sterile needle—ewww). There is also a good 22-minute interview with Roy from 2022, looking back on his filmmaking experiences and the gradual popularity the film has garnered with aficionados of *cinema mauvaise*. He gets it, too. "I, myself, like to watch bad movies."

Shot on videotape that has faded and softened, Visual Vengeance's 1998 **Scream Queen** (UPC#760137121176. #30) with Linnea Quigley has bad cinematography and bad performances (the continuity is also bad, resulting in characters changing outfits without reason, but that is part of the fun), but its basic premise is viably entertaining. A slasher film shooting in Los Angeles gets shut down when the lead actress dies under ambiguous circumstances and later the surviving members of the cast and crew are invited to an isolated house on a dark and stormy night, where they have to confront the past and some genuine slashings, with some basic gore abounding. The 74-minute film is not well directed, either—there is a scene where a dummy comes to life that has fantastic thrill potential but is shot and cut in the worst way imaginable—but it delivers pretty much what it promises. In the special features, there is a 2002 'Producer's Cut' that has one additional, nicely performed scene set in a thrift shop and a lot more gratuitous nudity, running 79 minutes. Heard in a somewhat muffled manner on the 'Producer's Cut,' but blazing away in full stereo at the opening of the standard version is a parody rendition of *These Boots Are Made for Walkin'*, about using a chainsaw (written and performed by Quigley, it shows up again over the end credits but we would wonder if Lee Hazlewood's estate knows about it.).

The picture is presented in a squared full screen format. Director Brad Sykes provides a commentary track, talking a little bit about his career and hanging out with Quigley, and also going over his memories of staging the individual scenes and what he was able to accomplish with his limited time and budget. He also supplies a 30-minute retrospective interview that is sort of an executive summary of what he covers in the commentary. "Within the story of **Scream Queen**, there's a lot of commentary about the industry that I think is very relevant. One of the central themes in the film is this theme of ageism in the industry. [One actress] is on her way out and some new blood actress is on her way in. These types of things happen. They were happening back then, they're happening now. Another obvious commentary that's going on is this idea, the power plays that go on within the industry and within even the smallest film shoots, even on the most low budget film shoots, there are always people who want to try to take over the movie, usurp the director, try to go beyond what they're there to do, the job they are there to perform, and that kind of thing is still going on today, as well. So I think that **Scream Queen**, not only is it a fun timepiece, because it is a timepiece of the late Nineties, I think it's just as relevant to 2022 as it was back then."

Also featured is a sweet 12-minute retrospective interview with Quigley (she enjoyed working with video because she could do more takes than she was allowed with film, but on the other hand she doesn't enjoy the nudity and was happy it was relegated to the other actresses), a 3-minute interview with editor Mark Polonia pointing out what bad condition the material he was trying to work on was in, a 3-minute montage of production photos refreshingly clearer than the images in the film itself, another minute-long montage of Quigley photos, five pages of the shooting script in still frame, and two trailers.

## DVD News

**CRITERION CORNER:** The Criterion Collection is releasing Peter Weir's **Picnic at Hanging Rock** in 4K format with a program on the making of the film, featuring interviews with executive producer Patricia Lovell, producers Hal McElroy and Jim McElroy, and cast members; an interview with Weir; an introduction by film scholar David Thomson, author of *The New Biographical Dictionary of Film*; an on-set documentary hosted by Lovell and featuring interviews with Weir, Rachel Roberts, and source-novel author Joan Lindsay; and *Homesdale* (1971), a black comedy by Weir. Béla Tarr's **Werckmeister Harmonies** will also be in 4K format and will be accompanied by an interview with Tarr by film critic Scott Foundas and *Family Nest* (1979), Tarr's first feature film. Mikhail Kalozov's **I Am Cuba** will be in 4K format and will include *I Am Cuba, the Siberian Mammoth*, a 2004 documentary on the making of the film featuring key participants; an interview from 2003 with Martin Scorsese; and an appreciation of the film by cinematographer Bradford Young. Mathieu Kassovitz's **La Haine** will be in 4K format and will have a commentary by Kassovitz; an introduction by Jodie Foster; *Ten Years of La Haine*, a documentary featuring cast and crew members; a featurette on the film's banlieue setting; production footage; deleted and extended scenes, with an afterward by Kassovitz; and behind-the-scenes photos. Nancy Savoca's **Dogfight** will come with a commentary featuring Savoca and producer Richard Guay; an interview with Savoca and Lili Taylor conducted by filmmaker Mary Harron; and interviews with cinematographer Bobby Bukowski, production designer Lester Cohen, script supervisor Mary Cybulski, music supervisor Jeff Kimball, supervising sound editor Tim Szyres, and editor John Tintori.

