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3D for everyone!

Dazed after discovering the corpse of the ex-lover who was blackmailing him, a TV writer played by John Forsythe strolls catatonically down a sidewalk, oblivious to a series of dangers that happen in rapid succession: Crossing the street, he steps in front of a truck, which jams on its brakes as the ladders it is carrying go sailing forward; then he walks in front of a man hosing the sidewalk, passes a newspaper truck as a delivery man heaves a bundle of papers to a vendor, and then wanders under a chute being used to clear debris from the upper story window of a building. Jack Arnold, already a 3D veteran with **It Came from Outer Space** (Nov 16), was assigned by Universal Pictures to helm another 3D feature in 1953, **The Glass Web**, which has now been released as a 3D Blu-ray by Universal, 3-D Film Archive and Kino Lorber Incorporated as a *KL Studio Classics* title (UPC#73832926962, \$30). Three presentations of the 81-minute film are on the platter—a standard 2D version, a BD-3D version that requires a special BD player, glasses and a special TV screen, and a version that can be played on any Blu-ray player and any screen in 3D, to be viewed through a pair of red/cyan glasses. A pair is included with the disc. Since **The Glass Web** is in black-and-white, very little is lost with the red/cyan version in comparison to the superior BD-3D format. Although the film is textured with a natural if pronounced grain, both the 2D and the BD-3D presentations are sharp and spotless, while the red/cyan presentation, while still spotless, is hazier at times and always softer. Dimensional definition is naturally stronger on the BD-3D version, but the red/cyan version works just fine. When the ladders, water, newspapers and debris are thrust at you, you don't just cringe, you scream in delight.

That one sequence has a 'now leave me alone' feel to it, and with the exception of a couple other moments—there is a really incredible matte shot involving a roadside cliff over surf; and the eventual corpse, played by Kathleen Hughes, puts her stockings on so that her toes dangle below your nose—the film's 3D effects are plentiful but aesthetic, designed to thrill you with the beauty of their dimensionality rather than the giddy surprise of their spatial incursion (as always, dissolves have a particularly serendipitous dimensionality). The narrative is a functional murder mystery wrapped around a tale of resentment, jealousy and greed, but Arnold's staging is smart and efficient, constantly titillating you with objects in the foreground and the background, and enhancing the suspense by invading the space Forsythe's character attempts to maintain around himself. The TV studio, where a lot of the film takes place, is set up so that you can see through the control room windows down onto the set, and is further populated with hanging sound booms, bulky cameras, monitors and other equipment, along with the props and set dressings. And actors. Appearing with Forsythe and Hughes is classic film superstar Edward G. Robinson, and as great as it is to marvel at a bust of Forsythe in close-up, having Robinson emerge from your screen and vividly snarl at you is an unparalleled joy.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1. The monophonic sound is reasonably strong. Be prepared to be humming *Temptation* for days upon end afterwards, since the instrumental plays a key role in the plot and is heard multiple times. There are optional English subtitles, a TV commercial (with Hughes speaking to the viewer!) and a 2D trailer. Film historian Jason Ney supplies an excellent commentary track, also inserting talks by 3D aficionados Mike Ballew and Greg Kintz, and a great interview with Hughes. Even though the history and technology of 3D has been covered a number of times before, the summary given here is succinct and informative, and speaks directly to the challenges the film was facing. The format was already beginning to fade, and so its intelligent use of the TV studio juxtapositions and so on as the central effects were lost when the film was mostly projected in 2D. Ney also goes over the interesting background of novelist Max Ehrlich (who had himself been involved with an early TV crime show like the one employing the Forsythe and Robinson characters), Robinson's troubles with HUAC, and he broaches a topic we've never encountered on other commentaries—Arnold's horrendous predatory behavior on his sets toward anyone in a skirt, young or old.

And a bunch of Oscars go to...

Born in this century, the two lovebirds in Sean Baker's 2024 Oscar-winning **Anora**, a sex worker and the son of a wealthy Russian businessman, stumble into maturity kicking and screaming in the delightful comedic romance set in New York's Brighton Beach and Coney Island. If you are apprehensive about the possibility of violence in the film, based upon experiences with other movies set in that area with Russian characters, rest assured. Aside from some dramatic slapstick, the film is as sweet, or bittersweet, as it is delightfully engrossing. It is at once a fairy tale and intuitively realistic, and it is that realism, which comes out in the additionally Oscar-winning performances by Mikey Madison and Mark Eydelshteyn, which holds you captivated to every sequence in the film. The narrative is simple and not worth repeating, but the characters are vividly rendered by every member of the cast. Baker, who wrote and edited the film as well as directing it, and received Oscars for all three activities (he also made the amazing **Take Out**, which we reviewed in Jan 23), is a modern incarnation of Frank Capra, uncovering entertainment in the carefully crafted experiences of real people. The luxury surroundings that most viewers only glimpse on the screen of fictional dramas and fantasies are nevertheless genuine places, and when you see these characters inhabiting those locations, you believe every second of it.

Neon Entertainment and The Criterion Collection have released **Anora** on a three-platter 4K Blu-ray (UPC#715515312318, \$50). Letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1, the image is vivid and glossy, and darker sequences are finely detailed. There are times when outdoor scenes appear to grow more and more hazy, but then you realize that Baker has a passion for twilight, and will sustain a scene from daytime to nighttime in order to convey the transition. All of that said, hues are brighter and the colors are more satisfying on the standard Blu-ray included in the set. The images often have a faint but purposeful haze, and make use of twilight a number of times in the outdoor sequences. The density in the 4K image and the clarity of its detail is still gratifying, but an argument can be made that since the standard BD is already superbly produced, it gains more than it loses in the trade off with its brighter colors, and the intricacies of the haze are not overwhelmed by the loss of detail. The 5.1-channel DTS sound has an enjoyable surround presence and general dimensionality. The sound does dominate a couple of party sequences, but it is never intended to overwhelm the viewer at any point, since Baker's focus is always on the characters and their emotional states. The film is partially in Russian, and those sequences have default English subtitling, but a second subtitling option covers all of the dialog. There is also an audio track that describes the action ("In the Club, holding her right heel, Annie twirls around a pole. She slows and bends back, hanging upside-down. She takes off her red bra. She pulls up and slides down the pole to her feet. She leans on a bearded man.")

Both platters have two commentary tracks, as well. One features Baker with cinematographer Drew Daniels and producers Alex Coco and Samantha Quinn, who describe the circumstances surrounding the staging of most every scene and convey a fairly comprehensive sense of how the film was created. Daniels also explains where the haze comes from. "From the beginning, Sean wanted to shoot 4-perf anamorphic on longer lenses. I know you pitched that to me right when you pitched the film. And that was honestly one of the scariest parts, because that comes with a lot of baggage, shooting vintage Russian lenses on 35mm. I think there's a tendency now when you shoot film to shoot on sharp lenses because people think film is so soft already, and I really appreciate Sean challenging me with wanting to go the opposite direction and use these vintage lenses. And just the fact that they're Russian [like] so many of the films that have gone into our psyche and our understanding of what cinema and anamorphic is. It just gave a layer of texture and soul to the project. It really was imbedded almost in the DNA of the film itself to have this Russian mist that I really was excited by."

Quinn and Baker also point out that what may be irritating in life can be ideal for movie entertainment. "Sean loves babies on airplanes, which is why this is necessary. There has to be a crying baby." "The things I can't stand in real life I love in my films. So, like bad weather. Hate it in real life, but I want to shoot in it."

On the second track, Baker is joined by Madison and costar Karen Karagulian, interrupted by inserted comments from the actors who returned to Russia, Eydelshteyn, Yura Borisov and Vache Tovmasyan. Again they recall the staging of each scene, but from a different perspective, and they also talk about the film's emotional ebbs and flows.

Oscars (Continued)

"I find that audience members are always complete silent after that last scene."

"I can watch that ending forever, man. It's so good."

"To do a Q&A after this film is very difficult, because I want the audience to be observing the end. Sometimes it can be quite jarring. The ending is designed so that the audience is sort of sitting in silence."

The second Blu-ray platter in the set holds a number of special features. Unlike the feature film on the other platters, the programs do not start up where they left off if playback is terminated. The film runs a little long as it is, so there are 7 minutes of great deleted sequences that just don't advance the narrative enough to have been left in, but are well worth savoring. Also featured is a very enjoyable 36-minute piece about a screening of the film for sex workers in Los Angeles with Madison and costar Lindsey Normington; a wonderful 67-minute collection of behind-the-scenes footage from throughout the shoot and its reception at Cannes; a 42-minute press conference from Cannes, which was pretty much the first time anybody from the production had faced the press so that their statements and answers had yet to be smoothed out from practice; a 10-minute interview with Baker, who speaks in detail about the film's creation and casting, and its overall designs; an additional 13-minute talk with Baker with Madison, discussing Madison's performance and the various strategies they used to stage the film; and 15 minutes of really nice audition tapes featuring the various supporting players.

