

Another great British mystery series

Four more terrific murder mysteries have been gathered in the Koch Vision release, **Wire in the Blood The Complete Fourth Season** (UPC#741-952651796, \$60). Robson Green stars as a brilliant but eccentric psychologist who assists the Manchester police in the marvelous British series. We reviewed the previous seasons in May 06. The four episodes featured in **Fourth Season** were originally broadcast in 2006. Each episode runs 86 minutes and appears on a separate platter. The picture is presented in letterboxed format only, with an aspect ratio of about 1.78:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback. The picture transfer is generally good, but once in a while a darker sequence will have a little grain or smearing. The sound has a mild stereophonic dimensionality. There is no captioning.

Simone Lahbib has been brought into the show as the detective who is the hero's primary contact with the force, so the first episode, *Time to Murder and Create*, presents her as the typical skeptic, with him pestering her about the discovery of a body in a barrel in a field until he comes up with enough insight that she stops resisting and starts listening to him. At the same time there are sequences with the victims intercut with the investigation, as young women are being lured into the submissive role in what appears to be a luxurious S&M relationship but turns out to be less than their fantasies had promised. A plot strand introduced in the show's beginning, however, about questions involving an earlier case the hero worked on, is never resolved.

Interestingly, while there are no direct links between one episode and the next, there are some very subtle thematic touches that create an echo in each episode from the previous episode, so it is best to watch them in order. In the very enjoyable *Torment*, which also has whiffs of S&M, prostitutes are being murdered by a serial killer in an exact copycat manner of murders that were committed previously by a man being held in a mental asylum, where the hero has been working with him. The story is fairly clever and leads to a well-executed and exciting finale.

Somewhat more farfetched, *Hole in the Heart* opens with the hero talking down a potential suicide and then moves onto a series of suicide/murders, staged in elaborate quotations of famous religious paintings. There are also scenes from a Masonic ceremony intercut with the action. Inevitably, the young man the hero saves at the beginning becomes involved in the subsequent, diabolical scheme. The effort is fully entertaining, but is less gratifying than the other mysteries because it doesn't seem quite as grounded in standard human psychology and real police work.

In contrast, *Wounded Surgeon* is the best episode in the box, as the hero begins questioning his own capabilities (and seriously worries about his fragile health) when a killer he helped incarcerate is released on parole and almost immediately a murder occurs—the abduction, rape and killing of a young woman at a disco—that is identical to the killer's modus operandi. The hero's enthusiasm to put the killer away again upsets normal protocols, and severely damages his own reputation when evidence apparently clears the suspect of the crime he had been serving time for. The episode is quite effective at capitalizing on the hero's own vulnerabilities and failings, and it is the one effort that you wish would last a little longer than 86 minutes, so the hero could bask a little more in his triumph at the end.

S&M, B&D doc

A legitimate documentary that is nevertheless loaded with provocative and salacious images, **Liberty in Restraint**, is available from MVD Vision (UPC#022891466895, \$20). The 2007 documentary is primarily a profile of an Australian photographer, Noel Graydon, who not only specializes in bondage and sadism photos, but participates in the lifestyle as well. The 90-minute program also profiles the various subjects he photographs. The participants are serious, expressing the psychological pleasures that lead them to practice what, from an outside viewpoint, particularly by those who can barely make it through a teeth cleaning, appears to be utterly insane. It is to the documentary's credit that while there are clearly some damaged souls involved in the practices, not one interviewee is made to look foolish or deranged, despite the various ghastly things they allow to have done to them. And that is the other part of the show's appeal. While the editing may not necessarily linger on certain images, the camera is nevertheless unflinching in observing how various, highly sensitive areas of the human anatomy can nevertheless be stabbed by pins, squeezed purple, and otherwise manipulated for purposes never intended by evolution, creationism or what their mothers had in mind for them while suffering through their own restraints and pains of labor. You're just glad it's all happening in Australia.

The picture is presented in letterboxed format only, with an aspect ratio of about 1.78:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback. The picture transfer is fine, although the visits to clubs and places where this sort of stuff goes on is at the mercy, to coin a phrase, of some limited lighting conditions. The 5.1-channel Dolby Digital sound has a serviceable dimensionality. There is no captioning.

The fun doesn't stop there. There is a 4-minute montage of Graydon's photos that can be accompanied by two different music tracks, and a minute-long talk about the photos to another montage of them. 19 minutes of deleted scenes are included that not only feature more bizarre practices, but have some more fascinating interviews, as well. And the show itself has a commentary track that features director Michael Ney and several of the film's participants (Graydon died of a heart attack in 2007), who share more interesting stories about the practices and participants observed in the film.

