

LASER **DISC REVIEW**

DECEMBER 1985

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The magazine about LASERVISION

First Anniversary Edition

**Complete Guide
To NTSC LaserVision**

FULL UK CATALOGUE INSIDE



LASERVISION STRIKES BACK !

**Reviews of the
First of the New Film Releases**

OCTOBER - DECEMBER
1985

ISSUE 5

FROM THE EDITOR

In the mainstream of magazine publishing new journals often appear in a blaze of publicity with the intention of cashing in on the latest trend in consumerism. The launch of LASER DISC REVIEW could hardly be further removed from that scenario. It would require a very vivid imagination indeed to describe the LaserVision disc as a high profile product in the marketplace. Its first offshoot - the digital audio Compact Disc - has met with greater initial acceptance. However, the demand for a high quality video medium is undeniable and the LaserVision disc is still the only prospect we have of being able to move on to the next stage of the complete home entertainment system. In pure economic terms, there may not yet be sufficient demand for a magazine such as this, but reassuringly the circulation continues to increase. The interest in LaserVision may indeed be far greater than is generally believed.

The publication of this issue coincides with a batch of good film releases - the like of which has not been seen in the UK LV catalogue for goodness knows how long. Having reviewed some of these titles it has to be said that there is still some way to go before the technical standard of film masters reaches a satisfactory level. We should have no qualms about expecting film masters to be of superior standard. Disc buyers are now in effect paying 10 times as much for their video in comparison with the bulk of the market where even a £2.00 rental is still considered a high price. If film companies are serious about developing a sale market then they have got to raise standards. The majority of music titles including the opera and ballet discs exhibit a level of master quality that is rarely seen with feature film material. Hopefully, when the new software distributors have got over the upheavals involved in taking over the software operation and initiating the present batch of new releases there will be breathing space to allow for more attention to be paid to these matters.

The next issue should be out before

Xmas but we are not saying what it might contain. (That's because we don't know.) It should be worth reading and you are encouraged to become a subscriber if you are not already one. The rates for subscribers offer certain cost advantages that are derived from our ability to gauge the print run accurately. Subscriptions also ensure the independence of the publication.

Thanks must go to all those who have contributed to the magazine so far - and to the readers who took the trouble to write and express themselves. It really does help move things on at a faster pace, you know. Don't forget to fill in the suggestion form - there will probably never be another occasion when LV owners will be able to affect the selection of titles so immediately. The people in charge of software distribution now have made it abundantly clear that they are only too willing to release any title provided there can be a guarantee of a certain level of sales. Their initial choices show that they can obtain the right calibre of title so it is really up to us to take things on from here. Don't leave it up to others - for the cost of a second class stamp and five minutes of your time you have the option of ensuring that the discs that appear next year will be the titles you want. Ignore it at your peril!

Well, that's enough from me. Here's to the second anniversary issue!



EDITOR

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Letters

From: Brian Stephens, Tyne & Wear

With regard to A.J. Kelly's letter regarding 'Star Trek 2 - Wrath Of Khan', I think this is the American version of the film. I can recall a number of scenes involving Kirk's son David which are different on the disc (please note, different not cut). When I saw this at the cinema I'm sure Kirk was unaware that he had a son until David's mother told both Kirk and David at the point where David was trying to kill Kirk. This scene is described in the book, 'The Making Of Star Trek 2', but the author claims it was not filmed. In the disc version Kirk knows he has a son but has no idea what he looks like. This strikes me as rather ridiculous with the technology of the 23rd century as he would have been able to obtain some kind of photograph or film of David. I'm sure the kind of goody-goody character Kirk is he would have maintained some form of contact with his own son. Does anyone else remember the scene? There may be other differences but they are quite minor compared to that example.

On the subject of Dutch discs do you know whether the Bruce Lee films are in English? I would hate to order them and find they were in German, or worse still, the original Chinese.

A final point. Do you know whether the 'Earth, Wind & Fire' disc is still to be released as indicated on the back cover of issue 4? My dealer informs me that it is not to be released after all and it certainly hasn't turned up so far. I've had this on order for over a year now.

We have resisted trying to sort out what happened in 'Star Trek 2' due to this problem with American & British versions. There have obviously been 'dubious' tapes of the film floating around that have produced conflicting opinions as to the original version. Hopefully this letter might sort things out! Incidentally, when we were doing some research on the quality of film masters submitted for LV release, the man from CIC claimed no knowledge of the sound fault on this disc. Clearly there has been a lack of communication between concerned parties up to now, a situation that must be resolved.

The list of Dutch titles we have states English dialogue with Dutch subtitles. Has anyone ever known an LV catalogue to be wrong?

Both the 'Earth, Wind & Fire' and 'Grateful Dead' discs took a considerable time to arrive but are now both definitely available. PIONEER advise that future new releases will not be announced until stock is available for shipment. There are advertisers in this issue only too willing to supply discs your local dealer may not be able to. Readers are reminded that discs listed in the LASER CALENDAR have usually been personally witnessed in dealers' racks in order to warrant a mention in the 'now available' section.

From: Mark Spry, Devon

The article by Ken Barnes on older movies on LV in the US was most welcome. This sort of publicity is encouraging for fans of older movies like myself, and when the US releases take off over here I trust it will create a demand for similar British films (the best of

them - not 'In Which We Serve' or 'The Ladykillers' and other overrated "classics").

An example of the type of film which LV is made for is 'The Life & Death Of Colonel Blimp' (1943) made, like 'Gone With The Wind' and Flynn's 'Adventures Of Robin Hood' (wasn't that film on every every Sunday afternoon when I was a kid!) in ravishing Technicolour. A magnificent new colour print of 'Blimp' has recently been showing at the Electric in Portobello Road, a full length 163minute version which even the curator of the NFT describes as "extraordinary".

For me I think the visual aspect, by which I mean photography (do I take LV picture perfection for granted!) in a movie is just as important as a thunderously crisp soundtrack. I have seen 35 films at the cinema in the past 18 months, and of those that are new (ie. not the 30's & 40's jobs seen at the NFT) I have one, 'Chariots Of Fire', on LV. I think there are only four others in the bunch that would satisfy the visual/audio as well as "ever interesting" criteria that I personally perceive and derive pleasure from in 'Chariots' & 'Blimp'. I suppose I must be a sort of mystical English romantic! The films are 'The Natural', 'Brazil', 'The Shooting Party', and 'Paris, Texas'. I have thought a lot about this and real-



[At present only an MISC release but one reader at least wants it here]

ise that since I choose the films I watch I enjoy all of them, leaving the cinema with that "want to see them again" feeling. I tried going to 'Passage To India' twice and found I did not get the same buzz again. I did get the buzz however when I saw 'The Natural' for a second time at the cinema. There are but a few films which appeal to an interest, state of mind, or set of attitudes and take a firm root in your head. 'Brazil' and 'The Natural' are not "great movies" as such, but they mean something to me, and they would be the discs, along with the previously mentioned titles that I would buy on LV.

Sorry to waffle on in so much detail but it was raining which meant I couldn't practice cricket. However the sun is now out so I will just say thanks again for publishing LDR.

From: C.R. McIntyre, Scotland

The harshness and crackling you described on the soundtracks of certain LV discs I have found can be caused by the mismatch of the player to the pre-amp terminals, a problem solved in my case by the insertion of an attenuator lead. These are made by Q.E.D. and easily obtainable through hi-fi/video dealers and only cost £7.30 or so, it depending on the type of connector. In my case the result was a perfect match. ##### It should be pointed out that this fairly common form of distortion is almost entirely confined to feature films where the fault lays in the inadequacy of the original optical soundtrack. If readers find that they are encountering distortion on music titles then the problem could be just as Mr McIntyre suggests. In most situations though the audio output from the player should be compatible with the AUX or TAPE inputs on any modern amplifier, but definitely not the PHONO input. Some forward thinking manufacturers now incorporate a dedicated VIDEODISC input into their amps although, more often than not, this is achieved by leaving off one of the other more usual ones. Win some, lose some!

