

THE DVD- LASER DISC NEWSLETTER

December 1999

Issue #184

\$3.50

Watch out for that spear!

Easily our favorite DVD to date, Rhino Home Video's **Comin' at Ya!** (R25660, \$20) delivers a solid 90 minutes of continuous 3-D effects. From bats to breasts and bullets to burning wood, the viewer is inundated with objects and perspectives that alternately burst into the viewing room or turn the viewing screen into a gateway. Using the red-blue system (2 glasses come with the platter), the 1981 color film, although it has a plot, is designed to display a relentless sequence of dimensional effects, and the only danger it may harbor is that you could go cross-eyed watching it day in and day out.

The film's colors become somewhat monochromatic when viewed through the glasses, but that is the nature of the process, though yellows and blues are discernible. The sharpness of the DVD image and the accuracy of the transfer enable the system to work as effectively as it does in a theater. It is best to view the program in a fully darkened room, and to get yourself level with the screen. The presentation is letterboxed, with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1 and no 16:9 enhancement. It isn't perfect. A number of the foreground objects that are supposed to loom out at you have too widely divided shadings and don't emerge properly from the rest of the image. Is that a fault of the design or the transfer? We have no idea, but there are so many, terrific depth effects that we never had time to lament the failure of one or two in passing.

One other problem, however. The film is an action movie, a western with a very simple plot, about a gunslinger attempting to rescue a group of women from white slavers. Action scenes, however, are usually predicated upon rapid editing, while the 3-D effects work the best when your eyes can take the time to adjust to the illusion of the shot. Hence, there are times when effects can barely get established before the camera angle switches to something else. One way the film gets around this is with the ubiquitous slow motion shots of people falling or otherwise getting plastered. It doesn't really matter though for, like we said, as soon as one effect goes by, there is another one to marvel. The presentation proves unequivocally that 3-D works on DVD, and if the other home video companies that have titles in their vaults don't take notice of this, their shareholders ought to storm their board meetings, with flaming arrows, hurled boulders and rats tossed by the tail.

The film actually runs 85 minutes, but it concludes with a 5 minute replay of its best moments. The sound is monophonic and is reasonably strong. There is no captioning, but there isn't much dialog, anyway. In the DVD's one real shortcoming, we would have preferred about ten times the 11 chapters the program has been encoded with. An amusing 2-D trailer, narrated by a guy pretending to watch the movie, is also included.

A Bob Clampett DVDeeee-eeee

An outstanding compilation that explores the entire career of animation legend, Robert Clampett, **Bob Clampett's Beany and Cecil The Special Edition**, is being released by Image Entertainment (ID5660BBDVD, \$30). Produced by Robert Clampett, Jr. and Greg Carson, the core of the DVD is a 90 minute collection of **Beany and Cecil** cartoons (twelve episodes) from the early Sixties, but there is also an hour (four complete episodes) of the original black-and-white *Time for Beany* puppet show from the early Fifties, a complete episode of another 15 minute puppet show, *Thunderbolt the Wondercolt*, and partial clips from many other projects. There are also more than 500 still photos, loads of home movies, and extensive oral histories of Clampett's career on a lengthy commentary track, much of it taken from recordings of lectures and appearances made by Clampett himself.

The DVD's menu is easy enough to navigate and defaults to a direct play of the **Beany and Cecil** cartoons. Many of the cartoons appeared previously on LD (Jun 89), but the transfers on the DVD are more than fresh. Utilizing original source materials, each presentation is immaculate, completely free of wear, with sharp, precise colors (Clampett used light and pastel hues) and a solid focus. Use the Still Step function and every frame becomes a gorgeous publicity photo. The monophonic sound has warm, stable tones. Nothing on the DVD is captioned and there is no time

coding.

The cartoons are presented within the opening and closing credit sequences from the original show, along with many of the episode teasers and briefer bits (there were several episodes and shorter pieces within each show—the format and irreverent style reminded us quite a bit of *Animaniacs*). Included are *Beany Meets the Monstrous Monster* (a giant is eating boats like seafood), *So What and the Seven Whatnots* (they visit Las Vegas and boogie with a big band), *Beany and the Boo Birds* (haunted house theme), *Super-Cecil*, *Wildman of Wildsville* (a beatnik painter whose canvasses display a number of Modern Art styles), *The Spots off a Leopard*, *Beanyland* (an extra-mischievous poke at the Disney organization), *Cecil Meets the Singing Dinosaurs* (including everybody's favorite pun from the program—they visit the No Bikini Atoll—and a vocal guest appearance by Dinah Shore), *The Mad Isle of Manhattan* (a satire on television advertising and sponsorship), *Dirty Pool* (about building a pool in their back yard; it clearly has something personal to do with living in Los Angeles; it also includes a pan across what appears to be a complete collection of Clampett's characters, waiting to get into the pool), *D.J. the D.J.* (perhaps the best episode of all—a feverish satire of the recording industry featuring Cecil's rendition of *Ragmop*) and *There's No Such Thing as a Sea Serpent* (kind of a pilot for another Clampett creation, Snorky).

One of the beauties of the DVD is that it gives these cartoons a complete context, showing them to be Clampett's masterpieces, a culmination of his long career. He actually started with Disney, designing a Mickey Mouse doll for a why-didn't-I-think-of-that-marketing-angle Walt Disney when he was a teenager, but he got his first job as an artist with Warner Bros. and was in on the development of Porky Pig (begun as an attempt to replicate the success of **Our Gang**) and the other **Looney Tunes** characters, eventually working his way up to directing his own team of animators. Although the DVD has no cartoons from this period, there are many still photos from the Warner lot, and many fascinating anecdotes on the commentary tracks.

As he negotiated his rise through Warner he also worked on independent projects, the most notable being an animated version of the Edgar Rice Burroughs *John Carter on Mars* stories, which would have rivaled the Fleischer Superman cartoons, had they been seen through to completion. The animation tests and drawings for this project alone are worth the proverbial price of the DVD.

Then in the late Forties and early Fifties, having become fascinated by the potential of the new medium, he shifted gears and began a pioneering puppet show on television, *Time for Beany*, which served as the initial incarnation of **Beany and Cecil**. In those days there were many puppet show and semi-puppet shows being broadcast on the tube, locally and nationally, but Clampett brought the grown-up sensibilities that had been a key part of the **Looney Tunes** successes to his puppet adventures, and they were, for the early days of network TV, a smash, appealing to adults as well as kids. Inspired in part by the Willis O'Brien silent film, **The Lost World** (not only the dinosaur, who became Cecil, but the bearded adventurer played by Wallace Beery, who became the captain; Beany was inspired by the time Clampett saw a young boy wearing a yarmulke), the episodes from the show that are presented on the DVD are not as inherently entertaining as the cartoons (the later ones play better than the earlier ones), but you can see within them the intelligent gags and irreverent attitude toward evil and heroism that would become the essence of the cartoon's appeal. More than 400 episodes were produced, so when Clampett was ready to create the cartoon, he had a wealth of practice and experience to draw upon.

Spin-offs being a key part of the TV industry even back then, Clampett soon had several 15 minute puppet shows running at the same time, the most developed being the *Thunderbolt the Wondercolt* animal super-hero, and the episode presented is effective, though the show's potential is clearly limited in comparison to the adventure premise and mix of characters on the Beany show.

We will not go into every item on the DVD—there's just too many—but some must be mentioned. There are clips and sketches from other cartoon shows Clampett tried to produce, many involving a boy and a phallic-shaped companion of some sort. During the early Sixties, he worked on an animated version of *The Edgar Bergen Show*, which came out a bit too over-sexed, and an incredibly surreal combination of human heads and animated bodies entitled *The Tex and Judy* show, featuring a Yosemite Sam-like actor and Judy Canova. The clips from both programs are super. There is a silent film Clampett made in 1927 called *The Golf Widow*, but it isn't very good. The still photos, which are scattered around the various menu options in support of specific aspects of Clampett's career, contain everything from family snapshots, grade school scribbles and backstage photos to the panoply of Beany and Cecil merchandising. There are many sketches and fully colored paintings from the various successful and unsuccessful projects. The commentaries, which play over the stills and the puppet sequences, include a fascinating live recording of a story session for the puppet show, the creators talking about gags to satirize the McCarthy hearings (Roy Cohn as a skunk).

Hours and hours of Judy

We had rated **The Judy Garland Show Volume One** (Jul 99) as one of the ten best music programs available on DVD, yet it represents a mere eighth of the new Pioneer Artists box set (actually, it looks like a miniature trunk), **The Judy Garland Show Collection** (PA99621D, \$120). The tantalizing box contains four separate platters, each held in an individual jacket, along with an insert—which features an essay, a guest index and a song index for the four platters, and a content listing of each platter—and a 432-page paperback book by Coyne Steven Sanders called *Rainbow's End The Judy Garland Show*, loaded with exhaustive minutia chronicling the show's production. Each dual-sided platter contains two episodes from the hour-long variety program broadcast in the 1963-64 season, except one side of one platter, which contains excerpts from the other episodes.

The episodes originally appearing on **Volume One**, as well as those appearing on **Volume Two** (Oct 99) are included, each representing a separate side on one of the platters and accompanied by the outtakes and other special materials those releases offered. The presentation of those episodes in the **Collection** is identical to their original releases. Throughout the **Collection**, the picture quality on the programs is fantastic. The black-and-white image is vivid and spotless, with textures and details that will enthrall even casual viewers. Even more exciting is the sweetening that has been brought to the audio track, which is presented in its original mono on one track and in grand 5.1-channel Dolby Digital stereo on another. The Dolby Digital mix brings an incredibly moving clarity and depth to Garland's vocals, as well as a great splendor to the orchestral accompaniment.

Side one of *Disc Two* in the set contains the **Volume One** episodes. *Episode #1*, which paired Garland with Mickey Rooney, and *Episode #3*, which brought out a teenage Liza Minnelli. As we mentioned in our initial review,

Garland was especially relaxed working these guests, and her sense of pleasure is readily conveyed to the viewer. Side two of *Disc Two* features the material that appeared in **Volume Two**, *Episode #2*, with Count Basie and Mel Tormé, and *Episode #4*, with Lena Horne and Terry-Thomas. Again, as we pointed out in our original review, Garland may be a little more business-like in these appearances, but her skills as an entertainer are never compromised.

Side one of *Disc Three* contains *Episode #5*, with Tony Bennett and Dick Shawn, and *Episode #6*, with Steve Lawrence and June Allyson. (Jerry Van Dyke also appeared in many of these early episodes, as a series regular, and while fans may be impatient when he steals airtime from Garland, some of his routines are quite good.) Bennett's signature number, *I Left My Heart in San Francisco*, is delivered with an exceptional calm and smoothness, and is very beautiful. Garland seems as relaxed with Allyson as she was with Rooney, though Allyson's singing seems a bit rusty. In any case, their scenes together are very warm and charming. Garland tells an amusing story about swallowing a moth in the middle of a number. There are several outtakes as well, including an extended talk with Steve Allen that is fairly amusing. The show's first producer, George Schlatter, also provides a commentary during *Episode #5*, not talking about that specific episode but sharing his concepts about the program, his experiences with the idiots at CBS and his formulas for keeping Garland on task. He has a number of fantastic anecdotes, as well as a lot of insight about the shows, including something that is readily noticeable if you watch much of the **Collection**—Garland would use the style of her fellow singer when performing duets rather than wrestle the song into her own style.

Episode #10 on the second side features Ray Bolger and Jane Powell, though both are a just a bit more reserved than one would expect. The highpoint is when the three do *The Jitterbug*. Garland also sings *A Lot of Livin' to Do*, *When Your Lover Has Gone* and *One for My Baby*, although the latter is a gag number, as the bar starts filling up with noisy customers while she tries to sing. We got goosebumps when we realized Garland was breaking into *Moon River* on *Episode #12*, which fills out the side. Vic Damone and Zina Bethune (she played a nurse on *Ben Casey*, but was a competent singer and dancer) guest star. Garland does some *Porgy & Bess* tunes with Damone and *Getting to Know You* with Bethune. She also has a nice conversation with George Jessel, who had helped get her started on the road to fame.

Our favorite of the new episodes was *Episode #17* on *Disc 4*. Garland's musical selections are wonderful, including *Something's Coming* (eat your heart out, Barbra Streisand), *They Can't Take That Away from Me*, and *I Believe in You*, and Chita Rivera does a terrific singing-while-dancing rendition of *I Got Plenty o' Nuttin'*. The only slow spot is an extended but dull comic monolog by Louis Nye. Vic Damone also appears. Both *Episode #17* and its companion on *Disc 4*, *Episode #18*, have what are billed as Ken Murray's home movies, containing wonderful semi-unguarded black-and-white images of Hollywood movie stars in the late Thirties. Martha Raye, cracking up Garland with improvisational mugging during their duets, also appears on *Episode #18*, as does Peter Lawford and, with a youthful energy that subsided later in his career, Rich Little. There are also some super outtakes, including more instances of Raye's mugging.

On the other side of *Disc Four*, Ethel Merman joins Garland for a belt 'em out rendition of *Friendship, You're the Top* and more, in *Episode #14*. In one ear-popping stunt to open a sequence, they both hold the same note for 20 seconds. Merman also sings *I Get a Kick out of You*, using the 'cocaine' line. Shelly Berman has an amusing telephone monolog and joins Garland and Peter Gennaro in *Makin' Whoopee*. Garland does a subdued version of *Puttin' on the Ritz*, *Shenandoah* and even *The Battle Hymn of the Republic*. When Peggy Lee and Garland sing together on *Episode #13*, also on *Disc 4*, Lee's singing is fine, but she looks stiff in comparison to Garland's relaxed confidence. Jack Carter does an almost classic song-and-joke rendition of *What's the Matter with Kids Today?* and Carl Reiner appears for a very funny, extended (apparently unedited) conversation with Garland about the difference between being famous and being a celebrity.

The two episodes on side two of *Disc One* come from later in the show's life and are closer to pure concerts. Garland opens with an incredible 20 minute set on *Episode 21*, with the camera often so close that you can watch the back of her mouth vibrate as she works her way through *Smile*, *After You've Gone*, *Come Rain or Come Shine* and others. Diahann Carroll appears for a medley of her own, including *Quiet Nights* and *Goody Goody*, and the two do a nice duet of Harold Arlen and Richard Rodgers songs. Tormé also appears. The music on *Episode 22* is interrupted only by one last appearance from Murray, showing films from downtown Hollywood in the Twenties, such as the night Grumman's Chinese Theater opened. Jack Jones sings a couple numbers (his *Wives and Lovers* does not have the resonance of the standard studio recording, a rare shortcoming on the DVD's fantastic array of audio splendors) and joins with Garland for a medley of Jeanette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy tunes (it's not as bizarre as you think—Jones' father once co-starred with MacDonald in a film; though admittedly, the orchestrations for this duet are substantially changed). Garland sings for a full thirty minutes in the opening half of the episode, including a definitive rendition of *Just in Time* and a compare-it-to-Liza rendition of *Just You, Just Me*. There is an extensive collection of outtakes, as well.

Side One of Disc One is an 84 minute compilation of Garland's songs from the other programs, each identified in its opening by title and where it can be found in the other platters. There is also an interesting 8 minute outtake, with Rooney doing a vaudeville-like skit, and a great collection of stills. The jacket suggests that there is DVD-ROM material on the platters as well, but we could not locate it.

Doubled entertainment

Sometimes supplementary features can be thorough without being interesting, presenting lots of redundant materials that take up space but don't really add much to a viewer's enjoyment. The new Columbia TriStar Home Video *Collector's Series* release of the animated omnibus program, **Heavy Metal** (03929, \$28), is quite the opposite. It is packed to the gills with special features, and they're all highly stimulating, not only enhancing one's understanding of how the film was put together, but extending the breadth of its appeal.

The central addition to the DVD is a second version of the movie itself, identified on the DVD as a '*Rough Cut*,' but actually what is commonly referred to as a 'work in progress cut,' unspooling the film as it stood at some point in its creation where different sequences were at different levels of completion. Some segments are fully colored, while others are bare sketches. The only audio is the dialog track (and there are a number of long sequences in the film that don't have dialog). Yet, it is by no means a duplication of the completed film. Although the running time is only a few seconds different from the final movie's 90 minute length, the order of the stories were altered, scenes were eventually excised, characters were modified and the framings were changed (sometimes to hide graphic sex). Additionally, the *Rough Cut* is accompanied by a very good optional commentary channel from **Heavy Metal** historian Carl Macek, in which he explains what is happening with the animation in each segment and why things were changed, and provides

many other insights on the animation process.

The 1981 film is an uneven but generally enjoyable effort in male-fantasy science-fiction animation, made more valuable by the relative rarity of its genre. The stories do not necessarily have great emotional or thematic depth, but they are witty and otherwise stimulating, and there is an air of thoughtfulness throughout the film that those who lack the patience for its format tend to ignore. It is also worth noting—because this is the first time we realized it—that both the narrative and the look of **The Fifth Element** seem to have been inspired by a couple of the film's segments.

The picture is presented in letterboxed format (the rough cut is in full screen, sometimes trimming a bit off the sides in comparison to the completed movie, but other times adding more around some or even all the edges), with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback. The picture looks as sharp and clean as the LD did (Sep 96), but the colors are slightly different. While it is generally a toss up as to which version has the better colors (each one looks fine on its own), the choices seem smarter on the DVD. The DVD has been given a 5.1-channel Dolby Digital track, remixed for the recent theatrical reissue, and the standard track sounds very flat in comparison. Separation effects are more distinctive on the 5.1 track, and the general atmospheric dimensionality is more compelling. There are optional English, Spanish and Portuguese subtitles.

A number of other pleasing supplements are also featured. An excellent 3 minute segment that was dropped from the film for time considerations, depicting the rise of evil across the history of the world, is featured. There is a good collection of artwork in its various stages that complements the *Rough Cut* effectively. While most are still frames, once in a while they move. There are also some behind-the-scenes photos, particularly of models and stand-ins that were used by the artists. There is a 35 minute retrospective documentary, which gives you the basic background on Heavy Metal magazine and how the film was conceived and developed. The filmmakers admit they were making the sort of movie an adolescent boy would lap up, but they also point out they were breaking new ground in the artform. The documentary contains more information on how the animation was accomplished, as well as going into the origins of the various stories. The movie itself has an alternate audio track, featuring Macek again, reading from a detailed book he wrote about making the film. Among other things, he explains that the key difference between comic books and animation is continuity—the images in animation have to cut together, whereas in comics, it is just an option. Finally, there is a fantastic collection of Heavy Metal magazine covers and artwork, spanning the entire history of the magazine, from 1977 to July of 1999. We're not sure if it is complete, but it is certainly extensive, and each image can fire the imagination of the adolescent boy within us all.

Groovy, baby

Having found out what worked and what didn't work in the first Austin Powers movie (Nov 97), the creators honed their skills and designed a stronger, more consistent sequel with **Austin Powers The Spy Who Shagged Me**, which has been released by New Line Home Video as a *Platinum Series* title (N4891, \$25). The film is just as silly as the first movie, but it seems to measure things out better, balancing the time back and forth between the adventures of the hero and the exploits of the villain, both of whom are played by the comic, Mike Myers. It may not be as uproariously funny as the best parts of the first movie were, because the first film had the advantage of its fresh premise, but it may actually seem funnier in the long run and on repeat viewings, because of the experience that went into it. It should also be noted that the movie has many song and dance scenes, and could easily be categorized as a musical.

The film is presented in letterboxed format only, with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback. The picture transfer looks super, with the mod Sixties colors (in this outing, they go back in time) appearing as bright and crisp as they did way back then. There are many enjoyable separation effects on the 5.1-channel Dolby Digital track and plenty of power as well, with the standard stereo track coming across a bit more blandly. The 95 minute program comes with optional English subtitles, trailers, including the marvelous **Star Wars** teaser, three music videos from Madonna, Lenny Kravitz and Mel B, an extensive cast, cameos & crew profile section, a 25 minute production featurette with lots of cast interviews, an amusing 20 minute Comedy Central profile of Dr. Evil, a good 20 minutes of deleted scenes filled with more amusing gags, and a commentary track featuring Myers, director Jay Roach and writer Michael McCullers. They talk about the production and the adjustments they made for the sequel, explaining how they had to allow for sudden bursts of improvisational inspiration within each scene in order to reap the most comedy from the material—it is an interesting process and quite the opposite from the meticulously planned action sequences of a thriller. The Dr. Evil profile, by the way, can only be accessed by allowing the 'Special Features' animation to play through, on the menu, and then accessing the Dr. Evil symbol. Some DVD-ROM features, including screen savers, have also been included.

Go West

Based upon a television show that smartly mixed a descendant genre with an ascendant genre, creating a western spy adventure, **Wild Wild West** is an enjoyable frolic that works much better as a home video program than it did in a theater. The special effects are more convincing on the small screen, and the humor is less at odds with the film's scope. Will Smith and Kevin Kline star, their characters made more equal in stature and more competitive than on the TV series. Kenneth Branagh, his legs digitally erased, is the villain, though he is unable to convey as strong a sense of character as Smith and Kline do. The film takes too many shortcuts—if you don't ask yourself how this or that happened on the first viewing, it is likely that you will be doing so a lot by the fourth or fifth viewing—and, except for one memorable shot of Salma Hayek in some makeshift pajamas, the actresses in the film are critically underused (the one aspect of the James Bond movies the filmmakers failed to take seriously), but Smith's timing is super, the action scenes are energetic and the 'steam-tech' imagery is imaginative, enough so to make a terrific DVD.

Warner Home Video is releasing **Wild Wild West** (17175, \$25) in letterboxed format only, with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback. The image is sharp and the colors look great—like we said, the special effects are much smoother and more realistic than they appeared on theater screens. The 5.1-channel Dolby Digital sound has an elaborate, engaging separation mix, and lots of bass at the appropriate moments. The standard stereo mix is much blander. The 105 minute program has optional English subtitles, a cast & crew profile section, a trailer, a music video with Enrique Iglesias and the better-than-the-movie music video of Smith's title song. There is a 15 minute HBO promotional 'making of' documentary and four shorter but more detailed and interesting documentaries about specific aspects of the production (an entire western town set caught fire at one point when the wind changed). There are also DVD-ROM options, including production essays, but we had trouble getting some op-

tions to work.

The director, Barry Sonnenfeld, provides a reasonably informative commentary track, explaining how the film was shot, how the special effects were executed, how he got along with Smith and Kline, and the problems that popped up here and there. In other commentaries he has opened up quite a bit—sometimes telling more about his feelings than listeners probably want to know—and while he starts to at times on this track, he usually changes the subject before going too far and is, in general, more reserved than he's been in the past.

Hair of the dog that bit him

Universal's engaging *Classic Monster Collection* continues with a very satisfying presentation of the 1941 horror feature directed by George Wagner, **The Wolf Man** (20331, \$30). As is explained in the excellent 33 minute documentary that accompanies the film, this was not the first werewolf movie, but it was the first one to really capture the public's imagination and set the subgenre a-howling. Lon Chaney, Jr. stars in the title role, with Claude Rains incongruously cast as his father, Ralph Bellamy as the nominal straight lead, and Bela Lugosi and Maria Ouspenskaya providing some gypsy color. The monster scenes, of course, are good fun, and the rest of the story supports their appeal effectively.

The film is not quite as old as some of Universal's other horror features, and so the picture looks pretty nice. The LD (May 88) was in good condition, but the DVD is much sharper, with better-defined greys and more detailed contrasts. The source material has a number of minor speckles, but larger markings are minimal. The monophonic sound is fairly smooth, with limited background noise. The 70 minute feature can be supported by optional English or French subtitles ("Même un homme au couer pur qui dit ses prières le soir peut devenir loup quand l'aconit fleurit et que brille la lune d'automne.") and is accompanied by a cast-and-director profile section, a decent production essay, an old but good re-release trailer and a very nice 7 minute montage of publicity materials, set to the film's score. The documentary is captioned in English only.

The documentary is excellent and the only thing we wish is that it could have gone on longer. Promotions for the film's sequels are effectively integrated with the narrative, werewolf lore is discussed and the film's production background is detailed. There is also a commentary track, with film historian Tom Weaver. Weaver's talk is not as analytical or as thorough as other *Monster Collection* talks have been, and the documentary does a little better job breaking down the film's pleasures, but he does share a few interesting anecdotes, talking about Chaney's career troubles, discussing the history of the 'wolf cane,' explaining how the makeup and special effects were achieved and pointing out that this is the only werewolf movie that doesn't have a full moon. Both the commentary and the documentary mention that the movie was originally scripted to be more ambiguous about the reality of the hero's metamorphosis (à la **Cat People**), and while it was wisely adjusted to a more literal explication, many references in the dialog to a psychological denouement remain.

In love with a star

Julia Roberts and Hugh Grant star in the leisurely but very charming romantic comedy about a bookstore owner and a famous actress who fall in love, **Notting Hill**, which has been released by Universal as a *Collector's Edition* (20640, \$30). As the director, Roger Michell, explains on the commentary track, Roberts' character is not Roberts exactly, but she "has researched this part for the last ten years." Her performance is totally captivating, not only because of her character's relationship with the hero, but because it turns the movie into a wonderful tease. You never know how much of her personality is made up and how much is genuine.

The picture is presented in letterboxed format only, with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback. The picture looks great, with bright, sharp hues and accurate fleshtones. The stereo surround sound and 5.1-channel Dolby Digital sound are okay, though the mix is rarely elaborate. The 5.1 channel has better surround detail and a fuller dimensional presence than the standard track. The 124 minute program also has a French audio track in standard stereo, optional English and Spanish subtitles, production notes, a reasonably big cast & crew profile section and a trailer. A DVD-ROM feature provides even more elaborate cast and production publicity essays.

The commentary, in which Michell is joined by producer Duncan Kenworthy and screenwriter Richard Curtis, is fairly basic and moderately informative. They describe how the story was generated, detail the complicated shooting logistics that combined difficult location work with faultless soundstage work (the film often shifts between the two from cut to cut), and share a few anecdotes about the crew.

Additionally, the DVD has about 10 minutes of deleted scenes, including a couple very funny bits that had to be excised for time considerations. There is also a detailed map of Portobello Road and the Notting Hill district of London, with an accompanying essay about the area. Finally, there is a super 5 minute collection of behind the scenes shots focusing on Grant, who is suitably embarrassed when his parents come to visit the set, makes fun of the crew when they have to wear suits and ties while shooting in the Ritz, and shares an amusing story about his bed scene with Roberts, admitting with his usual self-deprecating charm that he probably upstaged her.

There's serious talk, by the way, of remaking **Charade**, and if they decide to do so, Roberts is the only actress they could possibly cast in the lead, not only for her acting skills, but for her heritage as a star.

Speaking of Charade...

A perfect construction of romance, suspense and humor, inlaid with two of the most enchanting movie stars to ever grace the medium, Stanley Donen's **Charade**, has finally been given the attention and transfer it deserves as a Criterion Collection release (CHA180, \$40). Long relegated to the horrors of public domain bargain bin video purgatory (Jan 98, Jul 98), Criterion has rescued and resuscitated the 1963 film with a beautiful, spotless picture transfer and even a clean, crisp monophonic audio track. They've also roped in Donen and screenwriter Peter Stone for a marvelously engaging commentary track, but we'll get to that in a moment.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1 and no 16:9 enhancement, which is probably the DVD's only questionable attribute. In comparison to the otherwise awful, previous DVD versions, the letterboxing adds nothing to the sides of the image and masks picture information on the top and the bottom of the image, cutting off the spinning circles in the opening and chopping off parts of Hepburn's exquisite wardrobe. Fleshtones, though, are meticulous, Hepburn's outfits are still magnetic and every hue is precisely rendered. The 114 minute program has optional English subtitles, and is accompanied by a trailer, two essays about Donen and a summary of Stone's career.