An ambitious low budget dip into the life of a Jewish architect who immigrates to America after WWII, Brady Corbet's 2024 **The Brutalist** runs a daunting 201 minutes (the film has an Intermission) and settles primarily on the architect's efforts to complete one project, an enormous hilltop spiritual and community center in Pennsylvania (the film was shot in Hungary), commissioned by a wealthy estate owner who has emotional issues. The architect, played by Oscar-winner Adrien Brody, is also a drug addict and struggles with the resonances of the Holocaust while seeking to have his wife and niece reunite with him. Guy Pearce is the benefactor, a widower with two grown children, and Felicity Jones is the architect's wife. Both were also nominated for Oscars, as was Corbet. As it plays out, the film is engrossing, particularly in the early stages as Brody's character begins to get a foothold in his new home. Although the project is eventually completed, however, the film's vector follows the delays and failures in its construction and how those setbacks parallel the architect's emotional life during his first decade in America. Because of its limited resources, the film keeps a lot of the action to confined spaces and carefully apportions its wider views, which is ultimately a reflection back upon the architect's own design considerations. True to its title, the film is more dour than it is exhilarating, but it is continually interesting, so that between the tough personality conflicts that embroil the characters and the bits of artistic insight that flicker now and then within the conversations and the film's perspectives, there is a sustainable entertainment. The film is nowhere near as enjoyable or as satisfying as **Anora**, which beat it out for the Best Picture Oscar, but it is a memorable cinematic experience, one that can draw you back to it again and again despite its seemingly unforgiving contours.

And this is especially true of the 4K Blu-ray, which has been released by A24 (UPC#810180990899, \$35). The film was shot in a resurrected format, VistaVision, which captures more picture information on each frame of film—ideal for 4K playback—and is presented with an aspect ratio of about 1.66:1. Curiously, the image is subject to occasional scratches and speckles. Most are fleeting, but a couple pop up prominently, which is very unusual for such a high profile, freshly produced feature. Otherwise, however, the color transfer is precise and the cinematography, which won an Oscar for its acknowledgement of motion picture history, is well preserved. Like the rest of the film, the movie's visual strategy appears to be a carefully staged conflict between confinement and peeks at the outer world. Nevertheless, the spread of the film's focal plane is often stunning, and even if you are only absorbing it subliminally, the compelling sharpness of the images enhances the dramatic exchanges between the characters. The detail that each shot manages to convey, particularly as it is supported by the 4K playback, is a worthy compensation for the film's budgetary limitations, sacrificing superficial grandeur for penetrating ideas.

The 5.1-channel DTS sound is finely detailed, with carefully placed directional effects. The one Oscar that the film deserved to win was the one it received for Daniel Blumberg's outstanding modernist musical score, and the BD's directional rendering of its abstract dissonances is captivating. There are optional English subtitles and an audio track that describes the action ("Two men advance along a narrow corridor. The block of white Carrara marble forms the altar, and the first light of day casts the Sign of the Cross on it, perfectly centered. As the men hurry past, the camera tilts up to the dome, where the upside-down shape of the cross is cut out and allows the light to enter. The picture fades to black.") Also featured is an excellent 24-minute promotional featurette that encapsulates what the filmmakers wanted to achieve and how they went about doing it.

Cinematographer Lol Crawley supplies a full length commentary track. While his talk is primarily centered on the film's visual strategies and how various scenes were shot, he also talks about the performances and the film's thematic artistry. Although he explains that the film attempted to convey the spirit of movies from the Fifties in its lighting, color schemes and, of course, the VistaVision, he never mentions the speckling or in any way suggests that it was on purpose. In praising the VistaVision, he explains that he could use a 50mm lens with it so as not to distort the architectural lines that wider lenses would compromise. Most of the time, he busily describes how a scene was executed, often drawing generalized insights about Baker's intentions and moviemaking. "[This is] quite, quite difficult to achieve, to have such a long tracking shot, not only for the actors and the camera operator, but also lighting-wise, to really try and light this entire space while still seeing enough of the faces to get the emotion, and often, it's just knowing when to try to be bold enough with shadow and whether or not either you're confusing an audience or they're feeling denied something. I've learned over the years that audiences will let you go a lot further than you think. When you have nervousness about how dark or contrasty or silhouetted an image might be, you have to go a long way before audiences will switch off or become disengaged from the content or the emotion of a scene."

Finally, the word, 'bit,' is clearly part of his unthinking, idiomatic vocabulary, but as an otherwise unspoken reference to digital processing, it is perfectly placed in his offhand appreciation of working with film stock: "The thing about shooting on film is, you have your expertise and your experience and your confidence, your knowledge. But the one bit you're not in control of is when it goes through the chemicals and comes back, and so to anyone who's ever taken photographs and gets their images back, there's always a wonderful, hopefully a wonderful surprise. There's always a slight element of it, alchemical element that you're not in control of."

In its entirety, the 137-minute 2024 Oscar winner for Best International Feature Film, **I'm Still Here**, released on DVD by Sony Pictures Classics (UPC#0433-96642614, \$21), spans nearly five decades in the life of a Brazilian family that is upended when the father is taken away one day in the early Seventies by the police. Although the film centers on the effect the event has upon the mother, played by Fernanda Torres—who also garnered a number of nominations and awards for her performance—it also profiles the four sisters and the brother (the film is based upon his memoirs) and how the crisis affected them. To an extent, the narrative is evenly spaced out across the film, which removes some of the tension that has been created in other films based upon such events that focus on a single frame of time and effort to find out what happened. Directed by Walter Salles, parts of the film are interesting—Torres's character is also arrested at the same time and the film follows what happened over the days she was in captivity—and the complex family dynamic is continually engaging, but the manner in which the film is stretched out prevents any one part from sustaining an emotional impact, except perhaps the montage at the end that replaces the actors with the genuine archival photos. As for Torres, she delivers a competent performance that captures both the shifts in time (although the decade-and-a-half leap at the end, where the character is played by the actress's own mother, is jarring) and her need to hold her family together against the unknown. However, there is never really a point where her presence is captivating, just as there is never a point where the film becomes an exceptional drama. It is interesting enough to hold one's attention and supply a valuable history, and perhaps viewers will find within it a timely cautionary alarm that travels beyond the borders of Brazil, but its accomplishments are limited.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback. The image is a little soft—it is close to impossible to read the details of the end credit scroll—but otherwise the presentation looks fine, with accurate hues and detailed contrasts that evoke the film's era effectively. The 5.1-channel Dolby Digital sound has a pleasing dimensionality. The film is in Portuguese with an alternate Spanish audio track and optional English, French and Spanish subtitles. A trailer is also included.

Fearful symmetry

Over the years, folks have asked why we don't 'rate' discs with stars or something, and we always give the snarky reply that we use a more sophisticated and intricate rating system called, 'The English Language.' The truth of the matter, however, is that we love almost every movie we see. As we are watching a film, we are usually in its thrall, and loving movies is, after all, why we are in this endeavor to begin with. That said, however, the magnificent 2015 Korean adventure film released on Blu-ray by Well Go USA Entertainment, **The Tiger** (UPC#812491017166, \$30), is genuinely a five-star program. It begins as kind of a cross between **Dersu Uzala** and **The Ghost and the Darkness**, but it also has elements of an action film, a gory horror feature and a very sweet ecological fable.

Directed by Hoon-Jung Park, the story is set in Korea in the Twenties, when it was under Japanese rule. A Japanese military officer obsessed with big game trophies is demanding the remaining tigers in a mountainous area be hunted down. Most of the Korean hunters in the area assist and even lead the search, because it gives them an opportunity to amass guns. The best hunter, however, who lives in the hilly forest with his teenage son, wants nothing to do with them, even when the search comes down to one last, massive tiger, who was partially responsible for the death of the hunter's wife. Inevitably, however, the two are fated to meet again, and indeed, as the film plays out, it is revealed that their spiritual bond is both elaborate and indivisible. Although the film runs 140 minutes, the tiger is almost always present, often causing mayhem, so there is never a long wait between the tiger excitements, if that is what you are watching the film for. But the movie's true power comes from the characters and the land they inhabit. Letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1, the cinematography is outstanding, evoking the wilderness in the fall and winter with a compelling beauty so captivating that the film doesn't really need a tiger to transfix the viewer. The characters and their relationship to the land are not only at the core of the film, but the purpose of its resonance. The more the men are removed from nature or otherwise defile it, the more they lose of their souls.

The color transfer has an immediate, vivid clarity and while normally this would work against the computer animation effects that are required for the storytelling, quite the opposite is true. What awareness you have of those effects, which comes more from a common sense understanding of filmmaking than from any sort of flawed or under-budgeted application, simply strengthens the film's subtle ethereal component. It is the experience of the movie as a whole that ends up having an even greater impact on your own soul than its many ephemeral thrills.

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The 5.1-channel DTS sound is also outstanding, to the point where you definitely just have to sit there after the movie is over and let the power of Young-wuk Cho's orchestral score continue to surround you during the end credits and ease you off its highs. The film is in Korean with optional English subtitles and comes with a trailer. Min-sik Choi, Man-sik Jung and Sang-ho Kim star.