From: Graham Rhodes, South Humberside

Like a lot of letters I have read in LDR I too am keen on the cinema and cine photography and have in the past bought cine films but I was finally outdone by the price. Also, bringing out the screen and projector stand was always a sure way of getting rid of visitors. But sit them in front of a television set and you have to keep winding up the wall clock to remind them of the time.

I keep my PHILIPS VLP600 in another room but still close to the TV so the loss of signal is negligible. It is also coupled to the VCR so I can watch a disc and tape 'Dynasty' for my wife to view when I've gone to bed.

At this point I should say that I work in the TV trade and, believe me, you come across all manner of things. One day is never the same as the next. Take just a couple of calls for instance. I was asked to install a V2000 machine in a house where a little lad was ill at the time. Instructing the lady on the correct method of operation I made my farewells and left. The very next day we got a call back because the VCR wouldn't work so I thought, as usual, it was going to be the timer set to come on a fortnight next year. I arrived at the house, had a look at the machine...clock working...timer OK...(sweat on brow by now)...then I opened the cassette lid. "What's all this then?" I asked as I tried to clear the obstruction with my hand. "Well" replied the lady "You remember my little boy was ill yesterday, well, he was sick in it while he was trying to get the tape out". My hands covered in it by then I nearly felt on the verge of adding my own contribution!

Another time, I arrived to find the customer standing at the door with a pile of tapes still to be viewed and only an hour left before they were due

back to the rental shop. Pushing past under a stream of abuse I went inside, and after removing the dust, newspapers, and the cat getting a warm I took the top off only to see inside yards and yards of tape wrapped around the works. While the dog continues to lick me as I work I notice the little boy persistently pushing Polo mints in through the front-panel cassette flap - the cause of all the trouble in the first place obviously.

The branch where I work only has a few LaserVision machines out at the moment, with very little trouble. One is working in a carpet shop showing a dem disc eight hours a day, and it has been there six months with no calls.

I have found another machine working all day, a PHILIPS VLP700 in the National Museum Of Photography, Film & Television at Bradford - playing the LaserVision dem disc. The machine is in a glass case with the remote screwed down on the table. All the instructions are printed on the glass case which is a good job because all the thousands of people who pass through each day have worn off the writing on the remote itself. And to think I let my machine rest after showing two features consecutively! The Museum has free entry and well worth a visit.

The other week a VLP600 came in with an interesting fault. After playing a disc it would not stop in the usual way and after the motor made the uncontrol noise it would then start up again to play what? Colour bars. I put a few discs on and they all had the same on. I would never have known or noticed this extra information on the disc had it not been for this fault.

I am very keen on Transport. Needless to say I have a copy of 'Great Rail-

ways Vol. 1' and would like to see more. London Transport have released some films on trams and buses on tape at £30 each, but this would surely go further



[No tram photographs in the LDR file - would a trolleybus picture do?]

on LV? I have some old Movietone films on news events. With space projects going up and governments coming down one wonders whether the BBC or ITN could compile highlights of the past years events, maybe on an annual basis. Remember the York Minster fire, or the spectacular train crash set up to demolish the nuclear waste container. Imagine that on an Active Play disc. It would be nice to collect this sort of disc and look back on them on years to come.

There is always a problem in making a video compilation of the previous year's events inasmuch as if it is done thoroughly then it will not appear till well in to the following year, by which time the novelty tends to wear off. There is no doubt that old newsreel/documentary footage can be quite gripping if presented in the right way. Producers of such programmes do not yet appear to have embraced the concept of non-linear video afforded by the LV disc.

From: Peter Moverly, Middlesex

I would like to say how pleased I am to finally see a concerted effort to obtain the rights to quality titles. The new deal looks like paying dividends for LV owners even if it does mean the discs are more expensive than they have ever been, but if that's what it takes to persuade other companies like WARNER and RCA/COLUMBIA that LaserVision is a commercially viable format I think it's well worth it. It is encouraging to see THORN/EMI among the new programme contributors. I hope that some of the THORN back catalogue are released - 'Time Bandits', 'Deerhunter', 'Flash Gordon', 'Superman 3', 'The Dead Zone', 'Life Of Brian' etc., and that they do not just concentrate on the newer tape releases. Disappointingly, 'The Bounty' is not being given the disc treatment. It's a truly great film with terrific performances and a haunting Vangelis score ('Blade Runner' fans take note) on the splendid stereo soundtrack.

Owning a Hi-Fi VCR (I'm not boasting) does give one the opportunity of sampling soundtrack quality on a tape before the disc becomes available. I find that WARNER, RCA/COLUMBIA, and THORN/EMI all take great care over the quality of sound of their tape masters, whereas companies like DISNEY, GUILD, and RANK seem to be very hit and miss. CIC used to fall into this category, varying from truly atrocious (ie 'Cat People', 'The Blues Brothers' etc) to the superb ('Apocalypse Now' has the best sound and picture quality I've seen on disc). However, since CIC have been duplicating their videotapes in Hi-Fi the standard has been uniformly high with 'Star Trek 3' and 'Streets Of Fire' being especially memorable.

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I originally purchased my machine shortly after the initial launch as I was so impressed with the quality of the format when it first arrived in the store in which I work. Because of my enthusiasm and knowledge of films etc I became responsible for the buying of LV discs and pre-recorded videotapes and as a result came into contact with a lot of LaserVision owners and heard a lot of praise and criticism. The two subjects that are mentioned most frequently are: Active Play discs - Why are titles such as 'Duran Duran', 'Twist Of Fate' and most of the music catalogue not pressed in CAV? People who buy the disc players are amazed to find that, on investigation, 90% of functions on the machines will not work on almost all of the discs on the market. I would personally like to see some fantasy/effects films mastered up in CAV, as in the USA. Wide-Screen - Opinions vary as to the proper policy to adopt here but I think it is true to say that the people who would like to see the "letterboxing" of wide-screen films are more outspoken than those against, or they just plain outnumber them. Again, I would like to see it occur on spectacular films but I think that it is unlikely to do much for a film such as 'Educating Rita' where, amazingly, there are small borders at the top and bottom of the screen. It is interesting to note that often the actual film-makers prefer their movies to be shown wide-screen on TV or video (the Monty Python boys had a prolonged argument with CIC over 'The Meaning Of Life' and refused permission for it to be released until it was re-mastered with a small border in order to allow more detail to be seen).

Releasing titles in CAV is more than just a matter of flipping a switch. The preparation of the master tape requires considerably greater attention to detail in order to avoid jittery still frames etc. Each edit in the programme has to be synchronised to the same field dominance of the TV picture, either the first or the second - but not mixed. Also, changing to CAV almost certainly involves spreading the content over two sides and hence twice the cost. Disregarding the advantage of having all of the programme on one side, this cost difference is the main reason we do not see more CAV music discs. The possibility of a few film titles being in CAV seems more worthwhile fighting for, even if it is just a case of doing one side of a sub-90 minute feature where there might be a good action or effects sequence. It seems reasonable to expect that any film sympathetic to such exploitation would produce sufficient extra sales, on pure novelty value if nothing else, to justify the extra cost involved.