**COMING IN 3D:** Kino Lorber Incorporated and 3-D Film Archive are planning to release **Bwana Devil**, **Money from Home**, **The Glass Web** and **Southwest Passage** in 3D sometime during 2024.

**NEW IN BLU:** The following titles were recently issued in Blu-ray format—*Karate Ghost 2 Dojo of Death*, *Mind Melters 22 (Acid Bath)*; *Take It Out in Trade*, *The Violent Years (AGFA)*; *Surf Reality Movie of the Month Club Collection (Art)*; *A Light Never Goes Out (Bayview)*; *In Bloom & My Happy Family (Big World)*; *The Cost of Free Water*, *The Radicals*, *Tejendo Sombras*, *Wolf OR-7 Expedition (Blue Water)*; *After School*, *Myall Creek Day of Justice (Bounty)*; *Vengeance Rise of the Footsoldier (Brainstorm)*; *Action*, *Crossing Paths*, *Drop the Beat*, *Losing to Win*, *Not for Sale*, *Tell Me about It (Burning Bulb)*; *The Dog Who Stopped the War (Canadian)*; *Curse of the Dog God*, *Dard Divorce*, *Fatal Games*, *555*, *The Inferno*, *Nightmare*, *The Psychic*, *Stielke Heinz Fifteen (CAV)*; *Chopper*, *Forced Vengeance*, *Jennifer 8*, *St. Ives*, *Stephen King's Thinner*, *Telefon (Cinedigm)*; *The Abbott and Costello Show Season 2*, *Cause for Alarm!* (ClassicFlix); *Shellfish (Cre8ive)*; *Chantal Akerman Masterpieces, 1968-1978*, *Lone Star*, *Mudbound*, *Trainspotting (Criterion)*; *White Rush (Dark Force)*; *The Mysterious Castle in the Carpathians (Deaf Crocodile)*; *Eileen (Decal)*; *Redneck Zombies (Degausser)*; *Charlie Victor Romeo (Dekalog)*; *Death Athletic (Encode)*; *Skateboard (Factory 25)*; *The Devil's Partner (Film Masters)*; *Stony Island (Freestyle)*; *Demonic Toys Jack-attack (Full Moon)*; *Radio On (Fun City)*; *Totally Vegetarian The Essential Collection V.1*, *Totally Vegetarian The Essential Collection V.2 (Gemini)*; *Mission: Joy (Giant)*; *Among the Beasts*, *A Beautiful Curse*, *Christmas in the Heartland*, *Don't F in the Woods*, *Everyone Will Burn*, *Feeding Tomorrow*, *A Hard Problem*, *The Mental State*, *Project Dorothy*, *Spring Lakes*, *They Turned Us into Killers (Gravitas)*; *Suitable Flesh (Image)*; *The Highest of Stakes (Indican)*; *Token Taverns (Indie Rights)*; *The Boogens*, *Coming Home*, *The Devil's Brigade*, *Film Noir The Dark Side of Cinema XVI*, *Fireworks*, *Has Anybody Seen My Gal*, *The Hell with Heroes*, *Loaded Guns*, *Odds against Tomorrow*, *The Outside Man*, *Please Not Now!*, *The Road to Hong Kong*, *Run Silent Run Deep*, *The Russians Are Coming The Russians Are Coming*, *The Sea Shall Not Have Them/Albert R.N.*, *Split Image (Kino)*; *Bad Moms*, *A Bad Moms Christmas*, *Den of Thieves*, *The Edge of Seventeen*, *The Foreigner*, *Free State of Jones*, *The Gift*, *The Happytime Murders*, *I Feel Pretty*, *The Marsh King's Daughter*, *Mile 22*, *Molly's Game*, *Secret in Their Eyes*, *Silent Night*, *The Space between Us (Lionsgate)*; *King of Screen*, *Queen of Earth (MPI)*; *Conan The Barbarian*, *Conan The Destroyer*, *Cutting Class*, *The Facts of Murder*, *Inside the Mind of Coffin Joe*, *Mexico Barbaro II*, *Murphy's War*, *Yakuza Graveyard (MVD)*; *Eddie Murphy's Raw*, *The Peacemaker*, *Special Ops Lioness Season 1 (Paramount)*; *Impossible Object*, *Jinnah (Powerhouse)*; *Deep Inside Annie Sprinkle (Quality X)*; *Dark Waves*, *Doll Syndrome*, *The Farm*, *The Genius of Gianni Versace Alive*, *Helldose*, *Mount Hideaway*, *Mysteries Exes and Oh No's*, *She's the Eldest*, *Tales to Tell in the Dark*, *Terror Zone*, *The Welder (Rising Sun)*; *Scrapbook (Saturn's Core)*; *Afrojack and Friends No Place like Home*, *Blood and Lace*, *Carl Cox Awakenings 2018*, *Defqon 1 Dragonblood*, *Fedde Le Grand: Grand*, *A New Level In Dance At Ziggodome*, *Karate Kids USA (Shoreline)*; *Journey to Bethlehem*, *Thanksgiving (Sony)*; *Sons of Steel (Umbrella)*; *The Holdovers*, *Monk Season 3*, *Trolls Band Together (Universal)*; *Vile 21 (VHSShitfest)*; *Asylum*, *Cabin in the Sky*, *A Day at the Races*, *Dr. Who The Underwater Menace*, *Faithless*, *Justice League Crisis on Infinite Earths Part 1*, *Mademoiselle*, *Popi*, *The Prince and the Pauper*, *Red Planet Mars*, *Romantic Comedy*, *Rover Dangerfield*, *Strange Invaders*, *Superman Brainiac Attacks (Warner)*; *The Childe*, *Infiltration*, *Wolf Pack*, *Your Lucky Day (Well Go)*; *LadyWorld (Yellow Veil)*; *The Campus Man*, *Eat Play Diet*, *I Want to Believe 2 UFOs & UAPs*, *The Other Side of the Wind (Zapruderflix)*