A lovely wartime farce

A romantic action comedy brilliantly infused with elements of classic French farce, **Bon Voyage**, has been released on Blu-ray by Sony Pictures Classics (UPC#043396642010, \$27). Directed by Jean-Paul Rappeneau, the 2003 feature also offers a history lesson, with much of the film set in the confusion and overcrowding of Bordeaux in 1940 (impressively staged by Rappeneau), where the French government temporarily relocated after the Germans invaded. The sweet Grégori Derangère stars as a struggling writer who had done a favor for his childhood crush (who had grown up to become a famous actress played by Isabelle Adjani) and landed in jail, escaping when the Germans arrive. Adjani's character, always out for herself and possessing an uncanny (or maybe not so uncanny) ability to manipulate any man she meets, hooks up with a cabinet minister played by Gérard Depardieu. Peter Coyote is a reporter who is also smitten with her. Virginie Ledoyen and Yvan Attal are featured, as well, and Aurore Clément has a lesser role. The performances by Adjani and Depardieu are outstanding, so that their mere presence is riveting, but at the same time, the rest of the cast is highly appealing, while the narrative is made up of complications becoming more and more complicated, including the fate of an atomic scientist, a German spy, the loose leaf novel Derangère's character has been toting with him and the completely impotent nature of French windshield wipers in the era. To accommodate the large population of characters and the narrative's many cross-stitches, the movie runs 115 minutes, but under Rappeneau's assured guidance and in the hands of the wonderful cast, the film hooks you at the very start and never lets go.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1. The color transfer looks terrific, with smooth, finely detailed hues. The 5.1-channel DTS sound has a satisfying dimensionality. The film is in French with optional English and Spanish subtitles, and is accompanied by a trailer. Rappeneau supplies a commentary track, in French with its own optional English subtitled. It is a great talk, as he explains how the film was shot, identifies how some of the effects were achieved, describes what went into a very elaborate and lengthy day-for-night sequence, talks about working with the cast (this was one of Adjani's very few comedies, but she is brilliant in it; he is also pleased with having "discovered" Derangère), and what his strategies were for the various scenes. He himself had been part of the mass exodus to Bordeaux as a child, and he incorporated his own memories into the film's pandemonium. "Those extras, brought together in this hotel were there to do something that they had never done before. Those were not professional extras. But one has to pay tribute, and I pay tribute to the work of my assistants, those two guys and one girl who organized the choreography of these people in this hall. In a moment, we will see the dining room and I asked them something that I imposed on them right away, that the movement never stop. So for me, the hotel, like the whole of Bordeaux, was like a big ride, turning, that goes around faster and faster, a ride that will end up breaking down. The catastrophe of the capitulation. So in order for this to move, but not in an artificial way, my assistants had invented for each on-screen character, for each extra, some sort of imaginary biography. Each one of them could tell where he was from, who he was in the movie, who he was playing. So they had invented dozens of little stories, little cards that they would give to everyone. So there was some sort of movie under the movie. Sometimes I would ask an extra, 'What are you doing?' We said you are doing what?' He would answer, 'I'm a solicitor from Limoges and I'm here to look for my mistress.' This sounded to me completely unbelievable that he could have such a definition of his character when his job was just to run across the room."

Spectacular Hong Kong action

Hong Kong is back! A fantastic 2024 Hong Kong action film, **Customs Frontline**, has been released on Blu-ray by Well Go USA Entertainment (UPC#810348037817, \$30). Directed by Herman Yau, the film begins as a high-octane procedural, with members of Hong Kong's Customs and Excise Department (you can bet recruiting skyrocketed after the film came out) boarding a freighter that has drifted into territorial waters after a storm, finding lots of contraband and the corpses of executed sailors on board, and the captain running off in a power raft. The hero, a Customs cop played by Nicholas Tse, leaps off a boat into the raft to take the captain down, and they have a wobbly fight that ends up destroying the raft and sending them both to the hospital. That is just the beginning of the 116-minute film, which really becomes more of a James Bond-style production—the heroes go to Africa at one point, trying to trace the destination of the arms they have uncovered—and concludes with a spectacular accident involving another freighter and a number of crowded piers in the Hong Kong harbor. Oh, and the freighter is loaded with more explosive arms, bio-weapons and a small submarine. The production designs are as elaborate as any major Hollywood extravaganza, and not only does the film have a half-dozen action scenes that are as spectacular as anything Hollywood could come up with, but the martial arts fights are even better than anything Hollywood could ever manage to produce. The number of stunt performers (and stars) being placed in peril is amazing, and all that the computer graphic enhancements enable is a splashier tableau for those very real stunts to occur. The relationships between the different cops supply decent emotional hooks for the drama so that the film is not just mindless action sequences strung together—and indeed, the conclusion has a different tone and pace than what Hollywood would demand—making it no more outlandish than most any highly entertaining action feature, and proof that while Hong Kong may now be under very different management, they haven't lost any of the filmmaking mojo the rest of the world loves and envies.

Jacky Cheung and Karena Lam costar. The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1. The slick, glossy and vivid image accelerates the excitement of the action all the more, and the 5.1-channel DTS sound accentuates every thrill. The film is in Mandarin with optional English subtitles and comes with a trailer and 26 minutes of great promotional featurettes.

Snake in a townhouse

Movies don't need a specific formula to be good or bad, they just need to entertain you, and that is what the 1981 thriller directed by Piers Haggard (after Tobe Hooper dropped out), **Venom**, does enormously well. We reviewed the Blue Underground Blu-ray release in Jun 16, but now Blue Underground has upgraded the film to a two-platter 4K UltraHD Blu-ray set (UPC#827058752596, \$50). The older BD had a terrific color transfer already, but even the standard BD in the new set has slightly brighter hues, while the 4K presentation is even better, with a smoother image that is sharp and free of grain, making the already entertaining film even more engrossing and exciting. The film has two simple attractions. The first is that it contains six great movie stars—Sterling Hayden, Klaus Kinski, Nicol Williamson, Oliver Reed, Susan George and Sarah Miles—all of whom earn their pay with serious but uninhibited performances. The second is that while the film is set in a townhouse because some very stupid kidnappers are stuck there with the police outside, a snake is also roaming around the heating ducts, and leaps out at inopportune moments. With the actors taking the drama and tension seriously, and then the snake tripling the intensity of every sweaty moment, the illogic of how everyone got there is completely irrelevant. You're in the moment as each minute ticks by, and sure enough, you can go back and watch the movie again a couple of months later, and feel the same thrills all over again.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1. The Dolby Atmos sound on both platters is good fun and is vaguely more intricate in its separations than the old BD's 7.1-channel DTS sound. Both platters have the same two trailers, which had been included on the previous BD. There are optional English, French and Spanish subtitles.

The commentary with Haggard that appeared on the earlier BD has been carried over (as have three TV commercials), but a new commentary appears on both platters featuring film enthusiasts Troy Howarth and Nathaniel Thompson, along with Kinski biographer Eugenio Ercolani. They acknowledge how informative Haggard's talk is, and so they try to work around or embellish his stories with fresh information or different perspectives, and it is a very satisfying and engaging discussion.

Also featured on the standard BD is a collection of memorabilia in still frame that is more extensive than the collection appearing on the previous BD; a great 23-minute appreciation of the film by the erudite Kim Newman ("Kidnapping, it is quite often said, is one of the stupidest crimes. It's very hard to pull off without a huge organization behind you.") who compares the film to its source novel; another 15-minute appreciation by British film expert Allan Bryce (the only one to mention **Snakes on a Plane**); an excellent 26-minute interview with editor Michael Bradsell, who also did some of the second unit work and talks about the problems that occurred during the transition to Haggard, and about working with the actors and how well the film has held up over time; and a 21-minute interview with makeup man Nick Dudman (some of the bite marks in the movie are particularly gruesome), who was just getting his start in the business at the time and encountered some unexpected challenges ("Klaus Kinski was an exercise in learning the politics of how to deal with an actor, which was something I had never learned and this was a baptism of fire. The man was gifted, but he liked to wind you up for the sake of it."), and also has some great anecdotes about coping with the snake on the set.

Starchild

In the same way that astronauts skim past the gravitational pull of one planet in order to zoom off toward another, so, too, did MGM use ideas from overseeing the creation of **2001: A Space Odyssey** to shoot their wonderful 1971 telefilm, **Earth II**, a Warner Bros. *Warner WB Archive Collection* Blu-ray (UPC#840418323663, \$22). Not that the two films are in anyway similar dramatically or artistically, but it can be said without question that the strengths of the former were utilized effectively to boost the trajectory of the latter. The two features even share a movie star, since Gary Lockwood has top billing, although Anthony Franciosa is actually the film's primary celestial body, with Gary Merrill, Marianne Hartley, Lew Ayres, Scott Hylands and Hari Rhodes filling in the constellation. Set on an orbiting space station that was constructed by America but then altruistically granted its independence as a new country of its own, part of the 97-minute program is used simply to establish the premise, and it is glorious. Set not to Johann Strauss but to Lalo Schifrin's generic chords, the film depicts the rotating station as delivery modules approach it, the sun and the earth's horizon rotating outside the interior windows, zero gravity making pens and people float and walk upside down, and some sort of walkway that not only allows the characters to advance as if they were strolling down a hall even though zero gravity is present, but enables Hartley's hair to remain fluffed on her shoulders. Maybe the hairspray they invent in the near future will also be extra powerful. In any case, the film simply gorges on the concepts of living in orbit that **2001** established, and that alone makes it a giddy entertainment, even before the Chinese launch a bomb nearby. Hence, the tension of the second part—the heroes deactivate the bomb, bring it into the station and then argue about whether to keep it for defensive purposes or launch it into the sun, but Hartley's character thinks she's saving everyone by opening a pod door and pushing it out at the sun, believing it will go there because that's where she's aimed it even though she didn't account for, well, physics, and then they have to get it back again to diffuse it a second time—is more than enough to keep you equally enthralled for the remainder of the film's arc. Directed by TV veteran Tom Gries, the special effects are fantastic fun, the performances are marvelous, the color transfer is outstanding, the monophonic sound is fine and you will be floating on the ceiling yourself the entire time.

