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4K Face Off: Criterion vs Kino

MGM has made a few United Artists features available to more than one home video company at a time, and as a result, both The Criterion Collection and Kino Lorber Incorporated have released two-platter 4K Blu-ray presentations of a couple of excellent films. The movies may be the same, but the presentations have substantial differences.

We reviewed Criterion's standard Blu-ray release of Billy Wilder's brilliantly conceived and gloriously amusing 1959 comedy, *Some Like It Hot*, in Dec 18. The standard Blu-ray platter that comes with the 4K platter in the 4K release (UPC#71551531-1717, \$50) is the same platter as that previous release, but the presentation on the 4K platter is much improved. While the earlier version looked terrific, it seems grainy and even speckled from time to time in comparison to the ultra-smooth and impeccable 4K image. The incredible outfits designed for top-billed Marilyn Monroe (who was apparently pregnant for a while during the shoot, not just enhancing her bust but, as Criterion's 4K image makes clear, imbuing her with an ethereal glow), combined with the exceptional black-and-white cinematography by Charles Lang, Jr., is not just eye-popping on the 4K presentation, it is utterly transporting. Pauline Kael used to title her film review book compilations with sexual double entendres (*I Lost It All at the Movies*, etc.), but the 4K disc is an actual and palpable synthesis of sex and film, perfectly rhythmized to synchronize its discoveries and unrestrained humor, perfectly integrated to weave light and darkness, and perfectly textured to transform its collected visual and aural signifiers into a rapture of ideas, personalities, and human vulnerability.

The standard BD is monophonic, and the 4K BD defaults to the mono track, but there is also a 5.1-channel DTS track that gives the music—the film is set during Prohibition and many of the tunes are from that time; Tony Curtis and Jack Lemmon are musicians who must pretend to be women and join a female band to hide from mobsters that want to do them in; and hence, the film is at least partially a musical, with Monroe singing several choice songs—just enough of an added dimensionality to enhance the film's presence without distortion or distraction.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1. There are optional English subtitles, and the Howard Suber commentary is carried over from the standard BD to the 4K presentation. Also featured on the standard BD is a rewarding collection of other supplements, including a trailer; a 19-minute piece on costume designer Orry-Kelly; a 9-minute audio-only interview with Monroe; a 31-minute interview with Curtis from 2001; a 10-minute interview with Lemmon from a 1988 French TV program; 56 minutes of Wilder appearing on *The Dick Cavett Show*; a 2006 retrospective documentary running 26 minutes; a 2001 retrospective documentary running 20 minutes; and a 12-minute retrospective segment from 2001 about the all-girl band in the film.

The Kino *Kino Studio Classics 4K UltraHD* Blu-ray release (UPC#7383-29257477, \$40) is sharper than Criterion's standard BD and a little brighter than even the 4K presentation, but when you toggle back and forth between the two 4K images, it becomes almost unwatchable after the satisfaction the Criterion presentation delivers. The Kino image is not as smooth and you quickly become distracted by the grain and other extremely minor flaws, only because those flaws are not present on the other disc.

The Kino presentation defaults to the 5.1 DTS track, and comes with optional English subtitles. Suber recorded the commentary used on the Criterion disc quite a while ago, and *Some Like It Hot* scholarship has advanced since then. Kino supplies the film with two superb talks. One features Wilder biographer Joseph McBride, who does everything from clearing up the misconceptions surrounding the creation of the movie's famous final line with a definitive summary of the events leading to its placement, to identifying many of the bit players and explaining how they were chosen for the film. He discusses the documented one night stand between Curtis and Monroe (they both got aroused by their make out scene and continued later in the day) and shares other anecdotes about what went on during the shoot. He goes into detail about the film's technical achievements as well, while also going over Wilder's background and how the director drew from his knowledge of films, journalism and other experiences to piece together the feature.

On the other commentary, the son of co-screenwriter I.A.L. Diamond's, Paul Diamond, shares a track with two contemporary screenwriters, Lowell Ganz and Babaloo Mandel, focusing a great deal on the story's brilliant structure, but also sharing their own memories of how they reacted to the movie when they first saw it in their childhood (Monroe made a lasting impact) or, in Diamond's case, his handful of memories from

being at the beach during that part of the shoot. They dissect the pairing of Curtis, whose character simply finds the ruse convenient, and Lemmon, whose character rather comically starts to embrace the switch, to point out how Wilder often confounds expectations, such as having Lemmon be the first of the two to put the moves on Monroe's character. "Here's a choice. Look. He had Lemmon go for it. This is a great entrée, but he had the comedian instead of your leading man. That would have been a studio note. You know, 'Why you having the second banana?'" "Because later we have to root for Tony Curtis to get her, so why don't we see that he's the good guy? But he goes to the comedian and it's all of this kind of diagonal choices, diagonal writing choices I call them, that just make it more interesting." "Because [Curtis's character] is still detached." "Yeah, he's still holding back." "Just want to get out of town, dump this rig and make for better and better places."

Indeed, studio notes are often the bane of screenwriters. "You'd also get, 'Why does it have to be in period?' as indeed these guys did get. That was one early note and the answer was very simple. If you put guys in contemporary clothing, Fifties clothing at that point, they would have looked like guys in dresses. If you put them into the unfamiliar clothing of a generation before, then everybody looks odd, so they don't stand out."

And intercut with their talk are some terrific, separate recollections about shooting the film from Curtis and Lemmon, speaking in detail about various scenes and recalling the atmosphere on the shoot. Curtis is very sweet while sharing his memories of Monroe and ponders how one could not become aroused when kissing her. He also declares flat out his anger at reporters who took his facetious answer to a stupid question out of context to claim he had compared kissing her to kissing Hitler.

The second platter in the Kino set is a standard BD, but it does not contain the movie, just another large collection of supplementary features, including a trailer, the 31-minute Curtis interview, the 26-minute and 20-minute retrospectives and the 12-minute piece about the band that are also on the Criterion disc, along with a 21-minute montage of memorabilia and clips, all of which originally appeared on the MGM *Special Edition* DVD (Jan 03). Also featured is a lovely 2-minute funeral tribute Wilder made to Diamond and 21 minutes of an interview with Wilder by Volker Schlöndorff about shooting different moments in the film and in particular about the challenges of working with Monroe.

We reviewed the Criterion Blu-ray release of Norman Jewison's 1967 *In the Heat of the Night* in Mar 19 and we were very impressed with the freshness of the colors and the relative stability of Haskell Wexler's location cinematography and its natural but pervasive grain. The presentation on the 4K platter in Criterion's 4K release (UPC#715515313117, \$50), which also comes with the older BD platter, is a stunning improvement. The grain is gone. The delicacy and tentativeness of the low light situations remains, but the image is smooth and sharp, and hues are intricately defined. The improved image makes the already engaging drama even more immediate and engrossing. Sidney Poitier is a Philadelphia cop waiting one night in a train station in a small Mississippi town to catch a connection after visiting his mother when a local cop (played by Warren Oates, who really doesn't get his due at the end) drags him down to the station because there has just been a murder. Rod Steiger is the police chief. Famously, the film was about how Poitier's character, a model of perfection, steps in to solve the crime, but the reality of the film is that Poitier's character is extremely flawed. He's young and comes with his own prejudices and presumptions, while Steiger's character, although quick to use anger as a shield, is more mature and in some ways, more open minded. The film runs 110 minutes. The story advances systematically for a while—Hal Ashby was the editor—and then begins to fragment a little as the self confidence of Poitier's character is chipped apart. Indeed, there are actually a couple of minor points that don't really make much sense regarding the mystery's resolution, but the presence of every character is so brought to life by the 4K presentation that the movie's atmosphere, the wonderful performances, the basic profile of what it is like to be black in a white environment, and the tension of the mystery story create an enthralling entertainment made all the more enduring by the legacies of the movie stars playing the parts.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1. Although the film defaults to mono, there is a very nice 5.1-channel DTS track that is understated—the audio is centered most of the time—but still pleasingly dimensional at certain moments. The commentary that was included on the standard BD, featuring Jewison, Wexler, Steiger and costar Lee Grant, is also featured on the 4K platter. The standard platter also comes with a trailer, a 21-minute retrospective documentary, a 13-minute piece on

4K Face Off (Continued)

the Quincy Jones music, a 13-minute interview with Jewison from 2018; a 2018 interview with Grant running 15 minutes; an 8-minute interview with Poitier from 2006; and an 18-minute examination of Poitier's groundbreaking career.

In this instance, nothing is lost on the Kino MGM *KL Studio Classics* two-platter *4K UltraHD* Blu-ray (UPC#738329258474, \$40). Both the picture and the 5.1 DTS track seem interchangeable with the Criterion 4K release. Kino's disc has the Jewison et al. commentary, as well, which originated on MGM's DVD release (May 01), but they have also created an excellent second commentary, featuring Sixties film enthusiasts Nathaniel Thompson and Steve Mitchell, along with Robert Mirisch, nephew (actually, half-nephew, it's complicated) of producer Walter Mirisch, which was recorded just a few days after Poitier passed away. Mirisch, working for the Mirisch production company, was involved with the production and was also on the set at times, so he has plenty of stories and insights to share, which are effectively augmented with insightful and constant critical analysis of the film by Thompson and Mitchell. They explore the contributions of the cast and the crew, delve into how monumental the film's premise was at the time (including the outpouring of good will from the industry during and after it won the Best Picture Oscar), and delineate the film's careful construction. On the wildly different acting methods of Poitier and Steiger, for example: "The contrast in styles work so perfectly hand to glove to the contrast in characters."

The second platter included in the set is a standard Blu-ray that doesn't have the main film, but does have two very special features, the continuation of Poitier's detective character in standard crime adventures, the 1970 *"They Call Me Mister Tibbs!"* and the 1971 *The Organization*. Both films were based upon novels by the author of the source novel for *In the Heat of the Night*, John Ball, but transport Poitier's character from Philadelphia to San Francisco (Thompson and Mitchell speak briefly about the films in their *Heat of the Night* commentary, and suggest that San Francisco became a hot location for cop movies after *Bullitt*—and indeed, both films have car chase sequences that owe their design and music entirely to the Peter Yeats film; they also note that while Poitier's character is pointedly single in *Heat of the Night*, he now has a wife and two children, suggesting that he has not been single for at least a decade). Both films have reasonably strong monophonic audio tracks and both are accompanied by optional English subtitles.

Gordon Douglas directed *They Call Me Mr. Tibbs*, a standard procedural that at least attempts to give Poitier's character an inner life. Not only is one of the primary suspects in the murder of a prostitute a longtime friend of Poitier's character, but Poitier's character slaps his own son several times during a scene about family discipline. That scene is absolutely cringey, but it makes him a flawed human, just as he was for more refined reasons (and another impulsive slap) in the first film. Running 109 minutes, the movie has several action scenes, a lot of urban atmosphere, and a terrific cast, including Barbara McNair as his wife, Martin Landau as the primary suspect (an urban preacher involved in politics, suggesting that an African-American should probably have been cast in the part), Anthony Zerbe going over-the-top Steiger-style as another primary suspect (a pimp and drug dealer, but he sells it believably), Edward Asner wearing a Rod Taylor hairpiece, and Beverly Todd. Still, even with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1 and flashes of nudity during the opening murder, it feels like a telefilm. Thanks to Poitier's presence and his ability to sell the forensic discoveries, the movie is watchable, but it is no more than a pale and even painful shadow of its predecessor. Hues are fresh, but the image is often rather grainy and there is a speckle now and then, as well. Jones supplies another cool musical score.