This is not meant to answer the wide-screen part of Peter's letter but one possibility does spring to mind. There are a few sci-fi/fantasy titles in the LV catalogue that have been sourced from dodgy masters. Wouldn't it be a nice idea the next time stocks are depleted for a new master be made from a wide-screen print instead of just re-pressing the existing master. In this way both factions can be satisfied and the reaction will enable decisions to be made for the future?

When ever the Ed finds himself promoting the views of readers to the parties concerned he always indicates the apparent preference shown for at least an intermediate concession to the original wide-screen format.

From: Kees Borger, Holland

Ideally, it would be best to have two versions of wide-screen films. Certainly on special effects movies so much is missed by cropping, and who cares about black bars above and below the picture. People should buy a bigger TV. ##### This last sentence would seem to constitute the hub of the matter.

From: Bruce Stewart, Australia

You invite comments from your readers - OK here is one although, alas, it cannot be favourable. When I first purchased my LD1100 I did at the same time acquire a copy of 'The Nutcracker', a PIONEER disc. The quality of same was so lousy that I exchanged it for another - same result. A third copy was also less than desirable so I abandoned the quest.

A few weeks ago I received a batch of discs from the UK (Harold Moores Records) and amongst this batch I had yet another copy of 'The Nutcracker'. Again, a bloody lousy copy which leads me to assume that the master tape is just plain "crook". I might mention also that the price tag is above the average price of discs which makes the blunder quite unforgivable.

The magazine receives quite a lot of complaints about PIONEER discs. There are some good PIONEER titles but it can be a bit hit and miss locating them. The magazine hopes to cover more PIONEER titles in future reviews.

From: K. Kuomi, London

It is a pity some films on laser (and tape) are now being cut. No doubt this is to avoid problems when the new video Act comes into full operation. It is frustrating if you want to have a copy of your favourite cinema film to find bits cut out. Funny how things always go round in circles. When video started, many films came out in much longer versions than shown in the cinema. Now it is the other way round and the cinema is more than likely the only place you will be able to see the full version.

It would seem wrong to infer any more serious implications to this Act and similar other recent developments in the media. As long as we have the fr

concern.

From: Ad Jonker, The Hague, Holland

I am about to buy a player soon, probably the PHILIPS VP 720 model. Still, I have a few questions I hope you can answer:
1) Will the surround sound processor fit on any LV player or is there a separate one for the PAL system?
2) In issue 4 the processor is shown with a CD player as well. Do you know if there will also be CDs encoded with surround sound?
3) The people selling the machines here could not tell me if the player was suitable for 20cm discs. Do you know if the 720 can play the smaller disc?

By necessity, connecting your LV player to your hi-fi involves separating the audio and video signals. The surround sound adaptor is connected to your amplifier, not the player. The surround sound decoders vary from country to country only inasmuch as voltage considerations demand.

Second point. This just happened to be where MARANTZ placed the processor. The DOLBY MP process is essentially just a means of carrying three channels of information in a format that outwardly is only capable of carrying two. The specification for CD allows for the possibility of four totally independent sound channels - should anyone wish to exploit this option. This format would be far superior to anything that present surround sound systems could offer.

Lastly - because they play from the inside track outwards, all discs have the same start point regardless of size and so any player can accommodate any size of disc that might appear.

From: Mike Keen, Milton Keynes

As a hi-fi buff of many years

standing I was particularly interested in the sound quality of LaserVision which has proved to be very good indeed apart from the varying degrees of hiss present on most discs (and the lack of stereo!). My main pair of speakers are sited on stands either side of the TV, about six feet (2metres) apart. In addition, I have a QED Surround Sound adaptor connected to the second speaker outlets on the amplifier, feeding another pair of speakers fixed high up on the rear wall - facing inwards and downwards directly above my viewing seat.

Originally conceived for surround sound listening, this inexpensive system has proved admirable for the reproduction of laser disc stereo soundtracks giving outstanding results with films such as 'Alien', 'Poltergeist', 'Star Wars', and '2001'. This latter film (my all-time favourite) contains the best discrete rear channel information I have ever heard. The out-of-camera animal sounds in the Dawn Of Man sequences can be heard as a completely separate sound source above one's head - just like the original cinema presentation.

Unfortunately, the QED adaptor is no longer available, but anyone with a knowledge of the Hafler method of connecting extra rear speakers will find that this can give good results for a modest outlay. Basically, what these simple devices do is extract an out-of-phase signal from the stereo original and pass it to rear and/or side speakers. Most of this is ambience or spatial information. Obviously, a purpose-built decoder and amplifier will give superior results and would be a worthwhile long term investment.

ERRATUM

In the letters page in issue 4, Miss C. Day raised the subject of the cropping of 'The Sound Of Music'. In a blunder of the first order the Editor took to referring to this as 'My Fair Lady', a lapse prompted no doubt by the fact that Julie Andrews was in 'The Sound Of Music' and.....well you can work the rest out!

From: Mark Dowd, Mersyside

Is it not possible through either LDR or the Silver Disc Club for Laser-Vision owners to actually request titles (and in the form of their choice - CAV, wide-screen etc)? Depending on the number of replies titles could be selected with some measure of guaranteed sales success.

The new people handling future disc releases have indicated their openness to suggestions and as their prime consideration is for each release to be commercially viable such a request scheme might help push things ahead a little faster. Therefore please turn to WHAT WE WANT ON LASERVISION - THE SEQUEL for further info.

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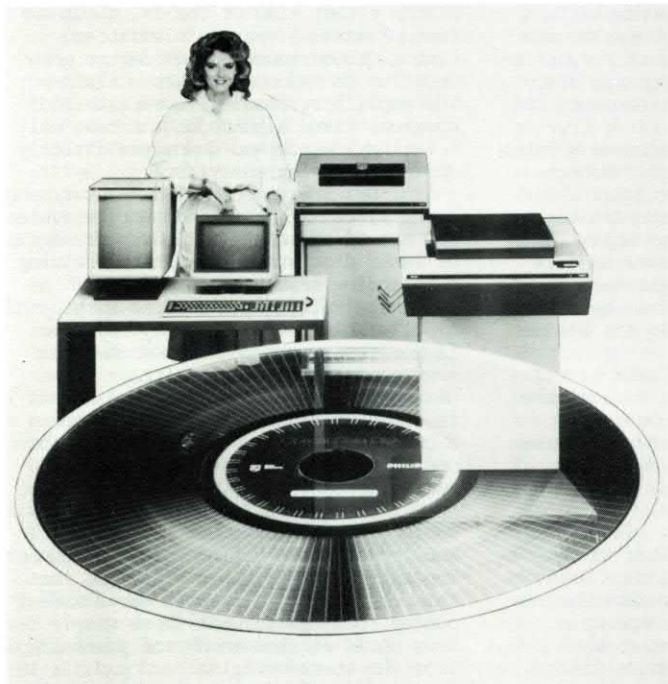
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SUBSCRIPTION COPIES ARE ALWAYS THE FIRST ONES TO BE DISPATCHED AS SOON AS THEY ARE RECEIVED FROM THE PRINTERS.

HAPPENING....WHAT'S HAPPENING...WHAT'S HAPPENING

RECORDABLE DISCS



This is Megadoc, PHILIPS recordable disc off-shoot of LaserVision. Conceived as an office document storage system, Megadoc discs can offer 2,000 Mbytes capacity on a double sided 30cm disc. The blank discs are "pre-grooved" by the 2P process (used until recently for all LV pressing) and by switching the laser in the Megadoc recorder to a high output the pits can be burnt into the sensitive tellurium alloy layer inside the disc. The laser is reduced in intensity for replay of the encoded information. Many other companies are busy developing recordable disc systems and those from NAKAMICHI and PANASONIC (this latter one being based on 20cm discs) look to be more accessible for general commercial use (ie. they're cheaper!). However, the prospect of for recordable home systems is still some way off. None of the present formats offer anywhere near the capacity or permanence of present factory produced LaserVision discs but the news from Japan is that manufacturers there envisage the recordable laser disc as being an integral part of future home A/V systems.