The picture is presented in a squared full screen format. There are optional English subtitles and a 1.78:1 letterboxed trailer.

Silent romantic dramas

Led by D.W. Griffith, silent films came into their own quite rapidly, achieving a capability of replicating literature that has not altered significantly, nor has it needed to, in the subsequent century of moviemaking. Rex Ingram's ambitious 1920 Metro Pictures adaptation of the Vicente Blasco Ibañez novel, **The Four Horseman of the Apocalypse**, adeptly transposes its generational narrative to the screen, beginning in Argentina where a cattle baron is looking forward to the birth of his grandson, the life that grandson and his cousins spend on the pampas, and then their move to Europe after the grandfather passes away. The grandson ends up with his parents in France, while the cousins and their parents go to Germany, with what we now refer to as World War I facilitating their final reunion. The War, however, is just the final section of the 134-minute feature. The film's entertainment rests in its depiction of luxury and debauchery in both Buenos Aires and Paris, with Rudolph Valentino as the good natured and dashing but uninhibited grandson anchoring the film but not limiting its exploration of the lives of the other characters, including his lover, the wife of a French aristocrat. Pomeroy Cannon, Joseph Swickhard, Bridgetta Clark and Virginia Warwick costar, with Alan Hale and Wallace Beery among the more recognizable supporting players. Ingram even stages fantasy sequences to underscore the horrors of sin and war, and it is the film's shorthand illustration of the story's sweep and its human conflicts that sustains its captivating momentum, even for today's viewers. Watching Valentino, we found ourselves recalling Brad Pitt's presence in **Legends of the Fall**. He has the same magnetic, bad-boy-with-an-angelic-smile appeal, and it is has endured, as Pitt's appeal will surely endure, long after the actor himself passed on.

Having undergone an extensive restoration, the film has been released by Turner Entertainment Co. and Warner Bros. as a *Warner WB Archive Collection* Blu-ray (UPC#840418323670, \$22). The image transfer is outstanding, its essential sharpness and clarity enhancing both a viewer's concentration and a sense of excitement regarding the film's detail (including some brief topless nudity) and spectacle. The presentation is tinted, which feels arbitrary at times (an untinted interior shot will cut away to a tinted exterior and then return to the interior, this time tinted as well), but it is sometimes quite effective, and one brief intertitle illustration is hand colored in multiple hues. There is an effective orchestral musical score, composed and conducted by Carl Davis and presented on the DTS track in a modest stereo.

Like Ingram's **Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse**, Erich von Stroheim's **Merry-Go-Round** was to have depicted the soul-wrenching devastation of war through the dramatic pathways of romance, but a month into filming the 1923 silent feature, Universal's Irving Thalberg fired von Stroheim and replaced him with a journeyman director, Rupert Julian, who shot for another 3 months and delivered a movie in which war is only a brief interruption in the romantic narrative arc. Von Stroheim had written the script and was heavily involved in the production designs, including receiving a second credit for the costumes, but after some initial promotions, his name as a secondary direction credit was dropped. The Flicker Alley Blu-ray release (UPC#617311600692, \$40) not only presents the completed film in a 123-minute presentation that supersedes the 116-minute Image Entertainment DVD we reviewed in Aug 04, but explores the extent of von Stroheim's involvement in the project, as well as looking at some of its artistic sources.

Norman Kerry, whose alcoholism apparently impacted the production schedule as much as von Stroheim's dithering (although Julian seemed to have less trouble with him), stars as a Viennese count who is smitten with a carnival girl played by Mary Philbin. She is also subject to some melodramatic threats by the nasty carnival owner, and later, Kerry's character is torn away from her because of his loveless arranged marriage to another aristocrat. After the war interrupts events, the two are eventually reunited. Other than looking the part, Kerry has absolutely ziltch screen appeal—even Beery or Hale would have been much better from a romantic standpoint—so what charm Philbin can muster and whatever remains of von Stroheim's conceptualizations and executions are all that the film has to offer.

Fortunately, the Blu-ray has plenty more. First off, the transfer is a substantial improvement over the DVD. While the squared and tinted black-and-white image still looks aged and worn, there are passages of distinctive sharpness and overall, the wear is less intrusive on the drama. The tinting is subdued and does not interfere with the image detail. The modest orchestral musical score by Robert Israel has a mild dimensionality.

The film is accompanied by a commentary from von Stroheim expert Richard Koszarski, who never refers to what is on the screen as he talks, but speaks extensively about von Stroheim's life and career and describes on a scene-by-scene level how the film was intended to play out in von Stroheim's original script. He also goes over the backgrounds of the cast and Julian, and describes as best he can the chronology of the firing and what happened afterward. "There is no question that the staging of such scenes as the attempted rape at the carousel was Julian's work, but a look at the script shows it to be following von Stroheim's continuity like a blueprint. When the original script calls for a camera movement, Julian moves the camera. He laundered the script, going a bit heavy on the starch perhaps, but stayed remarkably close to von Stroheim's original ideas. Julian may have been an opportunist, but he was no fool."

Film restorer Serge Bromberg presents a 6-minute piece demonstrating what went into the restoration and the tinting and toning choices in the supplement. Also featured is a fascinating 17-minute collection of silent footage from Vienna before the Twenties (it is presented in segments without a 'Play All' option) and an extensive collection of captioned production photos and promotional memorabilia (the first picture is of the carriage that was actually owned by Emperor Franz Josef, and was imported by Universal at von Stroheim's behest for the film) in still frame, as well as a copy of von Stroheim's initial screenplay.

Finally, von Stroheim had a wonderful supporting part as a nasty butler in the 1915 silent romance, *In Old Heidelberg*, starring Dorothy Gish and Wallace Reid, and directed by John Emerson, which has also been included on the disc. One of the initial versions of what would become *The Student Prince*, it was based upon a popular

stageplay and has narrative similarities to **Merry-Go-Round** that von Stroheim would most certainly have been cognizant of, as a young prince attending college falls in love with a tavern maid. The squared full screen black-and-white film is battered and worn, but the film is still a great deal more satisfying and entertaining than **Merry-Go-Round**. It is accompanied by a pleasant piano score and runs 63 minutes, followed by an abridged Blackhawk Films presentation running 12 minutes that is actually just a shortened version of the movie's final act, but is in better shape and is accompanied by a voiceover narration that tells the story while adding additional context about the history of *The Student Prince*.

Charles Chaplin's 1923 silent foray into romantic drama, **A Woman of Paris**, was clearly something he had to get out of his system. He does not appear in the film, which can be considered similar in career terms to Woody Allen's **Interiors**. And like **Interiors**, the film is by no means humorless. Released on Blu-ray by The Criterion Collection (UPC#715515310819, \$40), the 82-minute feature is the opposite of **Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse**. Confined to a handful of simple but carefully decorated sets, it is about the mistress of a wealthy playboy who questions her Parisian flapper lifestyle when she meets a love from her past. It is an intimate film, meticulously directed, and while it holds no significant surprises, it advances through its narrative effectively. It's just that the world didn't need it or want it, and even today, only those with admiration for well made motion pictures look forward to sharing it. Edna Purviance and Carl Miller star, but the one factor, besides Chaplin's little comedic touches now and then, that makes the film worth savoring is the performance by Adolphe Menjou as the playboy. It is a remarkable accomplishment. He's Chaplin, but he's his own man, too. The fidgeting, the surreptitious glances and the guarded composure are infused with a relaxed confidence and immediacy. As some of the other performers slip in and out of classic silent film melodramatic acting here and there (Chaplin worked to keep it at a minimum), Menjou is modern and unharried in every frame. His delivery is precise, devious and sheer perfection. The film may have failed, but it made him a star (and wouldn't it have been great if von Stroheim had used him in **Merry-Go-Round**?).

Chaplin has one brief unbilled cameo, doing a quick gag as an unconscientious baggage handler (another sequence depicting a masseuse played by Nellie Bly Baker looks suspiciously like Chaplin in drag, but it is definitely her, and she apparently picked up his facial expressions after working with him in the past, both on the screen and as a secretary). The squared, full screen picture is in excellent condition, with nary a scratch, and the clarity of the image adds to the subtleties of the performances.

There is a small orchestral score that is in stereo, but it is rather pushy at times and is best kept at a modest or even low volume. An alternate and more elaborate musical score arranged in 2005 by Timothy Brock (based on music written by Chaplin) is offered, oddly, in the Supplement rather than as a separate or alternate Audio selection, and is substantially more appealing. That the film also runs 8 minutes longer, clocking in at 90 minutes, is left unexplained, but appears to be from the frame rate pull down and not added footage, since we could never get the two presentations to line up. Nevertheless, it is the preferred presentation.

The film that is presented with both audio tracks is a cut Chaplin re-edited in 1975, and a 13-minute comparison reel is included to show the changes he made. Most of them are inconsequential, altering camera angles to remove undue emphasis on characters who are never otherwise seen, or providing subtle changes to the pacing of a sequence.