Directed by Don Medford, *The Organization* is a more superficial thriller—the family scenes are simply obligatory and suddenly the son is squeaky clean (he had great potential in the previous movie), but it is also more entertaining. Poitier is just the hero (superhero, really), without emotional conflict or anger issues, but he has such superstar charisma that whether he is interrogating suspects, chasing after bad guys on foot and in cars, or aiming and shooting his gun, he is too gorgeous and too good at his craft not to hold a viewer in complete cinematic bliss. A group of vigilantes steal a very large amount of drugs from a corporate headquarters, but the next day, one of the company's executives is found murdered in the room where the bags were lifted. Panicking, they robbers contact Poitier's character, pleading with him to help them in return for information no one else knows about the killing, and he goes along with it. As mobsters start identifying and killing the vigilantes, Poitier's character gets closer to identifying who is running the operation. Ultimately, the story has a few holes, but running 108 minutes, it keeps pushing forward with revelations, terrific San Francisco locations (including BART while it was under construction), action and star power. McNair returns as Poitier's wife, and a young Raul Julia has a terrific part as one of the vigilantes, with Sheree North, Graham Jarvis, Ron O'Neal, Allen Garfield and Gerald S. O'Loughlin. The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1 and the image is sharper and smoother most of the time in comparison to *They Call Me Mr. Tibbs*. The colors are very fresh. The music is by Gil Mellé, but does not sound like a downgrade and includes a few very pleasing jazz riffs.

Also featured on the platter are trailers for all three films; the 21-minute retrospective documentary; the 13-minute Jones documentary; and a 7-minute appreciation of the breakthrough cinematic social awareness *In the Heat of the Night* facilitated.

Getting high on 4K

The latest scientific methods for investigating an unknown pathogen... a half-century ago... are methodically displayed in the 1971 Robert Wise Universal Picture thriller based upon the novel by medical writer Michael Crichton, *The Andromeda Strain*. We cannot speak for ourselves, but we were reliably assured by friends, who were definitely in a position to know at the time, that the film is a total trip if you watch it when you are high. A satellite designed to capture microscopic life forms in space (ostensibly for 'research,' but, anticipating *Alien*, the government may also be looking for handy bio-weapons) crashes in the American Southwest near a sparsely populated desert town and is unknowingly opened by the town's doctor so that, at the

beginning of the movie, the entire town is dead except for a little baby that won't stop crying and an elderly man. The assembled team retrieves the unit and the two survivors and brings them to an elaborately constructed underground facility designed specifically to investigate whatever it would be that the satellite had returned.

Better known examples of motion picture directors casting and shooting their stars in their own image include Jack Nicholson coming across as Stanley Kubrick in *The Shining* and Robert Montgomery appearing extra portly in Alfred Hitchcock's *Mr. and Mrs. Smith* (and, more recently, Michael Fassbender in Steven Soderbergh's *Black Bag*). There are many other examples, of course, but we never would have expected Robert Wise, a paragon of movie director virtue, to do the same thing and yet there are not one but two central actors in *Andromeda Strain* that are wearing Wise's glasses and sporting his haircut, Arthur Hill and especially David Wayne. Yes, the film has TV stars rather than movie stars, but that was a Universal thing at the time to hold down costs. Hill's character is the leader of the group spearheading the investigation and Morse is a fellow scientist. Kate Reid delivers a memorable performance as, well, Thelma from *Scooby-Doo* 30 years older (and also wearing Wise's glasses), playing a scientist who has a medical secret of her own that endangers the project (Paula Kelly is also featured). The youngest principal cast member, i.e., the hunky guy, is played by James Olsen, who is nibbling at middle age himself (with a receding hairline) as the doctor attempting to reverse diagnose why the two survivors didn't catch the bug. He gets to do the brilliantly thrilling beat-the-clock-before-the-self-destruct-bomb-goes-off at the climax, which former editor Wise staged so well that it is just as hold-your-breath-and-scream gripping today as it was when the film was first projected in marijuana-wafting theaters.

Running 132 minutes, it was Wise who was perhaps the only director who could have turned the material into a hit. Still part of the first act, there is a lengthy sequence where the characters, in their descent to the lab, must go through five elaborate stages of sterilization so as not to further contaminate the pathogen. For Crichton, who was at the top of his game, this was the point of the story, as was all of the other computer-aided microscopy and data analysis—to demonstrate how something such as an alien lifeform ought to be researched, while dressing it up with thriller tropes to keep the reader engaged. Wise does not mess with Crichton's formula, and he doesn't have to, because the display of technology, however antiquated the monochrome computer screens look or how limited the electron imaging is, has an accuracy that can still be accepted and not laughed off. A few years later, in *Star Trek The Motion Picture*, Wise caught heat (although he has since been forgiven) for taking his sweet time getting things underway in the film so that the process itself could be savored, and yes, indeed, it has become readily apparent that *Star Trek TMP* was essentially a remake of *Andromeda Strain*, with a different venue.

The film's enduring entertainment is on full display with Universal and Arrow Video's 4K Blu-ray (UPC#760137175728, \$50). The quality of the picture is solid and hues are fresh, so that however antiquated the film's science is or will become, the dynamics of Wise's presentation supersede any technical shortcomings. Arrow also has a standard Blu-ray (UPC#760137252788, \$40), which still looks terrific, although the image is inherently grainier, which can impact a viewer's emotional or subliminal response to the creative visuals and eventual excitements, even with artificial chemical encouragements. On both presentations, the monophonic audio is solid and well worth amplifying, since the film's sound design plays an important role in its thrills. There are optional English subtitles.

Both releases come with the same set of supplements, including a complete copy of the shooting script in PDF format that is available through computer access, as well as a very readable copy of the script that can be stepped through on a regular TV, including a text addendum that features some of the 'text' props in the film. Also featured is a trailer; three TV commercials; 3 radio commercials; a great collection of memorabilia and production photos in still frame; a very enjoyable 28-minute piece by Kim Newman on contagion movies and how *Andromeda Strain* fits into the genre ("I love the fact that the world nearly ends because of a paper jam in a printer."); a terrific 30-minute retrospective documentary from 2001 that includes interviews with Wise, Crichton and others; and an excellent 13-minute interview with Crichton about his career and how he came to write the novel. Film expert Bryan Reesman supplies a good commentary track, going into the backgrounds of the cast and crew members, going over Crichton's biography, delving into the history of the film's production and touching on the science Crichton was exploring. He also shares relevant stories about his own personal life, surveys films about contagious diseases, and explains the science behind various scenes.

Who will buy this wonderful Blu-ray?

2001: A *Space Odyssey*, *Once upon a Time in the West*, *Rosemary's Baby*, and *Petulia*, not to mention the less likely but still more deserving *Bullitt* and *Night of the Living Dead*, all failed to be nominated for the Best Picture Oscar of 1968 when the Columbia Pictures production directed by Carol Reed, *Oliver!*, won. Heck, it also beat Franco Zeffirelli's magnificent *Romeo and Juliet*, and a much better musical, *Funny Girl*, both of which had at least made it to the final five. It was definitely a finger-in-your-throat gag moment when it won, and was not softened by the Oscars broadcast, which was laden with promotions for the film above and beyond promotions for the other movies.

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The film uses spare excerpts from the Charles Dickens story about an orphan, played quite sweetly by Mark Lester, falling in with a gang of child thieves in London to create an abridged plot that frantically advances from one major story moment to the next, and then stretches out the running time to a daunting 153 minutes with endless songs and dances. Oliver Reed (Carol's nephew) invigorates the film as the principal villain, while never having to sing, and Shani Wallis is appealing as the emotionally torn female lead. As the other villain, Ron Moody has way too much screen time, facilitated by his involvement in so many of the musical numbers. Although he sings a lot of notes, they all feel like the same note over and over again. There is no real attempt to turn the material into a film. Reed lifts much of the atmosphere and even guidance for the performances from David Lean's 1948 non-musical adaptation, and then shoots the songs and the dances as if he were recording a stage production. Sure, a couple of the numbers have a very large or wide setting, expanding what could be done on an actual stage, but it is never liberated from the confines of the stagecraft. When a number in **Funny Girl** shifts to a helicopter shot, it raises the song's emotional impact through cinematic means. When the flower ladies, tradesmen and so on begin dancing on the outdoor street in **Oliver!**, it amplifies the song, but not to a point of transcendence. At least, not until Sony Pictures Home Entertainment released the film as a *4K UltraHD* Blu-ray (UPC#043396640900, \$31).

You know the disc is fantastic even before the first image appears, because when the Overture plays over a blank screen, the 7.1-channel TrueHD sound delivers a spine-tingling bass, while spreading the rest of the music to the far corners of your viewing environment. The bass and the wonderful directional effects are sustained throughout the film. The images, when they finally begin to unroll, are smooth and clear, with finely detailed hues. You'll never see a sky so blue. Reed's character's dog is a revelation with the detail provided by the disc—is that actual mange?—it's probably one of the best movie dogs ever because it isn't acting like an earnest brat. True, Reed the director spends an inordinate amount of time trying to stage uplifting musical numbers in dreary, dank, open sewage settings and other depressing locales, but the story is about persevering in such environments anyway, so it isn't entirely out of synch in the way the film has felt in the past on home video, when the transfer was part of the problem and not part of the solution. While the movie never completely gels, it looks and sounds so nice on the disc that you immediately appreciate the musical numbers as the most elaborate stage productions possible. If you love just the idea of musical numbers, and are perfectly happy with a token, familiar story that can string them together, the disc is wonderful, because that is what it delivers, flawlessly. And so, okay, maybe the movie was more deserving than **Night of the Living Dead**, at least.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1. There is also an Intermission and Entr'acte, and Exit music. There is an alternate 5.1-channel French audio track (with French songs!—it makes it worth watching the movie at least a dozen more times), an alternate Spanish audio track (with English songs), and optional English, French and Spanish subtitles. Also featured are three trailers, a minute-long clip of co-star Jack Wild's screen test, a badly faded 8-minute production featurette with lots of great behind-the-scenes footage, a terrific 15-minute retrospective interview with Lester (he has a wonderful story about using room service at his hotel to get Matchbox cars during the Oscars), a nice 13-minute retrospective interview with Moody; a 5-minute piece on the real places in London where the film is set and what they look like in contemporary, gentrified times (as of 2007), a 36-minute karaoke section, a 13-minute instruction to aid a viewer imitating the dance moves in a couple of numbers (opening with a warning: "Any and all users of this program assume themselves all risk of injury..."), and a 10-minute combination sing and dance along clip.

Film historian and Dickens expert Steven C. Smith supplies an excellent commentary track, going over everything from how Dickens came to write the story to begin with, to how it was adapted as a stage musical, to a survey of the many film versions of the book (although he neglects to mention the Walt Disney cartoon puppy version), as well as a detailed history of the stage musical and the movie's production, including how Reed the director worked with different members of the cast and crew, going over how the film was received, and sharing what he believes to be its artistic strengths. "Oliver Reed was a rather wild spirit in real life, with a fondness for drink and for scaring people with his silent glare. He was really born to play Bill Sykes. Now listen to the soundtrack and you'll hear in the underscoring a song that the character of Bill Sykes sings in the stage version of **Oliver!**. It's called *My Name*. Well, leaving that song out of the movie makes sense, because this Bill Sykes has no music in his soul, setting him further apart from the other characters. Using the song in the underscoring gives it a special purpose in the movie as an ominous reminder of how dangerous Bill Sykes can be."

The 4K of **Cherbourg**

The Criterion Collection issued Jacques Demy's unique 1964 song film, **The Umbrellas of Cherbourg**, twice previously on Blu-ray, first in their multi-platter set, **The Essential Jacques Demy** (Aug 14), and then with the same platter as a free-standing BD release (Jun 17). Although the presentation was a decent improvement over earlier DVD releases, it still left something to be desired. The image was rather grainy and deep colors were slightly unstable. There was clearly room for improvement.