Sit down in front of your TV set, cross your legs and pretend you are at the feet of Donen and Stone, two crotchety old geezers who used to make movies and have many marvelous stories to tell about Hollywood and shooting **Charade**, that is, when they are not arguing with one another over whether or not they should tell you ahead of time about the stamps and that sort of thing. It is an utterly beguiling commentary track loaded with insight and anecdotes. They describe the steps that led to the film's financing, the first time Hepburn met Grant (she spilled wine on him, but it was his fault), what Grant, Hepburn and all the cast members were really like, and the logistics of the production. They also provide a deft analysis of how the film works and discuss its revitalization of what had been a moribund genre—the serious murder comedy. Stone, who wrote a novelization of the story, discusses the primary differences between the interior necessities of a novel and the exterior necessities of a screenplay. Donen actually talked Grant into saying, “Judy, Judy, Judy,” on film, but then he lost the clip. They also claim that a line of dialog was changed before the film was released, but every copy of the movie we have contains the original line and not the change.

We also have to share the best story on the commentary track, because it's too good to leave to the DVD. Universal was pressuring Donen to take out the shots of the corpses, but he worked out a compromise where they would hold two preview screenings, one with the corpses in and one with the corpses out, and let the preview audiences decide. At the first screening, both Donen and Stone, having seen the film plenty of times, were in the lobby cooling their heels, when they spied the post-screening preview cards sitting on a table waiting to be filled out and realized that no one else was around. They only had to take about five or six each, do the same thing at the next screening, and they got to keep their corpses.

Donen co-directed **The Pajama Game** with George Abbott, though some of the numbers, such as *Hernando's Hideaway*, show an influence from choreographer Bob Fosse that seems greater than simply the dance steps. In any case, it was a happy collaboration, creating a breezy, uncomplicated musical (about labor troubles at a pajama factory) that remained very true to its stage source but still obtained the added energy the flexibility of a film can instill, something we assume was Donen's contribution upon the project. The always underrated Doris Day stars in the 1957 feature, with John Raitt.

The Warner Home Video release (35085, \$20) is presented in cropped format on one side and in letterboxed format on the other side, with an aspect ratio of about 1.8:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback. We say cropped, because there is picture information missing on all four sides in comparison to the full screen LD (May 90). Comparing the LD to the letterboxed image, the letterboxing allows even more picture information on the sides, but masks off a bit more from the top and bottom. On the whole, the letterbox framing is preferable, but we can't help thinking that some sort of framing that just showed everything that was on the strip of film it came from would be the most ideal.

If you put on the DVD without comparing it to anything, it looks pretty good. The image could be a bit sharper, but colors are bright and fleshtones look fine. Although the colors on the LD are too light in comparison, however, whites are white on the LD and look yellowed on the DVD when you jump back and forth, and from that, everything starts to look a bit too yellow. Like the letterboxing, the effort is passable, but there is room for improvement. The monophonic sound is a little dull and not as detailed as the LD's sound. Curiously, a nice number by Day, which was deleted from the film in favor of a reprise of another number, is included in the supplement, and the clarity and tone on it is much nicer, so perhaps there is room for improvement there, as well. The 101 minute program has optional English and French subtitles (“Eh ben. Toi, avec des étoiles dans tes yeux...”), a cast & crew profile section, a small production essay and a trailer.

Donen's fairly ridiculous science-fiction effort, **Saturn 3**, is available from ITC, Artisan Home Entertainment and Pioneer (DVD69903, \$25). Kirk Douglas, Farrah Fawcett, Harvey Keitel and a killer robot star in the 1979 feature, about scientists in a remote but luxurious (and stocked with an apparent endless supply of negligees) research station on one of Saturn's moons. Seeing her traipse around in one of those negligees once too often, the robot gets the hots for Fawcett and the usual pandemonium ensues. Watching the film right after **Pajama Game**, we realized that the entire opening sequence is actually a musical number, and several of the later chase scenes also seem to have the rhythm of a dance. Indeed, the movie would probably be better if everyone broke out periodically into song. The film endures because of its star appeal and, however silly, because of its art design. When you put together Fawcett and some robots, apparently, it doesn't matter what else happens.

The picture is presented in full screen format, and the framing never seems cramped or unbalanced. There is some minor speckling on the source material, but the transfer looks quite nice, with bright hues, accurate fleshtones and a sharp focus. The stereo surround sound is also fairly enjoyable, with some distinctive separation effects and fairly clear tones. The 88 minute feature is not captioned and is accompanied by a trailer.

Paternal instincts

In the cleverly constructed **Big Daddy**, Adam Sandler portrays a layabout (albeit one who has graduated from law school) who takes a liking to an absent friend's child, forming a bond that eventually matures the both of them. Younger viewers will respond to the tomfoolery as Sandler's character and his young friend get to know one another, while older viewers will appreciate the romance that develops between Sandler's character and a woman the two of them pick up at a park. Although the kiddie stuff subsides after a while, it seems to be enough to sustain younger viewers, and pretty much everybody will be able to make it through the final courtroom scene except those who take the law seriously.

Columbia TriStar Home Video has released **Big Daddy** (03922, \$25) in letterboxed format on one side, with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback, and in full screen format on the other side. The letterboxing adds a smidgen to the sides and masks off picture information on the top and (mostly) bottom in comparison to the full screen version, but either one seems workable. The color transfer looks fine, with solid hues and accurate fleshtones. The stereo surround sound is okay, with a dimensional pop score and adequate separation effects, and there is a slightly livelier 5.1-channel Dolby Digital track. The 93 minute feature has optional English subtitles, a decent cast-and-director profile section, a trailer, music videos by Sheryl Crow and by Garbage, and a 13 minute

HBO featurette that contains an extensive interview with Sandler and the twins that played the kid.

Boorman's adventures

Perhaps the two most enduring films by the veteran director, John Boorman, have been released by Warner Home Video, his 1972 adaptation of James Dickey's **Deliverance** (15449, \$25) and his 1981 take on British mythology, **Excalibur** (22018, \$25). Among their many other fine qualities, both films have proven to be highly repeatable entertainment, holding up to multiple viewings through the combination of a strong narrative, compelling characters, complex action scenes and perhaps most importantly, a rich, clearly communicated atmosphere. We could watch either one, over and over, without getting bored.

Jon Voight with a mustache and Burt Reynolds without one star in **Deliverance**, with Ned Beatty and Ronny Cox, about a canoe trip that ends in disaster. The film is almost as mythological in structure as **Excalibur**, and is as much about the loss of the wilderness to progress as it is about male bonding and all the other more literal interpretations of the plot. It's not only that the white water sequences and the run-ins with the vicious backwoods characters are exciting. The dialog has a consistent poetic rhythm that brings resonance to every line, just as the shots of scenery around the river take on a sense of uncommon spiritual intensity. And we haven't even broached the film's moral examinations, which leave the viewer hoping that the heroes will get away with murder. It is a rich, timeless work that makes ideal home video entertainment, provided, of course, that it is letterboxed.

Which it is, on one side of the DVD. The other side is cropped, and not worth sampling. The letterboxed version is actually rather substantially windowboxed, and has an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback. The color transfer looks super, with the many shades of green and brown clearly delineated in both the light and the dark. The image is very sharp and finely detailed, and fleshtones look terrific. The orange flashes on the image during the conversation with the sheriff near the end are an intentional reflection of a warning light, just as the solarized sequences are intentional, or, at least, part of the original film.

There is a 5.1-channel Dolby Digital track, as well. We assume this has come from some kind of re-working of the film's original audio, but the constant sounds of the woods and the water on the rear channel drop you into the center of the adventure, and the louder you set them, the better. There is also a French audio track in mono and optional English and French subtitles ("Il faut quelquefois se perdre pour trouver.").

The 109 minute program comes with production notes, a smallish cast & crew profile section (including an error—the **Deliverance**-like **A Simple Plan** is listed among Boorman's director credits), a trailer and a good 10 minute 'making of' featurette, made in 1972, that profiles Dickey and shows how the film was shot. "When you see that river," says Boorman on the featurette, "And you realize what this country used to be, you can only weep for the destruction." In unusual candor, Boorman also speaks about horrendous arguments he had with Dickey over the film, and we wish we were privy to their content, not for the gossip, but for the artistic revelations they could provide.

Many filmmakers have made versions of the story of King Arthur, but none are as hypnotically cinematic as **Excalibur**. The film combines the surreal Christian mythos of the tale with its more earthly conflicts of jealousy and adultery to create a miasma of physical and conceptual excitements. You know that knights were never really this cool, but the film captures the way everybody wants to believe they were, which is the purpose of legends to begin with. Nigel Terry, Nicol Williamson and Helen Mirren star.

The 140 minute film is presented in letterboxed format only, with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback. The picture quality is definitely superior to the LD (Nov 98). It is sharper and less grainy, and hues are slightly richer, with better looking fleshtones. We prefer the windowboxing on the LD, however, which not only provides more picture information on the sides, but has more picture information on the top of the image, as well. In a direct comparison, the letterbox framing on the DVD is a bit frustrating.

The 5.1 Dolby Digital sound is pretty much on par with the LD's Dolby Digital track, providing more in the way of dimensional atmosphere than specific directional effects, though the overall impact of the audio is intrinsic to the mesmerizing sweep of the images. There is a French audio track in mono, optional English and French subtitles, a cast & crew profile section and the film's definitive trailer.

Boorman provides a commentary track, offering a modest amount of information about the shoot (such as the problems of working with Williamson and the mosquitoes that intruded on the outdoor love scene), touching on the background of the legend and explaining a bit about the story. He seems most interested in talking about the locations (most of which were close to his home in Ireland), but he does explain how most of the special effects were achieved, as well as the thinking behind the designs of other significant shots.

The only problem with Boorman's 1968 feature, **Hell in the Pacific**, which has been released by Anchor Bay Home Entertainment (DV10982, \$25), is that there are no surprises in it. You take one look at the cast—Lee Marvin and Toshiro Mifune—and the premise—a GI and a Japanese soldier alone together on an island during WWII—and you know how they're going to interact and pretty much what is going to happen. The film has a certain level of star appeal, it can be visually compelling, and then there's that whole male bonding thing again, but there just aren't enough variables in the situation to generate a sustained intrigue. In contrast to **Deliverance**, one viewing is almost more than what one needs to digest the film.

That is, one viewing of the complete movie. Anchor Bay presents the film in letterboxed format on one side, with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1 and no 16:9 enhancement, and cropped on the other side, but the cropping upsets the flow of the film's images. Since dialog is minimal and mostly one-sided, it is necessary to take in the complete image to absorb the film's artistry.

The color transfer is strikingly different from the CBS/Fox Video LD (Feb 92) and looks much more accurate. The jungle forests of the island are green on the DVD and yellow-pink on the LD. Scenes that look like they are taking place at sunrise on the LD, because of the tones in the light, are set more believably in mid-day on the DVD. Fleshtones are more accurate, and the image is sharper and more solid.

The stereo surround sound brings the same sort of atmospheric impact to the environment of the film that it did on **Deliverance**, and although it is not as finely detailed as **Deliverance**, it is on par with the LD's stereo. The film runs 101 minutes and is not captioned. Boorman's original and better ending for the movie, which was shown in the movie's Japanese theatrical release but exchanged for a clumsier conclusion on the American theatrical release, has been included as a supplement, as it was on the LD.

Listening to Private Ryan

Steven Spielberg's outstanding WWII tale, which has a powerhouse audio track, Saving Private Ryan, has been released by DreamWorks Home Entertainment with 5.1-channel Dolby Digital sound (84433, \$35) and, separately, with DTS encoding (84664, \$35). The Dolby Digital version is accompanied by a 25 minute production featurette and the DTS version is not, but otherwise the programming on the two DVDs is the same. Both have a 2 minute plug for a D-Day Museum by Spielberg, a pair of trailers, a large cast & crew profile section, production notes and optional English subtitling.

The picture quality is outstanding, surprisingly better than the LD (Aug 99). The image is consistently sharp and while the challenging cinematography is drained of color, hues remain distinctive and grain minimal. Fleshtones that look bland on the LD are fully discernible on the DVDs. The image is also sharper and better detailed. The frame transfer rates on the two DVDs appear to be identical or very similar.

The DTS sound is better than the Dolby Digital sound. There is more bass response, better separation definitions and more elaborate rear-channel activity. The differences are not extensive, but they are readily noticeable. There are fewer differences between the LD's Dolby Digital track and the DVD's DTS track. The DTS retains a slightly more active bass, but rear channel effects seem better defined on the LD and the forward separation effects are pretty much equal in quality on the two tracks.

Tom Hanks, Edward Burns, Tom Sizemore and Matt Damon star in the brisk and mesmerizing 169 minute feature, about the landing at Normandy and its aftermath, and a squad that is assigned to locate a particular soldier. Along with looking behind the scenes of the shoot, the production featurette includes many interviews with WWII veterans and a tantalizing selection of clips from WWII-inspired films Spielberg made as a child.

One of the inspirations for Saving Private Ryan is said to have been The Fighting Sullivans, about five brothers serving aboard the same ship in the Pacific. The 1944 film, which runs 112 minutes, spends the first 40 minutes depicting the brothers as kids and the next 40 showing them as adults before the bombing of Pearl Harbor is announced. Hence, the battle sequence and its aftermath are consigned to the film's climax. Most of the movie is a pleasant and nostalgic depiction of growing up in America during a more innocent time, with a light humor and genial romance.

Released by Roan Group Archival Entertainment (AED2000, \$30), the black-and-white source material is in pretty good shape, with only a few stray scratches and speckles. The image is a little soft, but contrasts are clear and the image is adequately detailed. The monophonic sound is okay and the program is not captioned. A touching half hour commentary about serving in World War II, by historian Jack Bilello, is also included.

How's this for a rip-off? Somebody tracked down a guy who was a private in World War II and whose last name was Ryan and interviewed him, combining the rambling reminiscences with some archival footage of the War and calling the 52 minute program The True Story of Private Ryan. The Ryan in question is British and the Eaton Entertainment release (13693E, \$25) is not subtitled, so American ears may have difficulty following everything he has to say, even though it appears that the real Ryan has been dubbed by another speaker.

The picture looks a touch washed out in places, but is reasonably stable over all, and the archival footage is passable. The monophonic sound is reasonably strong. If the program were called something else, it wouldn't seem so bad, since there are some interesting details about fighting the War, and the archival footage is interesting. But the title is shameless.

Bond, with lots of gadgets

In coordination with the release of the latest James Bond film, MGM Home Entertainment has issued a James Bond Gift Set (907928, \$200) containing seven Bond films that have also been issued or reissued individually as Special Edition titles, Goldfinger (907712, \$35), Thunderball (907857, \$35), Live and Let Die (907026, \$35), For Your Eyes Only (907027, \$35), Licence to Kill (907708, \$35), GoldenEye (906442, \$35) and Tomorrow Never Dies (907915, \$35). Each is presented in letterboxed format only, with an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback, and each has a bevy of special features, none of which is captioned.

Tomorrow Never Dies is an exact replication of the previous (and a bit cheaper) Special Edition release (Dec 98), though it has a new catalog number. The picture looks super and the film's 5.1-channel Dolby Digital sound is great. Letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1, the 1997 film is accompanied by two commentary tracks, one from director Roger Spottiswoode in conversation with Daniel Petrie, Jr. and one from special effects supervisor Vic Armstrong and producer Michael G. Wilson. There is also a track containing the isolated music score and a French audio track, both in standard stereo. An alternate angle function allows you to access storyboards as the movie plays. Accompanying the film is a wonderful 45 minute documentary, called The Secrets of 007, which goes over all the Bond movies with a lot of interesting trivia. There is also a brief but interesting interview with composer David Arnold about accommodating the Bond traditions in the musical score, Sheryl Crow's music video for the title song, breakdowns of several special effect sequences that run about 4 minutes, a couple trailers and optional English, French and Spanish subtitles. Pierce Brosnan and Michelle Yeoh star in the 117 minute feature, with Jonathon Pryce as the megalomaniacal villain, who is attempting to instigate a war between the British and the Chinese.

The previous DVD release of GoldenEye (May 97) had no special features. The transfer on the new release appears to be identical to the earlier one, with fewer artifacting flaws. There is a French language track in standard stereo and optional English and French subtitles ("Pour moi, vous êtes un dinosaure sexiste et misogyne."). The image is immaculate and the 5.1-channel Dolby Digital sound is tremendous.

With one exception, the DVD's special features are those that appeared on the original LD release (Jun 96). There is a commentary track by director Martin Campbell and the producer, Wilson, that does a good job at explaining how the film was put together. There is a fine 45 minute promotional documentary, The World of 007, hosted by future Austin Powers squeeze Elizabeth Hurley, as well as the Tina Turner music video of the title song, a brief 'making of' featurette, a couple trailers and a dozen TV commercials. The exception is an excellent 15 minute 'making of' program, not included on the LD, which has a lot of behind-the-scenes footage and interviews (like with the guy that actually did the dam jump), some of which are repeated in the shorter featurette, but most of which are fresh. Brosnan (fighting for control of a deadly satellite weapon) stars in the 1995 film, which has become our second favorite Bond movie, thanks

largely to the quality of picture and sound the 130 minute program brings to home video.

The picture and sound transfers on **Goldfinger** are identical to those on the previous DVD release (Jan 98), which had no special features. The color transfer looks terrific, with bright, solid hues, rich, accurate fleshtones and meticulously crisp details. The letterboxing has an aspect ratio of about 1.78:1. The monophonic sound is smooth, sharp and free of wear, though MGM has dispensed with the stereo mix on the title sequence that was used on several LD releases. The 110 minute program has an alternate French audio track and optional English and French subtitles (“‘Qui êtes-vous?’ ‘Je m’appelle Pussy Galore.’ ‘Je dois rêver.’”).

The DVD’s special features originally appeared on LD (Feb 96). There are two commentary tracks, one with the director, Guy Hamilton, that is intercut with background comments by Bond historian Lee Pfeiffer and briefer comments by star Honor Blackman and another Bond historian, Michael Mellinger, and the other, hosted by Bond historian John Cork, featuring the combined comments of many production personnel, including set designer Ken Adams, editor Peter Hunt, composer John Barry, stuntman George Leech and others. While the organization is a little haphazard, you do get a lot of information about how the film came together from the two and what it was like working on the production. There are also two excellent 25 minute retrospective documentaries, compiled in the Nineties and narrated by Patrick Macnee, *The Making of Goldfinger*, which provides a history of the film’s production, and *The Goldfinger Phenomenon*, which looks at the impact it had on the world. The documentaries contain many wonderful clips, including Theodore Bikel’s screen test for the title role and pictures of Ian Fleming visiting the set. There is also an original ‘making of’ featurette, a trailer, three TV commercials, a bunch of radio commercials, a radio interview with the star, Sean Connery, and a huge collection of still photos. On the other Bond DVDs, the Play function appears on the upper left in the opening menu and is the default choice, but for some reason on **Goldfinger**, ‘Special Features’ appears in the upper left and is the default choice, something we found to be mildly annoying. Gert Frobe is the villain in the 1964 production, attempting to corner the market on gold by irradiating Ft. Knox.

Our favorite Bond movie, the 1965 Connery effort, **Thunderball**, appears on DVD for the first time, accompanied by special features that were included in one of the 130 minute film’s LD releases (Nov 96). The picture quality is almost identical to the LD. In a few darker portions of the screen, the DVD’s image is more solid than the LD’s image, but basically they look identical, again with fabulously fresh colors and a crisp, clean image. The letterboxing has an aspect ratio of about 2.3:1. The sound is presented in 5.1-channel Dolby Digital, delivering slightly cleaner and crisper tones than the standard stereo surround sound on the LD, though again, the two are almost indistinguishable. Created for the LD with a healthy respect to the film’s original mono mix, separation effects are limited, but there is an atmospheric dimensionality, to many scenes and to the musical score, that is highly pleasing. The 130 minute program has optional English and French subtitles (“‘Ça vous ennuie, si mon amie s’assied? Elle est complètement morte.’”).

Again, there are two commentary tracks, both a compilation of interviews with many of the production personnel, organized with comments and thorough background information by Cork (who refers to the medium as a ‘laser disc’). An early interview with the late director, Terence Young, is also blended into the mix. Combined, the two tracks give you a fairly complete portrait of the film’s production. Also featured on one of the tracks is an alternate (but catchy) opening theme song, *Mr. Kiss Kiss Bang Bang*, which was recorded by Dionne Warwick and plays as it would have, over the opening credits. Segments of the film’s French, Italian, Spanish and German soundtracks are included on the track, too. The DVD has a full-fledged alternate French audio track as well, in mono. Again, there are two terrific 25 minute retrospective documentaries narrated by Macnee, although the original TV documentary that appeared on the LD hasn’t been included. There is also a short ‘making of’ featurette, a collection of trailers, TV commercials, radio commercials and still photos. We won’t go into all the reasons we enjoy the film, but we would like to point out that even though it is over thirty years old, the final underwater battle holds up magnificently to any contemporary action sequence, something we can’t say about many action scenes from those days.

Roger Moore’s initial foray as Bond, **Live and Let Die**, is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.8:1. The colors look slightly nicer than those on the letterboxed LD (Mar 91) and are a bit sharper, too, but the picture on the 1973 feature is not as nice as the picture on the Connery movies. Hues are bright and fleshtones are accurate, but darker sequences are grainy at times and there are a few speckles here and there. The monophonic sound is a little duller and flatter than the sound on the LD. The audio is clean, but not very lively. The 121 minute film has a French audio track as well, and optional English and French subtitles (“‘Qu’est-ce que ça peut faire/Quand t’as un boulot à faire faut bien le faire/Tu dois faire vivre à l’autre un enfer.’”).

There is a single 30 minute documentary, again narrated by Macnee, that contains a lot of behind-the-scenes footage and depicts how the various stunts were achieved (including a number of accidents), how the story was developed and how the film was cast. Co-star Jane Seymour has a very interesting anecdote about the film’s tarot card motif and how a reading she had during the filming accurately predicted the future of her love life. Footage of Roger Moore on location talking about his friendship with one of the bit players and a slightly lengthier piece about operating the hang glider have been included as a separate menu option. There is a good selection of still photos, along with trailers, TV commercials and radio commercials. There is also a British milk commercial that doesn’t seem to make too much sense but includes behind-the-scenes shots of one of the stunts.

Two audio commentaries are presented, one emceed by Cork, who compiles scattered comments by many of the cast and crew and applies the audio clips at appropriate moments, and one by screenwriter Tom Mankiewicz. In addition to explaining how various stunts were performed and why certain choices were made, the speakers on Cork’s track reminisce about the shoot and about working with one another. Mankiewicz’ best material is covered in the documentary, so he really doesn’t have too much to add, except a little bit of trivia here and there. He does offer extensive comparisons between Moore and Connery, and he gives a thorough background on the development of the boat chase.

The film, one of the periodic revitalizations of the series, has a number of black actors (in selling the film to some overseas markets, the black actress in the ad materials was changed to a nondescript white female) and is about drug running in New York and the Caribbean.

Moore also appears in the 1981 production, **For Your Eyes Only**, which has a deliberately increased focus on action sequences and less flagrant comedy (after the wild but successful **Moonraker**, where could they go?), but is supported by a serviceable narrative about obtaining (rather nominally) a critical decoding device.

The picture transfer is much improved over the LD (Apr 90). The letterboxing, which has an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1, is wider than the LD’s letterboxing. The colors are sharper and much more accurate, so that pinkish whites

on the LD become pure white on the DVD. The image quality is excellent, involving the viewer more in the action scenes and enhancing the film's entertainment. The 128 minute movie had what was for its time an excellent stereo mix, though it still seems primitive by today's standards. Given 5.1-channel Dolby Digital encoding, the audio on the DVD always holds its own against the LD, and in some instances, the surround and separation effects are stronger and better defined. There is also a French audio track in standard stereo and optional English and French subtitles. Another good documentary, running about a half hour and narrated by Macnee, is included, depicting the behind-the-scenes of various stunts, discussing how the film was cast and talking about accommodating the film's various locations. Along with trailers, radio ads and a Sheena Easton music video of the title song, there are two brief storyboard sequences and another decent collection of production stills. Two more commentary channels are also presented, both hosted by David Naylor. In one, the director John Glen, is highlighted, along with comments from the cast and some crew members. In the other, it is the scenarist and other crew members. Although the first track is okay—Lynn-Holly Johnson's reminiscences are particularly charming, there is an interesting discussion of the parallels to **From Russia with Love** and Naylor finds the time for digressive verbal essays on Corfu, deep sea diving and other subjects—the second track is the better of the two. It goes into more details on how the stunts and special effects were achieved and contains a lot more stimulating technical information than is available on the first track. The documentary, incidentally, functions as kind of an overview to the more extensive commentaries.

Their hearts were in the right place when the producers hired Timothy Dalton to play Bond, and they meant well when they attempted to get closer to Ian Fleming's writing with **Licence to Kill**, but the film never really clicked and was a boxoffice disappointment. Dalton brings a bit of a twinkle to his eye for the standard Bond stuff, but when he's called upon to become emotional after a friend is killed he can't pull it off, and it is one of several instances where the film's mood is broken. And, if the filmmakers were really serious about 'going back to Fleming,' why hire Wayne Newton to play a corrupt evangelist? He belongs in a Roger Moore Bond movie, not this one. Even the title is deflating, having been changed by panicky movie company executives from the far more intriguing and poetic *Licence Revoked*. But still, the action scenes are grand, the plot has some clever turns (it is compared on the DVD to **Yojimbo**), and Robert Davi is excellent as the main villain.

Like **For Your Eyes Only**, both the picture and sound are improved over the LD (Mar 94). Again, the letterboxing is a bit wider, with an aspect ratio of about 2.5:1. Colors are sharper and more accurate, and darker sequences are stable. The picture's clarity does not enhance the movie's thrills quite to the level that it does in **For Your Eyes Only**, but it helps a little bit. The 5.1-channel Dolby Digital track is sharper and better detailed than the LD's standard stereo, bringing more energy to the film's soundtrack. There is a French audio track in standard stereo, and optional English and French subtitles. Another half hour documentary narrated by Macnee goes over the production of the film fairly thoroughly, the highpoint being the troubles the crew had on what was apparently a haunted roadway—an eerie still photo taken during a pyrotechnical stunt shows a hand of flame reaching out from the explosion. There are two more commentary tracks on the 133 minute film (we felt like we were living and breathing James Bond for days), both hosted by Cork and divided again so that one features the director (Glen) and the cast, while the other focuses on the crew. In this instance, however, the cast talk is better, largely because of Davi's participation and the insight he brings to his experiences on the film, though the crew talk is reasonably thorough (not quite as effectively focused or paced as the **For Your Eyes Only** track) and informative. There are also another good collection of stills, a couple trailers, an original 5 minute 'making of' featurette, a good 10 minute featurette that concentrates on the truck stunts (including how the trucks were constructed at Kenworth), and two music videos, from Gladys Knight and Patti LaBelle.

One last word. Throughout the documentaries and commentary tracks, everybody has nothing but the warmest words for the generosity and nurturing instincts of the late Bond film producer, Albert Broccoli (yes, his ancestors were indeed responsible for inundating us with that notorious green vegetable). Not only did he create an environment that allowed the series to mutate with the times (to unparalleled success), but he trained and advanced the careers of many filmmakers in the process, so that even today his imprint upon the series and upon moviemaking around the globe remains palpable.

It might be a Giant

In a perfect world or, at least, a better one, there would be a hundred animated films as satisfying as **The Iron Giant**. Who knows, maybe there are, in Japan. The film attracted a lot of attention not because it is an exceptional work of art but because it is competently made, something that is still so rare in America that it seems like an exceptional work of art. Set in the Fifties so the antagonists will have limited resources, the story (adapted from a book by Ted Hughes) is about a young boy who befriends an enormous robot that has fallen to Earth from outer space. He lives near a wilderness, so they can interact and get to know one another in relative privacy, but eventually a nasty government agent starts snooping around, spoiling their idyll. The first half of the story has strong parallels to **E.T.**, but the second half is a relatively original amalgam of all sorts of things, and—this is where the competency comes in—it is impeccably constructed to maintain a compelling level of excitement and emotion as the plot accelerates to a smashing conclusion. The artwork is lovely and the film is a pleasing blend of humor and imagination. Sure it might have done better business if they'd added songs and little talking animal friends for the boy, but it is the determined purity of the work that makes it seem so grown up, and that purity never hinders the entertainment.