There is 5-minute introduction to the film, summarizing the film's production dynamics and Chaplin's love life at the time (it is suggested that he carried on an affair with Pola Negri while shooting the film only because he wanted to channel her wiles into the Purviance character, who was also based on another one of his lovers, Peggy Hopkins Joyce) and an even better 23-minute analysis of the film that itemizes Chaplin's innovations (subdued 'natural' acting, the use of symbolic props) and the film's modern attitudes. A 9-minute French introduction supplies a standard overview, but then goes into detail about Brock's music. Footage of Joyce is included in a 27-minute examination of the film, which emphasizes its innovative maturity and realistic emotional relationships, and includes enthusiastic reflections on the film from Liv Ullmann and Michael Powell. There is some discussion as to why the film is set in Paris and not America (probably to avoid censorship pressures) and how Chaplin had the actors speak their lines so clearly you can often read their lips (and even though it is Paris, they are all speaking English). Also featured is a great 5-minute audio-only interview from 1964 with cinematographer Roland Totheroh, talking about Chaplin and shooting the film, set to a montage of pertinent photos, as well as clips from the film; the often-seen 3 minutes of silent footage of the creation of United Artists (including Chaplin and Douglas Fairbanks doing acrobatics together); and two trailers.

Almodóvar dramas

John Turturro has a supporting part as a cranky environmentalist who believes the world is dying in Pedro Almodóvar's mostly two-character drama, **The Room Next Door**, a Sony Pictures Home Entertainment as a *Sony Pictures Classics* DVD (UPC#043396642393, \$21). Tilda Swinton is a former war correspondent coping with stage-three cancer and Juliane Moore is her friend, a famous author, who agrees to spend what they both know will be her final days—and not because the cancer will take her—in a woodsy rental house in upstate New York. The house is an architectural gem and like nothing that is actually in New York, as that part of the 2024 film was shot in Spain. Most of the film is taken up by the conversations between the two women, and a good portion of that conversation is about life and death, so that when Turturro's character, in the later part of the 107-minute film, begins talking about the fate of the Earth, your mind travels immediately to Swinton's character and only from there advances to wondering how much longer people in general have to look forward to. Swinton maybe comes across a little self-consciously stiff at the film's beginning, but that could also simply be the nature of her character, and when her character's defenses start to degrade, her vulnerabilities become readily apparent. The film is viewed through the eyes

of Moore's character and you feel her panic and frustration at the same time that you see her growing from the experience. The other characters do not dwell on death the way that Turturro's character is obsessed with global collapse, but they do not keep their distance, either. Engrossing and profound, the film, based upon a novel by Sigrid Nunez, is reminiscent of an Ingmar Bergman movie in that Almodóvar masterfully navigates the emotional ebbs and flows of the passing days while sustaining a calm but compelling visual style that is intimate, penetrating and captivating, welcoming ideas but instilling a vitality in every character that is worth knowing and savoring.

It is a shame that Sony, so far, has chosen to only release the film as a DVD, since everything from the house to the occasionally garish lipstick choices the characters make are precisely captured within the frame, which is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback. The presentation still looks terrific, but there is an underlying softness that one can come to feel is robbing the viewer of the film's full visual and emotional treasures. The 5.1-channel Dolby Digital sound has a viable dimensionality, although that, too, is shortchanged by being relegated to the DVD's bandwidth. There are optional English, French and Spanish subtitles, 7 minutes of excellent behind-the-scenes snippets from throughout the film, and a trailer.

Almodóvar's 31-minute 2023 gay western, **Strange Way of Life**, has also been released on DVD by Sony (UPC#043396635739, \$13). The film is also letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1 with an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback, but in this case, the color transfer and even the 5.1-channel Dolby Digital sound serve the presentation well. Where **Room Next Door** is elegant and deliberate, **Strange Way of Life** is gregarious and scattered, using the western setting and its tropes to distract the viewer from its true purpose, which is to define the depth of the attraction between its two central characters, and what that attraction means to each one. Ethan Hawke is a sheriff, intent upon arresting the boy who has killed his brother's wife, and Pedro Pascal is the boy's father, who had been in a relationship with Hawke's character in the past, and rediscovers it when he attempts to defend his son. The film's brevity is part of its purpose. There is a bit of action, but there is mostly an eager display of western iconography, peppered with brief, teasing glimpses of male infatuations, which is enough to advance the narrative and bring it to an emotional conclusion that is simultaneously contemplative and resolute. The film will primarily appeal to a predisposed constituency, in which case the western setting and cowboy paraphernalia will be especially gratifying. There are optional English and Spanish subtitles.

Monogram westerns on Blu-ray

Warner Home Video put out dozens of Monogram Pictures westerns on DVD, and now Warner is dipping into the Blu-ray market with the Warner Bros. *Warner WB Archive Collection* release, **Monogram Matinee Volume 1** (UPC#840418323694, \$22). The single-platter BD holds three 1949 films, and there is a 'Play All' option if you can't get enough of them. Each black-and-white film is in a squared full screen format and has optional English subtitles. The monophonic sound is consistently strong and clear.

The first feature, which has never appeared on disc before, is the musical western, *Mississippi Rhythm*. Directed by Derwin Abrahams, cowboy crooner Jimmie Davis stars as the heir to a land development business who rides the riverboat up to the town where his late uncle's partner has been, well, screwing over all of the landowners. The partner has both the sheriff and the town's judge in his pocket, and ranch owners are being bullied into paying for water rights, so Davis's character pretends to be a singer hired by the local dance hall so he can scope the place out before revealing his true identity. Hence, over a third of the 68-minute film (thirty-six percent, to be precise) is musical numbers performed by various characters including Davis, who has a nice voice to be sure. There are some classics, such as *Down by the Riverside* and *You Are My Sunshine* (Davis actually wrote the latter, with Charles Mitchell) along with lesser known tunes, but the setting and circumstances makes each number seem precious, as if it were part of a forgotten past and the film is your link to that innocent time. As per a warning that appears before the film unspools, one of the music hall shows includes two blackface performers, but it is very much part of the film's historical preservation and not intended by the filmmakers as topical exploitation. At least, not much. As for Davis, he proves himself an adept action hero, as well.

One of the clues to watch for at the start of these old quickie westerns is that if the screenwriter is a woman, the film is going to be better than usual, and that is the case with Gretchen Darling's script. There are a pair of well developed female roles along with the male parts, and one character undergoes a significant change of heart. Paul Maxey, Lyle Talbot, Veda Ann Borg and Sue England costar. The transfer looks gorgeous, and despite the inexpensive set dressings, the picture is so detailed that your attention is often riveted by the textures of the wood and other parts of the frame you would normally pay no attention to, both on the steamboat set that opens the film, and in the saloon once the characters get to town.

It was in Warner's **Monogram Cowboy Collection Volume 10** (Mar 20) that we first recognized the significance of the female screenwriters, and specifically of the greatest screenwriter of Monogram westerns male or female, Adele Buffington, with the story she concocted for *Western Renegades*, an exceptionally good Johnny Mack Brown feature that has now been included on the Blu-ray set. It begins with a brother and sister, who have arrived in town to visit their father just as the father is being murdered. A friend of Brown's character is framed for the crime, and Brown (who has also arrived in town) has to sort of sneak around and pretend to be an outlaw himself to spoil the devious plan. What sets the movie apart is that while there is plenty of action, the characters have pronounced emotional links to one another that encourage the viewer to care about what happens to them. After you sit through innumerable features that follow the same basic templates with just nominal variations from one story to the next, to suddenly get hit with these multiple familial and romantic links rivets your interest in what is going on and magnifies the entertainment exponentially. Not only that, but the characters quote popular poetry of the day and can have notable idiosyncrasies—the town sheriff's hobby is ventriloquism, and he has a dummy he converses with.

Running 54 minutes and directed by Wallace Fox, the film is witty, exciting (it isn't all Brown—the different heroes get their shots at various villains, too), and continually involving. Max Terhune, Poni Adams and Hugh Prosser costar. The picture is free of the wear that was evident on the DVD, but remains rather soft, especially in comparison to *Mississippi Rhythm*.

Buffington also wrote the script for the Whip Wilson vehicle, *Crashing Thru*, appearing on disc for the first time and closing out the set. When a lawman is killed during a stage holdup, Wilson's character takes his place and why he does this is one of the film's mysteries, which becomes more complicated when the lawman's sister shows up. The woman on board, who tipped off the robbers, is in league with the saloon owner, because she is expecting that the two of them are going to get married and move away, and she is upset that the murder occurred. Meanwhile, Wilson's character cleans up the town while trying to get to the bottom of who is behind the stage holdups. Directed by Ray Taylor, the 54-minute film is not as distinctive as *Western Renegades*, but it does have the poetry quoting and other nice quirks here and there (a woman walks into a small house and immediately recognizes that two men have been living there, because it is such a mess), and again, the emotional connections between the characters enhance the viewer's involvement with the narrative, something that does not happen on many of Monogram's other westerns. Wilson also gets to use his signature whip a couple of times, which he keeps strapped to his belt like a six-gun. The picture is a little sharper than *Western Renegades* (although again, it is not as nice as *Mississippi Rhythm*) and is free of noticeable wear.