The BD platter has been released by Criterion yet again, as part of the new two-platter 4K Blu-ray (UPC#715515313018, \$50), but fortunately, the 4K presentation is an entirely fresh picture transfer and is substantially better. It is not perfect—the image is soft at times, and Demy's pastels still seem to lack the intensity they deserve—but it is a great improvement over the old BD, as anyone who obtains the disc will immediately be able to determine. Running 92 minutes, the film, in which the dialog is delivered entirely through song, is not just a unique accomplishment in technique—it's not an opera, but it's not an operetta, either—but an amazing piece of sorcery that turns a rather banal romantic story, about young love eclipsed by fate and maturation, into a profound experience. Because the simplistic story is literally underscored by the music, narrative is lifted to an in-between state of character drama and abstract aesthetic while the viewer,

unable to anchor onto something solid, allows the film's emotions to converge with interior emotions the film has liberated, and to soar. In the past, the flaws in the colors were the only thing holding back the film's magic, and now, during many passages, all of the close-ups and the entire final act, Demy's wizardry is unleashed.

The remastered 5.0-channel Dolby Digital sound, which is the default track on the 4K release, seems to be identical to the previous BD and captures the clarity of both the vocals and the instrumentals in sharp detail. The film is sung in French and is accompanied by optional English subtitles.

The standard BD also has a number of supplements including an 11-minute interview with Demy and composer Michel Legrand; a 24-minute segment on Demy and the French New Wave; a 54-minute retrospective documentary; a 27-minute audio-only interview with Legrand; an 11-minute interview with star Catherine Deneuve; a 6-minute piece about the previous restoration; and a trailer.

Who wouldn't?

A teenager falls in love with a woman jilted by his older brother in **Girl with a Suitcase** (*La Ragazza con la Valigia*), a Radiance Films Blu-ray (UPC#760137177517, \$40), and since the jilted woman is played by Claudia Cardinale, who wouldn't? Letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1, Tino Santoni's black-and-white cinematography is uncluttered and spare, and Radiance's image transfer is stunningly gorgeous, which not only adds to the impact of the film as a whole, but is one more reason why the viewer fully understands the teenager's attraction to Cardinale's character. Jacques Perrin plays the boy, and Gian Maria Volonte costars. Directed by Valerio Zurlini, the film is set in Northern Italy, most of it around Parma and on a palatial estate, although there is a sequence at a beach town. The film runs a full 121 minutes, but is essentially just an exploration of the two principal characters, using the changes in location to break up and shift their conversations and complications. The performances are superb. While you can call the film a romance, and Perrin's character is unquestionably in love, the narrative really isn't so much about their connection with one another as it is about how their proximity and interaction reveal what is inside of them. If the picture transfer were any less compelling, the film would be dull, but the vivid, immediate presence of the characters, and especially of Cardinale, is all that the BD requires to keep a viewer not just entertained, but utterly transfixed from beginning to end.

While the cinematography is the film's most striking technical asset, one cannot discount the strong and clear monophonic sound, and particularly the musical score which, long before such compilations became common place, is made up entirely of existing recordings of classical and pop music, including *Tequila*, a passage from *Aida* (the name of Cardinale's character), and Dimitri Tiomkin's wonderful trumpet piece from **Rio Bravo** that inspired Ennio Morricone's music in **Fistful of Dollars**. The film is in Italian with optional English subtitles and comes with a good 14-minute analysis of post-War Italian films that highlight weak-willed men and strong-willed women, and then deconstructs the experiences of Cardinale's character in that regard; an informative 17-minute overview of Zurlini's career; a 17-minute interview with screenwriter Piero de Bernardi, who shares his memories of his early career and working on the film; and a very good 20-minute interview with assistant director Piero Schivazappa, who recalls different events during the production and what it was like working with Zurlini, as well as offering an incisive appreciation of the film ("Girl with a Suitcase came out in the spring of 1961, the year of **La Dolce Vita**, of **Rocco and His Brothers**. It seemed a light film, a love story, but it's a film which, seen years later, has extraordinary depth. The reason is the undercurrent of bitterness.")

Thesis, antithesis, synthesis

The basic concepts of editing are fully present in literature, but the integration of images and sound are what bring film editing the closest to an artificial representation of the human experience. Surprisingly, it has taken more than a century to approach an understanding of why editing in film works, but since we do not know entirely why humans blink, we still do not understand film editing completely. A spellbinding documentary about movie editing, **The Cinema Within**, has been released on DVD by Unicom Stencil and First Run Features (UPC#720229918428, \$20), combining a primer of how editing began in the first silent films ("I think that was crucial for the development of early cinema, because it really had to be a form of communication that people could understand without a lot of learning.") and then jumping ahead that full century to investigations by cognitive scientists and psychologists studying how editing communicates with the human brain. Compiled by Chad Freidrichs, the 93-minute program intercuts (naturally) three major avenues of exploration. One is the sort of testimony of the Oscar-winning editor, Walter Murch, on how he came to understand his craft. Another is studies by blink researcher Tamami Nakano, who has conducted a series of experiments to determine the parallels between cuts in film and blinking, something Murch had uncovered instinctively, as other filmmakers, notably John Huston, had done before him. And centrally, there is the research of Sermin Ildirar, who learned of a community in a remote area of Turkey that had no access to electricity and was able, deftly, to be the first to expose her subjects to a progression of images and query their responses. "I think that when we watch a film, we continuously ask ourselves questions and then we are looking for the answers. But if you don't know films as a storytelling device, you wouldn't even search for that meaning."

The aspect ratio of the presentation changes depending upon the footage or film clips employed, but the letterboxing has an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback. When movie clips are not involved, the image is slick, and the two-channel stereo sound, which conveys a full dimensionality, is integral to the storytelling. There are optional English subtitles. Surprisingly, in contrast to most seminal documentaries about the movies, the film clips, from the Lumière Brothers to **Star Wars**, are not noted in the end credits. As for the film, it will be a captivating experience for anybody who enjoys cinema or has any curiosity at all about the world around them, and it concludes with a joyful finale that will bring tears to all of those who have taken the movie and its lessons to heart.

Wealth and stealth

A delightfully cerebral entertainment, Steven Soderbergh's 2025 **Black Bag**, released as a two-platter *4K UltraHD Collector's Edition* Blu-ray by Focus Features and Universal Pictures Home Entertainment (UPC#840418325629, \$30), is about impossibly wealthy spies attempting to ferret out who among them is up to no good. It is every bit as silly as an action film, but except for a single explosion and a couple of gunshots—and an implied, off screen knife wound—the action is all in the guarded, urbane conversations and surreptitious clicks on computers. Michael Fassbender stars as the agent assigned to uncover the villain and Cate Blanchett, who works for the same organization, is his loving wife and one of the names on the list of suspects he has been given. To investigate, he invites everyone on the list to a dinner party at his luxurious London townhouse. Pierce Brosnan has a smaller supporting part. The film runs 94 minutes and over the course of that time, the viewer settles back into the same sort of blissful state that would be achieved if indeed the film was all gunfire and explosions, but it is instead filled with the sophisticated fun of loaded conversations and deadly glances.

The pleasure comes from the narrative, of course, but also from the dual atmospheres of wealth and stealth, and in this regard, the 4K presentation is especially engrossing, not only assisting in the viewer's concentration on who is who and what is what, but in conveying the textures of the environments. The Dolby TrueHD 5.1-channel sound supplies a carefully measured aural atmosphere to the environment, and makes David Holmes's musical score sound a great deal better than it actually is. The standard Blu-ray included in the set looks and sounds fine, yes, but it has a slightly softer image that will alienate a viewer just enough to undercut subliminal involvement with everything that is happening. Both platters have an audio track that describes the action ("She continues to a car and the driver opens the back door for her. Watching, George's smile fades."), alternate French and Spanish audio tracks, optional English, French and Spanish subtitles, 6 minutes of sorely missed deleted scenes and 16 minutes of enjoyable promotional featurettes.

Perfect Companion

The robot is the heroine and the humans are the villains in the marvelous 2025 New Line Cinema production directed by Drew Hancock, **Companion**, a WB SDS Studio Distribution Services 4K UltraHD Blu-ray (UPC#883929834075, \$33). The robot thing is no surprise because it is revealed early enough in the story, but the remainder of the tale is best left to be discovered and savored. Set mostly in a fancy house in upstate New York overlooking a lake (okay, we'll pause here for a second to rant at how the very similar type house in **The Room Next Door** has exciting, dynamic lines and is an architectural delight, while this one, which really is located in New York, is just a bunch of boxes piled sideways up a hill and may not really even be a house), three couples gather for a weekend of relaxation and drinking, just like in a slasher film. And just like in a slasher film, blood is soon spraying every which way. And yet, the 97-minute film is both heartening and thoughtful, genuinely taking the measure of what parts of thinking, feeling and free will are human and what are just combinations of machines and beasts. **Ex Machina** (Aug 15) was considered an intellectual breakthrough in films like this and remains more cerebrally gratifying, but as a double bill, this movie would make the perfect...uh, we just can't say it, you'll have to fill in the blank yourself.

Sophie Thatcher and Jack Quaid star, with Lukas Gage, Megan Suri, Rupert Friend and Harvey Guillén. All of their performances are great fun. The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1. The 4K presentation is outstanding. It is not just that the colors are precise and the image is smooth and sharp. The whole presentation has a concentrated perfection that pulls you into the story and the characters and keeps you engaged, even as the cast works its way through the initial weekend getaway tropes. The Dolby Atmos sound is also lovely and constantly present, pulling you into the movie's environment. There is an audio track that describes the action in American ("On the road, Iris drives alongside another car. She looks inside and spots a woman that looks like her, but with blonde hair, and a man driving. The other woman glances over at Iris, who smiles and waves her exposed, robotic hand. The woman stares with a confused expression."), another that describes it in British ("Driving down the highway, Iris draws parallel with a car and notices a blonde Iris in the passenger seat beside a man who is ranting at the wheel. The other Iris's curiosity turns to consternation as Iris waves with her robotic hand and overtakes them with a wicked grin."), alternate French, Spanish, Italian, German (as well as a German descriptive track), Czech and Polish audio tracks, seventeen subtitled options including English, and 15 minutes of decent promotional featurettes (curiously, Thatcher looks much taller and bulkier in real life—noticeably so—than she does in the film).

Krimi comes to Blu-ray

While the German Edgar Wallace-inspired 'krimi' thrillers of the Sixties have been available on bargain bin DVDs, it was only with the recent Film Masters release of **Creature with the Blue Hand** (Nov 24) that proper attention was paid to one. Now, after putting out an excellent Blu-ray set of the krimi spinoff **Dr. Mabuse** films (May 25), Eureka! has issued an inviting four-platter *The Masters of Cinema* Blu-ray boxed set, **Terror in the Fog: The Wallace Krimi at CCC** (UPC#760137179993, \$95), featuring six films produced by the German film company, CCC, filled with exotic intrigue and murder. The films are in black and white with very nice image transfers—the only time the picture gets hazy is when the fog becomes thick—and are in German with optional English subtitles. Each film also has an alternate English language track. The monophonic sound is consistently solid and, given the innovative musical scores that match the enthusiastic cinematography, worth amplifying. There is a 6-minute introduction to the entire set by cult film expert Tim Lucas, who also provides specific introductions to each film. He explains what 'krimi' means in German (crime novels, much like 'giallo' refers to them in Italian) and what it means in English—again, like 'giallo,' the word in English is used to identify the specific decade-long run of German crime films, most of which were

inspired by the Wallace stories, or stories written by his son, Bryan Edgar Wallace. While the casting sometimes presents the dubious supposition that young, nice-looking women readily open their hearts to creepy, middle-aged bulldog-like German men, that is precisely the sort of abstraction that opens the way to accepting the convoluted murder mysteries and world domination plotting on display. As Lucas explains, in addition to the eager cinematography and baroque stories—all of which are set in a markedly German interpretation of Great Britain—the films hold a worthy range of delights. "These movies are fun, stylish and charming, and they also have a strong wicked streak."