SHOWTIME

Wholesale distributors LIGHTNING and GOLD took the opportunity to announce the new LaserVision disc releases at the VIDTEL Home Video show. The show, the first of what is hoped to be an annual event, took place in one of those cavernous tombs at the NEC, Birmingham and for this reason the Ed had to forsake his usual means of transport in favour of the somewhat speedier Rapide coach. One bonus of travelling by coach these days is the provision of in-travel videos (tapes of course). In an obviously inspired moment someone at National Express had selected the imminent-on-LaserVision 'Jaws 3' for the outward journey. 'Jaws 3' consists mostly of white lines flashing across a screen. Sometimes it's just spots, and on occasions you can discern the presence of some garbled dialogue. This may have been clearer further forward (I was in row seven). Some wag down the front reckoned you could see a shark but he didn't look the sort you could really trust to tell the truth, and I suspect this was just the product of a vivid imagination. Still, I had a good sleep and on arrival it was a bit of a treat to be greeted by the sight of the Maglev zipping up and down it's track outside the exhibition hall. Inside PHILIPS and PIONEER were putting on a bit of a show on a combined LaserVision stand. There were samples of the first of the new discs playing and someone was even over from PHILIPS in Holland to look things over. True to form, the editor bored everyone's socks off stressing the importance of stereo and the need for some older classic films but he did express approval of the calibre of the new discs - even though some of them are verging on being rental titles rather than sellers. Although the standard of picture displayed on the LV stand was no great shakes (they always seem to undersell the potential) the tape displays elsewhere at the show were truly appalling. There were a couple of 8mm demos - LDR's advice is to wait! It's a good format

but looks to need further development. The show itself was a bit low key but has potential - especially if the hardware side is expanded.

NEWS

On top of THORN/EMI's recent commitment to LV they are also in the process of building a CD manufacturing facility at Swindon - planned to go on-stream in 1986 - that will have an eventual annual capacity of 10,000,000 discs. Swindon is also where THORN/EMI manufactures VHD videodiscs for industrial customers but they may soon be pressing discs for the consumer market too. At the September Personal Computer Show in London JVC were demonstrating VHD games discs in combination with their MSX computers. The older 'Highway Star' was not up to much but a new animated action release, 'Thunderstorm', showing helicopter gunfights over New York was reckoned to be a hot one with little visible evidence of loss of continuity of action. JVC are talking about a 1986 UK launch for these discs but fortunately it looks as though they will restrict the format to computer based software....initially?

Talking of other disc formats - some rather dubious practices are reported being used by some major retailers flogging off CED players and claiming them to be compatible with LaserVision. In the USA there is still a regular flow of disc releases on CED even though the format is officially defunct.

More remarkable attention to detail by THORN/EMI.

The sleeve of 'Children Of The Corn' carries the rather unpalatable statement "This film was certified 18 for theatrical release by the BBFC. Further cuts for LaserVision release have been made". Top marks for corporate integrity - but do we really want cut films released on LaserVision?



CHEAP DISCS!!!! Although the price of the new titles has undergone a considerable hike there are still cheap discs to be had. The transfer of stocks over to the new wholesalers has resulted in giveaway prices on over 100 older titles....but some of them aren't so old. There are several recent EMBASSY discs - 'Spinal Tap', 'Champions' etc @ £6.99 and some older titles are only £4.99! Avoid 'Getting Wasted' (Terrible crackly sound), but go for 'Hoodwink' @ £4.99 to see how good a film can look on LV. The sound isn't up to much but the print quality is better than '48 Hours'.

Between the lines - In issue 7 of PHILIPS Silver Disc Club magazine there is a reference to the combination LV/CD player launched by PIONEER in Japan and the USA. It then says "While the price of this unit is currently 3 times the price of popular CD players, it is anticipated that the combination player will sell at no more than 20 - 30% of [note: they mean 'more than'] a current CD player within a few years". Consulting the ever reliable LDR calculator, that works out to certainly less than £500 and may be even lower. Seeing what production refinements PHILIPS have been incorporating in their newer CD players it seems more than likely that they will be able to utilise much of this technology for LV applications. "Within a few years" would seem to be the crucial part of the statement. All that a Dutch PHILIPS spokesman would say when we mentioned the subject of Digital Sound LV was "It will come".

Join the Club - The Silver Disc Club is now open to all UK owners of LaserVision players, PHILIPS or PIONEER. See Autumn Album List for details.



...WHAT'S HAPPENING...WHAT'S HAPPENING...WHAT'S

...WHAT'S HAPPENING...WHAT'S HAPPENING...WHAT'S

NTSC NEWS

More Digital Sound titles - 'Koyaanisqatsi', and in Japan, 'Flashdance', 'Footloose', 'Streets Of Fire' and a music title from Stevie Ray Vaughan ##### Also from Japan comes 3D 'Eye Of The Dragon' in Chinese with Japanese subtitles ##### On the hardware front, as LDR suggested might be feasible several months back, PIONEER in Japan have announced a new player - the LD7100, as well as the DA-1 Digital Sound adaptor to go with it. Unfortunately there would seem to be no potential for this model in PAL format as yet ##### Recent US releases have included 'Pinochio' and in wide-screen 'Manhattan' ##### 'Night Of The Living Dead' made a recent appearance on two separate labels - THE DISC FACTORY at \$29.95 and IMAGE ENTERTAINMENT at \$24.95 ##### A few forthcoming US titles - 'The Flamingo Kid', 'Star Man', 'Birdy', 'Giant' & 'East Of Eden' (both reprocessed stereo), 'Topper' (in reprocessed colour!), and three 'Big Bands At Disneyland' discs featuring Cab Calloway, Lionel Hampton, and Woody Herman ##### IMAGE ENTERTAINMENT, the main source of X-rated Adult sex discs, has recently recommenced releasing titles after something of a lull. Ten or more have been so far scheduled. Alongside this renewed activity IMAGE has also set about the Classic film market with some vigour releasing the 1936 'A Star Is Born', 'Dressed To Kill' (Sherlock Holmes), and 'Flying Deuces'. These titles go for \$24.95, lower than usual for US discs, and IMAGE are optimistic of getting Public Domain titles down to \$19.95 eventually ##### Talking of Laurel & Hardys, THE DISC FACTORY, another of the smaller US labels, is bringing out a seven volume series of their films. Volume 1 contains 'Way Out West' and 'Brats'. Another forthcoming title is the 1940 Errol Flynn 'The Santa Fe Trail' ##### Industrial news: Six companies now offer LV disc production facilities although SONY are still pressing in Atsugi, Japan until their US plant comes on stream. That leaves PIONEER, 3M, and newcomer TECHNIDISC in bulk pressing and two companies specialising in fast turnaround small quantity production - LASERVIDEO with its 'LaserMaster' process and SPECTRA IMAGE who offer a DRAW 24 hour facility. No mastering is involved with the latter and each disc is cut individually. On the hardware side of things PIONEER, SONY, PHILIPS, and HITACHI offer players (most of which are actually manufactured by PIONEER) but SONY have recently introduced the LDP 2000 Industrial player that is of their own manufacture. The rumour is that a consumer version will follow! ##### The only change with consumer players is PIONEER'S revamping of the LD1100 which has re-appeared as the PR8210 boasting exactly the same features but with the benefit of a redesigned front panel - suggested retail price is \$499.00. An AVS-700 Audio Video Switcher capable of handling four inputs has also been announced ##### Some of the recent Laser 45s have been creeping up in price to \$12.99 (\$2.00 more) while some shorter playing time 30cm discs have been coming out priced down to \$16.95 ##### Looks like 'Dire Straits - Alchemy Live' is also due as a Digital Sound release in Japan ##### Shortly to be available on the industrial market are a pair of new PIONEER players designed solely for 20cm discs. The first one we have seen a photo of comes with a built-in 4.5" monitor, the whole unit fitting in to a carrying case with a shoulder strap. The player has 1K programming memory based on the LD-V6000's logic. The second model will apparently have an RS232C interface ##### MCA have a new series of vintage movie classics on the way the most novel of which will undoubtedly be 'Scarface'. The disc will come with two endings, one of which is a special version done to get past the then censors ##### As soon as PIONEER's US plant is able to press them, PARAMOUNT are planning to release every new stereo title in Digital Sound ##### Issue 3 of LASERTRADER (details in last Collector's Page) carries useful list of US mail order dealers. \$2.00 bills should get you a copy ##### Several new laser publications have appeared Stateside in recent months. We will try and do a rundown on them sometime in the future ##### Recorded live at the Met, directed by Zeffirelli is a Digital Sound version of 'La Boheme' due from PIONEER ARTISTS ##### PENTAX plan to have their own disc player on sale in America come the new year