Atmospheric crime

Michael Mann's atmospheric and nihilist crime film, **The Thief**, has been released by The Criterion Collection as a two-platter 4K Blu-ray (UPC#715515310710, \$50). James Caan stars as the title character in the 1981 United Artists production, and while he is focused and determined during the execution of the two burglaries depicted in the film (one at the very beginning and the other to begin the final act), he is anything but the suave, cool thieves that populated movies in the Sixties and Seventies. Caan delivers an excellent performance as an emotional and flighty used car dealer who is one more score away from retiring when his fence is murdered and his skills attract the attention of an unforgiving mobster, played by Robert Prosky. Thinking that he is nearing the point where he can pack it all in, he also begins romancing a waitress who has caught his fancy, played by the wonderful Tuesday Weld. The film runs 124 minutes (Mann made minor adjustments to the original theatrical release quite a while ago), and much of it is taken up with the romance, which Caan's character, an ex-convict, approaches like a bull in a china shop but still somehow manages to avoid breaking anything delicate, ultimately charming her into his arms. Without Weld, the film would be much briefer and single-toned, so that while the film feels like two separate stories zippered together, the mood that Mann establishes and the performances create a compelling, singular entertainment. And to this end, the 4K presentation is especially captivating. If the opening shot of the film does not send you soaring back to 1981, you weren't alive then. It was Mann's overseeing of the **Miami Vice** TV series that really set the tone of those times—music wafting in the air at night as characters, isolated from the sleeping world in their automobiles, cruise through mostly empty streets—and so amid a downpour in a wintry Chicago, with the replicated precision of the haze while the raindrops reflect the city's lights on every surface, the nighttime imagery on the disc, reinforced by the pulsating and unrelenting music of Tangerine Dream in 5.1-channel DTS sound, locks you into Mann's definitive expression of his times. Regardless of the unwise choices made by the characters or the ultimately depressing view the film takes of existence, the 4K disc is so sublime in its presentation of the movie that in viewing it, life is worth living after all.

Jim Belushi co-stars as Caan's sidekick, and Willie Nelson appears as an aging convict in another subplot meant to fill the narrative and reflect the choices Caan's character is facing. Dennis Farina, whom Mann would later pick up for his wonderful **Crime Story** series, has a bit part, and John Santucci is also featured. The picture is letterboxed with an aspect 1.85:1. The picture on the Blu-ray has slightly bright hues, but the image is also over saturated and grainier, so that the smooth picture and reasonably strong colors on the 4K presentation is still preferable. Criterion previously released another two-platter Blu-ray & DVD set (UPC#715515112512, \$40), and the BD platter in that set is identical to the BD platter in the 4K set. The DVD is even grainier and softer, although because of the film's moody atmosphere, the presentation is still effective. The 5.1-channel Dolby Digital sound is also less detailed or impactful. Nevertheless, the picture quality on the DVD is still an improvement over the MGM DVD we reviewed in Sep 98, with less pervasive grain and stronger colors. There are optional English subtitles. On all three platters, there is a commentary featuring Mann and Caan, which originally appeared on the earlier DVD and doesn't really have much to offer. The BD release, however, as well as the companion DVD, have, along with a trailer, a good 24-minute interview with Mann and another lovely 11-minute interview with Caan both from 2013, which together cover most everything that was in the commentary while also offering more elucidation on some of Mann's previous experiences, including growing up in Chicago and shooting a telefilm in a prison. Also featured is a great 16-minute interview with Johannes Schmoelling of Tangerine Dream, who describes Mann's filmmaking technique as creating music, details their working relationship, and recalls how the gig helped to establish his band in America.

Wild Suzuki ride

Pay no attention the movie's title. Rather, make note of the director: Seijun Suzuki's 1977 advertising satire, **Tale of Sorrow and Sadness**, has been released on a Blu-ray by Radiance Films (UPC#760137177524, \$40). Letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1, the color transfer is gorgeous and unblemished from beginning to end, and the monophonic sound is smooth and sharp. And yet, what the film reminded us of most of all was Robert Downey's black-and-white satire from the Sixties, **Putney Swope** (Aug 95). Given the cultural delay that can occur sometimes between countries, it seems natural enough that Suzuki's anarchic examination of status and the television business would feel like it had come from a decade before. Yoko Shiraki is a promising golfer who is recruited by a clothing company to turn pro before she is really ready to, because she looks fantastic in their bikinis. Her handler and lover, played by Yoshio Harada (who has a Brad Pitt thing going), accelerates her training, and in short order she wins a tournament, lands her own TV show, attracts the attentions of a crazy female stalker, and pretty much has a total nervous breakdown, with the rest of her world not far behind. Stylistically, the film is every bit as wild as Suzuki's **Tokyo Drifter**, and in fact, it is even wilder. He rapidly cuts from idea to idea with barely a pause to soak in one situation before leaping to the next, and he could care less what is being shot on location and what is playing out on a partially constructed set, mixing everything together to spew out the barely coherent narrative with unrelenting enthusiasm and high humor. The pop colors are vivid, and the ideas within the scenes are stimulating (as is the film's abundant nudity), so that the 93-minute feature is utterly dazzling in both its confectionary pleasures and its sociological damnations.

The film is in Japanese with optional English subtitles, and comes with a trailer and a good 20-minute interview with editor Kunihiko Ukai, talking not only about the film (he says that Shiraki was the producer's mistress and couldn't act, although her deer-in-the-headlights performance is perfect for the part), but about the animosity Suzuki received from film studios for making such eccentric features. Feminist cult film expert Samm Deighan supplies an excellent commentary, incorporating a thorough history and analysis of the careers of Suzuki, Harada, Shiraki and the other members of the cast and the crew, as well as providing a detailed analysis of the narrative, an extensive thematic overview (such as how the film grew out of more explicit exploitation features) and a general enthusiasm for Suzuki's exceptional talents. "When you see the descriptor of this being a 'golf melodrama' I think it really doesn't do justice to what the film actually is."

An independent woman

A woman in a sheer silk gown is swimming underwater and as she approaches the surface, she sees a blood red sword thrust into the water above her. When she does surface, the sword is also withdrawn, cleansed of the blood, and hovers next to her face. You can't come up with a more potent expression of phallic symbolism than that, and it is just one lyrical moment of many in the superb 1984 Shaw Bros. production directed by Eddie Fong, **An Amorous Woman of Tang Dynasty**, a Celestial Pictures 88 Films Blu-ray (UPC#760137167686, \$30). The translated title may be an article short, but the film is rich in literacy and while it certainly has erotic sequences, as well as swordfights and more than one beheading, it is, first and foremost, a captivating story about a female poet, played by Patricia Ha, who prefers to live in a brothel district so she is un beholden to anyone or anything but her own pleasures. Nevertheless, those pleasures eventually lead to her downfall. It is the film's acknowledgment of poetry and its attention to plot and character development that justifies the sex scenes and the violence. Ha's performance is riveting, and the lovers that she accepts are as dazzled by her independent spirit as they are by her sexual gifts. It is only when she must confront her own hypocrisy in regard to her maid and companion, played by Monica Lam, that the flaws in her perfection are revealed. Meanwhile, the sets are luscious, the action—she hooks up with a swordsman who kills corrupt officials—is energizing, and the intellectual journey that she takes is methodically attached to her romantic conquests, so that while following the narrative the viewer also absorbs the lessons Lam's character is absorbing. Letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1 and given an unflinching image transfer, the cinematography is exquisite and the film is an ideal synthesis of visual and cerebral stimulations.

Alex Man, Kuo-chu Chang, and Ku Feng costar. The cinematography does have grain on occasion, but not to its detriment. The monophonic sound is solid and the film is in Cantonese with optional English subtitles. Along with a trailer and an appealing 3-minute montage of promotional stills that include a lot of sexy photos, there is a nice 21-minute interview with Man recalling the work on various scenes, his fellow actors and how much he enjoys his profession. Chinese film expert David West supplies a good commentary track, not only going over the backgrounds and careers of many members of the cast and crew, and talking about the circumstances under which the film, one of the last to come out of Shaw Bros., was produced, but also supplying a thorough history of the actual poet upon which the film is based, Yuan-gi Yu, and reciting a number of her poems over the course of his talk ("...And dreaming astonishing dreams only enlarges my gloom.").

To the Lighthouse

Perfection in films comes in all shapes and sizes, but the basic rule of thumb is simply that if there's nothing wrong with the movie, it is perfect, and that would apply even to the very low budget 1947 PRC production directed by Frank Wisbar, **Lighthouse**, a Film Masters Archive Collection Blu-ray (UPC#840418322833, \$20). Running just 60 minutes, the film has a fantastic location—a lighthouse ostensibly in San Francisco sitting in the middle of the water but attached to another building with a cute little bridge. The lighthouse keeper lives in the other building, with his assistant. The assistant likes to take the boat into town from time to time where he has a girlfriend. One day, however, the girlfriend goes out to lighthouse to see him and ends up marrying the lighthouse keeper. The film is a romance, and while it does have some thriller components, it ends up being a romance above all else. The stars, Don Castle, June Lang and John Litel, are not anyone's idea of exceptional actors, but neither are they incompetent. Each delivers a clearly expressed presentation of the embodied character without embarrassment. There are a handful of studio sets, but they are all intelligently and wittily designed, contributing to the narrative at all times. Additionally,

throughout the movie, always present in sound or image, is the lighthouse itself, offering a spiritual metaphor for true love just as readily as it suggests the more obvious symbolism of manhood. Really, for an hour's entertainment, nothing more is required.

The disc does not start up where it left off if playback is terminated. The full screen black-and-white picture has a fairly pronounced grain, but no other significant flaws, save for a stray scratch or two. Despite its intensity, the grain provides a pleasing texture and is readily appealing in an antique sort of way. The focus is very sharp and contrasts are well defined. The monophonic sound is reasonably solid and the Ernest Gold (!) music is rarely distorted. There are optional English subtitles.