Directed by Franz Josef Gottlieb, the 1963 *The Curse of the Yellow Snake* (*Der Fluch der gelben Schlange*) is set mostly in London after a statuette is stolen from a wealthy collector in Hong Kong. The collector's son, played by Joachim Fuchsberger, is entering into an arranged marriage with the daughter of an exporter, but fortunately when they finally meet, after some initial hiccups (although by today's standards better looking at first, he has to shave off his stubble before she realizes he's a hot guy), they like each other. The statuette exchanges hands several times and the son's half-brother shows up, also wanting to get in on the arranged marriage deal. The mystery is more about what is going on than anything else (the statuette can apparently enable world domination, although how remains rather vague), and the entertainment comes from the periodic action (there is a terrific sequence across canal locks where the hero is being chased by hordes of Chinese henchmen), and the basic atmosphere of the entire endeavor. "You can't switch brides like a falsified customs declaration for an arms delivery," a character complains at one point, telling you everything you need to know about him and what he is up to. Running 98 minutes, the film concludes with a pointed and even unnerving reference to Adolf Hitler and a fascinating refutation of his will, while for the most part, the production is an enjoyably superficial mix of shady characters and suspenseful occurrences, with the fate of the world at stake.

Brigitte Grothum costars, with Pinkas Braun, Werner Peters, Charles Reignier, Doris Kirchner and Claus Holm. The opening credits have colored lettering, but otherwise the squared full screen film is in black and white. The presentation is sharp and contrasts are well defined. Raimund Rosenberger's musical score includes what sounds like melodic and electronic popcorn popping, which adds to the frivolity of the endeavor. A trailer is also included and the 13-minute Lucas introduction includes a full overview of the krimi movies and an enthusiasm specifically for Rosenberger's score.

A commentary track features the amiable pairing of British film experts Kim Newman and Barry Forshaw, who go over the backgrounds of the cast and the crew, dissect the film's genre intentions and essentially help the listener get onto the movie's wavelength. "I think throughout here, there is sort of a Bond send-up of perceived British failings, which I have to say is a lot gentler, sweeter and more charming than British humor at the expense of the Germans, which tends to be rather cruel." They also express their enthusiasm for the look of the film. "Kids, cigarette smoking is bad for you. Don't do it. [But] it looks great in black and white. Everybody smoked in the past, anyway, but in the era of black-and-white cinematography, smoking was the great, the secret weapon of film noir."

The companion film on the platter, the 1963 *The Stranger of Blackmoor Castle* (*Der Würger von Schloss Blackmoor*), directed by Harald Reinl, is a much better and even more satisfying entertainment. It is set on a British estate and involves a treasure in uncut diamonds, a masked murderer who is missing a finger, secret passages, and so on (including a spectacular, *Toby Dammit*-style demise), but it is more dynamically convoluted than a standard Agatha Christie-type thriller, where everything is organized and all of the pieces fit together. Instead, while everything makes total sense at the end, the movie leaps from one situation to the next, compiling threats and complications with a lively pace and atmosphere that is every bit as captivating as *Yellow Snake* and more sensibly constructed.

Karin Dor stars with Harry Riebauer, Rudolf Fernau, Hans Nielsen, Hans Reiser and Dieter Eppler. The picture has an aspect ratio of about 1.66:1. One or two shots look a bit grainy, but otherwise the image is smooth and sharp, and the source material is free of wear. There is another terrific electronic musical score, by Oskar Sala, which is essentially techno music before there was techno music. The Lucas introduction runs 10 minutes, and there is a commentary by British film mavens Kevin Lyons and Jonathan Rigby, who spend a lot of time going over the filmographies of the cast and the crew, but also have a good time commenting on the Britishness of the narrative (the guy who actually owns the castle lives in a small cottage on the grounds because he has to rent the main structure out to cover the upkeep) and its incongruous Germanisms (A pub substantially outside of London has strippers? Not likely.).

Although it is a much better film, the 1963 *Executioner of London* (*Der Henker von London*) on the second platter, also known as *The Mad Executioners*, calls to mind Peter Hyams's **The Star Chamber** (Sep 89), and its additional story embellishment is why it works so well while **Star Chamber** was such a hopeless flat tire. A group of hooded individuals are abducting unindicted criminals, passing judgment on them and hanging them, and there is pressure on Scotland Yard to find the killers, even though the victims deserved to die. At the same time—and this is the Wallace-type twist that makes the concept work—a serial killer is murdering blondes and removing their heads. The detective assigned to the serial killer case, played by Wolfgang Preiss, is reassigned to the vigilante case. Running 94 minutes, the film, directed by Edwin Zbonek, is terrifically entertaining and suspenseful (sure, the serial killer is not the type of guy who young blondes would believably fall for, but that is a humor reflecting the presumptions of the German filmmakers and, hence, part of the entertainment), and is a highly enjoyable endeavor.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1, and the image transfer is impeccable. Contrasts are sharp and the image is free of flaws. The monophonic sound is very nice, too, its crispness adding to the appeal of the jazz score. The Lucas introduction runs 11 minutes, and there are two trailers.

Lyons and Rigby supply another commentary track, again covering the backgrounds of the cast and crew members (although they insist upon joking about the surname of talented cinematographer Richard Angst) and commenting on the film's various amusements, such as how easily the killer sweet talks the victims, and how substantially less than hip the band in a nightclub appears to be. "It's a very peculiar time, because we'll see in a moment, when you watch it, bear in mind that during the production of this film, The Beatles released *I Wanna Hold Your Hand*, and so everything that we're going to see in that song and dance sequence is going to be washed away very soon, because young people aren't going to want to go to watch that any more. I do like the fact that they've got an old guy in back with his washtub bass, he's sort of sawing away at it. He's lovely, I like him."

The unseen serial killer in the 1964 *The Phantom of Soho* (*Der Phantom von Soho*) wears glittering gold gloves rather than the traditional black, but otherwise the film is a standard and quite wonderful whodunit. The film is set in London's Soho district, with prostitutes on every corner and striptease girls working the clubs, but the killer could care less about them, it is the men furtively cruising the bars who wind up with knives in their chests and, oddly, an envelope of money in their dead palms. There is a Least Likely Suspect, although in retrospect, it seems obvious, all things considered. The hero is the police detective assigned to the case, played by Dieter Borsche, with Peter Vogel as his nerdy assistant. Directed by Gottlieb, the 96-minute film is fully engrossing from beginning to end, augmenting its basic atmosphere and suspense with a steady array of amusing German interpretations of British sin.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1, and has another wonderful color-splashed opening credit sequence—set to a totally addictive theme song—even though the remainder of the film is in a crisp and unsullied black and white. The image is not quite as vivid as it is on the other films, but the presentation is still fully workable. The Lucas introduction runs 9 minutes, and he points out that the supposed novel the film is based upon does not actually exist. There are three trailers and a very nice 10-minute interview with Alice Brauner, the daughter of the film's producer, Artur Brauner, who explains how another company had the rights to most of the original Wallace stories, so that her father hired Bryan Edgar Wallace primarily so that his name could be put on the posters (with 'Bryan' in very small letters or light colors), but that Bryan turned out to be an effective writer. She also talks about how German audiences responded to the films being set in Britain, because of the exotic atmosphere that created.

Newman and Forshaw provide another commentary track, talking about the movie at hand, about the nature of the original Edgar Wallace stories and how they differ from the Bryan Edgar Wallace stories, and also about the unique attributes and differences of the genre. "I think that arguably the musical style of krimi was a big influence on the way that genre films started using more strange, extreme musical accompanists, as opposed to the Bernard Herrmann – Miklós Rózsa orchestral, romantic, classic style. And besides, it's Soho. You can't have respectable orchestral sound." Herrmann is the wrong choice since, after all, he pioneered using the theremin in Fifties sci-fi, but the point is still well taken. They also cite the many enjoyable aspects of the film, and how it can be better appreciated if you watch it as part of a series. "I'm glad to see them appearing in a collection. They get better the more of them you see. The more you pick up on the conventions and the familiar faces, and even the rules that are being broken, I think the more you'll get out of them."

The final two platters each hold a single film. The 1963 *The Monster of London City* (*Das Ungeheuer von London-City*) on the third platter opens with the same shots as *The Phantom of Soho* and for a moment you think you've put on the wrong disc, but this one, indeed, as the viewer quickly discovers, is about slashing ladies of the night. The killer has distinctive boots and uses a razor. For a while, the 90-minute film, directed by Zbonek, is very clever, focusing on an actor who is playing 'Jack the Ripper' in a stageplay very near to where the murders are taking place. The depiction of the play is terrific, and there are plenty of suspects to go around. A very promising attempt to fuse horror with the drama just leads to confusion—the girlfriend of a private detective manages to land a part in the play after the previous actress becomes a real victim, and the detective's snooping during a performance, along with the girlfriend's ineptitude on stage create comical moments for the play's audience—and the resolution to the thriller is somewhat pedestrian although, on the whole, the film is still fully satisfying. Nielsen, Hansjörg Felmy, Marianne Koch and Dietmar Schönherr are featured.

Adding to its appeal is the quality of Siegfried Hold's cinematography. All of the transfers look great, but it is clear that the cinematography in this film is superior, with consistently engaging compositions instead of marvelous but less stringent designs, and so the transfer is also the nicest of the group, with one sharp, unblemished image after another. Letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1, the framing is consistently compelling, as well—that is one reason the stageplay sequences are so effective, you get the complete sense of how the show is being executed—with one dynamically composed shot after another. The opening credits also have splashes of color again. The enlightening Lucas introduction runs 8 minutes. Along with a trailer, there is a good 18-minute piece going over all of the films and drawing parallels to gialli movies, slasher movies and horror movies in general. Newman and Jones supply another commentary, covering the careers of the players and touching on the story while talking a lot about the film's attempts to be British.

Faster than you can say, "Dick Francis," a jockey is killed in the 1964 *The Racetrack Murders*, also known as *The Seventh Victim* (*Das siebente Opfer*). Pretty soon, more murders occur in the horse owner's large mansion, although lost in the hubbub of mysterious deaths is that the prize horse is seen training at the beginning for a steeplechase, but the big race at the end is just a regular once-around-a-flat-track affair. In any case, the horse is the odds-on favorite to win, so some villains want to prevent the big payoff, while others seem to want him to come through, both resorting to murder to see their side score. By the end of the 93-minute feature, there aren't many suspects left, but ultimately the film feels more like a parody of a whodunit—something that is underscored by the film's rather shocking punchline—than a serious atmospheric thriller.

Directed by Gottlieb, Felmy, Nielsen, Riebauer, Vogel, Ann Smyrner, Wolfgang Lukschy and Heinz Engelmann star. The picture is in a squared full screen format and again has colors during the opening credits. The image is sharp and free of wear. The monophonic sound is adequate, and there is a decent stretch of Exit Music at the end. There is a trailer, and the Lucas introduction runs 8 minutes. Lyons and Rigby supply a general commentary track, talking about the cast, the Wallaces and the film's particular quirks. A second commentary, which ends after 84 minutes, has little to do with the film at hand as Lucas and film expert Stephen Bissette talk about the entire collection and the krimi movies in general, covering the same information and insights that the other talks have offered, but with additional perspectives and minutia. Bissette, for example, is the only one to mention **Star Chamber** as an heir to *Mad Executioners* and other vigilante movies that go back even farther in the history of films and Wallace's writings.