Trailer talk

Coming up with ways to keep fans excited about the series, Synapse Films has added a commentary track to **42nd Street Forever Vol. 3 Exploitation Explosion** (UPC#654930308394, \$20), another 101-minute collection of trailers for movies that are somewhat out of the mainstream from the Sixties, Seventies and Eighties. Exploitation film experts Michael Gingold, Chris Paggiali and Edwin Samuelson provide enjoyable, thumbnail descriptions and backgrounds of each film as its 2-3 minutes of glory unfolds. While it takes them the first couple of trailers to find their rhythm, they seem to have encyclopedic knowledge not only of every title that appears on the screen but of every performer smiling, grimacing, karate chopping or come-hithering for the camera. Not only is it an enjoyable spiel, but it gives the viewer an excuse to watch the collection a second time. As with the previous collections, the trailers are gathered in vague sub-genre groupings, flowing from martial arts films to horror features to giant animal thrillers to women's prison movies and so on. Salted among *Summer School Teachers* and *Blood Beach* are trailers for genuine cult movies one longs to see released on DVD, including *From Noon Till Three*, *Phase IV*, and *Convoy*, the latter playing what seems to be the complete C.W. McCall single to the images of Kris Kristofferson, Ali McGraw having a bad hair day, and trucks smashing into everything. Also featured are *Shark's Treasure*, *Scorchy*, *Beyond the Door*, *Guyana Cult of the Damned*, and *Savage Streets*.

The presentation is in letterboxed format, with an aspect ratio of about 1.78:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback, although widescreen trailers are shown in 2.35:1. The quality of presentation varies from movie to movie, but that is part of the fun. The monophonic sound is fine and there is no captioning. Included as well are another 7 minutes of TV commercials, including a few for films not represented by the trailers, such as *The Last Survivor*, *Golden Needles*, and *The Jesus Trip*.

DVD News

CLOVERFIELD MAKES A SPLASH: Paramount will be releasing the year's first monster hit, **Cloverfield**, with alternate endings, deleted scenes, a commentary, and 'clues' to some of the film's secrets.

BIG TRAIL FINALLY BIG: Raoul Walsh's experimental 1930 widescreen production starring John Wayne, **The Big Trail**, will finally be released by 20th Century Fox Home Entertainment in its full widescreen glory and 212-minute running time, with a commentary and accompanying documentaries. Fox released the shorter, cropped version previously (May 04). Fox is also releasing a two-platter presentation of **All about Eve**. The first platter will retain the two commentary tracks from the previous collector's edition (Mar 03), while the second platter will contain a number of new documentaries.

MORE TOUCHES OF HARRY: Warner Home Video's four **Dirty Harry** movies are being reissued as collector's editions with commentary tracks and other special features.

CRITERION GOES MISHIMA: The Criterion Collection will be releasing a fresh edition of Paul Schrader's **Mishima** with a new Schrader commentary, and they will also be releasing Yukio Mishima's only film, **Patriotism**. Other Criterion releases include Anthony Mann's **The Furies** and Claude Sautet's **Classe Tous Risques**.

YOUTH TALK: Sony Pictures Home Entertainment's **Youth without Youth** will have a Francis Ford Coppola commentary. **The Raisin in the Sun** remake will have a commentary. **Untraceable** will have a commentary and several featurettes.

PIERCE DVD: A 30-minute version of the 2000 **Jack Pierce Show** contains only one bonus feature, a behind-the-scenes slideshow never before seen. It can be ordered at Amazon.com and is priced at \$15. All profits (about \$3 per DVD) going towards publicity for the campaign to acquire a star for Pierce on Hollywood Boulevard.

MARKER MOVIES: Twelve films by French filmmaker Chris Marker have been collected on three DVDs that are available at store.wexnercenterstore.com/chrismarkerstore1.html

DVD and LD Ads

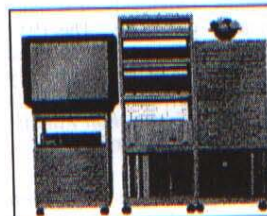
(All DVD and LD Ads are 50 cents a word. Deadline is 5 business days before the end of the month. Address all ads: DVD & LD Ads, The DVD-Laser Disc Newsletter, PO Box 420, East Rockaway NY 11518-0420.)

DVD-Laser Disc Newsletter Index, covering all reviews Sep 84 to Jun 07! Download the index for free from our website, www.DVDLaser.com.

D-LDN back issues are also available.

Write to PO Box 420, East Rockaway NY 11518.

RARE LDs for sale on E-bay! New titles posted every week.



DVD/CD drawers, and more

The RACKIT™ Systems by Per Madsen Design

Modular, stackable oak furniture

expands to hold any collection

Free brochure (mention DVD-LDN)

(800) 821-4883 www.rackitm.com