NEW PRODUCTS

Scheduled for delivery now is MARANTZ's RV353 Dolby Surround Sound Processor priced at £129.90. Further to our initial description, this unit already incorporates a 20 watt per channel amplifier and so only additional rear speakers are required. In addition to reproducing Dolby MP encoded

discs, the RV353 offers a Matrix setting giving a surround sound effect from non-encoded material and a Spatial option to give pseudo stereo from mono sources. The rear channel delay is continuously variable in order to facilitate the correct setting compatible with room size and personal taste.



The AV251 Audio/Video Controller is designed to allow easy connection of 4 AV inputs to 2 AV outputs. One of the inputs is conveniently front mounted and two-way dubbing is possible between two of the inputs and Enhance, Fader, Mike & Audio Mixing, and DNR noise reduction all complement this feature. The Spatial Stereo effect is also incorporated - all for £99.00.



Further information: Marantz, 15/16 Saxon Way Industrial Estate, Moor Lane, HARMONDSWORTH, Middx UB7 0LW - Tel: 01-897 6633.

PIONEER advise that the SP101 Surround Sound Processor is now available as are new supplies of the LD700 in black colour option. There is reason to believe that it is necessary to have the black model in order to function properly with the forthcoming PX-7 Computer. More on this next time. Someone asked why the computer game discs have the word 'PALCOM' on them and did it mean 'PAL compatible'? No. Palcom just stands for 'friendly computer'.

Possibility of repressing 'Apocalypse Now' being investigated.

VIDEODISC NEWSLETTER - For those involved in Interactive Videodisc applications this 6 page newsletter will be of interest. Published three times a year it is available for an £8.00 per annum subscription fee, £10.00 overseas (airmail). - BUFVC, 55 Greek Street, LONDON W1V 5LR. Tel: 01 - 734 3687.

FORTHCOMING



Promised for delivery some time in the early part of 1986 is the AV-300E Audio/Video Surround Sound amplifier from NEC. Conceived as the hub of a complete A/V system the AV-300E boasts 4 channels of 30 watt output, switchable to a pair of 60 watt channels in BTL configuration (Balanced Transformerless). There are inputs for four video sources (plus two sets of outputs) and on the audio side the unit incorporates DOLBY MP surround sound processing along with Synthetic Stereo, Hall Surround, and Matrix Sound options. The icing on the cake comes in the form of an infra-red remote control that allows the choice of surround sound format and volume and balance controls.

HAPPENING.....WHAT'S HAPPENING...WHAT'S HAPPENI

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STEREO!

First off, of the disputed titles in the Surround Sound article 'Green Ice', 'The Highest Honour' and 'A Wedding' have been confirmed as in STEREO (and in this case will be in DOLBY MP surround). All the remaining discs are confirmed as MONO.

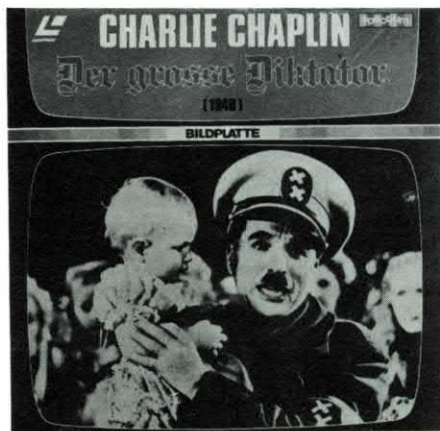
Most readers now maintain that 'The Thing' is MONO. Marc Comfort maintains that 'Moses The Lawgiver' is almost entirely MONO - all bar about 2 minutes of STEREO when God talks from the burning bush. Also Marc finds the STEREO content of 'The Blue Max' to be minimal to say the least. On a more positive note he informs us that 'Captain Scarlet Vs The Mysterons' is STEREO. 'Raccoons & The Lost Star' is another confirmed STEREO. Peter Moverley disputes that 'Kelly's Heroes' is STEREO and Steve Fielding maintains he has performed all manner of acrobatics with his equipment yet is still unable to extract a STEREO signal from 'Fantastic Voyage'!

On or about the fifth time the Editor played 'Zorro The Gay Blade' he realised that this too is in STEREO. The new 'Barenboim/Beethoven' discs are in STEREO.

As to the new releases, there are some unlisted STEREO discs - see reviews. It would appear that THORN/EMI indicate the STEREO status of their discs on the sleeves (Blimey! Most of the other companies don't even know what day it is!). Any THORN/EMI disc is most likely going to be in STEREO if the sleeve says so if experience with their stuff so far is anything to go by - it looks a safe bet to ignore the catalogue. There is a suggestion that 'Firstarter' should have been a DOLBY STEREO MP film but it may not have ultimately been produced as such. Seeing as 'Staying Alive' came out in MONO it would be unwise to make a chance purchase on other listed MONO CIC titles. 'Footloose', 'The Meaning Of Life', 'Top Secret' and 'Uncommon Valour' were made as STEREO films. 'Jaws 3' was made in 3-D & STEREO but is unlikely to arrive on disc in either form. Steve advises that the polarised 3-D process used in this instance will not translate to video. (But look, Steve, what about if you turn the TV on to its end - won't that make the polarisation right then?). The only VESTRON film in the Autumn list, 'Company Of Wolves' is another 'made in STEREO' title. Some readers take a chance on these possible STEREO discs by looking at the cassette releases. More often than not, any title that makes it in STEREO on to cassette will do the same for disc.

1.00.04

This German release of Charlie Chaplin's 'The Great Dictator' seems to have achieved the 60 minute maximum playing time usually quoted as the nominal maximum for LV. As the film runs for over two hours in its original form, presumably some



cuts must have been made to fit it on to the one disc as it is. When side one concludes the time counter is just on the point of changing as the disc rejects. You see some different figures but it is not possible to make out what they are. However, the current release of 'The Empire Strikes Back' - at 119 minutes a difficult film to fit on to a single disc unless there is a convenient changeover point - does run 4 seconds past the 60 minute barrier on one side, and for those four seconds you can see '1.00' on the time display. And yes, there still seems to be a little room left yet but the guess is that these long playing discs might cause problems on the older players and are likely to be avoided whenever possible.