The film has been released by Warner Home Video (17644, \$25), in letterboxed format on one side, with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback, and in cropped format on the other side. We would recommend checking out the cropped version at least once, because of the enhanced detail it provides to what has been left on the screen, but the only way to appreciate the vision of the animators is with the letterboxed version. The color transfer is excellent, with solid, perfectly executed hues. The stereo surround sound and Dolby Digital sound are great fun and worth amplifying to the limit. The film's directional effects are carefully meted out but, as a result, each has a strong impact that adds significantly to a viewer's subconscious response to the film. The sub-woofer work when the robot is walking around is also grand. The 87 minute program comes with an elaborate voice cast & crew profile section, optional English subtitles and a trailer. There is also a music video by Eddie Platt and a 22 minute production documentary designed for TV broadcast. The documentary contains a hard sell of the film with brief bits about the voice talent, the generation of the animation (the CGI robot was seamlessly integrated with the standard drawings of the humans), and the sound mix and scoring.

Muppets and more

The time will come when producers and writers will expend as much energy on the commentary track for a film as they do on its original screenplay. An indication of this is present on the jokey commentary for **Muppets from Space**, a Columbia TriStar Home Video release (03932, \$25). In silhouette at the bottom of the screen (when activated from the menu), the director and two muppets talk about the film as it unfolds. They start with a great joke, at the expense of F. Murray Abraham, who has a small cameo part at the movie's beginning ("We were very tight. I called him, 'F.' I met his entire family, G., K, D., L. They're all consonants. Except his for cousin, Y., who is, you know, sometimes a vowel.") and there are other amusing comments throughout, but there are also long passages in which nothing funny or substantial is offered. The format has so much potential, it cries for more and more attention, and more jokes.

The first Muppet movie captured the notice of a wide audience because it offered unique advances in the art of film puppetry, but the subsequent films have been understandably more and more focused upon entertaining children. The plot of **Muppets from Space** is very similar to the plot of **The Iron Giant**, up to a point, at least, as government agents attempt to grab one of the heroes after they learn that his origins may not be of this earth. Like many of the Muppet movies, the show works great when it is just exploring the comical situations created by the ensemble of characters, but it slows down some when it has to pause in the frivolity to advance the plot. Nevertheless, the 88 minute feature has plenty of wit and visual stimulation, and most adult viewers will have the patience to stick through it.

The picture is presented on one side in letterboxed format, with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback, and in full screen format on the other side. The letterboxing masks a bit off the top and bottom and adds a bit to the sides, but either framing seems workable. The colors are bright and the picture is sharp. The 5.1-channel Dolby Digital track is loaded with amusing separation effects. The standard stereo surround soundtrack is a bit more complacent, but still reasonably pleasing. There are optional English subtitles, a Muppet-inundated music video, a trailer, profiles of several of the filmmakers, and a healthy and entertaining collection of legitimate outtakes.

The nature of politics

Everybody hates overachievers. The inherent evil of their desire to better themselves is the subject of a dark and often funny comedy, **Election**, a Paramount *Widescreen Collection* title (33403, \$30). Matthew Broderick portrays a high school civics teacher having a bad day, who takes his frustrations and resentments out upon a bubbly, hard-working student running for the office of student council president. The film, directed by Alexander Payne, takes a comedy's license and allows the viewer to peer into the heads of the main characters, so we are all privy to how inherently rotten the student, played by Reese Witherspoon, is. It got us to thinking, however, how often such behavior is portrayed in this manner, and if it is not just one more instance of the majority attempting to cut down the non-conformists, regardless of how that non-conformity manifests itself. In any case, although the filmmakers do use Witherspoon as their villain, they save their punishment for Broderick's character, which is as it should be. Parts of the film are inspired and capture aspects of high school life that many other movies miss. Other parts are a little awkward, emotionally, and throw off the film's pitch, but many viewers will find the movie to be a unique and memorable effort.

The picture is presented in letterboxed format only, with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback. The color transfer looks fine, with bright hues and accurate fleshtones. The film's audio mix has some moderately nice moments in what is otherwise a basic, functional soundtrack, and these are well replicated on the 5.1-channel Dolby Digital track, though much of the time the 5.1 track is indistinguishable from the standard stereo track. The 103 minute program has optional English subtitles. Payne provides a commentary track as well, talking about the shoot, the performers, the film's symbols (he uses garbage cans a lot) and what he was trying to accomplish. The first 40 minutes are fairly good, but then he runs out of energy a bit, and becomes less informative.

DVDs for the holidays

Something surprised us in a video store a couple weeks ago. We overheard two mothers speaking enthusiastically about the availability of **Jack Frost**. And then a few days later, our neighbor spoke with great excitement about obtaining the same movie on DVD. Yes, **Jack Frost**, the film in which Michael Keaton is a dead father who returns as a snowman to interact with his family a little longer before passing to the great beyond. The same film that was lambasted by the critics and disappeared at the boxoffice last winter, with barely a residual puddle, is now, a year later, a word of mouth home video hit, melting the hearts of families everywhere. The special effects may have seemed hokey on a big screen, but they conform quite naturally to the smaller parameters of the video image and the film is classy enough, with Keaton's presence, to play better than its made-for-TV movie premise leads one to expect. We doubt **It's a Wonderful Life** is shaking in its boots, but the show is definitely more appealing than the likes of **Jingle all the Way**, and as youngsters who are enamored with it now grow older, they will inevitably share it with their own families, unless they die first, of course.

The movie has been issued by Warner Home Video (17227, \$25), in letterboxed format on one side, with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback, and in cropped format on the other side. The widescreen image is preferable, but most of the time, the cropping doesn't really harm anything. The color transfer looks great, with bright hues and sharp lines, and darker sequences look smooth. The 5.1-channel Dolby Digital track has a number of appealing separation effects, but the standard stereo track is also sufficiently dimensional. The 102 minute program has a French audio track in Dolby Digital, optional English and French subtitles, a cast & crew profile section, a production essay and a trailer.

Universal has generously combined two black-and-white Bing Crosby seasonal favorites onto one single-sided dual-layer DVD as a *Universal Cinema Classics Double Feature* title, **Going My Way/Holiday Inn** (20394, \$30). Both have somewhat longish running times, the 1944 **Going My Way**, directed by Leo McCarey and co-starring Barry Fitzgerald, clocking in at 127 minutes, and the 1942 **Holiday Inn**, directed by Mark Sandrich and co-starring Fred Astaire, running 101 minutes.

Crosby is a priest in the Oscar-winning **Going My Way**, assigned to clean up an urban parish, run by Fitzgerald's character, that has been unable to keep up with the times. Essentially a pastiche of emotional subplots and a few musical numbers (*Would You Like to Swing from a Star* comes from the film; there is also the complete *Habanera* aria from *Carmen*), it is intelligently compiled, but some viewers will still find it a bit dated and hokey, although the ending, in

which Fitzgerald's elderly priest is reunited with his even more elderly mother, will get you every time.

Holiday Inn always plays at Christmas, but it actually celebrates every holiday on the calendar and could just as conceivably be a Fourth of July staple. Crosby and Astaire portray partners who open a resort hotel, putting on seasonally-related musical shows to attract vacationers. There are also romantic complications, until each is finally paired off (with Marjorie Reynolds and Virginia Dale). The film, which was re-made in color as **White Christmas**, features a bevy of numbers by Irving Berlin, impeccably performed by Crosby and Astaire. It also has an elaborate blackface number, however, that contemporary viewers may find in poor taste.

The picture quality on **Going My Way** is a substantial improvement over the LD (Dec 86), which looks completely washed out and hazy in comparison. The DVD's image is sharp, with nicely detailed contrasts and shiny blacks. There is still some wear on the source material, particularly around the reel-change points, and the image tends to jiggle slightly at times, but overall the presentation is very satisfying. The monophonic sound has steady background noise, but the dialog is clear and the music is never overly distorted.

There is less room for improvement on **Holiday Inn**, which looked quite nice in its last LD outing (Sep 94) and is only slightly sharper on the DVD, with slightly deeper blacks. The source material is immaculate, with nary a scratch, and the presentation is terrific. The monophonic sound is smooth and the music sequences are stable.

Both movies come with production essays, cast-and-director profile sections and early re-release trailers. Both can be supported by optional English or French subtitles ("Sur l'avenue/La 5e Avenue/On prendra notre photo/Et tu te verras/Sur la rotogravure.").

One thing about Christmas movies—they seem to have to make you feel bad before they can make you feel good, such as the very long minute you have to watch Mary Steenburgen face the possibility that her husband has been shot by a bank robber and her children drowned in an icy river during the getaway chase, that is before Santa Claus appears and everything gets all warm and lovey again in **One Magic Christmas**, an Anchor Bay Entertainment release (DV10928, \$25). Harry Dean Stanton is featured as a rather skuzzy looking Christmas angel, helping a couple little kids who hope their stressed out mom will rediscover the joys of Christmas good will. The 1985 Walt Disney film is somewhat unique in its balance of real and unreal, and in its mostly understated emotions, so it has acquired a minor cult reputation over the passage of time, but it still tends to remind us much more of Christmas pressures than Christmas pleasures.

The film is presented in single-sided dual-layer format, letterboxed on one layer with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1 and no 16:9 enhancement, and is in full screen format on the other layer. The full screen image loses no more than a sliver on the sides and adds a lot to the top and the bottom in comparison to the letterboxed image, but we found the framing on the letterboxed version to be more satisfying. The colors are strong and sharp, and fleshtones are passable. There is a 5.1-channel Dolby Digital track as well as a standard 2-channel track. The film's audio mix is not elaborate, but the 5.1 track is more dimensional and more developed than the standard track, adding to the movie's pleasures. The 88 minute program is not captioned.

Few stories, Christmas or otherwise, are as reliable as *A Christmas Carol*, and it manages to press all the right buttons once again in the 1979 TV film, **An American Christmas Carol**, a Zia Home Entertainment Image Entertainment release (ID6666ZFDVD, \$20). The character names and situations are altered and the film is set in the U.S. during the Depression, but it has the same visits to the past, present and future, and the hero's change of heart at the conclusion. Henry Winkler, in old age makeup except during the sequences set in the past, stars. It's not the most elegant version of the tale, but once Winkler's character sees the error of his ways and goes out to make amends, it is hard to keep a dry eye. The picture looks fine, with reasonably fresh colors and a fairly sharp focus. Wear on the source material is minimal and the program is in a lot better condition than many twenty year old TV films. The monophonic sound is fine and the program is not captioned.

A cheap conglomeration of other Christmas movies, **Dear Santa** is about a used car salesman who lets his job take priority over his family until he is turned into a Santa for one night by an elf wanting to teach him the Christmas spirit. The whole thing feels very contrived, yet it inevitably takes on the inklings of holiday charm, at least a hint or two. The 1998 production is an A-Pix Entertainment Image Entertainment release (ID8797UMDVD, \$25). The picture is passable, with fairly bright hues and accurate fleshtones, though the image is a little soft at times. The stereo surround sound has a mild dimensionality and is adequate. The 90 minute program is not captioned.

Dolly Parton is a singer (of course) killed in an automobile crash, who is given an opportunity to demonstrate that she has a good soul or something before being sent down or up in **Unlikely Angel**, a BWE Video Image Entertainment release (ID5570BVDVD, \$25). She returns to Earth assigned as a nanny for some kids, their mother having died and their father having forsaken Christmas and all other joys in his grief. Roddy McDowall appears in various guises as her ethereal foreman. A 1996 telefilm, which is set during the holidays, the narrative is pleasant enough, but doesn't seem as tight or thorough as the best Christmas classics. The picture is bland, with pinkish fleshtones, dull hues and grain. The sound is vaguely stereophonic during Parton's singing sequences. The 92 minute program is not captioned.

Two holiday DVDs released previously by MGM Home Entertainment have been reissued by Warner, **A Christmas Story** (65044, \$20) and **Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas!** (65042, \$20). We reviewed **Christmas Story**, Bob Clark's very funny 1983 portrait of Christmas in the Forties, in Dec 97, and the 1966 Chuck Jones animated **Grinch**, paired as it always is with the 1970 *Horton Hears a Who*, in Mar 98.

Both Warner releases have identical transfers and menus in comparison to their MGM counterparts. The 98 minute **Christmas Story** is presented in full screen format only. The color transfer looks great, with bright hues and accurate fleshtones, and the monophonic sound is solid (disregarding the deliberately shaky Christmas music during the opening credits). There are French and Spanish audio tracks, optional English, French and Spanish subtitles and a trailer.

The colors on both cartoons, each of which run a little under a half hour, are bright and solid, and wear is minimal. The monophonic sound is fine. There is a Spanish audio track, optional English and Spanish subtitles, a trivia

game and a small but interesting collection of pencil tests.

Too busy cooking and shopping to watch all these wonderful holiday features? No problem, we've got the perfect solution, the FoxStar Image Entertainment release **A Hollywood Christmas** (ID8768FSDVD, \$20). Surprisingly good, the 90 minute program, directed by Kevin Burns and hosted by Jane Seymour, surveys the production of Christmas movies over the last hundred years, from an 1898 piece called *Santa Claus to The Santa Clause*. And these are not just cheap clips from trailers, the show manages to pull out the best moments from all the holiday favorites—Bing Crosby singing *White Christmas*, the neighbors giving George Bailey all their money, the postmen delivering all the mail to Santa in the courthouse, the kid getting his tongue stuck to the flagpole and the burglars being wasted by falling irons and flying tools. As we were reviewing it, our own family members wandered into our viewing room and ended up as riveted by the program as we were. The picture quality on the clips is usually very good, and the sound, with stereophonic theme music, is fine. There is no captioning.

A computer animated cartoon that uses the basic narrative and music from *The Nutcracker*, but also takes off on its own, **The Nuttiest Nutcracker**, has been released by Columbia TriStar Home Video (25189, \$20). The heroes are a group of anthropomorphic mixed nuts, who join forces with the cracker-prince to save the girl from the mice. They also have to retrieve a 'Christmas star.' It runs 48 minutes, which is plenty, believe us. The animation, though vivid, is also somewhat bland, and while there is humor in the ensemble sequences, and with the mice, the show's stimulations are modest. Colors are very bright the picture is sharp. There is a basic but reasonably strong 5.1-channel Dolby Digital track and a slightly blander standard track, as well as optional English subtitles, a trailer, a 'sing-along' reprise of one of the show's songs, and three very simple interactive games.

The popular 1964 stop-motion animation program narrated by Burl Ives, **Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer**, has been issued with a gorgeous transfer by Sony Wonder (LVD49560, \$20). The 52 minute program looks immaculate, a far cry from the worn out versions one usually sees. The colors are smooth and spotless, and the animation is greatly enhanced by the purity of the image. Here and there, there is a stray speckle, but the freshness of the image is transfixing. The monophonic sound is strong and the program is accompanied by optional subtitles and a trivia game. The show tells the standard story sketched out in the song, padded by a run-in with a snow monster and other digressions.

Want something to hold you over until your friends give you **The Judy Garland Collection** (see page 2) for Christmas? How about the 53 minute Christmas episode not included in the **Collection**, which has been released separately by Pioneer Artists as **The Judy Garland Show Volume Three** (PA99627D, \$20)? The 1963 black-and-white broadcast (*Episode #15*) appeared on LD (Dec 91) looking and sounding immaculate, but it is in even better condition here, with exquisitely crisp contrasts and smooth textures. The LD did not have 5.1-channel Dolby Digital sound, either, so while the standard track on the DVD is a little lighter than its LD counterpart, the Dolby Digital track is much more compelling for the clarity and detail it brings out in the vocals. If you think you've heard Garland do *Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas* so often it holds no surprises, wait till you hear the crispness and purity the Dolby Digital channel brings to each note. It is spellbinding. Unlike the other shows, this one is set in a mock-up of Garland's actual living room (have an architect come over and design one for you), with not only Liza Minnelli but Lorna and Joe Luft joining her in a sometimes unnerving portrait of a family entertaining the world. Jack Jones (whose rendition of *Lollipops and Roses* is beautifully drawn out and stands in a marked contrast to his disappointing version of *Wives and Lovers* in the **Collection**) and Mel Tormé also appear. There is a brief outtake, which wasn't on the LD, of Garland blowing a quick holiday message twice before getting it right on the third take—it is the sort of thing people will be sending one another in e-Christmas cards, very soon now.

BWE Video and Image have released two holiday programs featuring the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, **The Songs of Christmas: Featuring The Mormon Tabernacle Choir** (ID5572BVDVD, \$20) and **The Mormon Tabernacle Choir and the Canadian Brass: A Christmas Gloria** (ID5571BVDVD, \$20). For light holiday music, **Songs of Christmas**, from 1987, is probably the better choice of the two. Although the live concert recording has a couple dull non-musical segments promoting Mormonism, there are a number of non-religious songs, such as *Winter Wonderland* and *Silver Bells*, and a lot of cuts to pleasing images of winter and Christmastime. The program runs 41 minutes. The 57 minute **Christmas Gloria**, from 1998, also has a few holiday images intercut with the singers, but they are briefer, and the show doesn't seem to wander as far away from the live concert. The songs are again interrupted by talk, but it is always about the music being performed and not other matters. The Canadian Brass sequences provide a satisfying contrast to the choral sequences, bringing a bit more variety to the music. More importantly, while **Songs** is in PCM stereo only, **Gloria** is encoded in 4-channel Dolby Digital. The sound on **Songs** is very nice, with a pleasing dimensionality, but the audio on **Gloria** has better separation details and seems more delicately balanced.

The picture quality on both programs is the same. The image is soft or a little hazy in places, particularly where strong reds are involved, but colors are bright, fleshtones are accurate and details are usually clear. Although there is a notation on **Gloria** claiming that the program is captioned, neither DVD is.

Every year it seems that Sony brings out a new 'holiday in Vienna' program on home video. This year's effort (recorded in 1998), **Christmastime in Vienna** (SVD61809, \$25), seems intent upon cross-promoting two newish Sony artists, hauling in Plácido Domingo as a hook to display the talents of the throaty Patricia Kaas and the somewhat more lightweight talents of Alejandro Fernandez. They perform a 73 minute concert in Vienna's Rathaus, backed by the Vienna Symphony Orchestra and surrounded by holiday decorations. There are some cutaways to outdoor Vienna, but most of the images shift between the orchestra and the singers, with a reasonable effectiveness. There are only a few Christmas standards in the mix, but if one were to be collecting all of Sony's holiday programs, then this would not be a bad thing, and the tone of the program sustains a seasonal atmosphere. The highpoint of the show, however, is Kaas' succulent rendition of *Amours eternal*, a.k.a. *Midnight in Moscow*.

The colors are accurate. The singers are always brightly lit and sharply focused, creating a vivid dimension-

ality, though some of the outdoor shots are a deliberately hazy. The stereo surround sound is much duller than the 5.1-channel Dolby Digital track, which provides clearer detail and more satisfying separation effects. There are some program notes, but there is no captioning.

José Carreras takes on the holiday burdens by himself in **Concerto di Natale with Jose Carreras Jubilaem Collection 2000 A.D. Christmas Concert**, a Trinidad Entertainment release (TE1005DVD, \$30). Spelled only by the orchestra, Carreras performs a number of traditional and classic songs during the 80 minute concert at the Basilica di S. Ambrogio Church in Milan. Having been commissioned by the Vatican, the program is blissfully free of music company cross-promotions, yet it is also a satisfying blend of Christmas tunes and is by no means intensely religious—one of the highpoints is Carreras' rendition of *The Little Drummer Boy*. We've never had much patience for Carreras' self-commercialization, though we can't blame him, either, but this concert, recorded in 1998, is one of the few we've ever seen in which Carreras' genuine talents are maximized, and it is a highly satisfying effort.

The video picture, lit and shot by Carlo Di Palma, is excellent, with crisp, precise hues and accurate fleshtones. The stereo sound is quite clear and the dimensionality is pleasing. There is an option to play the audio without video accompaniment, just a menu screen, though we're not really sure what that accomplishes. There is no captioning.

A rather relaxed rendition of **The Messiah: George Frideric Handel** has been released by Carlton Entertainment and Image Entertainment (ID5046GCDVD, \$30). Performed by the National Choir of Lyon and the Auvergne Orchestra under the conducting of Jean-Jacques Knatorow, and featuring Veronique Dietschy, Eliane Tantcheff, Alexander Laiter and Thomas Thomaschke as soloists, the program was recorded at The Abbey of La Chaise Dieu in Auvergne in 1991. The choral singing is lovely and the soloists are competent, but there is no real fire in the performances and no cascading energy in the crescendos. The video presentation has many faces to explore, but also pays attention to the individual instruments in the orchestra. The stereo sound is clear, with a general dimensionality. The 140 minute program is not captioned, and even though it is sung in English, we've never been able to catch more than a phrase here and there whenever we've listened to it. The DVD's chapter encoding and jacket guide are excellent, providing more than four-dozen markers.

Ever get in your car at night and drive around, looking at Christmas decorations on other people's houses? Well, now you don't have to, because there is a DVD that has done it for you. **In the Christmas Spirit**, from WinStar Home Entertainment (WHE73064, \$15), presents an hour of Christmas instrumentals (there are two vocal numbers, one by Willie Nelson and one by Mahalia Jackson), while the camera cruises past elaborately and moderately decorated houses that could be from our own neighborhood as much as from anybody's. The power companies probably give this video to all their employees as a holiday gift. Anyway, the music is a little more energetic than what one would hear on an elevator, but it is still rather generic. The picture quality looks good, despite all the night shots, with bright, accurate colors and a reasonably sharp focus. The stereo sound is okay. The menu gives you the option of playing back the cuts randomly and the two vocals can be accompanied by optional subtitles as a 'sing along' feature.

Another Four Weddings

There is a new menu and the music video is gone, but the picture transfer on the MGM Home Entertainment release, **Four Weddings and a Funeral** (907850, \$30), is identical to the original PolyGram DVD (Aug 97). The picture is presented on one side in letterboxed format, with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1 and no 16:9 enhancement, and in full screen format on the other side. The letterboxing masks picture information of the top and bottom, but adds more to the sides and is the preferable framing. The color transfer looks great, with bright, sharp hues and accurate fleshtones. The stereo surround sound is okay, but there is no 5.1-channel track. The film also has a French audio track. Interestingly, while the jacket and the menu claim only that there is optional Spanish subtitling, there is actually optional French subtitling as well, though you can only access it directly and not through the menu. The 118 minute program has English captioning, as well. There is a trailer, but no other extra features. Hugh Grant and Andie MacDowell star in the delightful 1993 romantic comedy.

Mendacity

A replication of the LD we reviewed in Oct 97, Universal has finally issued a *Collector's Edition* of the inspired 1997 Jim Carrey comedy directed by Tom Shadyac, **Liar Liar** (20637, \$35). We reviewed the standard DVD in Feb 98. The picture on the *Collector's Edition* is presented in letterboxed format only, with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback. Identical to the earlier DVD, the image looks great, with bright hues and accurate fleshtones. The 5.1-channel Dolby Digital sound does not have an aggressive mix, but gets the job done in a perfectly acceptable fashion. There is a French audio track in standard stereo and optional English subtitles.

The special features include a marvelous 16 minute 'making of' featurette (Carrey lying about the scope of the film), a drawn out deleted scene that still has a number of amusing moments, some outtakes, a trailer, publicity photos, production notes, a cast and crew profile section and a commentary track by Shadyac in which he talks all about Carrey and how to direct him. The film, about a lawyer made unable to say anything but the truth, is a terrific fable that is enhanced gloriously by Carrey's unreserved performance, and the supplementary features are ideal for those who are not satiated by the film itself.

Good looking Rock

The beauty of **Red Rock West** is in the perfection of its character logic, the hero getting drawn deeper and deeper into trouble because of a single choice he makes at the beginning of the film. Nicolas Cage stars with Dennis Hopper, Lara Flynn Boyle and J.T. Walsh in John Dahl's 1992 feature and, to date, his best film. Set in a small western town, the hero quickly becomes caught in a murderous rivalry between a sheriff and his wife when he is mistaken for a hit man. The film is exquisitely designed, with just the right balance of wit and drama, and it was the first time Cage demonstrated that he could be more than just a bundle of uncontrolled mannerisms.

The Columbia TriStar Home Video release (26979, \$25) is presented on one side in letterboxed format, with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback, and in full screen format on the other side. The letterboxing masks picture information off the top and bottom, and adds nothing to the sides, in comparison

to the full screen version. Either framing seems workable, the letterboxing increasing tension a bit, but the full screen version presenting a viable alternative by showing more of the characters' surroundings. The color transfer is outstanding. Hues are sharp and vivid, allowing the cinematography to create an almost hyper-realistic image, gripping the attention of the viewer even more. The stereo surround sound has a basic, competent mix, which is presented with clarity. The 90 minute feature also has a Spanish audio track and optional English, Spanish and French subtitles.

Although the film first appeared on cable, Dahl and his brother, producer Rick Dahl, explain on a commentary track that it was shot for theatrical release, but their backers lost faith in it after an ambiguous test screening. That the film became a hit in a number of theatrical venues, after showing on cable and being released on home video, surprised even the filmmakers. They talk about the economics of shooting an independent film, about how the story and the movie's tone were developed and what it was like growing up in a small western town very much like the one they used for their setting. They also speak about specific shots and scenes, and about working with the cast (John Dahl feels that it is best to tell actors as little as possible, because any suggestion you make is often amplified by overly eager performers who are anxious to please). Comments from the editor, Scott Chestnut, are also included, and are highly informative not only for the insight they provide on the construction of key scenes, but for the conflicts of opinion they sometimes create when set against what the Dahls thought of the scene.

On the road again

Monte Hellman's lyrical 1971 road film, **Two-Lane Blacktop**, has been released by Anchor Bay Entertainment (DV10937, \$30). Sixties rock singers Dennis Wilson and James Taylor star as characters identified in the credits only by their functions (i.e., 'The Mechanic'), traveling across America and participating in local backstreet drag races along the way to earn 'bread.' Warren Oates is the driver of another car who crosses paths with them, and there is talk of a race to the East Coast, though nobody appears to really take it seriously. Some viewers will think the film pointless and dull, but others will find it rich in atmosphere, nostalgia and symbolism, with great-looking cars.

The picture transfer is almost indistinguishable from the LD (Aug 99). It is letterboxed, with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback. The picture on the DVD is a touch sharper, but the color quality is identical to the LD, with slightly murky night scenes and somewhat bland fleshtones, though otherwise the hues look reasonably good. The source material is free of wear. There is a remastered 5.1-channel Dolby Digital track that gives some oomph to the car engines. It isn't all that different from the standard track, but it has a little more energy and comes closer to equaling the quality of the LD's audio, which also had the remastered Dolby track. The 102 minute program is not captioned and comes with a trailer and a cast & crew profile section. A complete live recording of Kris Kristofferson (and friends) singing *Me & Bobby McGee* plays over one of the menus.

A commentary channel with Hellman and associate producer Gary Kurtz, which also comes from the LD, is included. They talk about the cast and crew and the production logistics, as well as sharing anecdotes about the shoot. Additionally, there is a 14 minute profile of Hellman that did not appear on the LD, shot by David Hickenlooper. It is a nice little documentary, though it focuses only on **Two-Lane Blacktop** and Hellman's two early westerns, **The Shooting** and **Ride the Whirlwind** (Dec 91), with a very brief bit on *Cockfighter*.