Bong in Hollywood

After being substantially less than impressed with his Oscar-winning *Parasite* (Jan 21), we have come to believe that Joon Ho Bong is an overrated director, and that feeling is reinforced by his first English language production, a viable but flawed 2025 science-fiction spectacle with a decent sense of humor, **Mickey 17**, which has been released on Blu-ray by Warner Bros. Pictures and SDS Studio Distribution Services (UPC#883929816200, \$30). Robert Pattinson displays an effective performance range as the only human being on a colonization transport who is continually being killed and then replicated in an advanced form of a laser printer, since that was the job he signed up for to get onto the mission and away from Earth, to be the guinea pig when the scientists aboard the ship need to test radiation levels, gasses and so on. His memories are recorded on a weekly basis and then reloaded into the newly replicated version of him, and it is against all rules and regulations to make more than one of him at a time. But when they land on an icy planet, intending it to be their new home, and he is sent out on an expedition, they don't realize that he survives what appears to be a fate worse than death, and then there are two of him. This basic concept is terrific, as is all of the science-fiction imagery, from the ship traveling through space to what they eventually meet on the new planet, and that, plus the humor of his situation is enough to sustain the entertainment across the film's 137-minute running time. But it is sloppy. He has memories that his character should not have by the film's own internal logic, and whether it is physical or emotional, his surreptitious romantic relationship with a ship security officer, played by Naomi Ackie, is unconvincing. Mark Ruffalo and Toni Collette are the buffoonish leaders of the mission, and to make matters worse, Ruffalo channels Donald Trump for his performance, which undermines the movie's tone even more. Bong has always been really good at establishing an unlikely science-fiction premise and then carrying through with it, as he did in his marvelous productions of *Snowpiercer* and *The Host*, and that is why **Mickey 17** is worth watching despite its flaws, especially since the Blu-ray presentation looks and sounds terrific, but none of Bong's movies have been able to accomplish much more than establishing a distinctive premise and exploring it, regardless of their genre, and never raise the experience to a higher level, even though the potential always seems to be there, out of his grasp.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1. The image is sharp and special effects seem flawless. The Dolby Atmos sound has a solid surround presence and clear details. There is an audio track that describes the action in American ("Medical staff in Hazmat suits chuck Mickey's body into the cyclor. A pair of gloved hands drop blood into a sample vile. Now the printer spits out a new Mickey. Matthew injects Mickey, who has his other arm swabbed. Now he sits drowsily in the chamber as it fills with vapor. Later, he vomits blood into his hands. Medical staff push another Mickey into the cyclor, and his body disappears into a glowing lava-like sludge at the bottom. Another Mickey flies out of the printer and is later discarded in the cyclor."), another track that describes the action in British ("A Mickey variant is thrown into the cyclor, a hole in the floor leading to a tank of molten, burning material. A sample of Mickey's blood is taken and a new Mickey variant is printed, is injected and the magnified virus is examined on a computer. He pukes more blood, is bagged and thrown into the cyclor again. Yet another stark naked Mickey variant emerges from the printer, head first, his arms dangling from the opening"), alternate French and Spanish audio tracks, optional English, French, Spanish, Swedish, Danish, Norwegian and Finnish subtitles, two trailers and 29 minutes of good promotional featurettes (Bong storyboarded every scene in the movie, handed out the boards daily to the cast and the crew, and followed them meticulously).

Whom do you trust?

A lovely 2025 low-budget wartime period thriller set in New England, **Fog of War**, has been released on DVD by Decal (UPC#840418324950, \$20). Jake Abel plays a wounded airman recuperating in the States who is given an assignment by government agents to nose around his fiancée's isolated home on the Massachusetts coast, because of suspected Nazi activity in the area. Brianna Hildebrand plays the fiancée, with John Cusack and Mila Sorvino in smaller roles as her uncle and aunt. Often drenched in an autumnal fog, the film is a wonderful blend of atmosphere and twisty story turns, with a number of nice performances that keep you guessing throughout the 103-minute feature who is the hero and who is the villain. The director, Michael Day, does a nice job with what are clearly limited resources—even his drone shots don't last very long—but some of the staging is highly compelling, particularly a climactic, grappling fight that suggests the participants have a previous familiarity with the positions they are now struggling to alter.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback. Hues are accurate and despite the abundant fog and night scenes, the image is consistently sharp. Fast pans have a jerky look in places, but otherwise the image is smooth. The 5.1-channel Dolby Digital sound has a workable dimensionality and some pleasant touches. There is an audio track that describes the action ("He leans his cane against the wall and crouches. He peers through a slot in the door. Victor sits at a desk in front of a telegraph machine in a suitcase. He wears headphones and taps it."), and optional English subtitles.

Gary Cooper western

A terrific 1952 Gary Cooper western directed by André DeToth, **Springfield Rifle**, has been released by Warner Bros. as a Warner WB Archive Collection Blu-ray (UPC#840418325070, \$22). Running 93 minutes, the film has plenty of action, particularly at the finale, and the drama is effectively played out, although the less of it revealed ahead of time, the better. What can be said is that it is set during the Civil War, but in the West, where the Union Army is trying to collect horses and a large group of rebels and spies, including a few sympathizers within the Army, are arranging to have the gathered herds hijacked. Fortunately, the Army gets a shipment of new rifles that can even the odds. The film has a wonderful supporting cast, including Phyllis Thaxter, Paul Kelly, Lon Chaney, Jr., Alan Hale, Jr., Martin Milner, David Brian and, in an early supporting part, Fess Parker. Under DeToth's careful guidance, the film never really takes a wrong turn, and serves as an excellent example of why westerns, paired down to the basics, can be so captivating, and all the more so when Cooper is the hero.

The picture is presented in a squared full screen format, and hues are fresh. From shot to shot, the quality of the image varies a bit, with some looking soft or a bit grainy while others look smooth and sharp, suggesting that the cinematography had a few shortcomings, although overall the presentation is fine. The monophonic sound is strong and there is an exceptional Max Steiner orchestral score that enhances the excitement with appropriately symphonic gusto. There are optional English subtitles; a good, basic trailer; an 11-minute 1952 Joe McDoakes comedy short, *So You Want to Enjoy Life*, in which he believes he has a month to live and so he borrows an enormous amount of money and goes around doing all sorts of unwise things (insulting an IRS agent, buying an airplane) and living it up, concluding with a fairly good pair of punchlines; a 7-minute 1951 color *Merrie Melodies* cartoon, *Rabbit's Kin*, in which Bugs Bunny helps a (very cute, fast talking) little rabbit frustrate a (very dumb) hungry puma; and a 7-minute 1951 color *Merrie Melodies* cartoon, *Feed the Kitty*, in which a (very cute) little kitten charms a bulldog, getting him into trouble with his human owner as it makes mischief around the house.

Good things come in threes

A trio of blaxploitation superstars team up under the guidance of the godfather of the blaxploitation genre in the wonderful 1974 Allied Artists action feature, **Three the Hard Way**, a Warner Bros. Warner WB Archive Collection Blu-ray (UPC#840418325049, \$22). Directed by Gordon Parks, Jr., Jim Brown plays a wealthy music producer whose girlfriend is abducted by white supremacists, so he enlists the help of two very able buddies, played by Fred Williamson and Jim Kelly, to get her back and destroy a nefarious plot to poison American water supplies with a formula that will only kill African-Americans. Sure, the plot is ridiculous, and even on a scene level, story logic is often completely ludicrous, but the 97-minute film is to be embraced for what it gets right, not for what it could care less about. For one thing, each of the three stars gets plenty of screen time, individually, as a group and even in pairs. For another, plenty of credit can go to Hal Needham's stunt team for a steady array of fabulous car chases, fights, gun battles and explosions. The excitement never lets up, or if it does, it is because female nudity is being flaunted, or one or more of the stars is getting to do his thing, or both. Utilizing excellent location footage from Chicago, New York City and California, the film is gloriously hip entertainment from start to finish and a quintessential example of why blaxploitation movies do not have to be obedient to the rules other movies follow.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1. Colors are very fresh and the image is sharp. Generally, it is also smooth, but if on occasion the cinematography's contrast levels aren't exactly right and grain or shadows slip in, too much is going on to pay much attention. The monophonic sound is solid and clear. There are optional English subtitles and a cool trailer. And for those who think that time has passed the film by, we would pull up this exchange of dialog between the wussy villain, played by Jay Robinson, and the feisty girlfriend of Brown's character, played by Sheila Frazier: "My dear lady, my troubles are almost over. You see, we have a scientific institution here. We seek humane solutions to social disorders. The ultimate purpose is a cleansing. A purification of the races on this continent, particularly in this great nation of ours." "Mister, you are way out of date."

An hour with Garbo

Greta Garbo stars as the bored wife of an older businessman who eventually finds herself on trial for murder, defended by the man she actually loves in the 1929 MGM production directed by Jacques Feyder, **The Kiss**, released on DVD by Memory Lane Entertainment and Shoreline Entertainment (UPC#840418322987, \$15). Like most public domain releases, the source material is worn, with scratches, splotches and weak contrasts now and then, but on the whole the film is still viewable, and is definitely worth viewing. The jacket promotes the movie as a sound film, but it is actually a silent, accompanied on its original monophonic audio track by music (a lot of Tchaikovsky) and a handful of sound effects. The sound is scratchy, but irreverently tolerable if held to a modest volume. Garbo is outstanding. The emotions she conveys with her expressions and mannerisms are believably real and vivid. The film runs just 61 minutes, but she is pretty much the center of the drama throughout all of it, and the DVD is clear enough and clean enough that you are utterly captivated by the youth and maturity of her

character and the genuine moral and emotional conflicts she undergoes. She is also sexy as all get out, and there is no mystery as to why the men around her are all in love with her. Lew Ayres, Conrad Nagel and Anders Randolph co-star.

High and low

Based upon a novel by Ed McBain, Harold Robbins wrote the screenplay for the 1958 United Artists production directed by Gene Milford, **The Pusher**, an MGM Blu-ray (UPC#840418317426, \$20). Felice Orlandi, best remembered as the assassinated 'witness' in **Bullitt**, delivers an appealing performance as the title character, while Robert Lansing and Douglas F. Rogers are the cops investigating an apparent suicide by one of his customers. In some ways, the 82-minute film is the Cadillac of the drug hysteria movies, a good deal of it shot on location in Spanish Harlem and seeming to embrace the 'police realism' films of the Fifties, all the while teaching young men that if you want to find sexy, pliant women, all you have to do is become a drug dealer and they will be kneeling at your feet and grabbing at your pants. Kathy Carlyle, who somehow scored top billing, and Sara Aman costar. Carlyle plays the daughter of Rogers' character, the fiancée of Lansing's character, and eventually the best customer of Orlandi's character when she discovers how far into the gutter she's willing to dive for a fix. Letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1, the black-and-white picture is smooth and spotless, adding to the film's seemingly high class appearance, despite the ominous chords of Raymond Scott's jazz musical score, which sound crisp and clear on the monophonic audio track. There are optional English subtitles.

Civilization as we know it

The destructive nature of urban renewal is just one theme in Claude Faraldo's absurd 1973 satire set in modern day Paris, **Themroc**, a Radiance Blu-ray (UPC#760137179382, \$40). The film ostensibly depicts a building painter played by Michel Piccoli who is fired from his job, goes home, and begins demolishing his apartment, to the point of knocking away the outer wall and turning it effectively into a cave, accessed from a rope ladder, actions that instigate a similar revolt among some of his neighbors. The cast is loaded with recognizable character actors, including Patrick Dewaere, Marilù Tolo, Miou-Miou, Coluche, Francesca Romana Coluzzi and others. The disc has optional English subtitles, but they are only for a few building signs that appear, because otherwise all of the dialog in the film is gibberish. It is discernibly French, but gibberish. At one point, Piccoli's character goes out at night, knocks out a couple of policemen, and brings them back, one for him and one for his neighbors, and when the meat is seen turning on the spit over the fire and they are feeding on it, it is clearly the carcass of a pig. This unfortunate metaphor, overly popular in its day, aside, the film makes witty observations of how limited the progression has been between Early and Modern Man, particularly when it comes to sexual relations, but also in terms of tribalism, wealth and hierarchical power. Running 109 minutes, most viewers will think the movie is stupid as all get out, but there is a clear method to its absurdities, and its abstract action, combined with its star appeal, will be intriguing to those with adventurous tastes.