SMALL ADS

FOR SALE/EXCHANGE

MEGAFORCE, TURKEYSHOOT, HUMONGOUS, FRUIT IS RIPE, FRIDAY 13th PART 2, FORBIDDEN WORLD, THE BOYS IN BLUE, ANIMAL HOUSE, JAGUAR LIVES, WICKED LADY, SEVEN UPS, HENRY V - Swap preferred for Horror/Thriller/Action films - A.WADE, 12 Southern Road, SALE, Cheshire M33 1HQ.

AIRPLANE, GIRL GROUPS, FRENCH CONNECTION, STAR WARS, PHYSICAL, VIDEO THEQUE, VIDEOHITS, VIDEO STARS, RAISE THE TITANIC, THRILLER, DIRE STRAITS, OLIVIA N.J. LIVE, ROD STEWART, STEVE MILLER, DON MCLEAN, PINK FLOYD, ADAM & ANIS, FEELING FIT, VIDEO ROCK ATTACK, N.T.W.I.C.MUSIC 2 - £6 each. LOVE STORY, GOLDEN GIRL, NIGHTHAWKS, EASTER PARADE, THE FOG, PLAYERS - £7. SILVER STREAK, POLTERGEIST, COMPLETE BEATLES, CHARIOTS OF FIRE, GUYS & DOLLS, OKLAHOMA, ELTON JOHN/CENTRAL PARK, PLAY GOLF, SIMON & GARFUNKEL/CENTRAL PARK - £8. PHILIPS VLP 600 £100 - John Jordan Tel: 0656-864152 (8-10 pm). ##### PHILIPS VLP 700 £160 - Martin Tominey

Tel: St.Albans 58193

Nearly 200 film/music/operas for sale.

Andrew - Tel: 01 691-8376

30 Discs for sale, singles £8/doubles £10. SAE for list - C.J. Holdstock, 10 Maes-Y-Afon, HOLYWELL, Clwyd CH8 7HP

Readers may advertise discs for sale in this small ads column at no charge. Please put details on a separate sheet of paper from other correspondence and mail in time to reach here by 22nd November.

NO ENTRY

We are advised that some of the discs mentioned in issue 4 in the Eurolaser section are likely to be seized by H.M Customs on the basis that they are considered pornographic! These would be the eight discs in the MIKE HUNTER list and possibly 'Caligula' which apparently is different from the version available on tape in this country (although the running time is about the same). Any reader sending off for these titles should be aware of the possibility of them being impounded though no-one has reported any trouble so far.

The Editor had a conversation with H.M. Customs about supposed pornographic discs coming into the country when the LDR copy of 'Inside Desiree Cousteau' was seized en route from the USA. Fathoming out the logic of what is and is not 'acceptable' would take more space than we can presently allot, suffice it to say that they still have our disc and we are objecting to their intention to destroy it. (They have to destroy it - there appears to be no option allowed whereby goods can be returned. Considering that H.M Customs will not give prior approval to the importation of

any disc this is clearly a ludicrous situation. They will only pass judgement on discs once they are in the country, and if they take exception to any one title within a consignment they are well within their rights to destroy the whole lot - and this is what they planned to do with our package until we objected.)

Any outcome of all this will be reported in a future edition.

LASER ROT

We have touched briefly on the subject of certain discs known to have deteriorated over a period of months due to manufacturing defects (Issue 3, p.21). Since then we have encountered discs made in Japan, Germany, and the USA all with variations of this fault - affectionately referred to as 'laser rot' in some circles in the US. That new technology should have its teething problems is something this magazine is more than happy to accommodate, but as has been succinctly voiced by one nervous laser owner "How long do you go on making these allowances for?"

This attitude bears some consideration as the appearance of laser rot discs seem totally random. Some newish discs have failed very quickly while many of the earliest discs in people's collections are as stable as the day they came off the presses. With a product concerned with archival storage in mind, this failure record strikes at the very concept of the laser disc, and while it can be accepted that modifications to the method of manufacture must be an ongoing process, it has to be questioned whether these 'improvements' should be thrust upon the market before the full ramifications as to their permanence had been assessed beyond all reasonable doubt. Using the market place to test-run products can be a risky business. And this is a problem that may not only be confined to the LV disc - what of the CD? Obscured by sophisticated error correction circuitry any failings in the digital audio disc are that less likely to make themselves known for a considerably longer time.

If we are about to embark on a whole new era of laser disc technology this aspect of stability needs to be sorted out - while there is still time. Fortunately for the consumer, as far as the LaserVision disc is concerned, the manufacturers have always shown willingness to replace defective product, but by no stretch of the imagination can it be good publicity for LV to have batches of discs randomly break out into multi-coloured speckles.

DEALER NEWS

Since our visit to MID-SUSSEX ELECTRONICS (163-165 Church Road, BURGESS HILL, Sussex RH15 9AA - Tel: 04446-42336), Roy Mackey informs us that the shopfitting has been carried out and the firm has branched out into supplying professional/industrial equipment. CHURCHER AUDIO VIDEO (154 Montague Street, WORTHING, Sussex BN11 3HH - Tel: 0903-30558) now doing mail-order too. HARP ELECTRONICS in London's Tottenham Court Road are a new PIONEER LASERDISC CENTRE. Another firm with a few branches in that notorious street, LASKYS, are likely to be carrying software in 20 or so branches from October onwards.

....WHAT'S HAPPENING...WHAT'S HAPPENING....WHAT

It's a Laser World

Australia

As far away as LaserVision can get is Australia where LV was introduced in December 1983 and is mostly handled by PIONEER on a consumer level who also sell discs in their shops. The discs cost about \$30 Australian and the catalogue consists of a selection of UK releases (some labels, like MGM, do not have their discs distributed). There is no sign of any indigenous product as yet which was something of a disappointment to the Ed who had hoped to find a Norman Gunston disc at the very least! The scene there benefits from a really good Australian video magazine, 'The Video Age', that actually reviews laser discs now and again even though the format is pretty obscure as yet. Response from Australian laser fans so far would tend to indicate the desire for "the big films" and "stereo" but 'Hancock' and 'Fawlty Towers' would also appear to possess considerable appeal.

Germany

What must count as the most bizarre item in this edition is the news that consumer LaserVision is being dropped in Germany - just at a time when news in the UK is so good as far as new releases is concerned. What repercussions this move by PHILIPS, Germany will have elsewhere one can only imagine. PHILIPS back at the Eindhoven HQ insist that Dutch and UK marketing is going ahead unhindered, but it does put a dent in the inevitability of the establishment of consumer LV. PHILIPS UK have in the past indicated that the possibility of dropping consumer LV was contemplated due to the slow take-up but the exercise was considered somewhat pointless if they were only going to be re-promoting it in a couple of years time. The eventual establishment of LaserVision is apparently taken for granted along with all other aspects of laser technology.

How it will be possible to re-introduce LV in Germany takes some contemplating. PHILIPS are even going to the extent of organising a player recall there offering a CD player in exchange. One disgruntled German owner commented "Maybe they will be sending all the reclaimed players over to China!". Owners trading in their machines will still be saddled with their discs, those staying the course are being offered discs at bargain prices (yet there is no promise of future German software).

Of course, PHILIPS aren't the only company involved in LV in Germany. PIONEER are both suppliers of hardware and software and it would appear that their operation will continue in support of music related product. An enquiry to PIONEER UK gave the impression that the company were decidedly unimpressed by PHILIPS course of action. PIONEER (& SONY) are obviously also in the industrial market, as are PHILIPS who will be continuing their German professional LV activity. (SONY now have a PAL version of their LDP180 on the German and Swiss markets. This is a badge engineered version of the



PIONEER LDV 4000, an industrial grade LD 700 with an improved remote and RS 232 interface. This model is also being sold in the UK too apparently.)