Espionage classic

Sidney J. Furie's superb, hard-edged spy movie, **The Ipcress File**, has been issued by Anchor Bay Entertainment (DV10925, \$25). Michael Caine stars in the 1965 adaptation of the Len Deighton story, set in London, about the abductions of scientists. The transfer and special features are a replication of the LD release we reviewed in Feb 99. The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback (the image is set slightly to the left, while the LD's image is set slightly to the right). The source material is a little worn, but the DVD presentation is very nice, adding considerably to the film's atmosphere and other pleasures. Colors are a little more stable and contrasts are a little clearer on the DVD. Details that are hidden in shadows on the LD can be made out on the DVD. While fleshtones are a bit paler, they are also less prone to pinkish haze, and on the whole, the image is more satisfying. The monophonic sound, on the other hand, is a bit stronger and clearer on the LD, though the DVD's audio is adequate. There is no captioning.

Furie and editor Peter Hunt provide a commentary track during the 107 minute program, discussing the production and pointing out the many innovations the filmmakers brought to the genre (the movie also helped establish Caine as a star). A trailer and a 3 minute montage of ad materials and stills are also included, as are profiles of Caine, Furie and Hunt.

A bomb

A feel-bad thriller that encapsulates everything that is wrong with filmmakers who think they're better than Hollywood, **Arlington Road**, is available from Columbia TriStar Home Video (03926, \$25). An artless rendition of **The Parallax View**, the film's ending is projected within its first 20 minutes (within the first minute and a half, in fact, we hated the film, so if you feel the same way at that point, don't go on) and the only reason we kept watching was in the vain hope that the filmmakers would be smart and truly overturn expectations, which they don't. There are many fun bad movies around that everybody chastises unfairly, but **Arlington Road** epitomizes what a genuine bad film is—anti-entertainment, anti-escapism and anti-intelligence. Jeff Bridges, who has an uncanny nose for picking out dog scripts (see **Blown Away**), stars as a conspiracy professor, with Tim Robbins as his shady neighbor and, in a creepy little performance that is one of the film's few bright spots, Joan Cusack as the neighbor's wife.

Columbia TriStar Home Video has released the film in letterboxed format only, with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback. The picture looks fine, with a sharp focus and well-defined hues. The 5.1-channel Dolby Digital track has some appropriately energetic separation effects during the action scenes and a whammo of an explosion near the end. The standard track is a bit less articulate, but workable.

The 117 minute program has optional English subtitles, a cast-and-director profile section, a trailer and several more elaborate supplementary features. Having suffered through the movie itself, we were actually quite excited about getting our hands on the supplementary materials, to see if we could discern more precisely where the filmmakers lost their marbles. There is, for example, a 4 minute 'alternate ending,' introduced by the director, Mark Pellington, that doesn't change anything, it just stretches out the excruciating final montage and left open another plot strand that test audiences—supposedly enthusiastic about the rest of the film—preferred closed. Pellington and Bridges (who had never actually seen the completed film before and wondered where the alternate ending had gone) provide a commen-

tary track. They mostly just respond to the film, praising everyone they worked with, talking a little bit about their craft (Pellington recommends sticking to a specific style, because you lose the viewer's attention when you shift around) and getting excited about their supposed manipulation of the viewer's expectations. Pellington occasionally laments a budgetary compromise here and there, but that is the closest they come to suggesting the film has a downside. A 20 minute 'making of' featurette provides more specific information about the development of the film while showing behind-the-scenes footage of stunt sequences and other scenes. The movie's script, incidentally, had won an award when it was first written, suggesting that cluelessness in the world of moviemaking is itself a conspiracy of vast proportions.

Astray

One thing leads to another and another in Sam Raimi's look at the conscience-suppression effects of money, **A Simple Plan**. Bill Paxton and, in a wig and buck teeth, Billy Bob Thornton star as Midwesterners who come across the wreck of a plane in the snow and find a bag full of cash inside. They try to act cool about it, but pretty soon a couple people are dead and the souls of the heroes are laid out raw in the bitter winter air. The plot has a few surprise turns, so the film is not entirely a long methodical descent into anxious despair, but parts of it still feel that way. Bridget Fonda gives a wonderful, Lady Macbeth-with-a-child-still-on-her-breast performance, but the others are less convincing, and while Raimi executes some scenes with great flair—particularly, for some reason, where animals are involved—there is a monotony to a lot of the film that works against the tension the drama should be generating.

Paramount has issued the film as a *Widescreen Collection* title (333767, \$30), in letterboxed format only, with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback. The picture transfer looks excellent, with crisp, carefully defined hues in all lighting situations. We can't get as excited about the movie's audio mix. There is a 5.1-channel Dolby Digital track that has a little more flourish than the standard track, but it seems that a lot of opportunities to enhance the movie's atmosphere are passed over. The 121 minute feature is adequately captioned and is accompanied by a trailer. The chapter encoding and jacket guide are limited.

A boxful of Eastwood

Sergio Leone's three classic European westerns starring Clint Eastwood have been packaged in a boxed set by MGM Home Entertainment under the title, **The Man with No Name Trilogy** (907859, \$60). Two of the films have been released previously on DVD and are packaged with their original catalog numbers and jacket art, **For a Few Dollars More** (Sep 98) and **The Good, the Bad and the Ugly** (Mar 98). It should be noted that **The Good, the Bad and the Ugly** is an outstanding DVD, with a supplementary section that contains 14 minutes of footage (mostly related to the film's backstory) excised before the American theatrical release. That footage is in Italian, with optional English subtitles.

An adaptation of **Yojimbo** in a western setting (about a gunslinger playing two groups of villains against one another), **A Fistful of Dollars**, from 1964, was the first film in the series and now appears on DVD for the first time, released both as part of the **Trilogy** and as a freestanding title (907858, \$25). The presentation is letterboxed on one side, with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1 and no 16:9 enhancement, and is presented in cropped format on the other side, although cropping destroys much of the film's artistry. The color transfer is greatly improved over the LD release (Sep 90). Whites that appear yellowed on the LD are pure white on the DVD and details that are vague or invisible on the LD's image are crisp and vivid on the DVD. Flesh tones are rich, blacks are pure and Eastwood's serape turns out to be an olive green. Some shots on the cropped version look a little softer. The monophonic sound is equal to the sound on the LD and is in fairly decent shape. The voices are dubbed, of course, and the music becomes a bit distorted if you raise the volume too high, but the audio is solid and free of overt noise. The film can be supported by optional English or French subtitles ("Prépare trois cerueils."). Like the LD, the film runs 100 minutes, restoring a few brief pieces of footage missing on earlier video and broadcast versions that show how the hero escapes using a large barrel. A trailer is also included.

Westerns

Two terrific westerns that Roan Group Archival Entertainment released as parts of double bills on LD have been issued individually on DVD, the 1951 MGM widescreen adventure starring Burt Lancaster, **Vengeance Valley** (AED2016, \$20) and the 1955 RKO thriller with Randolph Scott, **Rage at Dawn** (AED2015, \$20).

Lancaster stars with Robert Walker, John Ireland, Hugh O'Brian (his name is misspelled on the jacket) and others in the story of cattle ranchers coping with jealousies and family resentments while trying to work their herds. There is plenty of action, with an efficient narrative foundation in support, and you also pick up a thing or two about tending cattle. The picture is a bit sharper than the LD (Oct 96), but the transfer is basically the same and is fairly pleasing. The colors look a little light in much of the film, but the source material is reasonably clean and the solid image often makes up for the less than intense hues. When the colors are strong, the picture looks super. The monophonic sound is okay and the 82 minute program is not captioned.

Rage at Dawn has undergone a new transfer, with a number of improvements over the LD (Jan 97). Unlike the cropped LD, the picture on the DVD is letterboxed, with an aspect ratio of about 1.8:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback. Although the source material is a little battered, the colors are wonderfully deep and flesh tones look fine. The darker scenes and day-for-night scenes lose detail in the shadows, and the image often wiggles a little, but on the whole, the presentation is very pleasing. Forrest Tucker co-stars in the story of a detective who goes undercover to bust a train robbery gang, which may or may not be in cahoots with local government officials. Again, the action scenes are super and the narrative is engaging. The monophonic sound is a bit wobbly in places, but workable. The 86 minute program is not captioned. A trailer has been included, but there is no indicator to help you navigate the menu when the 16:9 enhancement is activated (it does appear when the 16:9 enhancement is de-activated—go figure).

Gone Fishburne

Laurence Fishburne stars in two entertaining crime thrillers, **Deep Cover**, from New Line Home Video (N4780, \$25) and **Fled**, from MGM Home Entertainment (906278, \$25).

Jeff Goldblum and Charles Martin Smith co-star in the 1992 **Deep Cover**, about a cop who becomes extensively involved in trafficking drugs in order to identify and convict those responsible for the raw supplies. Fishburne is super, and the film is a slick, involving thriller with a political conscience and no easy moral conclusions.

Stephen Baldwin and Salma Hayek co-star in the 1996 **Fled**, in which Fishburne and Baldwin are escaped convicts, attempting to prove their innocence before they get caught again. Although the film is not as tight or intelligent

as **Deep Cover**, it has a terrific momentum and is fully entertaining. Fishburne does not have to stretch as many acting muscles in **Fled**, but in both features, he demonstrates a no-nonsense magnetism that adds greatly to each movie's appeal.

Deep Cover is presented on a single-sided dual-layer platter, letterboxed on one layer with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback, and in full screen format on the other layer. The letterboxing masks a bit off the top and bottom and adds a bit to the sides in comparison to the full screen version, but the framing is more compelling. The picture looks super, with vivid hues and finely detailed contrasts. The 5.1-channel Dolby Digital sound is also terrific, with a strong bass and many distinctive separation effects. There is a French audio track as well, in standard stereo, along with optional English subtitles, profiles of Fishburne, Goldblum and the director, Bill Duke, and a trailer. The film runs 107 minutes. The chapter encoding and jacket guide are modest.

The colors are a little blander on **Fled**. The image presentation is workable, but it just isn't as glossy or as sharp as **Deep Cover**. The 98 minute presentation is in letterboxed format only, with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback. The 5.1-channel Dolby Digital sound is also a little duller. It has some kick and a reasonable dimensionality, but it is not as invigorating as the audio on **Deep Cover**. There is also a French audio track in 5.1 Dolby Digital, optional English and French subtitles and a trailer.

The lighthouse of death

An enjoyable mixture of blood and nudity that only slows down when the need arises to wrap up the plot, **Tower of Evil**, has been released by Elite Entertainment (EE8693, \$25). A 1972 British production, the film is about a group people on an isolated lighthouse island (with caverns beneath). Somebody starts murdering them, but that doesn't stop them from 'splitting up' when they search for things, to save time, or telling the women to wait in one place, where they'll 'be safe.' As long as everybody keeps their clothing off and bleeds a lot, it's great fun.

The enjoyment is also enhanced by Elite's nice picture transfer. The image is letterboxed, with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1 and no 16:9 enhancement. The color transfer is immaculate, with deep, solid colors, stability in the darker sequences and great looking fleshtones. The monophonic sound is okay. There is no captioning, and the 90 minute feature is accompanied by a groovy trailer.

A ghost

A simple ghost story from 1946 that runs 58 minutes, **Strangler in the Swamp**, has been released by Image Entertainment (ID5376FWDVD, \$20). Directed by Frank Wisbar on an elaborate swamp set with lots of fog, the spirit of a man wrongly hung for murder returns to haunt the community that executed him. The heroine is the daughter of a ferryman, who takes over his post after he becomes one of the ghost's victims. There isn't much to the plot, but the film is loaded with atmosphere and is an enjoyable genre exercise. Blake Edwards is featured in the cast.

The black-and-white source material has many speckles and scratches and looks soft even when the fog isn't permeating its edges. The image is clear enough to convey the story, however, and most of the wear does not affect the film's mood. The monophonic sound is coherent and the program is not captioned.

Mystery classic

It should be remembered that in addition to being a classic mystery story, Rene Clair's **And Then There Were None**, based upon Agatha Christie's *Ten Little Indians*, is also a fine romance, with the hero knowing in his heart that the heroine is not the murderer, even though the two of them are supposedly the only ones left on the remote island after all the other victims have been dispatched. The more the romance is played up, in fact, the better the story works, which is why Clair's version is still the best of all the adaptations. Roland Young and Judith Duprez join Barry Fitzgerald, Walter Huston, Judith Anderson, C. Aubrey Smith and other great character actors in the enjoyable 1945 thriller.

The film has been released by VCI Home Video (DVD8209, \$20). Presentations of the movie are usually fairly battered and in that context, VCI's presentation looks okay. There is plenty of wear around the reel-change marks and other scratches and speckles, but the image is reasonably smooth a lot of the time and contrasts are fairly decent. Although a bit smeary in a few places, the image is usually sharp. The monophonic sound is also relatively clean and free of severe distortion. The 97 minute program is not captioned. Along with a modest cast-and-director profile section, the film is accompanied by an amusing 17 minute 1946 RKO short, *Twin Husbands*, about a woman who thinks her husband is being unfaithful when she meets his twin brother. Leon Erol stars.

Star Trek: The first generation

Paramount Home Video has begun issuing episodes of **Star Trek The Original Series** on DVD, a measly two to a platter. The episodes have undergone picture and sound enhancements, though unfortunately nothing can be done about updating William Shatner's performances. Unlike the LD releases, which were issued and paired in broadcast order, the episodes on the DVDs are being put out in production order, which we suppose makes sense, since the only people who can remember the original broadcasts are now doddering about, thinking Majel Barrett is still a babe.

Each episode is accessed individually from the main menu and is accompanied by its original teaser. The old LD transfers don't look bad, but the DVD presentations are definitely improved, with cleaner, sharper images. The most significant difference—the uniforms on the crew members on the LDs are a light olive, while on the DVDs they are kind of light orange brown. Since wood tones are clearly more accurate on the DVD and fleshtones are richer, we assume the rest of the image is more accurate as well. There are still some speckles on the stock shots of the Enterprise, bobbing around on its wires in front of the pinpoint lights, but that just comes from repeated use.

The sound has been remixed for 5.1-channel Dolby Digital encoding! You know in the opening credit sequence, where the Enterprise races toward the screen, veering first to the right and then later, to the left? Well, on the new mix, the sound follows right along, whooshing to the rear right and then to the rear left. Cool. The mix is not obnoxious. Atmospheric sounds and the music have been given a satisfying dimensionality. The sub-woofer kicks in during explosions, and only things like the 'Red Alert' alarm are given specific separations. It's fun. The standard soundtrack comes across more weakly than the LD's audio, which is a little crisper in comparison, but the LD's sound is boring when put up against the Dolby Digital track. The programs, originally broadcast in 1966, have optional English subtitling and, yes, Paramount has finally deemed the shows worthy of chapter encoding.

The second episode after the infamous pilot episode was a modified pilot itself, *Where No Man Has Gone Before*, and appears with the episode that really got the show in its groove, *The Corbomite Maneuver*, on **Star Trek The Original Series Volume 1 Episodes 2 & 3** (600407001, \$20). Gary Lockwood and Sally Kellerman guest star as crew members

whose psychic abilities are magnified after an encounter with an anomaly. Lloyd Haynes is the doctor. It is a decent science-fiction exercise, though in terms of the series it was still a bit of a shakedown cruise. As the jacket notes suggest, it was in the *Corbomite Maneuver*, the first program to feature DeForest Kelley, that the show found its triumvirate of mind (Leonard Nimoy), body (Shatner) and soul (Kelley). To emphasize this point, Shatner is first seen with his shirt off, doing exercises. The command structure is far less egalitarian than it became on the **Next Generation** programs, and you really feel the limitations of the half set used for the bridge, but the plot, about an alien power that challenges the Enterprise, employs logic and strategy that reappeared in many great **Star Trek** episodes and is very entertaining. Bald even then, Clint Howard guest stars.

The show also found the right balance between humor and drama in *Mudd's Women* on **Star Trek The Original Series Volume 2 Episodes 4 & 5** (600407002, \$20). Portly and mustached, Roger C. Carmel stars in what was to become a recurring role as a hustler and pimp whose women are not what they seem. This deception jeopardizes the Enterprise's dealings with a mining colony. The companion episode, *The Enemy Within*, is a classic that has been done many times over. Shatner gets to stretch his acting muscles when his character is split by a bug in the transporter into two identical-looking people, one 'good' and indecisive, the other 'bad' and spirited, the moral, of course, being that it takes both the good and the bad to make the whole; and the secondary moral being that Shatner should never be allowed to stretch his acting muscles too awfully much.

The first episode broadcast, *The Man Trap*, on **Star Trek The Original Series Volume 3 Episodes 6 & 7** (60040003, \$20), was chosen because of its bug-eyed monster quotient, but it isn't a bad episode. About a creature that looks like a different human to each person beholding it, the episode does a fairly good job combining mystery and excitement with a nice dose of fantasy. In the companion episode, another often re-used premise, *The Naked Time*, the crew picks up a disease that makes everybody overly overly emotional, giving everybody in the cast a chance to act wild and crazy.

The strategy-and-logic formula that works so well on *The Corbomite Maneuver* is employed with even greater success on *Balance of Terror*, an episode that depicts the Enterprise's first run-in with the Romulans in **Star Trek The Original Series Volume 4 Episodes 8 & 9** (60040004, \$20). Patterned after WWII submarine movies and such, the crew of the Enterprise must devise a way to cope with the Romulan cloaking shield. The episode is deftly executed and raised the show's quality to a level few other efforts in the **Original Series** could match. Mark Lenard is featured. Robert Walker, Jr. portrays what appears to be a young man who has been living by himself on a deserted planet for most of his life in *Charlie X*, the companion episode. He has developed strong mind control and psychokinetic powers in his isolation and threatens the crew with his tantrums and desire for power. Yet another premise that was used often in the future, the episode is a little more farfetched and tiresome than the best efforts, but there is still a sense of discovery in its execution that is pleasing.

Remember the skit Shatner did on **Saturday Night Live** when he told **Star Trek** fans that they should get a life? Well, that's the gist of the amusing Pioneer release, **Free Enterprise** (PEAD009, \$30). The film is actually an umpteenth story about twentysomething men trying to locate the right mates and finding it within themselves to make a commitment, but it is decorated with some very funny references to the obsessive nature of pop culture fandom. Shatner himself even shows up in the movie, in an extended cameo that rightly earns him billing over the title. He plays himself, or a perverse variation of himself, trying to sell the film rights to a musical based on William Shakespeare's *Julius Caesar*, in which he would play all the male parts ("Won't you have to stab yourself in the back?" "I've done it before.").

Set in Hollywood, the heroes are on the periphery of the film business, just getting started in their careers, and, along with collecting McFarlane action figures and Enterprise Christmas ornaments, they are obsessed with the first **Star Trek** series and know every episode by heart. They are also into laser discs and, in fact, there are more references to LDs in this movie than in all other films we have seen, combined. The heroes meet Shatner while shopping, and befriend him. While he is leery of their sense of values, he is enthused about their connections. What scared us was that we got all the jokes, which include very obscure references to various episodes ("What you don't understand is how much you have inspired us. I mean, you are our hero." 'Linus Pauling is a hero and, and Chuck Yeager and Lincoln—they're heroes.' 'Right, because Lincoln saved your life on the planet Excalvia...'), to movies like **Logan's Run** and other arcane matters.

The picture is in letterboxed format only, with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1 and no 16:9 enhancement. The color transfer looks fine and the image is sharp. The stereo surround sound is okay, although the mix is not elaborate. The 114 minute program has optional English subtitles, an amusing second subtitle track that provides footnotes to the various trivia references, trailers, TV commercials, Shatner's inspired music video (a conglomeration of the *Julius Caesar* stuff), profiles of co-writer Mark Altman and director Robert Meyer Bennett, a glossary of terms and several meatier supplements. One is an hour-long production documentary, featuring interviews with everybody involved in making the film, including Shatner, who goes over the elaborate should I/shouldn't I process that led him to commit to the project. An excellent collection of audition clips is presented, showing how each performer first adjusted to his part. There is a commentary track featuring Altman and Burnett, who essentially based the script upon their own experiences in Hollywood, with the usual caveats. They have great fun talking about the inspirations for the various sequences, the arcane trivia references they've snuck into the background of various shots, and what all their favorite movies and things are, but they also share practical information about low budget filmmaking (the coverage on some sequences is pretty sparse) and the adjustments they had to make when various problems arose. Finally, there is an enormous collection of outtakes, which have even more wonderful references to video fanaticism, including a shopping visit to a prominent Los Angeles laser disc store and an amusing visit to an ersatz version of Full Moon studios, where one of the filmmakers used to work.

A documentary about people very much like the people who made **Free Enterprise**, **Trekkies**, has been issued by Paramount (33677, \$30). It was easy enough to find subjects, because they attend conventions, and the cameramen just followed them home, so the 86 minute program is full of people who wear their costume uniforms to work or shopping, or dress their cats up in costumes, people who spend oodles of money on obscure merchandise tie-ins or souvenirs, and people who otherwise exhibit an above ordinary enthusiasm for the show and its mythologies. It is easy

enough to laugh at the eccentric nature of such individuals, but the documentary treats them fairly, and intercuts profiles of the fans with respectful comments and anecdotes by the **Star Trek** cast members and creators. Thus, the film will appeal to both **Star Trek** fans and to viewers who are simply fascinated by the diverse tastes of their fellow humans.

The picture is presented in full screen format. Since it is a documentary, the quality of the image changes from one shot to the next, but the transfer appears accurate. The image is sharp and colors are strong whenever the source material accommodates it, and most of the film looks fine. The sound is mostly monophonic, though it is technically stereo and is in decent condition. There are optional English subtitles and there is a trailer, which is like getting a quick fix of the film.

More Avengers

As with A&E's **The Avengers '65** (Nov 99), the second of the two box sets containing **The Avengers '66** is generally superior to the first and those not fanatical about obtaining the entire series can get a good taste of it by limiting their purchase to the second. Like **Avengers '65**, each set contains two separate volumes in individual jackets with separate catalog numbers, but, like '65 and unlike '67 (May 99), the volumes are not available individually.

To recap, each volume contains about three episodes, which must be accessed individually. Each is accompanied by some terrific stills for the individual episodes. All are in black-and-white, with the later episodes in much better condition than the earlier episodes. The monophonic sound is fine and we would like to take note that in the '66 episodes, perhaps more so than in either the '65 or the '67 episodes, Laurie Johnson's incidental music, in which he toys with the show's theme song to suit the mood of a scene, is both witty and effective. The shows are not captioned. In the earlier episodes, the relationship between Patrick Macnee's character and Diana Rigg's character still contains a bit of tension, but by the later episodes they are much more sympathetic to one another and depicted, at times, like lovers.

Vol. 1 in **The Avengers '66 DVD Set 1** (AAE70034, \$45) opens with *Silent Dust*, in which the heroes investigate the curious absence of wildlife from a particular area. The mystery is bland and the final chase, during a fox hunt, is illogical. The picture is also fairly weak, with poor contrasts, grain and a lot of scratches and speckles. Characters are disappearing in a particular hotel room in *Room without a View*. Again, the mystery is lame and the show's eccentricities seem forced. The picture looks better, but there is still some wear. *Small Game for Big Hunters* is more in keeping with the series' charms. Someone in the English countryside is practicing voodoo, and when the heroes investigate, they discover a full-fledged jungle. Some of the darker sequences are murky, but generally, the picture looks okay.

Rigg's character is kidnapped in the opening of *The Girl from Auntie* on *Vol. 2*, and so she is seen only briefly at the beginning and end as Macnee teams with another, somewhat flakier actress (were they toying with a replacement?), to find her. The show's title is a spoof on the short-lived *Girl from U.N.C.L.E.* TV series, and it is a reasonably entertaining exercise, even without Rigg. Both *The 13th Hole* and *Quick-Quick-Slow Death* are rather bland exercises with something of the same premise—people are disappearing on a golf course in *The 13th Hole* and in a dancing school (the better of the two) in *Slow Death*. Each makes use of its setting, but the wit is often forced and the mystery rather ludicrous or uninteresting. The picture quality is passable.

Things perk up with *The Danger Makers* on *Vol. 3* in **The Avengers '66 DVD Set 2** (AAE70035, \$45), as the heroes try to figure out why important people have started taking unnatural risks. On paper, the solution is a little silly, but the episode was directed by Charles Crichton, who brings his particular brand of flair and energy to its execution. And then there is *A Touch of Brimstone*, which starts out appearing to have something of the same plot (important people are having practical jokes played upon them), but then turns into something considerably more bizarre, as the heroes investigate a club in which the members dress in Seventeenth Century garb and practice uninhibited debauchery. Naturally, the still photo chosen for the jacket cover, of Rigg in a strapless bodice, long black gloves, and a choker necklace with very long spikes—oh, and a snake—was taken from this episode, which also has quite a bit of fun with whips and that sort of thing. Closing out *Vol. 3* is a fairly good mystery, *What the Butler Saw*, in which the heroes try to figure out which of three military men is corrupt. Macnee's character goes undercover as a butler to investigate, and the episode is full of fascinating butler trivia. All of the episodes in **Set 2** are in generally good condition, with no more than a few scattered scratches here and there.

Four episodes are contained in *Vol. 4*. It opens with the classic *The House that Jack Built*, later remade as a color episode, in which Rigg's character is trapped in a mansion full of puzzle-like rooms. Both *A Sense of History* and *How to Succeed...at Murder* are enjoyable in that the identity of the primary villain is hidden and must be discovered. *History* is set at a college where an economics professor has been murdered. The climax is a party where everyone dresses as characters from Robin Hood, and Rigg, as usual, is particularly fetching. *How to Succeed* is about a band of secretaries that are murdering their bosses and taking over the firms. The band's leader is apparently a ventriloquist's dummy. Rigg is even more fetching in *Honey for the Prince*. The heroes must stop the assassination of an Arabian leader, and to do so, Rigg's character infiltrates the harem in a bikini-and-veils outfit with such a low waistline that she has to, on camera as an apparent gag, hitch it up in the back at one point. That's what Reverse Scan and Still Step were made for.

Milton, Milton, lost in time

The source material may be in rough condition, but the episodes Best Film & Video Corp. and Image Entertainment have released of the surprisingly intelligent **Milton Berle's Buick Hour** (actually, *The Buick-Berle Show*) still probably look and sound better than they did on 1954 televisions when the program was first broadcast. In any case, most viewers will appreciate that the value of what has been preserved far outweighs the disadvantages of the grainy black-and-white image and scratchy mono sound. The picture is always clear enough to make out the expressions on the faces of the performers, and the sound is usually coherent enough to catch the jokes and hear the music.

We reviewed the first two volumes in May 99. To recap, the hour-long show is not a simple variety program. Instead, each episode has a distinct narrative, usually revolving around the show Berle is supposedly putting on at the end of the week and the problems he is having with his guest star. The format can incorporate song and dance numbers and comedy routines, yet still pull you through with a plotline that links everything together. And the songs—Cole Porter, Irving Berlin, everybody. To buy just one song these days would probably cost more than what they spent on an entire show, catering and all, but each episode has several great numbers, and the dancing, when Berle steps to one side, is terrific.

Was Berle trying to clean up his image? There was for us a minor disappointment in the opening number of

the first episode on **Milton Berle's Buick Hour Volume Four** (ID5469BFDVD, \$25). It is identified as 'The Prince Valiant Number' and after a minor procession, Berle appears in a prince's garb, but—drat—no wig. The episode improves as it goes along, however, and we found ourselves chuckling aloud at a couple points. Bob Cummings guest stars, and the two attempt to dissuade a young star-struck would-be actress from entering the profession. The episode has some severe audio dropouts at the beginning, losing a couple punchlines in the process, but it settles down after a while. The companion episode has even more of a plot than most. Berle is talked into fronting a nightclub, not realizing that it has an illegal casino in the back. The nightclub setting accommodates several musical numbers and there is plenty of comedy in the disguised comings and goings of the gamblers. The sound is a little stronger, though it is still fairly distorted in places and the opening number is particularly obliterated.