The picture has an aspect ratio of about 1.66:1. The cinematography is somewhat grainy and drab, but colors are fresh. The monophonic sound is in decent condition. Also featured are seven posters in still frame; an 18-minute discussion with Faraldo and Piccoli in a circle filled with people talking about the movie's various meanings and assaults (it opens somewhat amusingly with interviews of baffled people leaving at the end of a screening); a decent 23-minute introduction to Faraldo and the film; and a great 23-minute profile of Piccoli.

Pre-Code infidelities

In the opening shot of the Alpha Video DVD, **Charming Sinners** (UPC#089218866998, \$9), Clive Brook is feeling up Mary Nolan at a restaurant, so while the characters are wearing clothing one associates with old prim and proper black-and-white movies, the 1929 Robert Milton Paramount feature was clearly made before the Production Code was put into place. Ruth Chatterton plays the husband of Brook's character and Nolan plays her best friend, with the obviousness of their naughty behavior bringing forth a crisis that sends Chatterton's character into at least contemplating a similar arrangement with an old flame played by William Powell. Based upon the W. Somerset Maugham stageplay, *The Constant Wife*, the film runs just 65 minutes and is comprised of scenes with urbane conversations or furtive grasping, or both. Powell and Chatterton give very modern performances, clearly comfortable with the talkie medium, and the suggestive romantic complications are interesting enough for the film to be worthwhile, or they would be if the transfer were tolerable. The squared full screen picture is riddled with scratches, smears and splices, although it would not be enough to interfere with the essential entertainment if the monophonic sound were any good. Since Alpha doesn't provide subtitling or closed captioning, however, you are on your own when it comes to making out what the characters are saying to one another. The disc's audio is a strain at the very least and nearly impossible to translate at times, given the poor quality of the replication and the challenges of the original recording. What is interesting is that while Powell and Chatterton are generally understandable, Brook's soft, low-pitched voice blurs all of his vowels together and subdues his consonants to a mush.

Unseen samurai trainee

A couple of characters die, but the 1970 Daiei production, **The Invisible Swordsman**, released on Blu-ray by Arrow Video (UPC#760137175810, \$40), is a lighthearted film, a kind of cross between a classic samurai dustup and an Abbott & Costello ghost movie. Directed by Yoshiyuki Kuroda, Osamu Sakai is the inept son of a samurai who follows his father to the underworld after the father is killed by villains. A spirit gives him the formula for a potion that will enable him to become invisible for a short period of time. He uses the potion to find his father's killers, while at the same time upgrading his own reputation. Running 79 minutes, the film is fun up to a point, and sustains the production designs and cinematography one associates with classic Japanese samurai widescreen color features, but the filmmakers don't really know what to do with their premise or how to get the most out of it. Other than a couple of nice ideas—the hero cleverly outwits Death in one scene—the plot doesn't lead to much more than a few objects floating in the air, frustrating the hapless villains, and even the fights become illogical here and there. There is rarely the satisfaction of recognition or any sort of actual excitement in the confrontations. You get the feeling that the film would have been much better if it had been played more seriously—not that much would have to have been changed—and been given a little more script attention to how things would wrap up.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1. The image is dark to begin with, to better hide the wires and things (the physical effects are well executed), with occasionally compromised contrasts, and looks a little soft on top of that, although colors are fresh. The monophonic sound is sharp, which is no help for the garish opening and closing theme song utilizing an overly cheery children's chorus. The film is in Japanese with optional English subtitles. Along with a small collection of promotional photos in still frame, there is a nice 15-minute summary of invisibility in literature and film, and a 27-minute piece that goes over the history of Daiei and in particular its special effect features before segueing into a detailed analysis of the invisibility formula the hero uses.

Also featured is a very good commentary track by film historian Jonathan Clements, who explains that the movie is primarily intended as a showcase for the comedians in the supporting roles, and that it is geared for children and was originally released on a double bill with a Gamera movie. Along with detailing the careers of the cast and the crew, he does his very best to infuse his talk with intelligent insights. "We get a good look at [Sakai's] clothes here, which are blue, a color associated with hard-working honest souls in the Far East because blue, or famously, you can use indigo dye to make it, but mainly, it doesn't show up dirt as much as other clothes which is why it is such a big deal with the working classes."

May Special Edition: A few Asian films

Our May 25 Special Edition features a selection of Asian films and is available for free as a PDF file for download, which can be requested by writing Special Edition at DVD.Laser@rocketmail.com. You can also sign up to get each month's Special Editions as a PDF file if you have a regular snail mail subscription, by writing the same email address. Those who already have an email subscription receive them automatically. If you have no access to a computer and want a hard copy, we unfortunately have to charge \$10 to cover our expenses for each individual Edition (\$15 outside of the U.S.). Please write to Special Edition %The DVD-Laser Disc Newsletter, PO Box 382, Glen Cove NY 11542, and include a check or credit card details.

The reviews featured include Arrow Video's five-platter Blu-ray set, **V. Cinema Essentials Bullets & Betrayal** (UPC#760137172901, \$100); the Criterion Collection Blu-ray **The Wind Will Carry Us** (UPC#715515313216, \$40); the 88 Films Blu-ray of **Jakoman & Tetsu** (UPC#760137178088, \$40), the Radiance Films Blu-ray of **Hokuriku Proxy War** (UPC#760137172833, \$40); Arrow's Blu-ray, **Cops vs. Thugs** (UPC#760137992981, \$50); Radiance's Blu-ray, **Sympathy for the Underdog** (UPC#760137155843, \$40); Criterion's 4K Blu-ray releases of **Farewell My Concubine** (UPC#715515299817, \$50) and **Ugetsu** (UPC#715515309318, \$50); the 88 Films Blu-ray **Gate of Flesh** (UPC#760137175919, \$40); Criterion's Blu-ray, **Yi Yi** (UPC#715515-069410, \$40); the Magnolia Entertainment DVD, **Shoplifters** (UPC#876964016582, \$15); Radiance's Blu-ray **Elegant Beast** (UPC#760137141068, \$40); Criterion's Blu-ray releases of **Jellyfish Eyes** (UPC#715515161817, \$40) and the four-platter **Jackie Chan Emergence of a Superstar** (UPC#715515289115, \$125); the Eureka! Blu-ray, **The Magnificent Chang Cheh** (UPC#760137177906, \$40); the 88 Films Blu-rays **Lady of the Law** (UPC#760137167709, \$40), **Lady with a Sword** (UPC#760137175889, \$30), and **The Lady Is the Boss** (UPC#760137167679, \$30); Arrow's Blu-ray, **A Certain Killer / A Killer's Key** (UPC# 760137170556, \$40); the Radiance Blu-ray, **The Rapacious Jailbreaker** (UPC#760137179375, \$40); Twilight's Blu-ray, **Bullet Train** (UPC#811956021472); Well Go USA Entertainment's DVD + Blu-ray, **Detective Dee The Four Heavenly Fathers** (UPC#810348030214, \$30); Eureka!'s **Running on Karma** Blu-ray (UPC#760137171737, \$40); Arrow's Blu-ray, **Tomie** (UPC#76013716-4340, \$40); Well Go's Blu-ray, **Operation Undead** (UPC#810348037831, \$30); Arrow's Blu-rays, **The Prodigal Son** (UPC#760137132271, \$40) and **Warriors Two** (UPC#760137125297, \$40); Eureka!'s Blu-rays, **Champions** (UPC#760137162605, \$40) and **Two Taoist Tales** (UPC#760137162612, \$50); Arrow's Blu-ray, **Wolf Guy** (UPC#760137985785, \$40); Criterion's Blu-ray, **Death by Hanging** (UPC#71551516-7819, \$40); the 88 Films Blu-ray, **Hong Kong Hong Kong** (UPC#760137167693, \$30); the Radiance Blu-ray **The Sting of Death** (UPC#760137142782, \$40); the 88 Films Blu-ray, **Yakuza Wives** (UPC#76013716924, \$40); the Eureka! Blu-ray, **The Adventurers** (UPC#760137177883, \$40); the Radiance Blu-ray, **Dogra Magra** (UPC#76013716-4616, \$40); and Criterion's Blu-rays, **Secret Sunshine** (UPC#715515085212, \$40) and **The Runner** (UPC#715515294119, \$40).

The reviews have also been incorporated in our PDF format compilation book available on CD-ROM, DVDs, for \$24.95 plus \$4 shipping (\$15 outside of the U.S.). Write to DVDs, The DVD-Laser Disc Newsletter, PO Box 382, Glen Cove NY 11542.

DVD News

CRITERION CORNER: Youssef Chahine's magnificent **Cairo Station** is being released by The Criterion Collection with *Cairo as Seen by Chahine* (1991), a short documentary by Chahine, with an introduction by film scholar Joseph Fahim; an interview with Fahim; *Chahine . . . Why?* (2009), a documentary on the director and **Cairo Station**; and an excerpt from Chahine's appearance at the 1998 Midnight Sun Film Festival. Kon Ichikawa's **The Burmese Harp** will be in 4K format and will include interviews with Ichikawa and actor Rentaro Mikuni. Ichikawa's **Fires on the Plain** will also be in 4K and will have an introduction by Donald Richie, and a program featuring interviews with Ichikawa and actor Mickey Curtis. **The Wes Anderson Archive** will contain ten films in 4K format, **Bottle Rocket**, **Rushmore**, **The Royal Tenenbaums**, **The Life Aquatic with Steve Zissou**, **The Darjeeling Limited**, **Fantastic Mr. Fox**, **Moonrise Kingdom**, **The Grand Budapest Hotel**, **Isle of Dogs**, and **The French Dispatch of the Liberty, Kansas Evening Sun**. The latter two films are also being issued as separate 4K releases. Vittorio De Sica's **Shoeshine** will be in 4K format and will come with *Sciuscià 70* (2016), a documentary by Mimmo Verdesca made to mark the film's seventieth anniversary; a program on **Shoeshine** and children in Italian neorealism featuring film scholars Paola Bonifazio and Catherine O'Rawe; and a radio broadcast from 1946 featuring De Sica. **A Confucian Confusion / Mahjong Two Films by Edward Yang** will feature excerpts of director Edward Yang speaking after a 1994 screening of **A Confucian Confusion**; an interview with editor Chen Po-wen; a conversation between Chinese-cultural-studies scholar Michael Berry and film critic Justin Chang; and a performance of Yang's 1992 play, *Likely Consequence*. Zeinabu irene Davis's **Compensation** will have a commentary featuring Davis, screenwriter Marc Arthur Chéry, and director of photography Pierre H. L. Désir Jr.; Q&As with members of the cast and crew; two short films by Davis, *Crocodile Conspiracy* (1986) and *Pandemic Bread* (2023), the latter with audio commentary featuring Davis and cast and crew members and descriptive audio; an interview with Davis from 2021; and a program about select archival photographs and adinkra and vèvé symbols in the film.