What advice to offer readers interested in German discs? Should you buy now or wait it out and hope to pick up better bargains later? If you are particularly keen to obtain German language discs it may be prudent to act now (see the advert in review pages). With music titles the urgency should not be so great as quite a few titles are duplicated in the Dutch catalogue. As things stand now (August) the indication is that German consumer operations will be wound down by the end of the year.

Switzerland

The most enlightened country as far as software is concerned must be Switzerland that draws upon the catalogues of the UK, Germany, and Holland for disc supplies as they have no discs of their own as yet. Prices vary but are roughly around the £20 mark and discs are sold in special 'LASERTHEK' shops of which five so far exist - Basle, Bern, Lugano, and Zurich (2), or by mail-order. LV was launched in October 1983 (six months after Compact Disc). In addition to the players mentioned in Issue 3 the PIONEER LD 700 is now available. PHILIPS VLP 720



also appears under the MEDIATOR brand name. One novelty in the disc catalogue is 'Laser Contact 3', a bi-lingual German/French LaserVision demo disc, priced at a fairly low 25f.

Holland

LV started in 1983 here as well and discs originally came from the UK but sub-titled versions were progressively substituted and the majority of US film titles (which mostly come from the CBS/FOX stable) are now listed in this sub-titled format. The sleeves are unchanged except for the addition of a sticker bearing the phrase 'Nederlands Ondertiteld'. There are no CIC, MGM, EMBASSY etc titles listed in the Dutch catalogue and so, even after a couple of years, there is still not much on offer for the Dutch film fan on LV.

There is talk of the imminent arrival of some sort of space disc(s) and any further developments will be reported in the next edition of LDR. Currently a special offer is being made on the VP 720 + the 13 'World At War' (known there as 'Bericht Van De Tweede Wereld Oorlog') TV series discs. As



[Available separately but with subtitles]

it turns out these discs are all in the original English with Dutch sub-titles. A while back PHILIPS UK indicated that the series would not appear here (the demand is not likely to be huge, to say the least) but times change and they are now scheduled for UK release as a boxed set retailing at £200. At present it is not clear whether we will have the option to buy individual discs but providing you do not

object to the sub-titles the Dutch versions are definitely available separately at the regular fls-79 price. Sometimes you do get sub-titles over sub-titles when new speakers appear on screen but you can normally catch a glimpse of their name at one point or other.

If it wasn't bad enough knowing whether to refer to PHILIPS' machines as 'VLP' or 'VP' (the machines carry one prefix, the brochures another), the latest Dutch adverts show the players there to have sprouted an additional prefix and they are now known as the '22 VP 720' and '22 VP 830'. The basic player, the VP 500, is no longer mentioned.

New films on the July/August list are mostly Dutch language titles:

VLP 2172E	'Mira'	95mins	fls-69
VLP 2174E	'Het Dorp Aan De Rivier' (b/w)	94mins	fls-69
VLP 2175E	'Max Havelaar'	170mins	fls-109
VLP 2176E	'Het Mes' (b/w)	89mins	fls-69
VLP 2177E	'Makkers Staakt Uw Wild Geraas'	97mins	fls-69
VLP 2179E	'The League Of Gentlemen'	116mins	fls-69
(this listed as English with Dutch subs)			

'The Wine Programme' discs and the 'Beethoven Piano Sonatas' also appear as do some pop music titles already out in the UK too.

LV Player Survey

		PHILIPS VLP 600	PHILIPS VLP 700	PHILIPS VLP 830	PIONEER LD 1100	PIONEER LD 700
PRICE		£229	£249	£549	£399	£499
LOADING		TOP	TOP	TOP	TOP	FRONT
CONNECTIONS		VIDEO (BNC) TV AUDIO L+R ANTENNA	VIDEO (BNC) TV AUDIO L+R ANTENNA	EUROCONNECTOR TV AUDIO L+R ANTENNA	VIDEO (BNC) TV AUDIO L+R ANTENNA DIRECT CONTROL SOCKET	EUROCONNECTOR TV AUDIO L+R ANTENNA VIDEO (BNC) 8pin I/O
REMOTE			IR - Limited Function	IR	IR - Does not control slow motion rate	IR
NOISE REDUCTION *				CX - Set On Machine	CX - Set On Machine	CX - Set On Machine & Auto *
AUDIO		L + R L & R	L + R (Not controll- L & R able on remote)	L + R L & R	L + R L & R	L + R L & R
PAUSE				+	+	+
TIME SEARCH *					+	+
CHAPTER SEARCH BY NUMBER *				+	+	+
PROGRAM BY TIME *						1 Consecutive sequence plus repeat
PROGRAM BY CHAPTER *				Up to 7 Chapters (Ran- dom sequence + endless loop)		
STILL FRAME	CAV	F & R	F & R	F + R	F & R	F & R
SLOW MOTION	CAV	F & R	F & R (F only on remote)	F	F & R	F & R
RATE	CAV	NORMAL to 1 Frame every 4 secs, variable	As VP 600	As VP 600	NORMAL to 1 Frame per second, variable	NORMAL to 1 Frame every 3 secs, stepped
REVERSE PLAY	CAV	+	+ (Main unit only)	+	+	+
FAST PLAY	CAV	+	+	+	F & R	F & R
FRAME SEARCH BY NUMBER	CAV			+	+	+
PROGRAM BY FRAME NUMBER	CAV			1 Consecutive sequence plus repeat		1 Consecutive sequence plus repeat
		Excellent value basic machine often available discounted.	As VP 600 but with the advantage of a limited function remote control.	The only player to offer inbuilt chapter programming. Lacks elapsed time search and certain reverse play functions.	Older model now becoming scarce. For the extra £100 it is well worth going on to the LD 700.	The newest LV player, solid-state laser and very quiet in operation. Fast 7second access time possible. Readily interface- able with MSX computer. LDR advises you in- sist on a black one!

+ Indicates function present on machine or remote.
* Indicates function dependant on disc coding.

All details are manufacturer's quoted specifications.

On remote control machines certain functions only available
on remote or machine itself.

'What we want on LaserVision' the sequel

What happened to the rest of the original survey? Well, it hasn't been forgotten but the passage of events has overtaken it somewhat. Many of the TV related titles you suggested have come to pass - 'Ripping Yarns', 'Hancocks', 'Dr. Who', & 'Monty Python' (coming!). The demand for TV related product was not generally great. Comedy, and specifically BBC comedy, did elicit a response. Only 'Minder' received mention out of all the possible ITV programmes. There were a few suggestions for some condensed versions of some of the long-running TV series and there is obviously a feeling that the LV disc is the ideal way of preserving a cherished memory.

Other than comedy it was the sci-fi TV programmes that drew response. 'Star Trek' TV episodes came out top of the list with special mention for some of the "banned" editions. 'The Avengers' and 'The Prisoner' also got a few votes.

Wild life programmes were often mentioned and also selected 'Horizon' documentaries. 'Flight Of The Condor' & 'Life On Earth' were obvious titles that cropped up and seeing as the BBC have prepared these programmes for tape release there may be some hope they will appear on disc.

Sports programmes did not draw much response and the only title to be mentioned more than once was 'Botham's Ashes' which, again, has now appeared. The prime motivation for wanting to own a sports disc would appear to be the fact that it had some historical significance rather than instructional CAV appeal. E. Williams suggested a collection of some of TV's '100 Great Sporting Moments'.