The picture and sound are somewhat stronger still on **Milton Berle's Buick Hour Volume Five** (ID5470BFDVD, \$25). The sound is steadier and the picture, though a little washed out, is reasonably sharp. Judith Anderson and Cyril Richard appear in the first episode, with Berle worrying that his show is going to turn into a BBC program. Anderson does a great job delivering wisecracks to Berle without breaking her expression. Berle has even more adlibs than usual, particularly when a microphone fails in the middle of a skit. Anderson and Richard also do a reading from *Medea*, straight. The source material has a number of scratches. Jack Webb appears in the companion episode, attempting to determine if Berle has been stealing jokes from Sid Caesar, who also makes a brief appearance. There are a lot of *Dragnet* gags and some great 'Who's on first'-type jokes about the name of Webb's character, Sgt. Friday. The picture looks a bit better, too.

The picture is fairly smooth on the first episode in **Milton Berle's Buick Hour Volume Six** (ID5471BFDVD, \$25). Kay Thompson guest stars as a new choreographer for the show. Berle takes advantage of the personnel switch and fires all the dead beats, but is eventually forced to rehire everyone. The highpoint is when he has to visit the house of his daffy secretary to ask her back and discovers that her whole family is as wacky as she is. In the companion episode, Berle visits the Steve Allen show and accidentally knocks out boxer Ezzard Charles, thereby placing himself, with steadfast reluctance, in line for a title fight. The show breaks away from the standard format effectively, and has a number of amusing gags. The picture has a few more scratches and other evidence of wear.

Questions

With the resurgence in popularity of a quasi-scripted game programs on television, it is worth taking a look at Robert Redford's 1994 drama, **Quiz Show**, a Hollywood Pictures Home Video release (17639, \$30), which pretty much defines what everybody now knows about the game show scandals of the Fifties. Ralph Fiennes stars as the contestant who goes all the way, with help from the program's producers, Paul Scofield is his scholarly father, who barely knows what television is, and John Turturro is a rival contestant who blows the lid on the show's formula after his ethnicity prevents him from continuing. Rob Morrow and David Paymer are also featured. Based upon real events, the film's entertainment comes from its character dynamics. It is an interesting exploration of a minor historical curiosity, although it is difficult to say what larger lessons can be drawn from the story.

The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1 and no 16:9 enhancement. The picture looks very sharp and colors are accurate, with satisfying fleshtones. The stereo surround sound is okay and is adequately dimensional. There is also a French audio track, optional English subtitling and a trailer. The film runs 133 minutes. Interestingly, when we de-activated the French audio track and returned to English, the French opening title sequence remained and we couldn't get rid of it without ejecting the DVD, even though English was playing over it.

Up, up and away

The LD version of **The Rocketeer** (Jun 92) came out before the advent of Dolby Digital sound, so the presence of a 5.1-channel Dolby Digital track on the Walt Disney Home Video DVD (17501, \$30) is a welcome improvement. Although the mix does not have the revved up constancy that newer audio tracks would have, there are still a lot of enjoyable rear channel separation effects and plenty of oomph at the right moments. The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1 and no 16:9 enhancement. Some sequences look washed out or overly soft, but in each case the image on the LD looks even worse, and there are other sequences that look fine. There is also a French audio track in standard stereo, optional English subtitles and a trailer.

Bill Campbell and Alan Arkin star in the period, comic book-inspired effects adventure about a young man who discovers a self-propelled rocket pack and uses it to fight bad guys. Timothy Dalton and Paul Sorvino are also featured. The first half of the movie is quite entertaining, but the second half has a bit of a formula feel to it and is less inspired. The result—it's worth watching, but its repeat potential is limited.

Happy 100th, Hitch

1999 was the hundredth anniversary of Alfred Hitchcock's birth, and it has also been a big year for Hitchcock movies on DVD. Universal released a box set, entitled **The Alfred Hitchcock Collection** (20654, \$75), containing the previously released collector's editions of **Vertigo** (May 98) and **Psycho** (20251, \$35), and a DVD that has not been issued individually, **Alfred Hitchcock Presents** (20653).

Psycho is pretty much a replication of the LD release (Jul 98). The 109 minute film is accompanied by a 100 minute retrospective documentary, the famous theatrical trailer (Hitchcock giving a tour of the house and motel), several shorter re-release trailers, an interesting 'press kit on film,' footage from the movie's premier, the shower scene (though it ends when the victim collapses, not with the pan away from the eyeball) presented with and without the film's musical score (why they couldn't just offer it once with two alternate tracks is beyond us), the storyboards for the shower scene, production photos, a production essay, a cast-and-director profile section and advertising materials. The documentary is great, featuring Janet Leigh, Hitchcock's daughter, Pat Hitchcock O'Connell, and many of the production personnel. It covers almost every aspect of the 1960 film's creation, as well as offering artistic insights.

The film is presented in letterboxed format with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1 and no 16:9 enhancement. The letterboxing is a bit problematic, adding picture information to the sides of the image in comparison to full screen presentations, but masking picture information off the top and bottom. The film was made in an era before 1.85:1 theatrical displays were widespread and it was really intended to be shown at 1.66:1 or even 1.33:1. Fortunately, except for the shower sequence where Hitchcock deliberately used a hard matte (which is masked by the letterboxing), the differences in the framing are negligible.

The black-and-white image is sharp and spotless, with excellent contrasts, and at its best moments it is so vivid

it almost appears three dimensional. The monophonic sound is bright and smooth. The film has an alternate French audio track and can be supported by optional English or Spanish subtitles ("Elmejor amigo de un chico es su madre."). The documentary, which is in English only, can be supported by optional English, French or Spanish titles.

In discussions of Hitchcock's centennial, incidentally, **Psycho** has apparently passed **Vertigo** to become his most highly respected film by critical consensus, though we aren't quite ready to make that switch yet ourselves.

Alfred Hitchcock Presents contains four classic half-hour black-and-white episodes from the TV series, all directed by Hitchcock himself. Hitchcock readily embraced the television medium, because it allowed him to explore dramatic ideas that were too radical for the restrictive boxoffice requirements of a feature film. Perhaps the most famous of the four, with a script by Roald Dahl, is *Lamb for the Slaughter*, from 1958, about a woman, played by Barbara Del Geddes, who kills her husband with a frozen leg of lamb, cooks the meat, and feeds it to the murder investigators. It is Hitchcock's long artistic obsession with food that gives the episode an extra helping of ironic wit. Tom Ewell stars in a creepy doppelganger tale, *The Case of Mr. Pelham*, from 1955. John Williams is featured in *Banquo's Ghost*, from 1959, as a retired detective who sets an elaborate trap to catch the conscience of a murderer. Williams is also featured in *Back for Christmas*, from 1956, this time as a murderer himself, who is undone by the goodwill of his victim. Of course, each episode is accompanied by Hitchcock's delightful prologs and epilogs.

The picture quality is excellent. *Lamb for the Slaughter* and *Case of Mr. Pelham* are spotless, with vivid contrasts. *Back for Christmas* is almost as good, and *Banquo's Ghost*, which is a bit softer in spots, still looks terrific. The monophonic sound is fine, and the show can be supported by optional English or French subtitles ("Bonsoir, Mesdames et messieurs, et bienvenue dans le somber Hollywood. La nuit amène un calme à la jungle. C'est si calme, qu'on pourrait entendre un nom être cite."). The collection appeared previously on LD (Jul 87) and has only four chapters, one for each episode.

The only Hitchcock movie to win an Oscar for Best Picture, **Rebecca**, has been released by Anchor Bay Entertainment (DV10808, \$25). Hitchcock's first American film, a lot has been written lately about his relationship with the movie's producer, David O. Selznick who, in a nutshell, forced Hitchcock to stick with the details of the popular Daphne Du Maurier novel, about a woman haunted by memories of her husband's previous wife, and not incorporate his own digressions or idiosyncratic twists. It was a well-advised bit of discipline, as the film itself demonstrates, and likely matured Hitchcock's sensibilities as an artist. Joan Fontaine and Laurence Olivier star, with Judith Anderson as the bitter housekeeper, and George Sanders.

By and large, the black-and-white picture transfer is stunningly beautiful. Contrasts are not sufficiently detailed, and so too much is lost in the shadows, but blacks are incredibly glossy and the image is super crisp, with ultra-clear textures. The source material is much cleaner than the Criterion Collection LD (Aug 90), and while we prefer the amount of light the LD allows into the darker portions of the screen, in every other way, the DVD is more pleasing. Even the monophonic sound seems sharper and cleaner. The 130 minute program is not captioned.

One of Hitchcock's most enduringly popular features, **Notorious**, has also been issued by Anchor Bay (DV10811, \$25). Cary Grant and Ingrid Bergman star in the 1946 romantic espionage thriller, about a government agent who falls in love with an informer but must send her off to sleep with his enemy. Claude Rains is also featured in the meticulously designed and executed film, which becomes more entertaining on every viewing, particularly since, in addition to its basic dramatic thrills, it can be read as a very perverse but pointed satire on marriage.

There are fewer differences between the DVD and the Criterion LD (Mar 90) than there were on **Rebecca**. Again, the LD has slightly better contrasts, but the DVD is slightly cleaner, with fewer scratches. Overall, it looks very nice, with rich blacks and sharp details. The monophonic sound seems about a half register deeper than the sound on the LD, and while it is less prone to noise and smoother, there is a clarity on the LD's audio that seems more realistic. The 102 minute program is not captioned.

Shame on Anchor Bay for screwing up the end of **Spellbound** (DV1081D, \$25)! As every Hitchcock fan knows, when the villain kills himself at the conclusion, his gun points at the camera and there is a brief flash of red, on the otherwise black-and-white image, when it goes off. Well, fans are seeing red, because they aren't seeing red on the DVD. It's not there. Otherwise, the picture transfer looks great. In comparison to the CBS/Fox Video LD (Mar 92), which did have the red flash, blacks and greys are pure on the DVD and purplish on the LD. Details are much sharper on the DVD, textures are clearer and there is less overt wear on the source material. The image is still a little soft at times, and there is a stray speckle or two, but the picture is generally smooth. There is a slight windowboxing on the right side only, revealing a bit more picture information than the LD delivered. The monophonic sound is also nicer, delivering smoother, cleaner tones than the LD can manage, without compromising on the audio clarity. The 111 minute program is not captioned.

Bergman stars with Gregory Peck in the psychological thriller, about a murder at a psychiatric institute and a doctor with a troubled past. The film is also notable for some striking dream sequences designed by Salvador Dali and for Miklos Rozsa's enduring musical score. As an entertainment, it is a little more confined and plodding than **Rebecca** or **Notorious**, but it is still an enjoyable mystery and an engaging romance, with a number of stimulating surprises. We would also like to take note that while female movie stars often get by on their popularity alone when playing doctors (see Meg Ryan in **City of Angels**), Bergman is genuinely believable as a working therapist who becomes emotionally involved with a man who may or may not be a murderer.

Even Hitchcock's failures have much to offer open-minded viewers and that is the case with **The Paradine Case**, particularly with the mostly gorgeous transfer offered up by Anchor Bay (DV10809, \$25). Peck stars again, as a lawyer defending a woman who has been accused of murdering her husband. The film is not so much about the murder, however, as it is about the emotional toll the assignment takes upon the lawyer and his marriage. For the most part, the black-and-white picture transfer is breathtaking, with deep, rich blacks, very sharp details and carefully defined textures. The vivid nature of the images enhances the impact of the drama considerably, so if Hitchcock feels more like exploring the flaws in the various characters than creating an exciting narrative, you are more open to going along with his choices. The film has many wonderful tiny moments, small details in the actions and attitudes of the characters, and with the beauty of the DVD's transfer, it is possible to savor each one, allowing the larger story to go where it may. Ann Todd, Valli, Charles Coburn, Charles Laughton and Louis Jourdan are also featured.

The picture transfer on the 1947 film looks super, but it is not perfect. There are minor artifacting flaws now and then, creating slightly jerky movements or minor displacements. Although the source material is very clean, there

is one point where a large mark of some sort flashes by. And, like the other Anchor Bay films, there is a tendency for details to be obscured in darker areas of the screen, though that is more of an artistic preference than a real flaw. The monophonic sound is okay and the program is not captioned. The film, which never appeared on LD in America, has had a number of different running times in its history, but this is the shortest version we are aware of, clocking in at 114 minutes.

LaserLight is getting into Hitchcock in a big way, with two boxed sets, **The Alfred Hitchcock Collection 1** (89022, \$90) and **The Alfred Hitchcock Collection 2** (89023, \$90). Each box contains seven DVDs that are also available as individual *Special Edition* releases. **Collection 1** features **Alfred Hitchcock Young and Innocent** and **The Cheney Vase** (82034, \$15), **Alfred Hitchcock Number 17 and The Ring** (82031, \$15), **Alfred Hitchcock The 39 Steps** (82022, \$15), **Alfred Hitchcock The Skin Game** (82030, \$15), **Alfred Hitchcock The Manxman** (82039, \$15), **Alfred Hitchcock Secret Agent** (82029, \$15) and **Alfred Hitchcock Jamaica Inn** (82032, \$15). **Collection 2** contains **Alfred Hitchcock The Farmer's Wife** (82038, \$15), **Alfred Hitchcock The Man Who Knew Too Much** (82023, \$15), **Alfred Hitchcock Rich and Strange and The Sorcerer's Apprentice** (82037, \$15), **Alfred Hitchcock Sabotage and The Lodger** (82035, \$15), **Alfred Hitchcock Blackmail and Easy Virtue** (82036, \$15), **Alfred Hitchcock Murder** (82033, \$15) and **Alfred Hitchcock The Lady Vanishes** (82021, \$15).

Each black-and-white program contains an introduction by Tony Curtis shot specifically for each program, and a trailer for a later Hitchcock film. All have optional Spanish, Japanese and Chinese subtitles, but no English captioning. The chapter encoding and jacket guides are good.

Hitchcock's definitive 1935 adventure thriller, **The 39 Steps**, is about a man, wrongly accused of murder, who is handcuffed to a woman and then escapes, forcing her to accompany him as he tries to find the real killer. Naturally, they fall in love, though not until they've done a lot of bickering, and among its many pleasures the film, again, contains a bemused satire on the bonds of marriage. Robert Donat and Madeleine Carroll star.

LaserLight has released a functional version of the film, but in terms of quality it is greatly eclipsed by a superb Criterion release, also entitled **The 39 Steps** (THI120, \$40). The picture on Criterion's version is smooth and crisp, with finely detailed contrasts, and the picture on the LaserLight version is hazy and washed out in comparison, with grain and stray speckles. The framing on the Criterion version also brings in more of the image. The monophonic sound is cleaner on the Criterion version as well. The film runs 86 minutes.

Criterion's presentation is accompanied by a number of extra features. There is an excellent *Lux Radio Theatre* rendition of the film, running an hour, with Robert Montgomery, Ida Lupino, and all the trappings of the original broadcast. A half hour promotional documentary about Hitchcock's earlier films is also included. Although it tends to put down everything but his thrillers, it will certainly get you primed for the LaserLight releases described below. There is a nice reproduction of the film's original pressbook, and some neat original production drawings. Film historian Marian Keane provides a commentary track. It is mostly an explanation of how the movie works, kind of like a film school lecture, but she does slip in a few interesting pieces of trivia here and there (Donat was suffering from a debilitation that prevented him from standing still without shaking).

The Secret Agent, from 1936, is an acquired taste, though it is a highly compelling and repeatable film once you come to accept the hero's flaws. John Gielgud stars as a British agent assigned to assassinate a spy whose identity is undetermined. Carroll, Robert Young and Peter Lorre are also featured. Often sold as a Hitchcockian spy thriller, it is more convoluted than that simple description implies, and more enduring as a result. As is usually the case with the title, the picture is very soft, with weak contrasts and lots of speckling. The image presentation is a tiny bit better than the version that was released by Madacy Entertainment (Sep 98). There are fewer artifacting flaws, the picture is a little sharper and blacks are a little purer (in a direct comparison, the Madacy image is faintly purplish). The sound on the Madacy version is somewhat stronger, however (they always push their volume), and the audio on the LaserLight version is somewhat weak and scratchy. The film runs 86 minutes.

Hitchcock's brief but entertaining 1932 murder thriller, **Number 17**, is paired with his 1927 silent boxing drama, **The Ring**. Running 66 minutes, the first half of **Number 17** is set in an abandoned house, as the hero and the people he meets try to figure out what a dead body is doing there. The second half is an exciting chase and train crash that features some really incredible model work. The presentation is essentially identical to the Madacy version (Sep 98). Artifacting is readily apparent, though it may be slightly less flagrant than it is on Madacy's rendition. Nevertheless, artifacting would be hard to avoid, because the source material is historically battered. The picture looks severely worn and is often hazy and full of scratches. The monophonic sound, indistinguishable from Madacy's version, is tolerable. One of Hitchcock's best silent films, **The Ring**, which runs 89 minutes, is about a boxer whose domestic life is in jeopardy until he wins the big match. The film has many circle motifs and is as much about the strains of a relationship as it is about boxing, though the fight scenes are quite exciting. The picture has its share of grain and wear, with artifacting apparent wherever there is a large patch of a single dark tone, but the image quality is viable. Movement is smooth, although the image flickers at times. There is a passable and reasonably jaunty monophonic orchestral score.

Hitchcock's 1937 effort, kind of a replay of **The 39 Steps**, **Young and Innocent**, is combined with a 1955 episode from **Alfred Hitchcock Presents**, **The Cheney Vase**. Nova Pilbeam stars as the daughter of a police chief, who believes that a young man accused of murder has not committed the crime and helps him escape, to locate the real killer. It is what one would think of as a typical Hitchcock effort and is very entertaining. The 82 minute feature looks a little battered in places, but the image is reasonably smooth and contrasts are adequately detailed. The monophonic sound is fairly scratchy, but coherent. The presentation is virtually identical to the Criterion LD (Feb 88). Directed by Robert Stevens, **The Cheney Vase**, from 1955, stars Darren McGavin and Carolyn Jones, with Patricia Collinge, and is about a young hustler who wants to steal a valuable vase from an elderly woman he is caring for. McGavin's performance is entertaining, although the narrative is constrained by the time limit of the half-hour show. The picture is markedly poorer than the image on the Universal episodes. Contrasts are adequately detailed, but the image is grainy and there are a number of scratches and speckles. The mono sound is a little raspy, but passable.

Set on the Isle of Man, Hitchcock's 1929 silent film, **The Manxman**, is an overblown melodrama about two men who love the same woman. On a technical level the film is adeptly executed and the location photography is highly satisfying, but the story isn't very interesting and it is difficult to work up sympathy for the characters. The 110 minute film is a little worn, but the image is reasonably clear and damage is generally under control. Movement is very smooth. There is a somewhat flowery and Wagnerian orchestral score on the mono soundtrack, with a little weakness

on the upper end.

About halfway through Hitchcock's 1931 feature, **The Skin Game**, there is what is probably the best auction sequence ever staged on film. The editing is outstanding and the dynamics across the auction room (they're bidding on a parcel of land) are communicated with a marvelous dexterity that demonstrates Hitchcock's remarkable command of the medium. It is a scene that should be studied in every film school. The rest of the 78 minute film, however, is terrible. The acting is so bad it's surprising the performers do not place the backs of their hands against their foreheads as they speak, and Hitchcock has them doing nothing but standing about and talking, interminably. The plot, about the underhanded gossip two wealthy families succumb to in their battle to claim that piece of real estate, is dated and unconvincing. There is a *Wild Duck* conclusion, but it's a relief, because you know it means the movie is finally over. The source material is in weak condition. Contrasts are so light that facial details are lost in medium shots. There are many scratches and speckles, and the image is often hazy as well. The monophonic sound is very scratchy, but dialog is coherent.

Beware of LaserLight's **Jamaica Inn**. It drops a full 8 minutes of footage at about the 51 minute mark, thereby giving the 98 minute film a 90 minute running time. It is best to stick with the Kino on Video version (Mar 99), which presents the film in its entirety. The transfer on LaserLight's presentation, missing footage aside, is actually quite similar to Kino's. Like Kino's it is rather substantially windowboxed. They are both sharp and smooth in the same places, grainy and battered in the same places and have the same contrast levels. Overall, the 1939 movie tends to seem a bit ragged. The somewhat noisy and confined monophonic sound also seems interchangeable.

You have to understand the impact Hitchcock's **The Lodger** had in Great Britain in 1927 to appreciate the real scope of his career and his greatness as a filmmaker. He was the Steve Spielberg of his place and time, and this was his breakthrough movie, which basically woke up the British film industry to the language of cinema. About a man suspected by his fellow boarders of being a serial killer, the film combined dramatic intensity and excitement with innovative camera angles and editing choices, leaving the British public—and the rest of the world—mesmerized and dazzled by what a movie could make them feel. Ivor Novello stars, his inherently eccentric presence adding a great deal of texture to his character. The picture is a bit grainier and worn than we've seen in some theatrical presentations, and contrasts are a little weak, losing facial details in medium shots. Movement is fairly smooth, but although it is an old film, there is probably room for improvement. The mono musical score is quite nice. Based upon a novel by Joseph Conrad, **Sabotage** is about a woman discovering that she is married to a foreign agent who has been setting off bombs around London. Unlike some of his other domestic thrillers, Hitchcock doesn't quite pull off a subversive commentary on marital arrangements—he doesn't seem to be trying to—but the film's technique is competent and the climax is well executed. Darker scenes are a little soft and there is some scattered speckling, but other sequences look stronger, with clearer details. The mono sound is okay, though you may want to push the amplification a little. The film runs 76 minutes.

Hitchcock advanced the achievements of the British film industry again with the first British sound film, **Blackmail**, from 1929, which he actually started filming as a silent, and then adjusted to sound when the technology became available. LaserLight has released the 85 minute sound version. And the film didn't just have sound, it uses sound creatively, such as during a conversation when the only word the heroine (and the viewer) hears is 'knife,' adding to the film's artistry as well as to its narrative. Anny Ondra stars, as a woman who accidentally murders a would-be rapist and is then blackmailed by a bum who witnessed the crime. There is an impressive chase sequence and a number of fine stylistic innovations, which have enabled the film to remain fresh and intriguing across the passage of time. Hitchcock's 1927 silent, **Easy Virtue**, clocking in at 80 minutes, appears to be a bit stretched out in comparison to the Japanese LD (Mar 97), which ran under an hour. The melodrama, about a bride who doesn't get along with her new in-laws, is effectively staged, but the slower running speed draws out the performances and deadens the film's pace. The picture is soft and grainy, with lots of markings and weak contrasts. The monophonic orchestral musical score is a little too aggressive.

A couple who learn about an impending assassination are forced to keep quiet when their child is kidnapped in the 1934 version of **The Man Who Knew Too Much**. Lorre appears again in the film, with Leslie Banks and Edna Best as the heroes. We've always found the film a little too extravagant and awkward, as the scenes in which the heroes track down the villains seem at times to be a bit eccentric, but others admire the film greatly and it certainly is typical of a successful Hitchcock thriller. The picture is a little sharper and blacks are a little deeper than the Madacy release (Sep 98). There is some wear to the source material and the image is a bit blurry at times, but that seems to be the way the 76 minute movie always appears. The sound has been given a mild artificial stereo, but tones are somewhat improved and stabilized by the process and the audio isn't bad.

One of our very favorite Hitchcock movies is not a thriller at all, but a domestic comedy about a married couple whose relationship undergoes a great deal of stress during a long pleasure voyage, **Rich and Strange**. The 1932 feature combines travelog footage with intuitively charming inserts as the couple begin their adventure with great excitement and then wear down spiritually as things progress. The picture is a touch more solid and a touch cleaner than the Image Entertainment LD (Apr 91), but it is generally in the same condition. The image is soft looking much of the time, and there is some speckling and smallish scratches here and there, but for the most part the presentation is reasonably nice, and the cuts between the stock footage and the inserts are fairly smooth. The sound is a little scratchy, but clear. The film runs 83 minutes, ending before it starts to get tiresome. Another **Alfred Hitchcock Presents** episode, **The Sorcerer's Apprentice** was written by Robert Bloch and directed by Josef Leytes. According to the jacket notes, the 1961 episode was never broadcast, but it is a more satisfying effort than the *Cheney Vase*, featuring an intriguing performance by Brandon De Wilde and an especially grisly ending. The unfaithful wife of a circus magician gets what is coming to her when she persuades a mentally limited teenager to eliminate her husband. The picture has a number of small black speckles and a grainy texture, but the presentation is workable.

Hitchcock's **Murder**, from 1930, is an early whodunit with little of the flair that later exercises in the genre would achieve, though there is a worthwhile stab at a twist ending and Herbert Marshall is very effective as the hero. The 93 minute film is soft and battered looking, but that is not unusual for the title and the transfer is actually pretty decent. The presentation is a substantial improvement over the Madacy version (Sep 98), which has a much tighter framing, a blurrier and more washed out image, and more damage. We could not get the two programs to synch up, however, and the LaserLight version ran consistently faster. The monophonic sound seems unaffected, however, age

disguising any difference in tone between the two DVDs.

The very entertaining 1939 thriller set on a train, **The Lady Vanishes**, was released previously by Criterion (Jul 98). Criterion's presentation is much cleaner than LaserLight's, which looks grainy, softer and has a number minor speckles in comparison to the smooth, spotless Criterion version. The monophonic sound is adequate, and were it not for the presence of the Criterion version, the LaserLight presentation probably wouldn't seem so bad, since there are no flagrant flaws, just minor annoyances. Michael Redgrave, Margaret Lockwood and May Witty star in the 94 minute feature, in which the heroine is speaking to an elderly woman aboard the train one moment and finds she has disappeared the next, although no one, except the hero, believes her.

Hitchcock's engaging 1928 silent comedy, **The Farmer's Wife**, is about a widower looking for a new mate. The performances are terrific and Hitchcock's comical touches are superb. Movement seems a little drawn out on the 129 minute program (the Japanese LD we reviewed in Mar 97 ran 98 minutes), however, upsetting the film's dramatic pace. The picture is worn looking, whiter areas of the screen are a bit washed out and the source material has a number of speckles, but the damage seems in keeping with the silent film format and there are no instances where the wear severely interferes with the entertainment. The film is accompanied by a pleasant monophonic score that sounds a little scratchy.

Rx for horror

A 1973 British horror film about a mad doctor giving lobotomies to teenagers so he can turn them into controllable zombies, **Horror Hospital**, has been issued by Elite Entertainment (EE4677, \$25). There are quite a few decapitations, but they are never very convincing. Beyond the film's predictable and silly narrative, its real failing is that the gore effects are dull. There is some nudity, too, but not an exceptional amount. Michael Gough and Robin Askwith star.

The picture is letterboxed, with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1 and no 16:9 enhancement. Colors are a little bland, but consistent, and the image is reasonably sharp. The monophonic sound is a somewhat flat, but workable. The 91 minute program is not captioned and is accompanied by a brief, suitably excited trailer for a double bill of **Horror Hospital** and *The Corpse Grinders*.

Horror Hospital is a work of art, however, compared to the nonsensical **Don't Look in the Basement**, a VCI Home Video release (DVD8214, \$20). Set in a kind of mental asylum in an old house, the place succumbs to anarchy after the head doctor is killed, with the head nurse becoming as bonkers as the patients. The phone lines have been cut, and the heroine, a new nurse, can't find the door to get out of the house (hint: see the title). Most of the 1973 film, however, is just about the patients, with the performers blathering about and overplaying their given idiosyncrasies. It isn't very scary or gory, just silly and tiresome.

The picture is presented in full screen format and the framing looks viable. Colors are light and the image is somewhat battered, with pale fleshtones, weak contrasts and smeary hues. There are some speckles, jiggles and other sorts of instabilities as well. The monophonic sound is scratchy and distorted. The 89 minute program (not 95 minutes, as is claimed on the jacket cover and listed in most reference books) is not captioned. A couple profiles of the filmmakers are included.