NEW IN BLU: The following titles were recently released on Blu-ray—Glitch Ditch 41, Glitch Ditch 42, Glitch Ditch 43, Glitch Ditch 44, Glitch Ditch 45, Glitch Ditch 46, Glitch Ditch 47, Glitch Ditch 48, Glitch Ditch 49, Glitch Ditch 50, Glitch Ditch 51, Glitch Ditch 52, Glitch Ditch 53, Glitch Ditch 54, Murder Zone III (Acid Bath); The Sword and the Claw (AGFA); Good Madam (AMD); Queer (A24); Forced March, The Mad King, Markus Bixby, 31 Kills of Halloween (Bayview); Pichuco (Blue Water); Hoges Live One Night Only (Bounty); Captain America Brave New World (Buena Vista); Stolen Time (Burning Bulb); When You Get to the Forest (Cartuna); Child's Play, Devil Doll/Curse of the Voodoo, The House of Witchcraft, The House of Lost Souls, Juice / Daddy Dearest, The Nesting, The Sweet House of Horrors (CAV); The Proud Rebel (Classieflix); DJ Mixset (CM); How to Get Ahead in Advertising, Killer of Sheep, Room 666 / Room 999, The Wind Will Carry Us, Withnail & I (Criterion); The End, Presence, The Seed of the Sacred Fig (Decal); What We Left Unfinished (Dekalog); Screambot (Deskpop); Underdeveloped (ETR); Louder Than You Think A Lo-Fi History of Gary Young & Pavement (Factory 25); Artie Shaw Time Is All You've Got, The Human Pyramid/The Punishment, The Marquise of O . . . , Playground (Film Movement); King of Kings (Flicker Alley); Falling in Love (Fun City); Arthur Erickson Beauty between the Lines, Field of Screams, Fighting Spirit, Greek Mothers Never Die, I'm Beginning to See the Light, The Lost Princess, Meme Gods, My Robot Sophia, Shakey Grounds, Stolen Time, Wind and Bone (Gravitas); Pulp Modern Die Laughing (Indie Rights); The Day the Earth Blew Up A Looney Tunes Movie (Ketchup); The Amorous Adventures of Moll Flanders, Audie Murphy Collection IV, Being Maria, Bottoms, Crack in the World, The Empire, I'll Sleep When I'm Dead, Live Like a Cop Die Like a Man, The Magnificent Seven Deadly Sins, Nate and Hayes, Peter Walker Crime Collection, Ramona, Wonder Dogs! (Kino); Kitne Door Kitne Paas, Mann, Shool, Tajurba (Leomark); The Quiet Ones, Severance (Magnolia); Miss O'Dell (Maverick); Physician Heal Thyself (Memory); Masters of the Universe Revelation / Revolution, Ultraman Trigger Complete Series + Movie (Mill Creek); Late Night with the Devil, Love Crime, Operation Raqqa (MPI); Heavier Trip (Music Box); The Beast Hand, A Better Place, The Bikini Car Wash Movie Bubble Feature, Entertaining Mr. Sloane, Gate of Flesh, Hell of the Living Dead, House of Psychotic Women Rarities V.2, In My Skin, Jason Goes to Hell, Jason X, Lady of the Law, The Naked Witch, The Rapacious Jailbreaker, Rats Night of Terror, Steppenwolf, Terror in the Fog The Wallace Krimi at CCC, Thermoc, Tunnel Vision, Visceral between the Ropes of Madness, Wan Pipel (MVD); Hamilton / Putty Hill, I Like Killing Flies (Oscilloscope); Landman Season 1, Yellowstone Season 5 Part 2 (Paramount); Girls without Shame, The Iron Rose (Powerhouse); Jose Benazeraf The Forbidden Films (Pulse); Craft Me a Romance, Cryptic, Dark Feathers Dance of the Geisha, The Elevator, The Eyes, The Great Turkey Town Miracle, Indieocracy, It's So Easy, The Keeper, Krispr, Life Without, 1915 Legend of the Gurkhas, Purgatory Station (Rising Sun); William Tell (Samuel Goldwyn); Bone Sickness (Saturn's Core); Outlander Season 7 (Sony); Tom Tyler Silent Film Collection (Undercrank); Along Came Polly, Big Miracle, Black Bag, Bridget Jones Mad about the Boy, October 8, The Woman in the Yard (Universal); Project Omicron (VHShiffest); The Alto Knights, Doctor Who The Savages, Dune Prophecy Season 1, La Vie en Rose, Lean on Me, Mickey 17, Mystery Street, Rhapsody in Blue, Three Comrades, Waiting for the Light (Warner); The Demoness, Hunt the Wicked, The Prosecutor, Silent Zone, Striking Rescue (Well Go); Rats! (Yellow Veil)

NEW IN 4K: The following titles were recently released in 4K format—Captain Marvel Brave New World, Kingdom of Heaven, Lilo & Stitch (Buena Vista); Bang the Drum Slowly, Murderock, The Nesting (CAV); Blaxploitation Classics V.1, Scent of a Woman, Sky Captain and the World of Tomorrow, What Lies Beneath (Cinedigm); In the Heat of the Night, Killer of Sheep, The Three Musketeers/The Four Musketeers, The Umbrellas of Cherbourg, Withnail & I (Criterion); Presence (Decal); Last Tango in Paris (Distrib-pix); Kingpin, Prophecy, Vice Squad, Wayne's World 2 (Kino); The Andromeda Strain, Hell of the Living Dead, Jason Goes to Hell, Jason X, Rats Night of Terror (MVD); Girls without Shame, The Iron Rose (Powerhouse); A Knight's Tale, Oliver!, Staman (Sony); Black Bag (Universal); Dune Prophecy Season 1, Mickey 17 (Warner); The Prosecutor (Well Go)

An index to the reviews contained in this issue

BDs
The Adventurers p7
The Andromeda Strain 4K p2
Black Bag 4K p4
Bullet Train p7
A Certain Killer / A Killer's Key p7
Champions p7
Companion 4K p4
Cops vs. Thugs p7
(The Curse of the Yellow Snake) p4
(Das siebente Opfer) p5
(Das Ungeheuer von London-City) p5
Death by Hanging p7
(Der Fluch der gelben Schlange) p4
(Der Henker von London) p4
(Der Phantom von Soho) p5
(Der Würger von Schloss Blackmoor) p4
Detective Dee The Four Heavenly Fathers p7
Dogra Magra p7
Elegant Beast p7
(Executioner of London) p4
Farewell My Concubine 4K p7
Gate of Flesh p7
Girl with a Suitcase p3
Hong Kong Hong Kong p7
Horkuriku Proxy War p7
In the Heat of the Night 4K p1
The Invisible Swordsman p7
Jackie Chan Emergence of a Superstar p7
Jakoman & Tetsu p7
(A Killer's Key) p7
The Lady Is the Boss p7
Lady of the Law p7
Lady with a Sword p7
(The Mad Executioners) p4
The Magnificent Chang Cheh p7
Mickey 17 p5
(The Monster of London) p5
Oliver! 4K p2
Operation Undead p7
(The Organization) p2
(The Phantom of Soho) p5
The Prodigal Son p7
The Pusher p6
(The Racetrack Murders) p5
The Rapacious Jailbreaker p7
The Runner p7
Running on Karma p7
Secret Sunshine p7
(The Seventh Victim) p5
Some Like It Hot 4K p1
Springfield Rifle p6
The Sting of Death p7
(The Strangler of Blackmoor) p4
Sympathy for the Underdog p7
Terror in the Fog The Wallace Krimi at CCC p4
Themroc p6
("They Call Me Mister Tibbs!") p2
Three the Hard Way p6
Tomie p7
Two Taoist Tales p7
Ugetsu 4K p7
The Umbrellas of Cherbourg 4K p3
V-Cinema Essentials Bullets & Betrayal p7
Warriors Two p7
The Wind Will Carry Us p7
Wolfguy p7
Yakuza Wives p7
Yi Yi p7
DVDs
Charming Sinners p6
The Cinema Within p3
Detective Dee The Four Heavenly Fathers p7
Fog of War p5
The Kiss p6
Shoplifters p7