A tale told by an idiot

It may not apply to all of William Shakespeare's plays, but there seem to be just two types of movie adaptations of **Macbeth**, expository and expressionistic. Roman Polanski's 1971 version (Oct 14) is the best example of an expository presentation, in which the narrative is the central purpose of the film, supported by the poetry and the images, while Orson Welles' version (Jun 15) is an excellent example of an expressionistic presentation, where the poetry is the central purpose of the film, supported by the images and the narrative. Kit Monkman's 2020 feature (it has a 2017 copyright), issued on Blu-ray by Darkside Releasing (UPC#840418324523, \$20), is an expressionistic interpretation of the play. Using computer effects, it is presented as if it were taking place on a stage with multiple levels—nearly a dozen altogether—and otherwise floating in a dark, empty three-dimensional sphere hanging in space. When the characters sit on the edge, you kind of wince. The camera pretends to move up and down the levels from the outside, and then dollies in to get closer to the activities it wants to observe, computer graphics filling in much of the eccentric, abstract decor. Once in a while a character will leave one level, but will almost immediately be seen on another, indicating that invisible edits are hiding the occasional illusion of an unbroken shot.

The film runs 121 minutes—the play is actually one of Shakespeare's shorter works—but leaves out quite a bit of material, some of it sorely missed. While there is a representation of the witches—an older woman and two children—there really aren't any witches, and most of their dialog has been eliminated. Other scenes have also been re-ordered, severely abridged or deleted entirely. Still, there is enough of Shakespeare present that provided one can decipher the steep Scottish accents used by a couple of the actors, including Mark Rowley, who plays the title character, one can get the gist of what is happening, although the story is secondary to the presentation of individual scenes, where the specific poetic exchanges and the striking visuals enable the viewer to transcend mortal coils and bask in the infinite potential of the English language and motion picture creativity. Rowley is adequate in the part, sometimes nailing a moment or a line (you really believe he sees a dagger) and sometimes just working his way through it without flair, and the other actors are equally functional, with a couple of minor players making a strong impression through their articulations. But one performer is transcendent. Akia Henry is so good as Lady Macbeth, the movie does not deserve her. The part of Lady Macbeth is problematic, even for a star actress. Like Ophelia, she is only in a handful of scenes and dies offstage, well before the end of the play. But the film's format serves to magnify her presence, and Henry takes full advantage of every second the camera is on her, whether it is a long shot and she can be seen coming on to the king when he first arrives at Macbeth's castle, or up close, when she is trying to remove invisible spots of blood from her sinewy hands. She is so definitively good that the film's obnoxiousness is well worth suffering through just to savor all of the moments she is on the screen.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1. The image is a little soft, but otherwise the picture looks okay, with accurate fleshtones. The darker areas of the screen are stable and the computer effects are seamless—you really can't tell where the real stage stops and the imaginary one starts. There is a nice Dolby Digital stereo track that sustains a pleasing dimensionality, but no captioning is provided. A trailer has been included.

An unfunny thing happened on the way to the Forum

A rather poor cousin to **Fellini Satyricon**, **Seneca**, has been released on DVD by Freestyle Digital Video (UPC#850067441410, \$15). John Malkovich is the title character, a popular philosopher and Nero's teacher in Ancient Rome, who runs afoul of his student (as does pretty much everyone else) and is ordered killed. After the establishing bits, most of the 112-minute feature is set at Seneca's arid estate (the film was shot in Morocco), where he is entertaining a group of socialites before learning that it will be his last evening in this world. We are insufficiently schooled in such matters to know how much of the events or conversations are taken from actual accounts. The dialog makes steady use of modern turns of phrase—Nero, in fact, is even called 'president' rather than 'emperor,' which will seem topical to some viewers—and there are deliberate anachronisms—power lines, a drawing of a tank on a wall—slipped into the movie at key moments, but otherwise, the film has the same kind of strange decorations, odd behaviors and disjointed narrative that was a hallmark of **Satyricon**'s replication of the past. Malkovich's character stages an outdoor 'drama' for his guests, and it includes the actual beheading of a pair of young slaves. Since the film does eventually settle upon his character having to come to terms with his own mortality, his contemplations of this have a recognizable universality that could definitely be sourced to Seneca's thoughts and beliefs, but how closely or elaborately they coincide is outside of our realm of judgment. What we can say is that the film's indulgences and convoluted dramatization will not be to everyone's liking. Directed by Robert Schwentke, there are images and ideas that fans of **Satyricon** will readily welcome, and Malkovich has an opportunity to soak up the center of attention for pretty much the entire film, but other than just conveying some general ideas about what has and has not changed between the past and the present, the appeal of the film is limited.

Geraldine Chaplin shows up in a nicely costumed supporting part, as do Marie-Louise Parker and the late Julian Sands. The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1. The color transfer looks fine and is reasonably sharp. The Dolby Digital stereo sound has some distinctive separation effects and is generally satisfying. There are optional English subtitles, but they have to be activated manually.

Here comes the egg

As the title characters in **Four Rode Out** stumble across the desert, their water depleted, the camera cuts to an image of the hot, penetrating sun, and... it looks exactly like a yellow egg. That is because the squared full screen image on the Film Masters Archive Collection Blu-ray (UPC#840418322840, \$20) has been squeezed to fit that squared frame. The actors are tall and lean, the horses are gangly and the whole thing looks pretty ridiculous. Except for some footage in the final reels, the colors are reasonably fresh, and while contrasts are inevitably weak, wear to the picture is manageable, so if it weren't for the squeezing thing, the presentation wouldn't look bad.

The disc does not start up where it left off if playback is terminated. The film, directed by John Peyser, has a 1969 copyright but is listed on the Internet as a 1971 production. Shot in Almeria Spain, Pernell Roberts is a sheriff and Leslie Nielsen is a Pinkerton agent tracking a bank robber played Julián Mateos, and Sue Lyon is the robber's fiancée, who joins the two men tracking him. Not only does the film have star appeal, but Janis Ian sings several songs and also provides the guitar score. The monophonic sound is in good enough condition to deliver the music without distortion. Nielsen's non-ironic performance is weak, but the other three actors aren't bad and while the 95-minute has a couple of narrative conveniences, it is passable entertainment for fans of westerns and the stars, or would be if the framing had been truer to the source material.

Dr. Mabuse, Dracula, Joan Crawford and more

No room is available to publish our review of the Eureka! boxed set, **Mabuse Lives! Dr. Mabuse at CCC: 1960-1964** (UPC#760137174240, \$95), so we have chosen instead to publish the review for free on our Substack page (<https://dvd-laser-disc-substack.com/p/the-dvd-laser-disc-newsletter-special-d09>) and have also made it available for free as a PDF file for download, which can be requested by writing Dr. Mabuse Review at DVDLaser@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 Dr. Mabuse Review %The DVD-Laser Disc Newsletter, PO Box 382, Glen Cove NY 11542, and include a check or credit card details. Also featured are reviews of the Kino Lorber Blu-ray, **Dr. Mabuse, the Gambler** (UPC#738329206307, \$40); the Criterion Collection DVD, **The Testament of Dr. Mabuse** (UPC#037429187227, \$40); the Universal Studios Home Entertainment DVD releases of **Renfield** (UPC#191329246382, \$17), **The Last Voyage of the Demeter** (UPC#191329252925, \$20) and **Nosferatu** (UPC#191329273197, \$23); the Warner *WB Archive Collection* Blu-ray, **Sadie McKee** (UPC#840418323687, \$22), and DVD, **Susan and God** (UPC#883316242193, \$13); the Leomark Studios Bollywood Blu-ray releases, **Pakeezah** (UPC#840418324417, \$20), **Khuda Gawah** (UPC#840418324455, \$20), **"Hello Brother"** (UPC#840418324752, \$20), **Heyy Babyy** (UPC#840418324400, \$20), **Kaalaa** (UPC#840418324462, \$20), **The Great Gambler** (UPC#840418324813, \$20), and **Hera Pheri – Foul Play** (UPC#84041832-4820, \$20); the MVDvisual 4K Blu-ray, **Zyzxv Road** (UPC#7609137153825, \$40); the Unearthed Blu-rays, **100 Clowns** (UPC#760137172130, \$35) and **The Profane Exhibit** (UPC#760137158912, \$40); the Amcomri Blu-ray, **Crocodylus Mating Season** (UPC#840418323779, \$20); The Wild Eye Releasing Video Vengeance Blu-rays, **The Wrong Door** (UPC#760137128113, \$35), **Dinosaur Valley Girls** (UPC#760137130154, \$30), **Despiser** (UPC#760137167518, \$25), **Kung Fu Rascals** (UPC#760137135845, \$35), and **Furious** (UPC#760137172741, \$35); the Anchor Bay Entertainment Blu-rays, **Cursed in Baja** (UPC#760137164975, \$30) and **Abruptio** (UPC#760137165132, \$30); Criterion's Blu-ray releases of **The Beast** (UPC#715515-306812, \$30), **Éo** (UPC#715515288415, \$30), and **Au Hazard, Balthazar** (UPC#715515215510, \$40); Kino's Blu-ray, **Murder He Says** (UPC#738329244873, \$25); the Focus Features DVD, **Downton Abbey A New Era** (UPC#191329216187, \$30); Highway 61 Entertainment's DVD, **The Climate According to Al I Gore** (UPC#760137166818, \$15); the Cleopatra Blu-ray, **The Fabulous Thunderbirds Live in Houston** (UPC#889466632884, \$25); and the Troma Team DVD release, **The Vagabond Lover** (UPC#785604209293, \$10).