Something Wicked This Way Comes onto DVD

The Walt Disney adaptation of Ray Bradbury's **Something Wicked This Way Comes** has been released by Anchor Bay Entertainment (DV10891, \$25), in dual-layer format, letterboxed on one level with an aspect ratio of about 1.66:1 and no 16:9 enhancement, and in cropped format on the other level, though the cropping is just annoying and the letterboxed presentation is the only way to go. The picture looks super. Except for a couple stray speckles, the image is immaculate. The colors are sharp and finely detailed, with good-looking fleshtones. The 4-channel Dolby Digital sound is okay, though it is pretty much only the music that seeps into the rear channel. The 94 minute program is not captioned and is accompanied by a trailer.

Jason Robards and Jonathan Pryce are top billed in the 1983 feature, directed by Jack Clayton, in which two young boys are the only ones to discern the inherent evil that has accompanied a traveling carnival to their town. The film begins promisingly but then subsides into an overly labored battle between good and wicked, losing a sense of atmosphere that should have been the film's essence.

Murderous amusements

Ira Levin and Sidney Lumet's flagrant variation on **Diabolique**, **Deathtrap**, has been released by Warner Home Video (11256, \$15) in cropped format only. Based upon a Levin's play, with a screenplay by Jay Presson Allen, Michael Caine, Christopher Reeve and Dyan Cannon star in the story of playwrights who will resort to murder when writer's block prevents them from otherwise making millions. The plot gets bogged down a bit in the final act, but the 1982 production is an entertaining exercise with star appeal.

The picture on the LD (Aug 98) was letterboxed, and while a sliver is added to the top and bottom of the image on the DVD, the sides are somewhat trimmed, enough to create a cramped-looking image that is often not as satisfying as the proper framing on the LD. The color transfer appears to be equal to that of the LD, with reasonably bright hues and fleshtones, but the picture is much sharper on the DVD, bringing out details that are no more than a blur on the LD. The monophonic sound is okay. The 116 minute program has an alternate French audio track and English captioning.

Psycho killer

An entertaining thriller about a therapist who must determine which of his five patients is a wacko killer, **Color of Night**, has been released by Hollywood Pictures Home Video (17633, \$30). Bruce Willis stars in the 1994 feature, which was directed by Richard Rush. Brad Dourif, Lesley Ann Warren and Lance Henriksen are among the patients. The 139 minute program runs about 15 minutes longer than the theatrical release, as it did on the LD (Mar 95). The performances are almost all over the top, but that is part of the fun.

The picture is letterboxed, with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1 and no 16:9 enhancement, and the framing is effectively balanced. The image is a little soft at times and there is some minor speckling on the source material in a couple places, but the colors are viable. The stereo surround sound is okay, with plenty of dimensionality, though separation effects are limited (the musical score, by Dominic Frontiere, grows on you). There is a French audio track as well, optional English subtitles and a trailer.

Willis is a Vietnam vet and the once promising Emily Lloyd is his niece, who is curious about the war, in Norman Jewison's 1989 feature, **In Country**, a Warner Home Video release (11888, \$15). Avoiding the usual clichés, the film focuses on Lloyd's character coming to terms with life, and Willis gives a solid performance as a down-on-his-luck vet who has seen it all. The picture is presented in full screen format only, but offers some improvements over the full screen LD (Aug 90). The upper and lower frames are better balanced on the DVD, centering the characters better. The colors are also greatly improved, looking solid and shiny throughout. The image is very sharp and fleshtones are accurate. The stereo surround sound is passable. The 116 minute program (not 120 minutes as is mistakenly listed on the jacket) is adequately captioned.

How come they didn't leave any tubes of Tang around?

Selling short the ingenuity of Man while at the same time proving that there is a sucker born every minute, the 1970 documentary, **Chariots of the Gods**, from VCI Home Video (DVD8210, \$25), spans the globe, visiting world's most fascinating and impressive archeological sites, only to surmise that most of them were built by beings from outer space. Based upon the popular bestsellers by Erich von Daniken, the documentary continually makes unsubstantiated claims (" [Quoting Gilgamesh,] 'And the Earth looked like a meal pap. And the sea like a water trough.' The American moon men used very much the same words to describe their impressions of Earth from high in space." Roger that, Houston.) and then rushes on to the next subject before you have a chance to think twice about it. At least you get a decent tour of the world's wonders. The only thing we want to know is, if ancient people were so adept at drawing the images of alien astronauts (wearing oxygen helmets the narrator suggests at one point, although he never goes into why), how come they couldn't draw other ancient people?

Colors are faded, but then, the documentary has always looked like that, even when it first came out in the theaters. Otherwise, the image is fairly sharp and damage to the source material is minimal. The musical score is grating and wobbly, but then, Mozart and Beethoven were probably from outer space also, and this is the best humans can come up with when they try to write music. There is no captioning, but the 94 minute program is accompanied by a trailer, a couple promotional stills and a brief paragraph about Daniken.

Go fish

The first official dual-sided dual-layer DVD, **Aquaria Serenity, Tranquility, Variety**, has been released by The Richard Diercks Company and DVD International (DVD10720, \$25). Offering what the jacket claims is 'over 15 hours of unique programming,' the DVD contains extended video shots of five different fish tanks, framed so that you cannot see the edges of the tank. Three of the tanks, 'Classic,' 'Natural,' and 'Coral Reef,' are on one side and two more, 'Exotic' and 'Freshwater' are on the other. The tanks can be seen in letterboxed format with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1 and an accommodation for enhanced 16:9 playback, and in full screen format. Each has four accompanying 5.1-channel Dolby Digital audio tracks, none of which we found particularly relaxing. Two contain electronic musical scores and two have natural, excuse-us-we-have-to-use-the-rest-room water sounds. Each 'tank' can be played in an automatic repeat mode, but there doesn't seem to be an option to run the tanks sequentially. There is no time encoding. Each tank is also accompanied by a shorter sequence that provides closer views of the fish, and text backgrounds on the fish in the tanks are also provided. The picture is very sharp and the sound is reasonably clear. Unless you run a dental office or something, however, the utility of the DVD is obscure.

Mill Reef Entertainment and DVD International have also released a somewhat simpler concoction, **Coral Sea Dreaming** (DVD10723, \$25). The program consists of a 55 minute tour of the coral reefs off Australia's coast with a half dozen other, shorter segments about other life in the same general area, stretching the DVD's complete running time to about 82 minutes. There is a sleepy musical score with a nice 5.1-channel Dolby Digital dimensionality. The DVD's most useful function is an optional subtitling feature that names everything you're looking at. The underwater cinematography is vivid and the colors are exquisite. Much of the primary program is about the coral itself, spawning, feeding and being tended by colorful fish, but all manner of sea life is depicted, in crisp, colorful splendor. Some of the hues are almost unbelievable. A profile of the filmmaker, David Hannan, is also included, and DVD-ROM features include a screensaver and still photos.

More than an opera

A marvelous, circusy production of **Gioacchino Rossini: Il Barbiere Di Sivilia** has been released by RM Associates and Image Entertainment (ID5779RMDVD, \$30). Produced by the Netherlands Opera under Dario Fo and conducted by Alberto Zedda. The singing is standard for a lesser opera company. Jennifer Larmore is reasonably good as Rosina but the male singers, David Malis, Richard Croft and Renato Capecci, rarely deliver much vocal flair. How can they, though, when, for example, Malis juggles balls while singing the opera's most famous aria, *Largo al factotum*? The staging is a delight, filled with acrobats, jugglers and clowns, all vaguely pretending to be maids, menservants and towns people. But, as we intimated, even the principals get into the act, swinging on swings, ducking beneath banners and otherwise making the show almost as much a comical pantomime as it is an opera. Indeed, the staging is so satisfying that every time the video director chooses a close-up of a principal, you lose half the entertainment. In this environment, all the music has to do is come close to being good to satisfy, and it does a great deal more than that.

The picture looks fine, with sharp hues and passable fleshtones. On some camera pans, there is a slight artifact jitter, but it is momentary. The PCM stereo sound is pretty good, with a detailed ambiance and forceful sense of immediacy. The 153 minute program is in Italian and is supported by optional English subtitles.

How do you get to Carnegie Hall? Buy the DVD.

Many people dream of going on stage at Carnegie Hall, but now there's an opportunity to bring the Carnegie Hall's stage into your viewing room. The Hall's ethereal acoustics have been replicated with a spine-tingling accuracy on the 5-channel Dolby Digital track of the fabulous Hybrid Image Entertainment release, **My Favorite Broadway The Leading Ladies** (ID9156MODVD, \$30). We don't know how they recorded it, but it sounds as if they did not take the tracks directly from the performers' microphones, or at least not entirely. The separation effects for the orchestra alone are amazing, and voices float in the air above you with a delicate echo that suggests a listening area substantially larger than one's entire house, much less one's living room. The standard stereo track is pretty good, too, though it is a bit of a downer after the 5.1 track. The picture looks great and the 99 minute program is not captioned.

And then there's the show itself, an all-star extravaganza in which established Broadway actresses take turns

singing a litany of show tunes. They all come out at the end for an all-too-brief sequence during the final credit scroll, but otherwise, each comes out separately to sing one or two numbers, including Liza Minnelli (doing *Some People*), Dorothy Loudon, Jennifer Holliday, Nell Carter, Andrea McArdle, Audra McDonald, Elaine Stritch, Priscilla Lopez, Judy Kuhn, Faith Prince, Linda Eder (doing a wonderful rendition of *Man of La Mancha*) and others. There are also several song-and-dance numbers, the most memorable being an ensemble piece with a young actress, Anna Kendrick, singing *Life Upon the Wicked Stage* from *Show Boat*, as the chorus from *Cabaret* gesticulate around her. We only wish there were videos of what was going on backstage. A number of the songs will be obscure to non-Broadway fans, but that will only be for the first five or six times you watch it.

Festival memories

A documentary that focuses on the personalities of the musicians, **Monterey Jazz Festival**, has been released by Warner Home Video (36494, \$20). There are more interviews than music, but the 80 minute program, a profile of the yearly festival, has a wealth of brief music clips spanning the past four decades, featuring Charles Mingus, Miles Davis, Louis Armstrong and other legendary figures. In surveying the success of the Festival and providing brief profiles of its headliners, the film also dips into a history of modern jazz and its many subdivisions. The picture is slightly sharper than it was on the LD (Feb 99) and fleshtones are a little truer. The quality of the archive footage varies from shot to shot, but in the interviews filmed specifically for the documentary, colors remain a little soft and contrasts a bit weak. The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 1.7:1 and no 16:9 enhancement. The stereo surround sound is not as strong as the LD's stereo, but is still sounds real nice and there is a strong, basic dimensionality. The program is accompanied by a good collection of biographical profiles for all the performers and a 'Jazz Trivia' game. Although the jacket cover has the closed caption logo, the program is not captioned.

Jazz concerts

An excellent series of *Brewhouse Live* jazz concerts shot at the Brewhouse Theatre in Taunton, England is being released by Eagle Rock Entertainment PLC and Image Entertainment. Each program runs 52 minutes and has a standard but functional PCM stereo track. The stage is well lit and colors are sharp, with accurate fleshtones.

Roy Ayers plays an elaborate electronic vibraphone on **Roy Ayers Live** (ID5731ERDVD, \$25), a 1992 concert in which he is joined by Rex Rideout, Dennis Davis, Donald Nicks and Zachary Breaux. He sings, too, but that is not his forte. His complex manipulation of the vibe, however, is as fascinating as it is satisfying, and you start to feel impatient when the camera moves off it to provide a different angle.

Kenny Drew plays the piano and is joined by Niels-Henning Orsted Pedersen on bass and Alvin Queen rather aggressively on drums on **Kenny Drew Live** (ID5723ERDVD, \$20), another 1992 concert. A classic jazz trio, the three musicians are dressed in formal attire, but that does not appear to impede their playing ability. Keyed by Queen's drums, their numbers tend to have a fairly fast-paced rhythm, making the music a bit less relaxing than the Ayers program, but it still has an introspective flavor and is a stimulating exploration of the dynamics between the three instruments.

Gordon Beck, Kenny Wheeler, Tony Oxley, Stan Sulzmann and Dieter Ilg join for a 1991 concert, **A Tribute to Bill Evans** (ID5712ERDVD, \$25). They play several of Evans' compositions and selections he popularized, but they do not achieve the smoothness Evans brought to his most complex improvisations. Some of the solos, particularly Ilg's bass, are compelling, but other passages seem to fall short, straining just to evoke Evans' structures. Nevertheless, like the other *Brewhouse* programs, it is a pleasant hour or so of jazz, and visually, the quintet presents the opportunity for a variety of performance images that are deftly edited to underscore the music.

Rock 'n jazz

More rock than jazz, Lee Ritenour plays a mean electric guitar on **RIT Special: Lee Ritenour Live**, an Eagle Rock Entertainment PLC Image Entertainment release (ID5729ERDVD, \$25). The 1984 concert, shot at the Concord Pavilion in California, runs 75 minutes and features Barnaby Finch, Carlos Vega, Ernie Watts, Jimmy Johnson and others. Some passages, particularly Watts' saxophone solos, are jazz-like, but much of the program sounds like a good rock band jam, and that said, while it may have seemed stylistically pleasing in the mid-Eighties, it is a bit overblown for today's refined tastes. The picture looks fine, with accurate fleshtones and solid hues. The PCM stereo lacks the crispness Dolby Digital might have brought to the audio track, but is passable.

The balladeer

Willie Nelson performs 18 numbers on the 58 minute concert program, **Willie Nelson: Greatest Hits Live**, a Pioneer Artists release (PA99624D, \$25). Performed at the Austin Opera House in 1986, Nelson stands in front of a small but energetic back up band, playing the guitar and singing his best known ballads. Despite the live environment, there is some color to Nelson's voice, and while there is less variety to the tone of his songs, fans should still be pleased with the scope and directness of the program.

Colors are accurate and fleshtones look good, but the picture is often soft and hues look fuzzy in places. The stereo surround sound is good and the 5.1-channel Dolby Digital track is even better, with an improved clarity and sharpness that adds to the appeal of the music. The program is not captioned.

LD Reviews

The last horror package

Three black-and-white films from the Fifties and one color feature from the early Sixties have been combined on the three-platter box set, **United Artists Horror Classics Volume 2 The Neanderthal Man (The Vampire (Curse of the Faceless Man (Doctor Blood's Coffin**, an MGM Home Entertainment release (ML106530, \$100).

In the Jekyll and Hyde-like *The Neanderthal Man*, from 1953, a scientist, after creating a saber tooth tiger by injecting his cat with a serum, gives himself a shot and goes caveman, tearing up the countryside and otherwise frightening the locals, who eventually shoot him.

In *The Vampire*, from 1957, a scientist develops pills from a vampire bat and another doctor accidentally swallows them, tearing up the countryside and otherwise frightening the locals, who eventually shoot him. Kenneth Tobey appears as a cop. There is a wonderful, Herrmannesque score by Gerald Fried, making the isolated music-and-effects track on the analog channel (it is isolated on all four movies) well worth while.

Things pick up a bit with *Curse of the Faceless Man*, a silly but enjoyable 1958 effort about a mummified body uncovered in the ruins of Pompeii that immediately starts chasing after the reincarnated soul of his former love, who just happens to be the girlfriend of a scientist connected to the excavation. Richard Anderson, acting stiffer than the mummy, stars.

Directed by Sydney J. Furie, *Doctor Coffin's Blood*, from 1962, is several levels above the others. Vaguely inspired by **Frankenstein**, it is about a young scientist who commits several murders in an attempt to collect body parts and bring other corpses back to life. Although the jacket's claim, that the movie has an "unflinching eye toward on-screen gore," is pure wishful thinking, the film is astutely dark and complex, with strong moral explorations and creepy performances. Shot in England, it is set in Cornwall.

The black-and-white picture looks very nice on *The Vampire*. The image is spotless and contrasts are effectively detailed. There are more outdoor scenes in *Neanderthal Man* and *Curse of the Faceless Man*, which look a little murkier, but on the whole these, too, are in good condition.

Although not immaculate, the colors on *Doctor Coffin's Blood* look great, with bright hues and accurate flesh-tones in most sequences. The image is sharp most of the time, as well, but there are moments where the colors look a bit lighter and the image a little fuzzier.

On all four, the monophonic sound is fine, and the programs are not captioned. *Neanderthal* runs 78 minutes, *Vampire* runs 74 minutes, *Faceless Man* runs 66 minutes and *Doctor Blood* runs 92 minutes. The chapter encoding and jacket guide are good.

Biblical epic

The much-maligned 1954 Biblical epic, **The Silver Chalice**, has been released on LD by Warner Home Video (11560, \$40). Admittedly, the acting in the film is uniformly atrocious. Paul Newman is so stiff you'd think it was his first role in a local theater group and, on the opposite end, Jack Palance is all over the place. Additionally, the sets are often highly stylized and vacant, looking more like a backdrop for a modern opera than lived-in cities and buildings of early Rome and the Middle East.

The acting is inexcusable, but the film's design is striking, almost abstract, and it decorates the narrative the way modern furniture would a church, using streamlined angles and clutter-free backgrounds to reinforce a concentration upon the film's spirituality. The narrative, from a Thomas B. Costain novel, is an amalgam of favorite Biblical bestseller plots, but it keeps the film's momentum from becoming tangled in the performances. We're not saying it is a masterpiece, but the movie, directed by Victor Saville, has a determined style, and is open to many repeat viewings, regardless of how one rates its artistic value.

The 135 minute feature is spread to three sides, with the finale in CAV. The picture is windowboxed, with an aspect ratio of about 2.5:1. Colors and flesh-tones look a little light, and there are some small speckles popping up from time to time, but the image is very smooth and the focus is sharp. Some of the drabness in the color is conceptual. The monophonic sound is strong, with even tones. There is no captioning. The chapter encoding and jacket guide are passable.

Only doctors have wings

Only one thing really dates **Dive Bomber**—everybody smokes. The 1941 Michael Curtiz film, starring Errol Flynn, Fred MacMurray and Ralph Bellamy, is about the development of cockpit life support technologies that enabled pilots to utilize the full maneuverability of their aircraft. Sure, the planes are a little old and the phones have circles, but what is really jarring is the constant use of cigarettes—even in places like operating rooms and next to airplanes that are being fueled.

Flynn portrays a Navy doctor, although most of the problems he tackles are engineering challenges rather than medical challenges. There are the usual false animosities between the heroes and plenty of great flying sequences, as well as some formula comedy relief involving a crewman trying to hide from his ex-wife. The film runs 132 minutes and its unifying narrative structure is tenuous but, in Curtiz' hands, the film remains inherently watchable and the stars are consistently engaging.

Shot in color, the Warner Home Video LD (65208, \$40) looks gorgeous. Hues are deep, flesh-tones are rich and the image is sharp. Wear is minimal and the quality of the image adds to the entertainment. The monophonic sound provides adequate support for the Max Steiner score. There is no captioning, and side three is in CAV. A faded but interesting trailer is also included. The chapter encoding and jacket guide are fine.

Lies within lies

Tim Roth is a murder suspect and Michael Rooker and Chris Penn are cops giving him a lie detector test in **Deceiver**, an MGM Home Entertainment *Deluxe Letter-Box Edition* LD (ML106833, \$40). Renee Zellweger is the victim, seen in flashback. We cannot say that we completely understood the ending, but there are several good twists to the plot and whether or not the story ultimately makes sense, the film generates a sufficient atmosphere of tension and mystery to keep fans entertained. The acting, which is terrific across the board (Ellen Burstyn is also featured in a somewhat unique part for her), also adds to the 1997 film's appeal.

The picture quality, however, does not. Colors are drained beyond any conceptual dampening of hue, and flesh-tones are so bland they often match the colors of the walls behind the characters. The picture is also quite grainy or hazy in places. It is letterboxed, with an aspect ratio of about 1.85:1. The stereo surround sound has some workable separation effect and a viable dimensionality. The 102 minute program is not captioned and comes with a trailer that twists things around a bit. The chapter encoding and jacket guide are fine.

LD roundup

No DVD will ever have jacket art that looks as nice as a well-designed LD cover, such as the compelling ad art design on the Artisan Home Entertainment Pioneer release, **The Blair Witch Project** (LD10188, \$30). Sure, you have to turn the platter over part way through, but the conclusion of the 81 minute program is presented in CAV, so you can pick apart the final hair-raising sequence on a frame-by-frame basis. The LD includes the two best features from Artisan's DVD (Nov 99), the marvelous hour-long promotional special that was broadcast on cable, pretending the events within the film actually occurred, which appears on one side of a second platter, in CLV, and the informative commentary track by directors Daniel Myrick and Eduardo Sanchez and producer Robin Cowie (One thing they point out: The film's best known image, a half-framed close-up of the heroine, was a mistake—she was trying to shoot herself in full

frame). Like the DVD, the picture is presented with a fairly substantial windowboxing, squared in the middle of the screen. Alternating between black-and-white and color footage, the image quality is highly flexible, since grain and drab colors are part of the dramatic content. The sound is in standard stereo only and is monophonic by design, but the replication is solid. The film and the documentary are adequately captioned. The chapter encoding for the film is fine, but the jacket guide isn't very helpful.

No documentaries or trailers are featured on the New Line Home Video Image Entertainment *Widescreen Edition* LD release, **Austin Powers: The Spy Who Shagged Me** (ID5956LL, \$30), but the commentary track (referring to the medium as a DVD) and the deleted scenes are included. Both the picture and the 5.1 Dolby Digital track are essentially identical to the DVD (see page 3). The image is brightly colored and reasonably sharp, and is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1. We couldn't tell the audio track apart from the DVD, but it has many enjoyable separation effects and plenty of energy. The 95 minute program is adequately closed captioned. The chapter encoding and jacket guide are good.

The Paramount Home Video Pioneer *Widescreen Edition* LD release of **A Simple Plan** (LV333763WS, \$35) looks as good as the DVD (see page 10). Even the darker sequences look stable and solid. The LD has no 5.1 Dolby Digital track, but the standard stereo surround sound is stronger than its DVD counterpart and the film's audio mix is not all that elaborate, anyway. The 121 minute program is spread evenly to three sides in CLV and is adequately closed captioned. The chapter encoding and jacket guide are a little generalized.

There is no commentary track or other special features (except a trailer) on the New Line Home Image *Widescreen Edition* release, **The Corruptor** (ID5449LI, \$35), as there were on the DVD (Nov 99), but the picture and sound transfers are on par with the DVD release. The image is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1. Colors are bright and glossy, and the image is sharp. The 5.1-channel Dolby Digital track is even a little stronger than its DVD counterpart, with slightly sharper separation effects and a bit more oomph. ChowYun-Fat and Mark Wahlberg star in the 110 minute story of police corruption in New York's Chinatown.

There is no 5.1 Dolby Digital track or a commentary track on Paramount and Pioneer's *Widescreen Edition* release of **Election** (LV334033, \$30) as there is on the DVD (see page 7). The picture is letterboxed with an aspect ratio of about 2.35:1. The colors are a little lighter on the LD than on the DVD and there is a bit more tendency toward grain, but the picture looks reasonably good and fleshtones are okay. There really isn't that much difference in the quality of the sound between the LD and the DVD, and the stereo is reasonably strong. The 103 minute program is adequately captioned. The chapter encoding and jacket guide are passable.

Adults Only DVDs

A male prostitute is framed for a burglary and organizes a sting to catch the real culprit in **Jenteal Loves Rocco**, a Vivid release (UPC#0073215730, \$35). There is enough of a narrative to support the erotic sequences, creating a fairly entertaining effort within the genre. Contrasts are a little weak and colors are a bit flat, but workable. The monophonic sound is okay. The 75 minute program features Jenteal, Christi Lake, Jeanna Fine and Davia Ardell, and has multiple angle sequences.

A man has an affair but then returns to his wife in **Sex Secrets of a Mistress**, from Vivid (UPC#0073215729, \$35). The erotic sequences are fairly standard and there isn't much to the narrative, but it is a pretty basic premise that some viewers will find emotionally compelling, and the picture quality is quite good, with particularly rich fleshtones. The sound is okay, there are multiple angle sequences and the program runs 70 minutes. Christy Canyon, Lana Sands, Channone and Jill Kelly are featured.

Another of Vivid's stabs at interactive programming, **Dyanna Presents Vivid's Virtual Vixens** (UPC#0073215719, \$35), there seems to be only so much they can do with the format. Basically, they divide erotic sequences into segments and offer them individually on a menu. In each, the actress is looking directly at the camera and talking to the viewer, while the actor remains unseen except for the appropriate portions of his anatomy. Two actresses are featured, with a third set appearing to have been drawn from some other program and not doing the looking at the camera thing. There is also a 'behind the scenes' sequence that has a little more variety to it. The first DVD Vivid did was inspired, but this offering hasn't added much. The picture quality is quite good, though, and the monophonic sound is okay, although an airplane drowns out the dialog at one point.

A softcore program depicting nude models cavorting in out-of-the-way places, such as deserts, **Raw Adventures**, from Vivid (UPC#0073215-727, \$35), includes a lot behind-the-scenes footage, with some dialog, to show how the women were able to get to where they are sunning themselves with nary a suitcase. The picture quality varies wildly, from ratchety computer-style video, to overly blurry and blandly colored images, to a few scattered shots that are reasonably bright and sharp. Most of it is rather hazy, though. The monophonic musical score is tolerable, but some of the dialog also has a computer-style ratchety tone. The program runs 51 minutes.

Another softcore nude modeling program, Vivid's **Malibu-Hardbodies** (UPC#0073215663, \$35) runs 53 minutes. Shot around a house or houses with Southwestern architectural styles, the models spin and smile a lot, but pretend with only great vagueness that they are working out. The colors are light, fleshtones are bland and the image is often grainy. The monophonic sound is okay.

Vivid has gone overboard with the interactive menu on **L.A. Swimstyles** (0073215689, \$35), making the 76 minute program very difficult to reach (you have to press the play button about a half dozen times). The show features nude modeling sequences set inside a house somewhere, most of the models beginning in bathing suits that don't stay on for very long. The picture is reasonably sharp and colors look okay. The monophonic score has an aggressive beat.

All Vivid programs are accompanied by elaborate interactive promotional sequences for other erotic releases, though the accompanying text is sometimes in Japanese.

DVD & LD News

THE PERFECT GIFT FOR EVERYBODY: Normally we would not make an official announcement until we actually had it in our hands, but we want to make sure you know about this for Christmas. *Doug Pratt's DVD-Video Guide* (ISBN0966974441, \$20) should be available from your favorite book retailer the first or second week of December. Published by Harbor Electronic Publishing and distributed by Unet 2 Corp (800-269-6422, www.readfilm.com), it contains over 2400 DVD reviews and is the ideal present not only for those who have DVD players, but for anybody who likes to read. Buy a bunch of them.

DISNEY GOES DVD: After years of waiting in vain for Disney to release LDs at the same time they release their video cassettes, Disney has announced they will now release all DVDs on the same day the cassette comes out. First up is the standard edition of **Tarzan**, priced at \$40, which will be appearing on Feb 1 with some minor special features, including the **Jurassic Park**-without-people clip for the forthcoming **Dinosaurs**. On April 18, Disney will release a collector's edition of **Tarzan** with extensive supplementary features, priced at \$50.

JUMANJI IN DETAIL: Columbia TriStar's forthcoming collector's edition of **Jumanji** will have a special effects crew commentary, a 'making of' documentary, briefer featurettes on specific topics, extensive still photos and more. It will be priced at \$28. Columbia TriStar's **The Winslow Boy**, **Love Stinks** and **Twin Falls Idaho** will have commentary tracks and Columbia TriStar will be doing it right this time, releasing **Godzilla vs. Destroyah/Godzilla vs. Space Godzilla** and **Rebirth of Mothra 1 & 2** in letterboxed format.

CRITERION RUSHMORE: Criterion Collection will be releasing **Rushmore** with a commentary track, a 'making of' featurette, a Charlie Rose interview, an MTV clip and more. It will be priced at \$40.