**NEW IN 3D:** The following title was recently released in 3D format—*The Man Who Wasn't There (Kino)*

**NEW IN 4K:** The following titles were recently issued in 4K format—*D.A.R.Y.L.*, *eXistenz*, *Nightmare*, *The Prophecy I-II-III*, *The Psychic (CAV)*; *The Apu Trilogy*, *Blood Simple*, *Lone Star*, *Trainspotting (Criterion)*; *Old Boy (Decal)*; *The Boogens*, *Kindergarten Cop*, *Scarlet Street (Kino)*; *Blood Feast*, *Conan the Barbarian*, *Conan the Destroyer*, *Cutting Class*, *Danza Macabra V.2 Italian Gothic Collection*, *Police Story III Super Cop (MVD)*; *Varsity Blues (Paramount)*; *The Raid Redemption (Sony)*; *Trolls Band Together (Universal)*; *Justice League Crisis on Infinite Earths Part 1 (Warner)*

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Current Attractions

The following titles recently appeared for the first time: The Abbott and Costello Show Season 2 (Classic Flicks), Action (Burning Bulb)\*, Adventures of the Naked Umbrella (Level 33), After School (Bounty)\*, Alien Agenda Into the Future (Alchemy), Alien Chronicles Antarctic Worlds Below (Alchemy), Alien Intervention UFOs over Nuclear Bases (Alchemy), Alien Outer Space UFOs on the Moon and Beyond (Alchemy), Aliens and the New World Order: The Cosmic Conspiracy (Alchemy), Aliens at Loch Ness (Alchemy), Amar De Nuevo (Green Apple), American Outdoor with Baratlunde Thurston Season 2 (Paramount) (Gravitas), Ancient Alien Origins: Science and Legend (Alchemy), And the King Said What a Fantastic Machine (Strand), Animal DNA Season 1 (Dreamscape), The Agnostic (Gravitas), The Astral Woods (Filmhub)\*, Bad Moms (Lionsgate), A Bad Moms Christmas (Lionsgate), Bad Moms Party Like a Mother (Lionsgate), Badland Doves (Green Apple)\*, Battle of Britain 80 Allies at War (Dreamscape), A Beautiful Curse (Gravitas)\*, Biggest and Baddest Season 3 (Buffalo 8)\*, Billions Final Season (Paramount), Billions Complete Series (Paramount), Borrowed (Buffalo 8)\*, The Box (Burning Bulb)\*, Burning Land (Freestyle), The Campus (Zapruderfix), Cascade (Breaking Glass), Cause for Alarm! (Classic Flicks), Christmas in the Heartland (Gravitas)\*, The Church with an Overshot Wheel (Green Planet), Circumstances (Buffalo 8)\*, Cold Vengeance (Stream Go), Condition of Return (Stonecutter), Contagion of Fear (4Digital), The Cost of Free Water (Blue Water)\*, Crossing Paths (Burning Bulb), Crypto Shadows (Vision)\*, The Curse of Wolf Mountain (Uncork'd)\*, Cutting Class (MVD), The Dancing Detective A Deadly Tango (Cinedigm), Dangerous Waters (Brainstorm)\*, Dark Waves (Rising Sun)\*, Deep Woods (1091), Demonic Aliens UFOs from Inner Space (Alchemy), Demonic Toys Jack-attack (Full Moon), Den of Thieves (Lionsgate), Desperately Seeking Susan (Kino), The Devil Comes at Night (Uncork'd)\*, The Devil's Partner (Film Masters), Diplomatic Passport (Alpha)\*, Discover London Season 1 (Dreamscape), Discover London Season 2 (Dreamscape), Doll Syndrome (Rising Sun)\*, Don't F in the Woods (Gravitas)\*, Dreaming Whilst Black Season 1 (Paramount)\*, Drop the Beat (Burning Bulb), Easter Egg (Frolic)\*, Eat Play Diet (Zapruderfix)\*, The Eden Theory (Indican), The Edge of Seventeen (Lionsgate), Eileen (Decal)\*, Electra (Warner), Elyse (Gravitas)\*, The Enchanted Valley (Alpha)\*, Ever Deadly (Kino), Ever, Révé, Helene Cixou (Indiepix), Everyone Will Burn (Gravitas), The Exorcist Untold (Distribution), The Exorcists (Greenfield), Far Haven (Mill Creek), The Farm (Rising Sun)\*, Feeding Tomorrow (Gravitas)\*, The Fight for the Sky/The Battle of London (Alpha)\*, The Fighting Coward (Alchemy), Fireworks (Kino), Five More Minutes (Cinedigm), The Flying Swordsman (Well Go), Follow the Money (Dreamscape), For Heaven's Sake (Filmhub)\*, Forbidden Knowledge Cities Lost in Time (Alchemy), The Forensic (Lionsgate), Forgiven (Green Apple)\*, Fortunes of War (Amcomri), Four Daughters (Kino), Fumpy Facts (Dreamscape), The Funeral Director (Dreamscape), The Genius of Gianni Versace Alive (Rising Sun)\*, Ghosts Season 5 (Warner), The Gift (Lionsgate), The Gift of Peace (Cinedigm), Gold Strike River (Stream Go)\*, Great Fires of California (Alpha)\*, Gunslinger (Reel Vault)\*, The Hanged Girl (Uncork'd), The Happytime Murders (Lionsgate), A Hard Problem (Gravitas)\*, Hardwiring Happiness V.1 Rick Hanson (Dreamscape), Hardwiring Happiness V.2 Rick Hanson (Dreamscape), Harry Wild Season 2 (AMD), Haul Out the Holly (Cinedigm), He Knows (Filmhub)\*, Hearts and Bones (Gravitas)\*, Hellfire (Rising Sun)\*, The Highest of Stakes (Indican), The Holdovers (Universal)\*, I Feel Pretty (Lionsgate), I Want to Believe 2 UFOs & UAPS (Zapruderfix), I'm a Creepy Crawly (Dreamscape), I'm a Fish (Dreamscape), Illuminati Matrix (Alchemy), In Too Deep (Paramount), Insight (Leomark), The Inventor (Breaking Glass)\*, Joan Baez I Am Noise (Magnolia), Journey to Bethlehem (Sony), Karate Ghost 2 Dojo of Death (Acid Bath), Katemica (Rising Sun)\*, Killer (Gravitas), Kingdom of the Spiders (Warner), An L.A. Minute (Buffalo 8)\*, Ladyworld (Yellow Veil), Las Justicieras (Green Apple)\*, Long Pants (Alpha)\*, Losing to Win (Burning Bulb), Love Again (Green Apple), Lucy and Whitney (Indican)\*, Mad Dog Killer (Cheesy Flicks), Mademoiselle (Warner)\*, Magnum P.I. Complete Series (Paramount), Magnum P.I. Final Season (Paramount), The Man from Painted Post (Alpha)\*, A Maple Valley Christmas (Cinedigm), Mary Had a Little Lamb (Uncork'd)\*, Meathook Massacre 5 The Final Chapter (Wild Eye), Meathook Massacre 6 Bloodline (Wild Eye), Meathook Massacre 7 Bubba's Dead (Wild Eye), Meathook Massacre 8 Mayhem (Wild Eye), The Miracle of Sinners (Gravitas), Merry Good Enough (Freestyle), A Message to the Stars (Dreamscape), Mile 22 (Lionsgate), Millie Lies Low (Film Movement), Mind Matters 22 (Acid Bath)\*, Mind Science in Action Dan Siegel (Dreamscape), The Miracle of Sinners (Dreamscape), Moonhouse Road (Filmhub), Mouth Hideaway Mysteriest Exes and Oh No's (Rising Sun)\*, Mudbound (Criterion), The Mummy Murders (Gravitas), Murder and Cocktails (Vision)\*, The Murder Podcast (Filmhub), My Hero Family (Big World)\*, My Sailor My Love (Music Box), Myall Creek Day of Justice (Bounty), Mysteries from Beyond Earth (Cheesy Flicks), Native America Season 2 (Paramount), Not for Sale (Burning Bulb), On Angels' Wings (Green Apple), The Other Side of the Ring (Zapruderfix), Our Almost Completely True Love Story (Universal), Out Past Dark (Leomark), PBS Kids Book Buddies (Paramount), The Phantom Bullet (Alpha)\*, Pianoforte (Kino), Pins and Nettie V.1 (Dreamscape), Pins and Nettie V.2 (Dreamscape), Plan C (Level 33), Popi (Warner)\*, Princess of the Row (Gravitas)\*, Project Dorothy (Gravitas)\*, Puppet Master The Legacy (Full Moon), The Puppetman (AMD), The Radicals (Blue Water)\*, Radio On (Fun City), Under the Influence (Vision)\*, Redneck Zombies (Degasser)\*, Reunion from Hell (Filmhub)\*, River of Ghosts (Freestyle)\*, Romantic Comedy (Warner), Rookies (Film Movement)\*, Route 66 The Untold Story of Women on the Mother Road (Dreamscape), The Royal Hotel (Decal), S&M Hunter Begins (Kino), Scott Free (Filmhub)\*, Screaming of the Wolf (Uncork'd)\*, She's the Eldest (Rising Sun)\*, Silent Comedy Classics V.10 (Alpha)\*, The Sisters Karras (Freestyle)\*, Sisters M&S (Indiepix), Skymaster Down (Dreamscape), The Smoke Master (Freestyle)\*, Smoke Sauna Sisterhood (Kino), Snow White Dies at the End (Deskpop)\*, Social-Emotional Learning My Well-Being Making Good Decisions (Wonderscape), Space Kids from Hubble to the James Webb Telescope (Wonderscape), Space People (Filmhub)\*, Special Ops Lioness Season 1 (Paramount), Spector (Paramount), Spring Lakes (Gravitas), Slagcoach Run (Stream Go)\*, Story Island (Freestyle)\*, Strange Secrets Alien Artifacts Cryptic Codes and End Times (Alchemy), A Stranger among the Living (Filmhub), Stress Reduction Jon Kabat-Zinn (Dreamscape), Stripperland! (Filmhub)\*, Succuba (Filmhub)\*, Suitable Fish (Image), Supreme Team (Paramount), Taking Notes The Secret World of Mountain Lions (Green Planet), Tales from the Apocalypse (Uncork'd)\*, Takes to Tell in the Dark (Rising Sun)\*, Team One (Filmhub)\*, Tejiendo Sombras (Blue Water)\*, Tell Me about It (Burning Bulb), Terror Zone (Rising Sun)\*, Thanksgiving (Sony), There is a Monster (Gravitas)\*, They Turned Us into Killers (Gravitas), Three Blind Mice (Uncork'd), Time Expired (Filmhub)\*, Token Tavern (Indiepix), Tomorrow's Today (Filmhub), Top 25 Alien Encounters UFO Case Files Exposed (Alchemy)\*, Totally Vegetarian The Essential Collection V.1 (Gemini), Totally Vegetarian The Essential Collection V.2 (Gemini), The Trial of Lee Harvey Oswald (MVD), Troll Band Together (Universal)\*, The Trouble with Barry (Filmhub)\*, 12 Months (Dreamscape), 24 Seven (Green Apple), The 211 Home (Mill Creek)\*, UFO Paranormal Overlords (Alchemy), Under the Influence (Vision)\*, Unit 362 (Indican)\*, Urban Myths (Filmhub), Vengeance Rise of the Footslogger (Brainstorm)\*, Vlad El Vampiro Fabuloso (Dreamscape), War Blade (Amcomri), Watch Out for the Automobile (Filmhub)\*, The Way Home (Green Apple)\*, The Wedding Cottage (Cinedigm), Welcome to Valentine/A Picture of Her (Cinedigm), The Welder (Rising Sun)\*, What Happened at 625 River Road (Freestyle)\*, Will Rogers Silent Comedy Classics (Alpha)\*, A Wing and a Prayer (Green Apple)\*, Witness for the Prosecution (Kino), Wolf OR-7 Expedition (Blue Water)\*, Women Want Everything! (Inspiration), You're Not Gonna Die (Indican)\*, \*Did not appear on last month's Coming Attractions listing

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