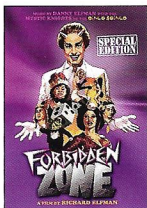


arrives for a visit and immediately stirs things up. There is a black cat, a family treasure, and a conspiracy of terror behind the murders, but the plot isn't as important as the style and spectacle provided by director Sergio Martino. *The Black Cat* (1981), directed by Lucio Fulci, throws in elements from other Poe tales. Patrick Magee stars as a psychic who can send his pet cat to kill his enemies, and Mimsy Farmer costars as a photographer and amateur detective who notices the scratches on each victim that the cops missed. It's a confusing mystery and a muddled film that features blood and nudity, but is tame compared to Fulci's infamous gore classics. Neither are essentials of the genre but both are entertaining and have been beautifully mastered for this double feature. Extras include audio commentary on *The Black Cat*, a collection of bonus interviews, behind-the-scenes featurettes, and an 80-page book. A strong optional purchase. (S. Axmaker)

Forbidden Zone ★★★

MVD, 76 min., not rated, DVD: 2 discs, \$19.95; Blu-ray: \$29.95



One of the most bizarre underground films to win a devoted cult following, Richard Elfman's 1980 musical happily and recklessly combines crass low comedy with inspired Dadaist flourishes to create a tuneful sci-fi slapstick adventure. The story follows a dysfunctional family's journey through a mysterious door in their basement that leads to a warped parallel universe called the Sixth Dimension, where an oversexed little king (Hervé Villechaize) and his tempestuous queen (Susan Tyrrell) reign with sadistic glee over their imprisoned subjects. Topless women, mature adults pretending (badly) to be pre-teens, and a Cab Calloway-style Satan (the director's brother, Hollywood soundtrack maestro Danny Elfman, backed by the Mystic-Knights of the Oingo Boingo—Oingo Boingo being Elfman's former band) add to the mayhem. *Forbidden Zone* also features very politically incorrect humor (including broad black and Jewish stereotypes and a comic gang rape), intentionally ridiculous threadbare sets, and John Muto's outrageous animation. The film is far from perfect—the comedy is more silly than funny, and the zany shenanigans eventually grow tiresome—but for sheer audacity, *Forbidden Zone* is quite an experience. This new release features both the original black-and-white version and the 2008 colorized re-release, along with extras including an audio commentary, behind-the-scenes documentary, deleted scenes, and a booklet detailing the film's surprisingly tortured history (exclusive to the Blu-ray release is a bonus soundtrack CD). Recommended. (P. Hall)

Full Moon in Paris

★★★

Film Movement, 103 min., in French w/English subtitles, R, DVD: \$29.95, Blu-ray: \$34.95



The fourth of Éric Rohmer's six *Comedies and Provverbs*—a series of contemporary romantic dramas that begin with a familiar French proverb—*Full Moon in Paris* stars Pascale Ogier as Louise, a restless designer bored with her sleepy suburban life outside of Paris with lover Remy (Tchéky Karyo), a stable architect happy with a calm home and a long-term relationship. The independent-minded Louise decides to move back into her old Paris apartment during the week, losing herself in the bustle of dinner parties and nightclubs and single men, while spending her weekends with Remy. Like an inversion of Rohmer's *Six Moral Tales*, Louise here becomes briefly entangled with another man—a spontaneous musician who is the opposite of Remy—but in a neat twist on the formula Remy himself drifts into a romantic relationship at Louise's suggestion. This is the most ironic and, in many ways, judgmental of Rohmer's films. Willowy Ogier's kittenish sexuality and zest for life are wrapped in a self-absorbed determination that borders on indifference, but for the most part this is another wryly witty look at modern love from the master of the sophisticated romantic comedy. Also on hand are Fabrice Luchini as Louise's best friend and conniving confidante, and Laszlo Szabo as a café patron who pontificates on the magical effects of the full moon. Ogier, who died shortly after the film's release, designed many of the handsome sets. Extras include an archival interview with Ogier, and an essay by film critic David Thomson. Recommended. (S. Axmaker)

Horror Classics, Volume One ★★★

Warner, 4 discs, 376 min., G/PG/R/not rated, Blu-ray: \$54.98



During the late 1950s, the British studio Hammer Films revived the classic monster movies in gothic style with lurid color. This boxed set presents the Blu-ray debuts of four Hammer films. *The Mummy* (1959) is the most notable, marking the fourth Hammer title to pair up its two marquee stars, Peter Cushing (as the archeologist who uncovers a lost crypt) and Christopher Lee (as a former high priest turned gauze-wrapped guardian of the tomb). This mummy is a haunted soul, rampaging juggernaut, and hugely powerful monster all in one, and the film features a notorious scene of Lee's transgressive priest having his tongue removed. *The Mummy* was helmed by Hammer's top filmmaker, Terence Fisher, who also directs this set's *Frankenstein Must Be Destroyed* (1969), the fifth entry in Hammer's

Frankenstein series and one of the best. Cushing delivers a thoroughly cold-blooded portrayal of the mad Baron, an amoral genius who blackmails a young couple into helping him with his bloody plans. And Lee stars as the malevolent Count in both *Dracula Has Risen from the Grave* (1969) and *Taste the Blood of Dracula* (1970), two lesser *Dracula* sequels. All four films—also available in separate volumes—have been newly remastered for Blu-ray and are a significant upgrade over previous DVD releases. Recommended. (S. Axmaker)

The Hurricane ★★★1/2

Kino Lorber, 110 min., not rated, DVD: \$19.95, Blu-ray: \$29.95



John Ford directs this 1937 drama of Western civilization colliding with native culture in the South Seas, based on the novel by Charles Nordhoff and James Norman Hall (authors of *Mutiny on the Bounty*). Jon Hall plays young Polynesian hero Terangi, a native of Tahiti who has become a respected first mate on an American ship, and Dorothy Lamour is his innocent Tahitian bride. Although the pair receive top billing, the film spends as much time (if not more) with the array of other Caucasian characters in paradise: a philosophical alcoholic doctor (Thomas Mitchell), a priest devoted to the islanders (C. Aubrey Smith), and the new island governor (Raymond Massey)—the latter a strict, stiff martinet whose devotion to the letter of the Napoleonic Code allows no room for justice or compassion. Mary Astor plays the governor's wife and conscience, although he refuses to listen to either when he sentences Terangi to hard labor for assaulting a racist white man. The titular hurricane arrives in the final act, whipping up a deadly storm while Terangi struggles to get home. *The Hurricane* was a big commercial success in 1937 but remains one of Ford's lesser films. The characters are more debate positions than developed personalities, the natives are holy innocents, the film is shot largely in the studio (which does no service to the exotic setting), and the wrath of God finale makes for a confused metaphor in that it destroys innocent islanders (who are no better than extras in the drama) while sparing the Western interlopers. Still, this does feature a fine cast and a spectacular storm sequence. Extras include an audio commentary by film historian Joseph McBride. A strong optional purchase. (S. Axmaker)

I Want to Live! ★★★

Kino Lorber, 121 min., not rated, DVD: \$19.95

Based on the true story of Barbara Graham, the first woman sent to the gas chamber at San Quentin, the 1958 drama *I Want to Live!* stars Susan Hayward in her signature role. Although made under the strictures