LEWIS FEAST: Image Entertainment is releasing collector's editions of three Herschell Gordon Lewis splatter classics, **Blood Feast**, **2000 Maniacs** and **Color Me Blood Red**. There will be commentaries, deleted scenes and more. Image is also releasing three Charlie Chaplin films that originally appeared on LD through Fox Video, **City Lights**, **The Circus** and **The Kid/A Dog's Life**, and Image is issuing several Ed Wood films, including **Plan 9 from Outer Space** and **Glen or Glenda?**. **Plan 9** will be coupled with an hour-long documentary about the feature.

CLOSED OUT OF TOWN: The three Indiana Jones films announced for LD by Paramount Home Video have been cancelled and have been removed from our *Coming Attractions* listing. We've also removed the remaining Synapse LDs, World Vision LDs, **Fists of Fury** (Goodtimes DVD) and **Placido Domingo** (Image DVD).

CLOSED FOREVER: Columbia TriStar Home Video has officially deserted the LD business, which means that all those Columbia TriStar LDs that are rotting like crazy cannot be returned.

DVD and LD Ads

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

DVD-Laser Disc Newsletter Index, covering all reviews Sep 84 to Jun 99! \$9 (\$10 overseas). LDN back issues are also available.

Write to DLDN Index, PO Box 420, East Rockaway NY 11518.

Or download the index for free from our website, www.DVDLaser.com.

SELLING PIONEER DVL-909 LASER/DVD PLAYER \$400.00.
SONY DVP-7000 DVD PLAYER \$400.00. ORIGINAL BOXES.
CALL (617)361-8891 ANY DAY BETWEEN 12-2PM (EASTERN).

LASERDISCS WANTED—HIGH (IN-ADVANCE) PAYMENTS—GENEROUS SHIPPING ALLOWANCE—Andy Warhol's Bad —Avenging Angel: 1985 —Battle beyond the Stars —Blood & Black Lace: Import —Buckaroo Banzai —Dead & Buried: Import —Eraserhead: Import —Hercules: Schwarzenegger —Hills Have Eyes —I Vitelloni —Justine: Import —Killer Klowns from Outer Space —Lady from Shanghai —Let Sleeping Corpses Lie: Import —Lucky Luciano: Import —Objective Burma —Scream Blacula Scream: Import —Some Like It Hot: Box —Space 1999 TV #01 —They Made Me a Criminal —Thunderbirds TV: Complete —Trapeze —Under Capricorn —Valley of Gwangi —John Wayne
RKO Box CALL: (978)251-7888 (Mon-Fri 9am-5pm Eastern Time)
FAX: (978)251-7889 (24 Hours)

BIG EMMA: THE WOMAN WHO PAYS THE MOST FOR YOUR DISCS. QUESTION: I HAVE DOUBLES OF DISCS AND WOULD LIKE SOME CASH, WHAT DO I DO? ANSWER: CALL BIG EMMA TO GET TOP DOLLAR FOR YOUR TITLES. QUESTION: I HAVE A COLLECTION THAT NO LONGER FITS IN MY HOUSE, WHAT DO I DO? ANSWER: CALL BIG EMMA AND GET A FAT CHECK IN DAYS. WHY DEAL WITH BIG EMMA? SHE GOES OUT OF HER WAY TO MAKE YOU THE HIGHEST OFFER POSSIBLE FOR YOUR DISCS, AND PAYS YOU QUICKLY. EMMA PAYS CASH OR CREDIT, AS YOU PREFER. SHE BIDS ON HUNDREDS OF DISCS A DAY AND CAN BID ON A SINGLE DISC OR ON A LIST OF TEN THOUSAND. SHE ALSO HAS THE FRIENDLIEST CUSTOMER SERVICE IN THE BUSINESS. SO IF YOU'RE LOOKING TO SELL SOME DISCS, CALL THE WOMAN WHO PAYS THE MOST.

CALL (617)262-4344. YOU CAN ALSO FAX HER AT (617)262-3679. EMAIL HER AT BIGEMMA1@AOL.COM OR CHECK OUT HER WEB SITE AT WWW.BIGEMMA.COM. HER SITE LISTS HUNDREDS OF NEW TITLES EVERY DAY, ALL CHEAP, ALL GUARANTEED, AND ALL ON HER OWN REAL TIME INVENTORY SYSTEM. SO CALL BIG EMMA, BECAUSE NOBODY IN THE WORLD PAYS MORE FOR YOUR DISCS.

For Sale, All Sealed: Beauty & The Beast CAV \$59, Looney Tunes Box #1 \$99, Civil War Box \$199 (708)846-0117

GODFATHER - "IMPORT" TRILOGY THX-\$129.00 Criterion - SPINAL TAP - \$99 ALIENS CAV w/EXTRAS - \$69
BEAUTY & THE BEAST \$150 CALL (818)908-9711.

**RARE LASERDISC SUPER-SALE—MOST SPECTACULAR SELECTION EVER OFFERED—FREE SHIPPING—15%
OFF WITH TWO—25% OFF WITH THREE—INTERNATIONAL ORDERS WELCOME—SCHOOL & LIBRARY
PO's ACCEPTED—MASTERCARD-VISA-AMEX-DISCOVER-MONEYORDERS**

\$60 —Back to School —Back to Beach —Disney: Best 1931-1948 —Edge of Sanity —I Remember Mama —Man
Called Flintstone —Maniac Cop III —McCartney Movin —McCartney Special —Rolling Stones Rolling: Import —
Roxy Music High Road —Tree Grows in Brooklyn

\$90 —Better Tomorrow II: Import —Better Tomorrow III: Import —Betty Blue —Boxcar Bertha —Cat's Eye —
Creepshow II —Deepstar Six —Disney: Donald's Bee Pictures —Disney: How Best Won —Disney: Life with Mickey
—Django Kill: Import —Head —Maniac Cop II —Monster Squad: Import —Pink Floyd Delicate Thunder —Rail-
roaded —Residents: Music —Serial —Streetfight: Bakshi —Tie Me Up & Down

\$120 —Android —Angels Die Hard —Asylum —Bachelor & Bobbysoxer —Being There —Black Caesar —Blob:
1988 —Blacula —Body & Soul —Brood —Chained Heat —CHUD —Code of Silence —Count Yorga Vampire —
Creeping Flesh —Cujo —Death Warmed Up: Import —Devil's Daughter —Dreamscape —Easy Money —Fiend
without Face —Frankenhooker: Unrated —Gorgon —Hardware —King Kong/Son Kong —Kronos —Laurel & Har-
dy: Saps/Oliver —Laurel & Hardy: Way Out West/Brats —Leon Professional: Uncut Import —Lifepod —Lone Wolf
McQuade —Metropolis —Miracle Mile —Mr. Blandings Dream House —Nightbreed —Operation Petticoat —
Phantasm Two Autograph Box —Return Living Dead II —Savage Streets —Silent Night Deadly Night —Space
Raiders: Import —Vampire Hunter D —Velvet Vampire —Willard

\$150 —After the Fox —Beast Must Die —Beyond Valley Dolls —Blood Feast —Brain Planet Arous —By Dawn's
Early Light —Captain Blood —Charge Light Brigade: 1936 —Clash Titans —Coffy —Collector —Crawling Eye —
Day of Locust —Day of Triffids —Death in Venice —Destination Moon —Donovan's Brain —Dracula's Daughter/
Ghost Frankenstein —Dr. X/Mystery Wax Museum —Earth Vs. Flying Saucers —Endless Summer —Experiment in
Terror —Fantastic Voyage —Fantasy Films George Pal —First Men in Moon —Flowers in Attic —Frankenstein
Meets Wolfman —From Beyond —Galaxy Terror —Godzilla 1985 —Godzilla vs. Biollante —Honeymoon Killers —
House Frankenstein/House Dracula —I Love You Alice —Ilsa Harem Keeper —Ilsa She Wolf —Ilsa Wicked Warden
—Johnny Guitar —Jonny Quest I —Jonny Quest II —Journey 7th/Angry Red Planet —Kind Hearts/Captains Para-
dise —King of Comedy —Koyaanisqatsi —Last Days Pompeii —Last House Left —Lavender Hill/Man White Suit
—Lift —Long Hot Summer —Lust for Vampire —Macao —Magic Christian —Making Star Wars: Import —Maltese
Falcon —Manhunter —Man Knew Too Much: 1955 —Marnie —Mask: 3D —Master of World —Mighty Joe Young
—Mondo Cane —Mouse That Roared —Murder My Sweet —Mysterious Island —Name of Rose —Near Dark —
Night of Demons —Ninth Configuration —None But Lonely Heart —One Million B.C. —Our Man Flint —Party —
Phantom of Paradise —Phase 4 —Picnic —Quo Vadis —Rancho Notorious —Raven/Black Cat —Rear Window: 1954
—Return of Vampire —Rocketship XM —Rope —Saboteur —Santa Sangre —Sea Hawk —Shadow of Doubt —Si-
esta —Sodom & Gomorrah —Son of Dracula —Son of Frankenstein —Tarzan Ape Man —Tarzan & His Mate —
Terror Train —Them —This Gun for Hire —Three Worlds Gulliver: 1960 —Tom Jones: LBX —Topaz —Torn Cur-
tain —Trancers —Two Rode Together —UFO TV# I —UFO TV# II —UFO TV# III —Ulysses —Vikings —Werewolf
of London —When Dinosaurs Ruled Earth —When Stranger Calls —While City Sleeps —World Henry Orient —
Zombies Broadway

\$180 —8 —American Friend —Beast 20,000 Fathoms —Big Heat —Black Narcissus —Bob Le Flambeur —Burn
Witch Burn —Cherry 2000 —Clash by Night —Conversation —Gary Cooper Box —Countess Dracula —Dead of
Night —Devil in Flesh —Devil Rides Out —Dinosaur Island —Dona Flor —Don't Look Now —Egyptian —Eijan-
aika —Escape from New York —Flesh & Blood —Fog —Frankenstein Created Woman —Gilda —Grey Fox —Hail
Mary —Hercules: Reeves LBX —Hidden Fortress —House of Games —Il Bidone —Kwaidan —Labyrinth Passion —
La Chienne —Last of England —Law of Desire —Leave Her to Heaven —Life Death Colonel Blimp —Looney Tunes
Box: Uncut —Lust in Dust —Mackintosh Man —Mildred Pierce —Mummy's Shroud —Narrow Margin: 1952 —Out
of the Past —Possessed —Private Life Sherlock Holmes —Prospero's Books —Queen of Blood/Planet Vampires —
Rashomon —Return Living Dead —Rocco & His Brothers —Sawdust & Tinsel —Scars of Dracula/Horror Franken-
stein —Stranger on 3rd Floor —Suspiria —They Live by Night —Traci Lords: Import —Trauma —Twins of Evil —
Un Chien Andalou —Unknown Chaplin —Urotsukidoji Box —Vampire Circus —Vampire Lovers —Witches —Zor-
ba the Greek

PRICED AS MARKED —Aquarius: Import \$210 —Bad Taste: Uncut Import \$375 —Captain Scarlet TV: Com-
plete \$995 —Cat O'Nine Tails: Import \$375 —Church: Import \$375 —Class 1999: Import \$275 —Conquest: Import \$275
—Curse of Demon \$250 —Day Earth Stood Still Box: Autographed \$295 —Deep Red: Import \$375 —Demon Seed:
Import \$375 —Detective Story: Import \$275 —Devil within Her: Import \$275 —Dracula AD 1972: Import \$210 —Eyes
without Face \$210 —Falstaff Chimes Midnight: Import \$595 —Frankenstein Monster Hell: Uncut Import \$375 —
Frankenstein Unbound: Uncut Import \$375 —Friday 13th: Uncut Import \$375 —Godzilla Vs. Gigan: Import \$275 —
House by Cemetery: Longer Japan Import \$275 —I Claudius Box \$475 —Ilsa Collection Box: Uncut Import \$475 —It
Came Beneath Sea/20 Million \$210 —Captain Kronos Vampire Hunter: Import \$210 —La Dolce Vita \$210 —Ms. 45
\$250 —Murder Rock: Import \$275 —Nightmare City: Import \$475 —Possession: Uncut Import \$375 —Rabid: Import
\$375 —Razorback: Import \$210 —Roger Rabbit's Best \$210 —Frank Sinatra Reprise I, II, III \$250 —Sinbad Collection
Box \$295 —Slaughter High: Import \$275 —Song of South: Import \$375 —Star Wars Special Trilogy \$295 —Time Tun-
nel TV: Complete \$1795 —UFO TV: Complete \$1995 —Val Lewton Collection Box \$395

CALL: (978)251-7888 (Mon-Fri 9am-5pm Eastern Time)

FAX: (978)251-7889 (24 Hours)

WANTED: LASERDISKS of: The Ventures, especially "Beloved Invaders" The Buddy Rich Band, The Lettermen, Big Bands. Mikey1@pipeline.com (212)677-5045

The Laser Disc Gazette's DVD & CD Report, \$10.95 a year in the US, \$17.95 out of the country. New subscribers mention DLDN and get an introductory year for only \$9.95 (domestic only, please). Sample copy, \$2.00. LDG, Road 2 Box 654, Harpers Ferry WV 25425. All copies mailed first class.

We Want Your Laserdiscs!! - Money Available Now!!!! Laser Enterprises The Largest Laserdisc Company In England Will Purchase Your Unwanted Laserdiscs For Cash. All Titles Considered, Including Complete Collections U.S. Delivery Address Available. Call +441268.571686
FAX +441268.572420. **Visiting England** Then Come To The Laserdisc Shop **CINEMA HOUSE** Unit 4, The Willowdales Shopping Centre, Wickford, Essex, +441268.572775 FAX +441268.572420. In Excess Of 1000 Laserdiscs and DVDs in stock at the cheapest prices in England. 35 Minutes From London. We are known all over Europe for our Prices and Selection.

SET SALE: X-FILES LD BOXES, VOLS 1-4 (SEASON 1 & 2) RARE, NEW, SEALED \$1200/SETS ONLY **STAR WARS:** CAV THX BOX \$200 BOTH PIONEER JAPAN PRESSED. (206)323-5364 aqua1@access1.net

MILWAUKEE LASERDISC & DVD HUNDREDS OF USED DISCS FOR SALE COLLECTIONS BOUGHT
(414)777-0222 milwld@mail.execpc.com

LASERTOWN VIDEO DISCS: Large selection of in stock Laserdiscs and DVDs. Visit our web site at www.lasertown.com or call for a free catalog. Lasertown Video Discs, 50 Schoolhouse Road, Kulpsville PA 19443, (800)893-0390, (215)721-8688

The LOCATOR

Mail-order firm specializing in Out-of-Print & Hard-to-Find laserdisc titles at **REASONABLE PRICES**. Want lists welcome! Free title search with no obligation. NO DVD. Factory sealed in-stock in-print laserdiscs at least **50% OFF RETAIL** (Criterion 40%)/used in-stock in-print laserdiscs at least **70% OFF RETAIL** (Criterion 60%). **FREE CATALOG** (overseas too!)

Phone: (413)644-9455, FAX: (413)644-9446 E-mail: jimp@interport.com. Write: The Locator, PO Box 534, Monterey MA 01245-0534.

PHONE HOURS: Tuesday/Wednesday/Thursday 12-5. E-mail/Fax/Mail answered 7 days a week. **WEB SITE:** WWW.THELOCATOR.COM

HONG KONG LASERDISCS, VCD, DVD & Players largest selections **BLUE LASER**, 54 Hazard Avenue #105, Enfield CT 06082, (413)747-8527 FAX(413)746-1622 www.bluelaser.com **credit-card taken**

Sight and Sound has a large selection of DVDs & LDs. Visit our Web site at www.ilovelaser.com - used inventory updated daily! Sight and Sound,
1159 Main Street, Waltham MA 02154, (781)894-8633

LASERLAND: Long Island's best source for DVD and LD purchases and rentals. Thousands of rentals at each of three convenient locations!

211A Voice Road, Carle Place NY 11514 (516)746-3147

99 Fulton Street, Farmingdale NY 11735, (516)501-1818

124 West Jericho Turnpike, Huntington Station NY 11746 (516)423-2443

Coming Attractions

The following 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 asterisk () and are added to the bottom of subdivisions so that the longest awaited titles appear at the top within each grouping:*

LD Releases

From MGM Home Entertainment:
The Thomas Crown Affair (remake)
From Box Office Spectaculars:
The Beyond

City of the Living Dead
Massacre Mafia Style
From Cult Video:
New York Ripper
Eaten Alive
From Image Entertainment:
Sheryl Crow: The Globe Sessions Tour
*Lake Placid
From Buena Vista Home Video:
Life Is Beautiful
Ten Things I Hate about You
Inspector Gadget
eXistenZ
Instinct
*Inspector Gadget
From Universal:
Notting Hill
*American Pie
*The Wood
*Bowfinger
*Dudley Do-Right
*Mystery Men
*Runaway Bride
From DreamWorks:
*The Haunting
From Warner Home Video:
Wild, Wild West
Deep Blue Sea
The Iron Giant
*Mickey Blue Eyes
From Paramount:
Trekkies
South Park Bigger Longer & Uncut
The General's Daughter
*Stir of Echoes
From Artisan:
*Stir of Echoes
From Regents Entertainment:
Free Enterprise
Hoods
From Troma:
Mother's Day
DVD Releases
From A&E:
*C.S. Forester's Horatio Hornblower (miniseries)
From Allday Entertainment:
Bluebeard
Carnegie Hall (1946)
From Anchor Bay:
Plague of the Zombies
The Last Valley
Lost Continent
Donna Richardson 3 Day Rotation
Rasputin The Mad Monk
Reptile
Moonlighting (pilot)
Watcher in the Woods
Brenda Starr
Running Time
*Even Dwarfs Started Small
*Where the Buffalo Roam
*Zacharia
From A-Pix:
Dance with the Devil
From Ark Media:
*Aliens of the Sea
From Artisan:
Masterpiece
Once When We Were Colored
Little Odessa
The Bedroom Window
Black Mask

Dirty Dancing: Special Edition
Christmas Classics
Hiroshima
Voyage of the Damned
Candyman 3
The Sarah Trilogy
Cujo/The Langoliers/Thinner
The Boys from Brazil
The Buena Vista Social Club
Illuminata
Witchboard 3/ Rumpelstiltskin/Body Bags
*All Quiet on the Western Front (1974)
*Bandit Queen
*Tornado!
*Animal Farm
*The Year My Voice Broke
*Zandalee
*Stir of Echoes
From Astralwerks:
Air: Eating, Sleeping, Waiting & Playing
From Barnholtz Entertainment:
*Taxman
From BMG:
The Motley Crue: 1983-99 The Video Collection
Lynard Skynyrd: Lyve from Steel Town
Windham Hill: Winter Solstice on Ice
Stone Country
N'Synch: 'N The Mix
Meat Loaf: VH1 Storytellers
Blondie
Anthrax: Return of Killer B's Video Anthology
VH1 Divas Live
George Thorogood: Live in '99
An Evening with Christopher Cross
From Buena Vista:
*Adventures in Babysitting
Backstreet Boys: Disney Live
*Color of Money
*Eddie
Encino Man
Everest
The Extremely Goofy Movie
Farewell My Concubine
*Fist of Legend
Fresh
*From Dusk till Dawn 3
Georgia
Hocus Pocus
*The House of Yes
I Love You, I Love You Not
*An Ideal Husband
Il Postino
*In Too Deep
Inspector Gadget
The Jungle Book
Like Water for Chocolate
The Little Mermaid
*Mad Love
*Miami Rhapsody
Mickey's Once upon a Christmas
*Mighty Ducks
*My Life So Far
*My Son the Fanatic
*Outrageous Fortune
A Price above Rubies
The Program
*Rich Man's Wife
Rouge Trader
Senseless
Shakespeare in Love Special Edition
*Sister Act 2: Back in the Habit
Summer of Sam

Supercop 2
Switchblade Sisters
Tarzan
*Tarzan Special Edition
Teaching Mrs. Tingle
*The 13th Warrior
*The Tie That Binds
*Total Recall 2070
The Very Thought of You
*When a Man Loves a Woman
From Celebrity Entertainment:
The Toothbrush Family
From Central Park Media:
Silent Service
Strange Love
Cybernetics Guardian
The Legend of Crystania: The Motion Picture
The Slayers: The Motion Picture
Boxer's Adventure
Midnight Panther
Moonlight Sword & Jade Lion
Young Tiger
Wild Cardz
Battle Skipper: The Movie
Battle Angel
Golgo 13: Assignment Kowloon
Ninja Resurrection
The Ultimate UFO collection (328 min.)
*Destroy All Monsters
From Columbia TriStar:
*Absence of the Good
The Adventures of Elmo in Grouchland
Against All Odds (collector's)
*Bats
The Bear
The Big Brass Ring
*Birdy
Bizet's Carmen
Black & White
*Blue Streak
*Born Yesterday
*Buck and the Preacher
Close Encounters of the Third Kind
Desert Blue
Dick
Easy Rider
*Elmo in Grouchland
Five Easy Pieces
From Here to Eternity
Funny Girl
*Godzilla vs. Destroyah/ Godzilla vs. Space Godzilla
Heavy
Hero
Hey Mr Producer Royal Gala
It Happened One Night
Just Dance
Jumanji Special Edition
The Last Detail
The Last Picture Show
Loss of Sexual Innocence (w/commentary)
*Love Stinks
Loves of Carmen
Ma Vie En Rose
Made Men
The Man from Laramie
Mr. Deeds Goes to Town
Mr. Jones
*Mr. Smith Goes to Washington
The Odessa File
Pal Joey
*Persuasion
The Pillow Book

*Rasin in the Sun
*Rebirth of Mothra 1 & 2
R. Pryor Live on Sunset Strip
Run Lola Run
The School of Flesh
Seventh Voyage of Sinbad
Simon Sez
*Solo
Storm Catcher
Surviving the Game
*To Sir with Love
Twin Falls, Idaho
The Way We Were
*The Winslow Boy
Universal Soldier 2: The Return
Year of the Gun
 From Criterion:
Lord of the Flies
For All Mankind
Autumn Sonata
Sisters
Carnival of Souls
Spartacus
The Lady Eve
Orpheus
The Third Man
Written in the Wind
All that Heaven Allows
The Night Porter
*Rushmore
*The Hidden Fortress
*The Magic Flute
*The Tales of Hoffman
*Testament of Orpheus
 From Dead Alive Productions:
*In the Woods
 From Digital Versatile Disc, Inc.:
Desert Passion
Devotion
Hollywood Dreams
Prelude to Love
 From Docudrama:
Bob Dylan Don't Look Back
 From D3K:
*The Snows of Kilimanjaro
*The Outlaw
*Angel and the Badman
*Beat the Devil
*A Star Is Born
 From DVD, Ltd:
Reaches
*Alice in Wonderland (animation)
*Black Beauty (animation)
*Black Arrow (animation)
*Dr. Jeckyl and Mr. Hyde (animation)
*King Solomon's Mines (animation)
*The Last of the Mohicans (animation)
*The Legend of Hiawatha
*The Man in the Iron Mask
*The Odyssey (animation)
*Peter Pan (animation)
*Robin Hood (animation)
*The Three Musketeers
*Around the World in 80 Days (animation)
*Ivanhoe (animation)
*Prisoner of Zenda (anim.)
*Rob Roy (animation)
*Tom Sawyer (animation)
*Treasure Island (anim.)
*Westward Ho
*Wind in the Willows
 From Elite:

Buckets of Blood/Attack of the Giant Leeches
The Brain That Wouldn't Die
The Slime People
Castle of Blood
The Night Evelyn Came Out of the Grave
Kiss of the Tarantula
Last Man on Earth
Giant Gila Monster
Vampire Bat (uncut)
The Screaming Skull
I Eat Your Skin
Black Sabbath/Kill Baby Kill
The Ape
Werewolf Vs. The Vampire Women
The Wasp Woman
Night of the Blood Beast
Masterworks of the German Cinema: Nosferatu, Der Golem, The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari
Howling 3
Communion
Eaten Alive
*Bluebeard
*Jack the Ripper
 From EMI:
Paul McCartney's Standing Stone
 From First Run Features:
Somewhere in the City
Tower of Fear
 From FocusFilm Entertainment:
Hard and Heavy Vol1-2
Sherlock Holmes and the Secret Weapon
Terror by Night
Woman in Green
Dressed to Kill
 From Fox Lorber:
Revival of the Dead
Dead Heart
North Shore Fish
Boiling Point
Dizzy's Dream Band
Violent Cop
Digging to China
Eden
Midaq Alley
The Pompatus of Love
Ulysses (Kirk Douglas)
Poison
Infinity's Child
Cadillac Ranch
Fist of the North Star
Directors John Frankenheimer
Directors Garry Marshall
Directors Ron Howard
Directors John McTiernan
Norman Rockwell Painting America
Yours for a Song The Women of Tin Pan Alley
Lottoland
The Twilight of the Golds
Wedding Bell Blues
The Leading Man
A Brother's Kiss
The Draughtsman's Contract
A Zed & Two Noughts
Bloodmoon
Clean Shaven
Beshkempir The Adopted Son
Different for Girls
Heidi Fleiss Hollyw'd Madam
Johns
One Hundred and One Nights
*Ella Fitzgerald Something to Live For
*Vaudeville
*Clockwatchers

*1-900

From Full Moon Pictures:

The Creeps

Auditions from Beyond

Blood Dolls

Puppet Master

Subspecies

*Vampire Journals

From Goodtimes Home Video:

The Wind in the Willow/The Willows in Winter

*Gray Lady Down

*Ghost Dad

*Jet Pilot

*Murder 101

*The Warlord

From HBO:

The Jack Bull

Babar King of the Elephants

Last of the Dogmen

Cher: Live in Concert 1999

Cinema Paradiso

Black Cat Run

*Truman

*If These Walls Could Talk

*Introducing Dorothy Dandridge

*Chris Rock: Bigger & Blacker

*Vendetta

*Volunteers

From Image:

20,000 Leagues under the Sea (animated)

Ultraman

The Alley Cats (Metzger)

Allyson Is Watching

Animal Instincts 3

Bad Love

Enchanted Forest

Great Milestones

Midnight Confession

The Mysterious Man of the Shroud

Night Fire

Placido Domingo His Life

Sergei Eisenstein's Autobiography

Andre Previn's A Streetcar Named Desire

Antonio Gaudi

The Bat Whispers (flat & scope)

Black Death

Black Sunday

Bob Clampett's Beanie and Cecil Special Edition (reviewed in this issue)

Broken Vessels

Bruckner's 8th Symphony

Caligula Director's Cut

Carman McRae Live

Desperate Crimes

An Evening of Fourplay: Volumes 1 & 2

Golden Age of Rock and Roll 1, 2, 3, 4, 5

GRP All-Stars

Iron Maze

The Key to Sex

Killer Tongue

Killing Obsession

KISS Second Coming

Lee Ritenour and Friends

Light Dance

Macbeth

My Best Girl

My Favorite Broadway The Leading Ladies (reviewed in this issue)