Current Attractions

The following titles recently appeared for the first time:
Abby's List A Documentary (Freestyle)*
The Adventures of Superman Complete Series (Warner)
Air Marshal (SP)*
Air Strike (SP)*
Along Came Polly (Universal)*
The Alto Knights (Warner)
American Delivery (Kino)
Ants! / Tarantulas The Deadly Cargo / Terror Out of the Sky (Kino)
Arthur Erickson Beauty between the Lines (Gravitas)*
As Good As Dead (SP)*
Autumn and the Black Jaguar (Blue Fox)
The Azusa Street Project (Vision)*
The Beast Hand (MVD)
Behind That Curtain (Shoreline)*
Being Maria (Kino)
Ben 10 Complete Collection (Warner)
The Best of the Sound & Vision Film Festival V.1 (360)
Better Man (Paramount)
Beverly's Plight (Random)
The Bikini Carwash
Company Bubble Feature (MVD)
Bitten Complete Series (Lionsgate)
Black Bag (Universal)
The Black Watch (Shoreline)*
Blue Lights (MPI)
Body Odyssey (Indieplex)
Branching Out / Romance in Style / Mid-Love Crisis (Cinedigm)
Bridget Jones Mad about the Boy (Universal)*
Brothers after War (Mill Creek)
Captain America Brave New World (Buena Vista)*
Cassettes Go Hi-Fi / Amplify / Analog (360)
Charming Sinners (Alpha)*
Chinatown Nights (Shoreline)*
The Cinema Within (First Run)
Cold Heart (SP)*
Conspiracy of Fear (Vision)*
Costa Rican Summer (MVD)
Craft Me a Romance (Rising Sun)*
Creature (SP)*
Crocodile II (SP)*
Cryptic (Rising Sun)*
CS Lewis on Stage Further Up & Further In (Vision)*
Dalia and the Red Book (Vision)*
Dangerous Curves (Shoreline)*
Daniel's Gotta Die (Brainstorm)*
Dark Feathers Dance of the Geisha (Rising Sun)*
The Day the Earth Blew Up A Looney Tunes Movie (Ketchup)
Dead on the Vine (MPI)
The Death and Life of Bobby Z (SP)*
The Demoness (Well Go)
Demons at Dawn (MPI)
Dianne Warren Relentless (Kino)
DJ Mixset (CM)*
The Drew Carey Show Complete Series (Warner)
Dune: Prophecy Season 1 (Warner)
Egypt's Tombs of Amun (Paramount)
The Empire (Kino)
Eternal Love (Shoreline)*
Eternal You (Film Movement)
Eureka (Film Movement)
Fallen (Kino)
Fallout Season 1 (Warner)
Father Brown Season 12 (Warner)
Feed (Freestyle)*
Field of Screams (Gravitas)
Fighting Spirit (Gravitas)*
Finding Nicole (Freestyle)*
Fish War (Kino)
Fog of War (Decal)
Forgotten Hero Walter White and the NAACP (Paramount)
Foyle's War Complete Series (AMID)
Funny Little Cars Complete Series (Ytini)*
Glitch Ditch 41 (Acid Bath)*
Glitch Ditch 42 (Acid Bath)*
Glitch Ditch 43 (Acid Bath)*
Glitch Ditch 44 (Acid Bath)*
Glitch Ditch 45 (Acid Bath)*
Glitch Ditch 46 (Acid Bath)*
Glitch Ditch 47 (Acid Bath)*
Glitch Ditch 48 (Acid Bath)*
Glitch Ditch 49 (Acid Bath)*
Glitch Ditch 50 (Acid Bath)*
Glitch Ditch 51 (Acid Bath)*
Glitch Ditch 52 (Acid Bath)*
Glitch Ditch 53 (Acid Bath)*
Glitch Ditch 54 (Acid Bath)*
The Great Turkey Town Miracle (Rising Sun)*
Greatest Mysteries of Ancient Egypt / Great Mysteries of the Sphinx / Great Mysteries of Tutankhamun (360)
Greek Thrones Never Die (Gravitas)
Hamilton / Putty Hill (Oscilloscope)
Happy Valley (Warner)
The Heiress and the Handyman / Finding Love in Mountain View (Cinedigm)
History Kids The Founding Mothers (Wonderscape)*
Hoges Live One Night Only (Bounty)*
The Hole in the Wall (Shoreline)*
A Holistic Journey (X4)*
Hunt the Wicked (Well Go)*
I Like Killing Flies (Oscilloscope)
I'm Beginning to See the Light (Gravitas)
Indieocracy (Rising Sun)*
Inspector Ellis Season 1 (AMID)
It's So Easy (Rising Sun)*
Jazz Ramsey A K-9 Mystery (Cinedigm)*
Juice / Daddy Dearest (MVD)
Jules of Light and Dark (Wolfe)
The Keeper (Rising Sun)*
Kidnapping Inc. (MPI)
Knox Goes Away (Lionsgate)
Krisp (Rising Sun)
Landman Season 1 (Paramount)
Las Tres Sisters (Kino)
The Last Supper (Pure Fix)
Late Night with the Devil (MPI)
Lead Belly: The Man Who Invented Rock & Roll (MVD)
Legally Mine (Random)
LEGO Jurassic World Collection (Universal)
Life Without (Rising Sun)*
Liz in September (Wolfe)*
Los Frikis (Decal)
The Lost Princess (Gravitas)*
The Magic of Ordinary Days / The Valley of Light (Cinedigm)
Magazine Dreams (Universal)
Marie Antoinette Season 2 (Paramount)
The Masonic Presidents A Secret History of Power (Wownow)
McVeigh (Decal)
Meme Gods (Gravitas)*
The Mentalist Complete Series (Warner)
Michael Smith Mike's Box (Molka)
Mickey 7 (Warner)
Miracle Mile (BMG)
Miss Austen (Paramount)
Miss O'Dell (Maverick)
Mogwai If the Stars Had a Sound (Kino)
Moral Combat (Wownow)
More Beautiful for Having Been Broken (Wolfe)*
Mr. Peabody and Sherman Complete Collection (Universal)
Murder Zone 3 (Acid Bath)*
My Dead Friend Zoe (Universal)
My Normal (Wolfe)*
My Robot Sophia (Gravitas)
Mystery 101 6-Movie Collection (Cinedigm)
NASA Explores OSIRIS-REX / To an Asteroid and Back (Wonderscape)
NASA Planetary Defenders (Wonderscape)*
The Native American Renaissance (Green Planet)*
Never Too Young to Die (SP)*
The Night They Came Home (Lionsgate)
1915 Legend of the Gurkas (Rising Sun)*
No Address (Mill Creek)
Off Season (Freestyle)*
One Tree Hill Complete Series (Warner)
100 Yen Love (Film Movement)
Operation Raqqa (MPI)
Outlander Season 7 (Sony)
Panda Bear in Africa (Cinedigm)
Pandora's Box (Shoreline)*
PBS Kids Let's Go on a Trip (Paramount)
The Penguin Lessons (Sony)*
Pichuco (Blue Water)*
Pichu The Dwarf Planet (360)
Pompeii's Secret Underworld (Paramount)
Poor Little Peppina (Alpha)*
Presence (Decal)
Problems Higher Up Seasons 1 - 3 (Butler)*
The Prosecutor (Well Go)
The Proud Rebel (Classicflix)
Pulp Modern Die Laughing (Indie Rights)*
Purgatory Station (Rising Sun)*
The Quiet Ones (Magnolia)
Redneck Mutants / Buster (Alpha)*
Remembering the Catskills (ULTV)
Retribution (Lionsgate)
Rock Bottom (MVD)
Rookie Blue Complete Series (Lionsgate)
Room Six (Freestyle)
Room 666/Room 999 (Criterion)
Santa's Second Wife (Bruder)
Screamboat (Deskpop)*
7 Palms Short Films Collection V.1 (7 Palms)*
Shakey Grounds (Gravitas)
Shark Zone (SP)*
Silent Zone (Well Go)*
Solitude (Mill Creek)
Somebody Up There Likes Me (Tribeca)*
Stay with Me (Freestyle)
Stolen Time (Burning Bub)*
Stolen Time (Gravitas)*
Striking Rescue (Well Go)
Takedown (BMG)
Talk to Me (Lionsgate)
The Texas Steak (Alpha)*
These Stories (Vision)*
Today You Die (SP)*
Tom & Jerry Kids Collection (Warner)
Tom Tyler Silent Film Collection (Undercrank)
Topkapi (Freestyle)*
Tunnel Vision (MVD)
24 Hours to D-Day (The Wantme2 KILLHim? (Tribeca)
Vice Squad (Kino)
Viet and Nam (Strand)
The Vourdalak (Oscilloscope)
V13 (DeskPop)
Waiting for the Light (Warner)
Wan Pipel (MVD)
Was Once a Hero (BMG)*
We Are Gathered Here Today (Freestyle)*
We Could Be King (Tribeca)
Wind and Bone (Gravitas)
Wolf Hall The Mirror and the Light (Paramount)
The Woman in the Yard (Universal)
Yellowstone Season 5 V.2 (Paramount)
Young Hearts (Strand)*
The Younger Generation (Alpha)*
*Did not appear on last month's Coming Attractions listing

Coming Attractions

The following select DVD titles are promised for the near future. How many of them will show up is never a certainty. Logical subdivisions appear unmarked within each division. Titles which did not appear on last month's list are marked with an arrow (→) and are added to the bottom of subdivisions so that the longest awaited titles appear at the top within each grouping:
From AMD:
The Creep Tapes Season 1
Recipes for Love and Murder Season 2
→ The Rule of Jenny Pen
→ Murdoch Mysteries Season 18
→ Ash
From BMG:
Book of Joshua
→ Horse Healing
→ Potluck Teacher
→ The Greatest Thing Ever A Garden Cartoon Movie
→ Spark
→ Bound
→ Band on the Run
→ Land's End
From Full Moon:
Naughty Pack (Housewives, Real Wild, Vice Girls)
From Gemini:
→ Atlantic / Mystery Liner
→ Enter the Devil / Ghosts That Still Walk
From Gravitas:
→ Trafficking
→ The Picture of Dorian Gray
→ Vengeance
→ The Haunting of the Tower of London
From Immortal:
Tim Travers and the Time Traveler's Paradox
From Indican:
→ The Clouds
From Indieplex:
Vainilla
From Jinga:
Tulpa Demon of Desire
Tonight She Comes The Bunny Game
Transmission
→ Darklands
→ Iconic
→ The Protos Experiment
From Kino:
Marcella
Holy Cow
Who by Fire
Shark Warning
The President's Wife
The Annihilation of Fish
→ I for Icarus / Millions of Dollars
→ Dames and Dreams
→ Black Tea
→ Blur to the End
→ Northern Lights
→ Bonjour Tristesse
Compensation
From Decal:
The Wedding Banquet
The Friend
→ The Monkey
→ Hell of a Summer
→ Rust (Alec Baldwin)
From DeskPop:
Autumn
The Burnt Half Phantoms
→ Worth the Fight
→ Blood Tulip
→ Bearing Witness Native American Voices in Hollywood
→ Wolf in the Chute
From Dolly Sez:
The River A Songwriter's Stories of the South
From Dreamscape:
→ The Imago
→ Girl Clock
From Film Masters:
→ The Fabulous Dorseys
→ The Blood of Jesus
→ A Life at Stake
From Film Movement:
→ An Unfinished Film: My Motherland
From Freestyle:
→ Raise Your Hand
→ Beth & Jeremy & Steve
→ A Light through Coloured Glass
→ Spark
→ Bound
→ Band on the Run
→ Land's End
From Full Moon:
Naughty Pack (Housewives, Real Wild, Vice Girls)
From Gemini:
→ Atlantic / Mystery Liner
→ Enter the Devil / Ghosts That Still Walk
From Gravitas:
→ Trafficking
→ The Picture of Dorian Gray
→ Vengeance
→ The Haunting of the Tower of London
From Immortal:
Tim Travers and the Time Traveler's Paradox
From Indican:
→ The Clouds
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→ I for Icarus / Millions of Dollars
→ Dames and Dreams
→ Black Tea
→ Blur to the End
→ Northern Lights
→ Bonjour Tristesse
From Leomark:
→ Jekyll and Hyde
→ The Fourth Musketeer
→ Gone with the Dead
→ Werewolf Castle
From Lionsgate:
The Gunslingers
From Lonesome:
Long Lonesome Highway The Story of Michael Parks
From Magnolia:
Borderline
The Assessment
From MPI:
Vanilla
→ On the Go
From Music Box:
Ephesus
→ The Trouble with Jessica
From MVD:
Dead on the Vine
Vampire at Midnight
Wild Malibu Weekend
Miss Julie
Sour Party
Terminus
Pushman Frank Lucas & The True Story of the American Gangster
Mysteries / Pastorale 1943
Roseanne Barr Is America
One Tough Cop
→ Lost Country
→ Hard Rock Zombies
→ Sex and Satan
→ Double Bill
→ Sidekicks
→ Queens of Drama
→ Tammy and the T-Rex
From Ocean Avenue:
The Redemption of Henry Myers
From Octane:
→ Mercy Land
→ Nowhere Land
→ Malice
From 101:
→ Give Me a Word The Collective Soul Story
From Oscilloscope:
→ The Cruise
From Paramount:
Bugs That Rule the World
Dexter Original Sin Season 1
We Want the Funk!
Novocaine
Katawi Africa's Fallen Paradise
The Corridors of Power
→ Patience
→ Revolutionary War Weapons
→ Matter of Mind ALS
Parkinson's Alzheimer's
→ Simon Schama The Holocaust 80 Year On
→ Grantchester Season 10
→ Secrets of the Forest
→ Cooking with Legends
→ Hummingbirds of Hollywood
From Sandpiper:
The Charge of the Light Brigade
Malice
Roller Boogie
A Midsummer Night's Dream
Life Stinks
Rush
Great Balls of Fire
From Shoreline:
→ Blood Creek
Woodsmen
→ Channel 99
From Social:
→ VHS Violence
→ Bootlegged
From Sony:
→ Broke
From SRS:
Private Blue
Night of the Strangers
The Pickleball Exorcist
Bloody Nun Last Rites
→ Four Nights in Fear Forest
→ Cannibal Tick
From Strand:
Young Hearts
From 360:
→ Greatest Mysteries of Ancient Egypt, The Sphinx, Tutankhamun
From Universal:
→ Drop
→ Sneaks
→ Rosario
From Vertical:
→ The Lost Lands
→ Saint Catherine
From Warner:
Call the Midwife Season 14
Death in Paradise Season 14
Doctor Who Season One (Season 14)
→ Fallout Season 1
→ The Last of Us Season 2
→ A Minecraft Movie
→ The Pusher
→ Rick and Morty Season 8
→ Sinners
→ Walking with Dinosaurs Complete Series (2 platters)
The White Lotus Season 3
A Working Man
From Well Go:
→ 01 Rebels
→ Zero
→ Stowaway
→ Soul Reaper
From Wild Eye:
→ Sheesballs
→ Race War
→ Fisted!
From Wonderscape:
NASA Explores X-59
NASA's 'Quest' for Silent Supersonic Flight
→ NASA Explores Far Out Building and Eating in Space
Great Authors Masters of Science Fiction
From Wownow:
Damon Resurrection
Drugg League
RFK Conspiracy
Dracula's Drive-In
Phantom from Space
Dracula's Dine-In Invasion of the Bee Girls
Boonie Bears The Adventurers
Childhood Treasure
Filthy Rich Asians
→ Kung Fu Masters
→ Godiac Way Copy Cat
→ Gangs of Shanghai
→ Westland
→ All Out
From X4:
→ Things Like This
→ Karla
→ Life is a Carnival