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

ANOTHER NEW READER: It seems like just a short time ago that we announced the birth of her mother, Lara, but now we are very excited to announce the birth of Aria Rose Auclair on April 9. This follows the announcement of her brother Adrien's birth that we ran Nov 22. If they are anything like their mother, they will soon begin watching Tom & Jerry cartoon non stop.

CRITERION CORNER: Mike Nichols's **Carnal Knowledge** is being released in 4K format by The Criterion Collection with an audio commentary featuring filmmaker and playwright Neil LaBute; a program with Mike Nichols biographer Mark Harris and film critic Dana Stevens; an interview with film-editing historian Bobbie O'Steen; a conversation from 2011 between Nichols and Jason Reitman; and a Q&A with screenwriter Jules Feiffer. Fritz Lang's **The Big Heat** will be in 4K format and come with a commentary by film-noir experts Alain Silver and James Ursini; a video essay by critic Farran Smith Nehme on the women in the film; interviews with Lang, conducted by film historian Gideon Bachmann and Peter Bogdanovich; and interviews with Michael Mann and Martin Scorsese. In 4K format, François Truffaut's **The Adventure of Antoine Daniel** includes **The 400 Blows**, **Stolen Kisses**, **Bed and Board**, and **Love on the Run**, and the short subject **Antoine and Colette**, and will include a 4K restoration of *Les mistons*, Truffaut's 1957 short film, with commentary by Claude de Givray, Truffaut's then assistant director; two audio commentaries for **The 400 Blows**, one featuring film scholar Brian Stonehill and the other Truffaut's lifelong friend Robert Lachenay; archival

interviews with Truffaut and his collaborators, including Jean-Pierre Léaud, Claude Jade, and Marie-France Pisier and co-writers de Givray and Bernard Revon; video essays by film historian Serge Toubiana for **Stolen Kisses** and *Les mistons*; and *Introducing My Father, François Truffaut*, a 2019 interview with Laura Truffaut by filmmaker Daniel Raim. Stanley Kubrick's **Barry Lyndon** will be in 4K and will include interviews with the cast and crew as well as archival audio featuring Kubrick on the film's cinematography, costumes, editing, and production; an interview featuring historian Christopher Fraying on production designer Ken Adam; an interview with critic Michel Ciment; an interview with actor Leon Vitali about the 5.1 surround soundtrack, which he co-supervised; and an interview with curator Adam Eaker about the fine-art-inspired aesthetics of the film. Kenneth Lonergan's **You Can Count on Me** will be in 4K and will have a commentary featuring Lonergan and interviews with Lonergan, Matthew Broderick, Laura Linney, and Mark Ruffalo.

CLOSED OUT OF TOWN: The following titles have been removed from our *Coming Attractions* list—**A Complete Unknown**, **Hanukkah**, **Trinity** and **World Series Champs The 2023 World Series**.

NEW IN BLU: The following titles were recently released on Blu-ray—Bite School 2 Bite Squad, Glitch Ditch 45, James Balsamo Knows How to Rock 3 (Acid Bath); The AGFA Mystery Mixtape Vault (AGFA); Birth/Rebirth, Lovely Molly, May-fair Witches Season 2, Spoonful of Sugar (AMD); A Summer Trip (Bayview); Cannibal Orgy and the Films of J.T. IV (Bleeding Skull); Cora Bora (Brainstorm); A Complete Unknown, Mufasa The Lion King (Buena Vista); Broken Road, El Enviado, El Seguidor, The Final Contestant, Ronnie's Quest (Burning Bulb); Cannibal Girls (Canadian); Allison, Stittsville on Patrol (Capital Motion); Ninja Terminator (Cauldron); The Belly of an Architect, Brimstone & Treacle, Devil Fetus / Her Vengeance, Shanks, 38 Special, Who Killed Teddy Bear? (CAV); Please Don't Destroy The Treasure of Foggy Mountain (Cinedigm); Devon (Cineverse); The Visitor (Circle); Anora, Basquiat, Jean de Florette / Manon of the Spring, Prince of Broadway (Criterion); Drummer Boy Christmas Live (Curb); The Comeback Trail, Love Me (Decal); Sweet Dreams (Dekanalog); Screambot (Desktop); The Knight Knifer (Die Star); A Knight's War (Epic); American Expandables The Films of North American Pictures (ETR); Mother Couch, The Oldest Profession, Saint-Narcisse, Tarpon (Film Movement); Devil's Knight (Filmhub); Merry-Go-Round (Flicker Alley); The Gingerdead Man Movie Collection (Full Moon); Baby It's You (Fun City); The Barghest, Trip (Gemini); Call of the Void, Desert Fiends, Die Like a Man, Dogs Are People Too, Grassland, Hellbent on Boogie, Lilies Not for Me, A Lion's Game, Man Goes on Rant, Marcie's, Relative Control, Shiver Me Timbers, Vitalik An Ethereum Story (Gravitas); The Bermuda Triangle, Borderline, Burke & Hare, Career Opportunities, The Cruel Sea, Film Noir The Dark Side of Cinema XXV, Heaven's Above!, I'm All Right Jack, Liza A Truly Terrific Absolutely True Story, Posse, Things to Do in Denver When You're Dead, World Series Champs The 2023 World Series (Kino); After Life Crisis, Benaam Nameless, Deewane Huye Paagal, Deewangee, Dharman Veer, Dhol, Dushman Duniya Ka, The Great Gambler, "Hello Brother", Hera Pheri, Heyy Babyy, Highway, Ishq Vishk, Jhuk Gaya Aasman, Judwaa, Kaalia, Khuda Gawah, The Legend of Bhagat Singh, Love Ke Liye Kuch Bhi Karega, Manorama Six Feet Under, Masoom, Pakeezah, Raja Hindustani, Torture the Flesh, Traffic Signal (Leomark); Fruit Fly (Level 33); Welcome to the Darkness (Lightbulb); Flight Risk (Lionsgate); Shoplifters, The Way (Magnolia); The Kamen Rider Trilogy (Media Blasters); Icons Unearthed James Bond, Ultraman Z Complete Series (Mill Creek); The Dish & the Spoon, Good Bad Things (Music Box); The Adventurers, The Eel, Empire of the Dark, Four Rode Out, Girl with a Suitcase, Jakoman and Tetsu, Lady with a Sword, Lighthouse, Mabuse Lives! Dr. Mabuse at CCC 1960-1964, Hard Boiled Three Pulp Thrillers by Alain Corneau, The Magnificent Chang Cheh, A Moment of Romance, Motorpsycho, The Pick-Up, Russ Meyer's Up, A Tale of Sorrow and Sadness, V-Cinema Essentials Bullets & Betrayal, Yakuza Wives (MVD); Death Web, The McKinney Family Home Videos, Untitled Footage (105); The Vourdalak (Oscilloscope); Sonic the Hedgehog 3, Star Trek Section 31, Star Trek The Lower Decks Complete Series (Paramount); Alien Country, Macbeth, Live Fast Live Free, Love Yourself Today, What We Find on the Road (Rising Sun); Lydia Lunch The Gun Is Loaded (Saturn's Core); American Daylight, Badi Bahen, Bhakti Mein Shakti, Loha (Shoreline); Bossa Nova, One of Them Days, Paddington in Peru (Sony); Cyborg She (Synergetic); The Trialside Studios Movie, The Trialside Studios Movie 2, The Trialside Studios Movie 3 (Trialside); Dog Man, Heart Eyes, Hysteria! Season 1, Last Breath, Love Hurts (Universal); Batman Ninja, Batman Ninja vs. Yakuza League, Captain Planet and the Planetheers Complete Series, Cheyenne Complete Series, Clean and Sober, Companion, The Good German, Just Friends, Lili, Rick & Morty The Anime, Side Street, Springfield Rifle, Superman & Lois Season 4, Superman & Lois Complete Series, Three the Hard Way, Wacky Races Complete Series (Warner); Cannibal Mukbang, Cold Wallet, Everyone Is Going to Die, Harbin, Into the Deep, Invasion, Jade, Revolver (Well Go)

NEW IN 3D: The following title was released in 3D format—Evil Bong 3D The Wrath of Bong

NEW IN 4K: The following titles were recently released in 4K format—A Complete Unknown, Mufasa The Lion King, Tombstone (Buena Vista); Brimstone & Treacle, Shanks, Short Night of Glass Dolls, Who Killed Teddy Bear? (CAV); The Hunt, Sorority House Massacre, Timecop (Cinedigm); Terrifier 3 (Coven); Anora, Basquiat, Chungking Express, Jean de Florette / Manon of the Spring, Some Like It Hot, Ugetsu (Criterion); Career Opportunities, Donovan's Reef, Foul Play, The Sands of Iwo Jima, Sneakers, Swept Away, Things to Do in Denver When You're Dead (Kino); Flight Risk (Lionsgate); Blue Sunshine, The Long Kiss Goodnight, Motorpsycho, Night Train Murders, Russ Meyer's Up (MVD); Sonic the Hedgehog 3, Star Trek Section 31 (Paramount); Gandhi, Stripes (Sony); Love Hurts, Renfield (Universal); Batman Ninja, Batman Ninja vs. Yakuza League, Companion, Dirty Harry, The Good German, The Informant, The Outlaw Josey Wales, Pale Rider (Warner); Harbin (Well Go)