Oasis

Playboy's 1998 Calendar

Playboy's 1999 Calendar

Playboy's Club Lingerie

Playboy's College Girls

Playboy's Girls of Spring Break

Playboy Playmate Erotic Adventures
Playboy Playmate 2000
Playboy girls of Hooters
Playboy Fabulous Forties
Playboy Wet and Wild 1
The Price of Desire
The Prince and the Surfer
Puccini's La Boheme
Queen's Farewell Concert
Redline
Romeo and Juliet
Scarred City
Sheryl Crow Rockin' the Globe Live
A Stranger in the Kingdom
Sweepers
Tchaikovsky's Queen of Spades
Tess of the Storm Country
Top of the World
The Tragedy of King Lear
Tragedy of Richard II
Verdi's Aida (RM)
Village of Dreams
Web of Seduction
Why Has Bodhi-Dharma Left for the East?
*Alive and Kicking
*Amarilly of Clothes-Line Alley
Another Man's Poison (Bette Davis)
*Any Number Can Win
The Baby
*Beaver (IMAX)
*The Big Combo
*Blood Feast (w/extras)
*Bride of the Monster (Ed Wood)
Cheryl Crowe Rockin the Globe (DTS & AC3)
*Chick Corea Remembering Bird
*The Circus (Chaplin w/extras)
*City Lights (w/extras)
*Classic Albums Meatloaf Bat out of Hell
*Classic Albums Phil Collins Face Value
Clothesline Alley
Cold Harvest
College
*Color Me Blood Red (w/extras)
Cost of Living
Curtain Call
Dali
Davey and Goliath
*The Designated Mourner
*Destination Moon
Diane Schurr & The Count Basie Orchestra
Explosive Dance
Fakin' Da Funk
*Family Reunion
Flash Gordon Space Soldiers
The Gadd Gang
*Glen or Glenda?
Global Storming (skiing)
*Inside Club Wild Side
*It Happened Here
*Jail Bait (Ed Wood)
*Jerry Lee Lewis & Friends
*Jose Carreras
*The Kid/A Dog's Life
*La Nuit Fantastique
Laurel and Hardy Volume 4
Lies & Whispers
Loveblind
Mystery Kids
*Night Calls
*Night Screams
Orland Furioso Vivaldi
*Plan Nine from Outer Space (w/doc)

Playboy Night Dreams
*Playboy Wild Web Girls.com
Portrait of Africa
Portrait of England
Portrait of Ireland
*The Puppet Films of Jiri Trnka
The Robin Hood Gang
Santa Fe
*Santo Bugito
The Saphead
*Secrets of War Air Wars
Secrets of War Intelligence
Seven Chances
*Slaves to the Underground
*Something about Sex
*The Stand-Ins
*Sunday in the Country
*Tabu
*2000 Maniacs
*U.S. SEALS
What-a-Mess
Wicked Ways
*Win Stanley
*With Byrd at the South Pole
 From Kino on Video:
90 Degrees South
Nighttide
Women in the Dunes
I Am Cuba
 From LaserLight Entertainment:
Looking Italian
Killers
Darkdrive
Capo Blanco/US Marshall
Sinatra:Hollywood Years/On Television
Sinatra: Man & Music/Judy & Dean
Angel and the Bad Man/John Wayne on Film
Englebert Humperkinck: Live
Lucy Show: Lost Episodes Marathon
Jamaica Inn
Murder
 From Living Arts:
AM Yoga/Stress Relief/PM Yoga for Beginners
 From Lyrick Studios:
Barney in Outer Space
 From Madacy Entertainment:
The Great Events of Our Century 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
The Complete Aero-Kickboxing System
Mysteries and Myths of the Twentieth Century 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Secret KGB UFO Files
Secrets of Bible Code Revealed
Animals of the Wild 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Firepower 2000 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
Killer Instincts 1, 2
Predators of the Wild
Top Guns Thunder from Above 1, 2, 3
*Beauty and the Beast
*Camelot
*Goldilocks and the Three Bears
*Hercules
*Mulan
*Pocahontas
*Prince of the Nile, The Story of Moses
*The Three Little Pigs
 From MGM:
Carnal Knowledge
The Falcon and the Snowman
The Graduate
The Usual Suspects
Dead Man Walking
Lord of the Dance
Friends and Lovers

The Extreme Adventures of Super Dave
*Cooley High
*Diggstown
*The Thomas Crown Affair
From MPI Home Video:
Ringo Starr & His 4th All-Star Band
The Judds The Farewell Tour
Hondo/McClintock!
Strange & Gruesome
From MTI:
Streetwise
Never Too Late
Smalltime
Nautilus
Undercurrent
Girl Next Door
True Friends
Winner Takes All
Fugitive Mind
The First to Go
Liquid Sky
*Portrait of the Soul
*Pimps Up, Ho's Down
*West New York
From Music Video Distributors:
*G.G. Allin: Hated
From New Horizons:
Cheyenne Warrior
Deathsport
Born Bad
Home for Christmas
From New Line Home Video:
Corrina, Corrina
Eight Seconds
The Hidden
House Party
In the Mouth of Madness
National Lampoon's Loaded Weapon 1
Now and Then
Pump Up the Volume
The Rapture
Surviving the Game
Total Eclipse
Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me
Besieged
Detroit Rock City
Drop Dead Gorgeous
From Panasonic:
Village Jazz Festival
Popular Jazz Series: Stardust
Popular Jazz Series: Smoke Gets In Your Eyes
Christmas Journey
Master Composer: Mozart
Master Composer: Beethoven
Panasonic's Hawaii: The Lei of the Rainbow
The Twilight Zone Vol.14
The Twilight Zone Vol.15
The Twilight Zone Vol.16
The Twilight Zone Vol.17
*The Twilight Zone Vol.18
*The Twilight Zone Vol.19
From Parade:
Denise Austin Tone & Tighen
From Paramount:
Days of Heaven
Star Trek Original Series Miri/Conscience of King
Star Trek Original Series What Are Little Girls Made Of/Dagger of the Mind
The Way We Were
The General's Daughter
The Presidio
Reds
Sliding Doors

Stalag 17
*Runaway Bride
*Wood
From Passport:
The Stars of Star Wars
Pamela Sue Anderson
The Man with the Golden Arm
The Road to Bali
Second Chorus
Heavy Petting Detective
Memories of JFK: America's Son
*Embryo
*Angel on My Shoulder
From Pioneer:
David Bowie Serious Moonlight
Getting Personal
Searching for Jimi Hendrix
The Best of Ocean Adventures
DragonBall Z The Ginyu Forces
DragonBall Z Super Saiyan
Battle Athletes Victory: No Looking Back
Battle Athletes Victory The Human Race!
Fushigi Yugi: The Mysterious Play DVD Box Set—Suzaku Box (20 episodes)
Monkey Magic: Quest Begins 12-13
Blue Angels: Backstage Pass
A Chinese Ghost Story (animated)
Tenchi in Tokyo A New Career
*Tenchi in Tokyo A New Ending
Hoods
Nazca Blades of Fate
*Sailor Moon R The Movie
*Pokémon Wake Up Snorlax!
*Pokémon Jigglypuff Pop
*El Hazard The Alternative World Dreams of Tomorrow
*Kitaro The Light of the Spirit
From Platinum:
Platinum Pop Collection #1
From PM Entertainment:
Extramarital
White House Madness (Doodlesbury)
From PolyGram Video:
International Release #1
This Is Spinal Tap
Valley Girl
Lion in Winter
U2 Live from Sydney
Blue Velvet
Valley Girl
The Last Days
The Apostle
From PPI Entertainment:
Beginners Essential Yoga
Power Play
Mrs. Arris Goes to Paris
Nativity Story
From Program Power:
*Whitehouse Madness
From Raven Releasing:
Cold Hearts
From Real Entertainment:
Rapmania: The Roots of Rap
Roy Firestone's Greatest Moments in Golf
From Renegade Pictures:
The Cotton Club (Coppola w/extras)
*Apocalypse Always: Tales from The Cotton Club
From Rhino Home Video:
Jocks/Hunk
Bubble
*Get a Life
*Galaxina
From Roan/Magic Lantern:
Horror Hotel (fresh transfer)

Carnival of Souls (original theatrical version)
Missouri Traveler
Angel and the Bad Man
Bird of Paradise/The Lady Refuses
Three Musketeers (serial)
That Uncertain Feeling
Happy Go Lovely
D.O.A.
Indecretion of an American Wife
Perils of Pauline (Hutton)
Dixiana (w/color sequences)
The Big Trees
The Big Lift
Bowery at Midnight
Human Monster
Invisible Ghost
Scared to Death
Mysterious Mr. Wong
The Ape Man
Ghosts on the Loose
Black Dragons
Chamber of Horrors
Svengali
Mad Monster
Condemned to Live
The Monster Walks
Mystery Liner
From RykoDisc:
McGarrigle Hour
Suck It and See
From Showtime Entertainment:
*Inspectors
*Menno's Mind
From Simitar:
Sitting Bull
From SlingShot Entertainment:
Animation for Kids
This Is ElvisSinatra
Great Journeys
The Impossible Spy
Roger Corman Box Vol.1 (Attack of the Giant Leeches, Wasp Woman, Bucket of Blood)
For Your Height Only
The Joker's Wild
Spring Fever, USA
Malibu Weekend
From Sony Music:
Stevie Ray Vaughn Live at the El Mocambo
Pearl Jam: Single Video Theory
Neil Diamond: Making As Time...
Kate Bush: Line Cross & Curve
George Michael: Ladies and Gentlemen
Beavis & Butt-Head: Butt-O-Ween
Sesame Street 1-2-3 Count with Me
MTV Real World Hawaii 1999
Karajan: New Year's Eve 1988
Grind Workout-Tai Funk Aerobics
VH-1 Pop-Up Christmas Videos
Johnny Cash & Willie Nelson VH1 Story Tellers
Pink Floyd The Wall
Dixie Chicks
The Offspring
Will Smith Video Collection
Black Sabbath: The Last Supper
Donna Summer VH-1 Live & More
MTV Unplugged Classic Moments
MTV Unplugged Finest Moments
Andy Kaufman Midnight Special
Ruffhouse 10th Anniversary
Mariah Carey The #1 Singles
From Spectrum Films:
FumbleHeads
Organ

From Sterling Home Entertainment:

New Rose Hotel

*Corrupt

From Synapse Films:

Vampyros Lesbos

She Killed in Ecstasy

Deadbeat at Dawn (w/extras)

*Organ

From Tai Seng Video Marketing, Inc.:

Beautiful Investigator

Crystal Hunt

Eat My Dust

Ultra Cop 2000

From THF Home Entertainment:

The F Zone

From Trimark:

Night of the Warrior/An Occasional Hell/Family of Cops/Extreme Justice

Last Resort/Flashfire/Blood & Sand/A Good Day to Die

Cyborg 2/Evolver/Death Machine/Solar Crisis

Tactical Assault

Natural Born Killers (director's cut)

*Romance

*Sex Monster

*Shaka Zulu (300 min.)

*Blood Oranges

From Troma:

Killer Condom

Cannibal! The Musical

Teenage Catgirls in Heat

The Stendahl Syndrome

*Legend of the Chupacabra

*The Imitators

*The Suburbantors

From 20th Century Fox:

The Abyss: Special Edition

How Green Was My Valley

History of the World Part I

Miracle on 34th Street (remake)

Midsummer Night's Dream

Pacific Heights

*One Fine Day

*Picture Perfect

*Ever After

*French Kiss

*Great Expectations

*Lake Placid

*Anna and the King (new version)

*Anywhere but Here

*Best Laid Plans

*Ally McBeal Volume One

*An Affair to Remember

*Brokedown Palace

From Ultra DVD:

Richie Valens: The Complete Richie Valens

From Universal:

Back to the Future

Back to the Future II

Duel

Harry and the Hendersons

Jesus Christ, Superstar

The Money Pit

Cats

K-911

American Pie (R-rated)

American Pie (Unrated)

Dracula

Dudley Do Right

Fast Times at Ridgemont High

Red Violin

Mystery Men

Bowfinger

From USA Home Entertainment:

Trippin'
From VCI Home Video:
A Doll's House
Bird with the Crystal Plumage
Black Sabbath
Black Tights
Blood and Black Lace
The Brave One
Brother Can You Spare a Dime
Death Game
Dick Tracy (serial)
The Duke of West Point & My Son My Son
Getting Gertie's Garter & Up in Mabel's Room
Glass House
Gorgo
Jack Armstrong (serial)
Jungle Girl (serial)
Kill, Baby...Kill!
The Legend of the Lone Ranger
Marco
The Naked Kiss
Negatives
The Night Visitor
Pinocchio (Danny Kaye)
Pippin
Queen of the Stardust Ballroom
Ride in the Whirlwind & The Shooting
Room at the Top
Ruby
To Build a Fire
Secrets of the Millennium 1, 2, 3
Hi Yo Silver!/The Legend of the Lone Ranger
From Victory Multimedia:
Silent Prey
Visions & Voyeurism Featuring Pandora Peaks
*Zackl & Reba
From Warner:
Citizen Kane
Eight Days a Week
Imagine: John Lennon
The Old Man and the Sea
Pee-Wee's Big Adventure
The Shawshank Redemption
The Omega Man
A Star Is Born
South Park Volume 4
South Park Volume 5
South Park Volume 6
National Geographic: 30 Years National Geographic Specials
NatGeo: Secrets of the Titanic Collector's Edition
National Geographic: Battle for Midway
National Geographic: Nature's Fury!
Nat Geo: Photographers
Nat Geo: Surviving Everest
Nat Geo: Tigers of the Snow
Wild, Wild West (reviewed in this issue)
Led Zeppelin: The Song Remains the Same
The Big Sleep
Lone Star
Deep Blue Sea
The Outsiders
Pacific Heights
Anchors Aweigh
Before Sunrise
Black Beauty
Jimi Hendrix
Mickey Blue Eyes
Dead Calm
Batman: Mask of the Phantasm
Batman Beyond: The Movie
*The Exorcist III
*Scooby-Doo's Original Mysteries

- *Tom and Jerry's Greatest Chases
- *Extreme Measures
- *American Flyers
- *Young Guns 2
- *Something to Talk About
- *Spitfire Grill
- *Mosquito Coast
- *Papillon
 - From WEA:
- Metallica: Cliff 'Em All
- Metallica: A Year and a Half
- *Filter: Title of DVD
- *Short Cinema Journal 1
- *Short Cinema Journal 2
 - From WGBH Boston Video:
- Nova Everest The Death Zone
 - From World Vision:
- Happy Together
- Naked Killer
- Kids from Shaolin
- The Shaolin Temple
- Born to Defence
 - From WWF:
- *Hell Yeah
- *Wrestlemania XV
 - From Xenon:
- Master with Cracked Fingers
- Dangerous Evidence: Lori Jackson
- Penitentiary
- Penitentiary 2
- Dangerous Evidence
 - From York Entertainment:
- Johnny 2.0
- Men of Means
- Kolobos
- Highway Hitcher
- *Wanted
- *Angels Dance
- *Escape Velocity
- *Total Reality

An index to the reviews contained in this issue DVD Reviews

- The Alfred Hitchcock Collection p14
- The Alfred Hitchcock Collection 1 p14
- The Alfred Hitchcock Collection 2 p14
- (Alfred Hitchcock Presents) p14
- An American Christmas Carol p8
- And Then There Were None p11
- Aquaria Serenity, Tranquility, Variety p17
- Arlington Road p10
- Austin Powers The Spy Who Shagged Me p3
- The Avengers '66 DVD Set 1 p13
- The Avengers '66 DVD Set 2 p13
- (Beany and Cecil) p1
- Big Daddy p4
- (Blackmail and Easy Virtue) p14
- Bob Clampett's Beany and Cecil The Special Edition p1
- Charade p4
- Chariots of the Gods p16
- (The Cheney Vase) p14
- A Christmas Story p8
- Christmastime in Vienna p9
- Color of Night p16
- Comin' at Ya p1
- Concerto di Natale with Jose Carreras Jubilaem Collection 2000 A.D. Christmas Concert p9
- Coral Sea Dreaming p17
- Dear Santa p8
- Deathtrap p16
- Deep Cover p11
- Deliverance p5
- Don't Look in the Basement p16
- Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas p8

Dyanna Presents Vivid's Virtual Vixens (X-rated) p20
(Easy Virtue) p14
Election p7
Excalibur p5
(The Farmer's Wife) p14
The Fighting Sullivans p5
A Fistful of Dollars p10
Fled p11
For Your Eyes Only p6
Four Wedding and a Funeral p9
Free Enterprise p12
Gioacchino Rossini: Il Barbiere Di Sivilia p17
Going My Way/Holiday Inn p8
GoldenEye p6
Goldfinger p6
Heavy Metal p2
Hell in the Pacific p5
(Holiday Inn) p8
A Hollywood Christmas p8
Horror Hospital p16
(How the Grinch Stole Christmas) p8
In Country p16
In the Christmas Spirit p9
The Ipcress File p10
The Iron Giant p7
The Lady Vanishes p14
Jack Frost p8
Jamaica Inn p14
James Bond Gift Set p6
Jenteal Loves Rocco (X-rated) p20
The Judy Garland Collection p2
The Judy Garland Show Volume Three p9
Kenny Drew Live p17
L.A. Swimstyles p20
Liar Liar p10
Licence to Kill p6
Live and Let Die p6
(The Lodger) p14
MalibuHardbodies p20
(The Man Who Knew Too Much) p14
The Man with No Name Trilogy p10
(The Manxman) p14
The Messiah: George Frederic Handel p9
Milton Berle's Buick Hour Volume Four p13
Milton Berle's Buick Hour Volume Five p13
Milton Berle's Buick Hour Volume Six p13
Monterey Jazz Festival p17
The Mormon Tabernacle Choir and the Canadian Brass: A Christmas Gloria p9
Muppets from Space p7
(Murder) p14
My Favorite Broadway The Leading Ladies p17
Notting Hill p4
(Number 17 and The Ring) p14
The Nuttiest Nutcracker p9
One Magic Christmas p8
The Pajama Game p4
The Paradine Case p14
Psycho p14
Quiz Show p13
Rage at Dawn p11
Raw Adventures p20
Rebecca p14
Red Rock West p10
(Rich and Strange and The Sorcerer's Apprentice) p14
(The Ring) p14
RIT Special: Lee Ritenour Live p17
The Rocketeer p13
Roy Ayers Live p17
Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer p9
(Sabotage and The Lodger) p14
Saturn 3 p4
Saving Private Ryan p5
(Secret Agent) p14
Sex Secrets of a Mistress (X-rated) p20
A Simple Plan p10
(The Skin Game) p14
Something Wicked This Way Comes p16
The Songs of Christmas: Featuring the Mormon Tabernacle Choir p9
(The Sorcerer's Apprentice) p14
Spellbound p14
Star Trek The Original Series Volume 1 Episodes 2 & 3 p12

Star Trek The Original Series Volume 1 Episodes 4 & 5 p12
 Star Trek The Original Series Volume 1 Episodes 6 & 7 p12
 Star Trek The Original Series Volume 1 Episodes 8 & 9 p12
 Strangler in the Swamp p11
 (The 39 Steps) p14
 The 39 Steps p15
 Thunderball p6
 Tomorrow Never Dies p6
 Tower of Evil p11
 Trekkies p12
 A Tribute to Bill Evans p17
 The True Story of Private Ryan p5
 Two-Lane Blacktop p10
 Unlikely Angel p8
 Vengeance Valley p11
 Wild Wild West p3
 Willie Nelson: Greatest Hits Live p17
 The Wolf Man p3
 (Young and Innocent and The Cheney Vase) p14

LD Reviews

Austin Powers: The Spy Who Shagged Me p18
 The Blair Witch Project p18
 The Corruptor p18
 Deceiver p18
 Dive Bomber p18
 Election p18
 The Silver Chalice p18
 A Simple Plan p18
 The United Artists Horror Classics Volume 2 The Neanderthal Man (The Vampire (Curse of the Faceless Man (Doctor Blood's Coffin
 p18

Current Attractions

The following titles recently appeared for the first time:

DVD releases

An American Christmas Carol (Image)
 Anastasia (Fox)
 The Andy Griffith Show Classic Favorites (Delta)
 The Ape/British Intelligence (Roan)
 Apocalypse Now (Paramount)
 Aquaria (DVD International)
 Armstrong (Image)
 Art Pepper: Notes of a Jazz Survivor (Roan)
 Austin Powers: The Spy Who Shagged Me (New Line)
 Barney The Night before Christmas (Lyrick)
 Bartok The Magnificent (Fox)
 Battle Athletes Victory The Last Dance (Pioneer)
 Bay of Blood (Simitar)
 Beavis and Butthead Do America (Paramount)
 The Best Bits of Mr. Bean (Universal)
 Big Daddy (Columbia TriStar)
 The Big Friendly Giant (Celebrity)*
 Blue Angels: Backstage Pass (Pioneer)
 Bob Hope: Hollywood's Brightest Star (Simitar)
 Body Snatchers (Warner)
 Bonfire of the Vanities (Warner)
 Break Up (Disney)
 Bridge of Dragons (HBO)
 Broadway Damage (Wolfe)*
 A Bug's Life Collector's Edition (Disney)
 The Business of Sex 1, 2, 3 (Simitar)
 Cary Grant: His Girl Friday/ Cary Grant on Film (Delta)
 The Castle (Disney)
 Challenge of Flight (FocusFilm)
 Champion/Body & Soul (Artisan)
 Chaplin Special Edition (LaserLight)
 Charade (Criterion)
 Chinatown (Paramount)
 Christmastime in Vienna (Sony)*
 Cinema Beer Belly (Music Video Distributors)*
 Cirque du Soleil: Quidam (Columbia TriStar)
 Clan of the Cave Bear (Warner)
 Classic Albums: Paul Simon Graceland (Image)
 The Climb (Vanguard)*
 The Commitments (Fox)
 Concerto Di Natale with Jose Carreras (Image)
 Cookie's Fortune (PolyGram)
 The Corpse Vanishes/The Devil Bat (Roan)*

The Crossing Guard (Disney)
Daddy Long Legs (Image)
Dame Edna's Neighborhood Watch (Image)
Dangerous Ground (New Line)
Dario Argento's Phantom of the Opera (A-Pix)
Dead Men Walk/Monster Maker (Roan)
Dear Santa (Image)
The Distinguished Gentleman (Disney)
Divorce His/Divorce Hers (D3K)*
Django/Django Rides Again (Anchor Bay)
DragonBall Z Quest (Pioneer)
DragonBall Z Trouble! (Pioneer)
Embrace of the Vampire (New Line)
Entrapment (Fox)
Exotica (Disney)
Father Goose/That Touch of Mink (Artisan)
Feeling Minnesota (New Line)
Fitzcarlido (Anchor Bay)
Free Enterprise (Pioneer)
Free Money (Sterling)
Freeway 2 (Full Moon)
Friends and Lovers (Universal)*
The Full Monty (Fox)
Giant Anthlers (Simitar)
The Gorilla/Nabonga (Roan)*
Go West (Image)
Godmoney (Image; reviewed last month)
Going My Way/Holiday Inn (Universal)
Grand Illusion (Criterion)
The Great Santini (Warner)
The Haunting (DreamWorks)
Heaven (Disney)
Heavy Metal (Columbia TriStar)
Hell in the Pacific (Anchor Bay)
Her Name Is Cat (MTI)
Herbie Mann: Jasil Brass (Pioneer)
Hercules (Disney)
Hidden Agenda (MTI)
His Girl Friday (D3K)*
The Hitch-Hiker (Roan)
A Hollywood Christmas (Image)
Horror Hospital (Elite)
Human Cargo (Image)
Humphrey Bogart: Beat the Devil/Humphrey Bogart on Film (Delta)
I'll Be Home for Christmas (Disney)
In Old California/The Fighting Kentuckyan (Artisan)
Instinct (Disney)
The Iron Giant (Warner)
Jack Frost (Warner)
James Cagney: Blood on the Sun/James Cagney on Film (Delta)
The James Dean Story/James Dean: A Legend in His Own Time (D3K)*
Joker's Wild (Simitar)*
The Judy Garland Show Collection (Pioneer)
The Judy Garland Show Volume Three (Pioneer)
Jules and Jim (Fox Lorber)
A Kid Called Danger (Image)
King of the Zombies/Revolt of the Zombies (Roan)
Klash (WEA)
Krakatoa East of Java (Anchor Bay)
Ladies and Gentlemen Leonard Cohen (Fox Lorber)
Ladies of Rock (Pioneer)
Lady and the Tramp (Disney)
Lain: Reset (Pioneer)
The Last of the Mohicans (Fox)
Life Is Beautiful (Disney)
Limbo (Columbia TriStar)
The Lion King II: Simba's Pride (Disney)
Lips of Blood (Image)
The Living Dead Girl (Image)
The Longest Day (Fox)
Lord of the Dance (Universal)*
Love Letter (DreamWorks)
Madonna The Video Collection 92-99 (WEA)
Madusa's Tae Kickboxing (Simitar)
March of the Wooden Soldiers (GoodTimes)
Maria Callas in Concert: Hamburg 1959 & 1962 (EMI)
Maria Callas Life and Art (EMI)
Matewan/Traveller/Breaking the Waves (Artisan)
Meatballs (HBO)
Monty Python's Flying Circus Volume 3 (A&E)
Monty Python's Flying Circus Volume 4 (A&E)
Monty Python's Life of Brian (Criterion)
Mr. Wonderful (Warner)
Mulan (Disney)
Natalie Merchant Live Concert (WEA)
The Navigator (Image)
Night at the Opera (Image)
Ninth Street (Ideal)*
Notting Hill (Universal)*
101 Dalmatians (Disney)
Operation Delta Force 3 (Image)
Our Hospitality/Sherlock, Jr. (Image)

Patton (Fox)
 Peacekeeper (Image)
 Peach/Lavender Limelight (First Run)
 Peeping Tom (Criterion)
 Peter Pan (Disney)
 Playboy's 2000 Calendar (Image)
 Playboy's Cheerleader (Image)
 Playboy's Real Couples Sex in Dangerous Places (Image)
 Poison Ivy (New Line)
 Poison Ivy 2: Lily (New Line)
 Poison Ivy 3: New Seduction (New Line)
 Pokémon Pikachu Party (Pioneer)
 Pokémon The Great Race (Pioneer)
 Queen Emeraldas (Central Park)
 Race (Image)
 Rachmaninov/Tchaicovsky (Pioneer)
 Resurrection (Columbia TriStar)
 Ricky Martin Video Collection (Sony)
 Rising Sun (Fox)
 A River Runs Through It (Columbia TriStar)
 Roy Orbison A Black-and-White Night (Image; reviewed last month)
 Roy Rogers Volume 2 (Roan)
 Rudolph The Red Nosed Reindeer (Sony)
 Sakura Wars (Disney)
 Santa Fe Trail (Roan)
 Saturday Night Live: The Best of Adam Sandler (Trimark)
 Saturday Night Live: The Best of Mike Myers (Trimark)
 Saving Private Ryan (DreamWorks)*
 Scrooged (Paramount)
 Sea Wolves (Warner)
 Sesame Street Do the Alphabet (Sony)
 Seventh Sense (Image)
 Shark Attack (Trimark)*
 South Park Bigger, Longer & Uncut (Paramount)
 Spiritual Earth Aloha Wave (Pioneer)
 Spiritual Earth Crystal Water (Pioneer)
 Splendor (Columbia TriStar)
 Star Trek IV The Voyage Home (Paramount)
 Stealing Home (Warner)
 Stonewall (Fox Lorber)
 Story of Top Gun (Fox Lorber)*
 Tarzan the Fearless (D3K)*
 Tchaikovsky Concertos (Pioneer)
 Tea with Mussolini (MGM)
 Ten Benny (Fox Lorber)
 Tenchi in Tokyo: A New Challenge (Pioneer)
 Tex (Anchor Bay)
 The Three Ages (Image)
 Thesis (Vanguard)*
 A Thin Line Between Love and Hate (New Line)
 The Thin Red Line (Fox)
 The 39 Steps (Criterion)
 Three Amigos (HBO)
 To Play or To Die (Waterbearer)*
 Tokyo Decadence (Image)
 Tom Petty and the Heartbreakers High Grass Dogs Live from the Filmore (WEA)
 Tommy Boy (Paramount)
 Tora! Tora! Tora! (Fox)
 Tower of Evil (Elite)
 Trekkies (Paramount)
 Trial and Error (New Line)
 The Two Jakes (Paramount)
 U2 Rattle and Hum (Paramount)
 Van Halen Video Hits Volume 1 (WEA)
 A Very Natural Thing (Waterbearer)*
 Willie Nelson Greatest Hits Live (Pioneer)
 The Wolf Man (Universal)

LD releases

Austin Powers: The Spy Who Shagged Me (Image)
 Carrie 2: The Rage (MGM)
 Entrapment (Fox)
 Forces of Nature (DreamWorks)
 Small Soldiers (DreamWorks)
 *Did not appear on last month's *Coming Attractions* listing