Space was the biggest special interest demand, probably due

to the mention of some of the US space discs in issue 2. These would undoubtedly satisfy a demand that would be exclusive to the CAV potential of LV - you do need the still-frame capability. Transport was another interest that LV looks like catering to with it's still frame/archival storage potential.

The last major request was for 'Adult' material, the likes of the 'Electric Blue' & 'Playboy' videos. Other than that most suggestions were isolated ones. We obviously need more player owners to make these minority titles an LV reality.

the survey

The new people responsible for future disc releases have indicated their openness to suggestions from LV owners. As their prime consideration is for each release to be commercially viable (that's the reason the new disc prices are higher) some organised request scheme might help things along at a faster pace. This is the plan. Tucked in the pages of this magazine is a subscription blank that on the reverse side LDR wants you to write down five titles (no more than this, otherwise it'll defeat the efficiency of the whole thing) that you would have no hesitation in buying if they became available next week. At this stage, try to choose titles that are already in existence, regardless of label. It doesn't matter whether they're films, TV programmes, special interest discs or whatever - it's the choice of titles that you want to buy that counts. This is not a time to be suggesting what would be good for LaserVision or what you think other people would buy - just pure self-indulgence.

While we're at it we might as well try and get a couple of other points sorted out. If you regard discs as being in stereo as crucial circle the word STEREO. If you would like to see some films released in wide-screen, circle the word WIDE-SCREEN.

That's all there is to it - five titles, stereo, and wide-screen. The sooner you mail it off the quicker something will happen. If your subscription has expired and you plan to renew it don't forget to enclose your remittance too! (Anyone who doesn't find the form in their copy of the magazine is asked to write their suggestions on one side of a piece of paper 105 by 150mm with your name and address on the other. By keeping within these guidelines it makes it a lot easier to handle the whole survey. WHATEVER YOU DO, DON'T HANG ABOUT - THE FUTURE OF LV RELEASES IS AS MUCH IN YOUR HANDS NOW AS IT EVER WILL BE!

RELIABLE VIDEOS

820 PERSHORE ROAD SELLY PARK BIRMINGHAM B29
Telephone 021 471 2428

LASERDISC STOCKIST 500 DISCS ALWAYS IN STOCK

- ☐ SAME DAY DISPATCH FOR DISCS HELD IN STOCK
- ☐ YOU CAN ALWAYS PHONE THROUGH TO CHECK AVAILABILITY OF TITLES
- ☐ ACCESS & VISA CARDHOLDERS CAN ORDER DIRECTLY BY TELEPHONE
- ☐ WHY NOT SEND LARGE SAE FOR FULL CATALOGUE OF TITLES
- ☐ WE CAN ALSO MAIL DISCS OVERSEAS
- ☐ DISCOUNTS FOR LARGE ORDERS
- ☐ THERE IS ALWAYS A NEED FOR ANY OF YOUR UNWANTED DISCS TOO - SEND DETAILS

WE ALSO SELL MACHINES

PHILIPS

VLP 600 £184

VLP 700 £225

VLP 830 £500

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New Releases



NTSC LaserVision

The UK catalogue contains about 500 titles. In Europe there are at least that many again which, bar language barriers, are watchable on a standard UK PAL LaserVision player. This Summer the US disc catalogue surpassed the 1200 titles mark and in Japan the total is even greater (although language and cultural differences may diminish the appeal of many of the latter). Notwithstanding, we are faced with a world catalogue of LV discs approaching 3500 titles of which the majority are issued on the incompatible NTSC format. That means we cannot play them on our players.

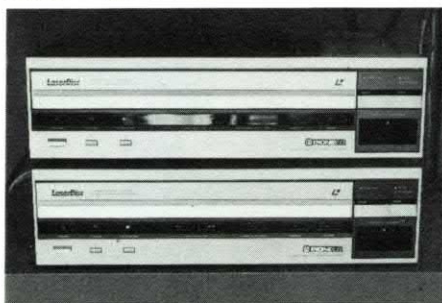
This may change. The substitution of digital chip processing circuitry in future video components may indeed make PAL/NTSC compatibility an everyday reality although this multi-standard option may only be a low priority feature. We do not appear to have yet reached the stage where manufacturers can break the habit of tying video developments to national broadcasting standards. Some readers have been expressing an interest in playing NTSC discs now. Is this a worthwhile endeavour?

The recent hike in the cost of UK discs has narrowed the gap between UK & US prices. Traditionally the UK has been the cheapest country in the world for LV discs (we may have had to wait for them but at least they've been cheap! This low price concept is undoubtedly there when the LV disc becomes the true market product it is ideally suited to be, but until the player population reaches a certain level we are regrettably faced with the prospect of paying more for LV discs). USA disc prices are presently around the \$30.00 to \$35.00 mark, depending on the company. Some double discs and prestige film titles go for \$40.00 - \$45.00. Music titles are generally \$25.00. (As the exchange rate varies so frequently it may be best to do your own conversion at the time you get to read this.) Added to the basic price is the cost of postage from the US and any import charges that may be levied - these could add another 30% to the total you end up paying. (More on this later.) It is almost a certainty that, for the foreseeable future, US discs will only be obtainable on an individual order basis and one is not likely to be faced with the option of sorting through the import bin at your local dealer. If that reality does not deter you, this is what you need to do to view them.

The Player

Your PAL LaserVision player will not play NTSC system discs. An NTSC player is necessary. (Although both sorts of player are mechanically the same, no manufacturer appears yet to have perceived the wisdom of incorporating both sets of electronics into a multi-standard unit.) NTSC players are commonly used all over the place in the industrial/educational sector where discs have, in the past, often been sourced from the US. Likewise the LV

disc based arcade games that have an NTSC player concealed in their casing. On a retail level NTSC players are not generally available, but we can suggest one source of supply. STEREO REGENT STREET - 245 Regent Street, London W1R 7AF (Tel: 01-491 7922) can obtain an NTSC version of the PIONEER LD 700 to special order (takes two to three weeks) for £529 and this will be a 240V model. For those intrigued by the concept of LV discs with Digital Sound (so far only available in NTSC format) they can also supply you with the combined LV/CD model - the CLD 900 - for £899.



[Externally almost identical - PIONEER LD 700 players in NTSC and PAL formats.]

There are PHILIPS models available but these are all professional versions of the VP 830 that incorporate teletext and genlock facilities etc and consequently come out a bit overpriced for regular applications. In the US it is possible to see \$200 - \$300 being asked for the PIONEER LD 660 (the non-remote version of the LD 1100) but by the time you have paid airfreight and bought a transformer (US mains voltage being lower) there would not appear to much of a price advantage over getting an LD 700 here with the advantage of it already being set up for the correct voltage and also being a much better machine.

The Monitor

Unless you wish to view your NTSC discs in black & white a multi-standard monitor or receiver/monitor will also be necessary. Much confusion often occurs in dealing with other TV standards. To many dealers the term multi-standard translates into a requirement for a TV receiver that can be carted round the world and will pick up whatever happens to be the local broadcast system, and work on any mains voltage; but this is not our priority.

In order to encompass every LV disc format the need is for just a dual-standard monitor. In practice, dual-standard monitors for PAL and NTSC 3.58 (there are two types of NTSC video, read on) do not exist. Manufacturers into producing multi-standard equipment tend to go the whole hog and offer 4-system units that cater for PAL/SECAM/NTSC 3.58/NTSC 4.43 although beware. In the UK there exist quite a few triple-system monitors that only contain the corrupted 4.43 NTSC standard often used in professional video circles. This is

not the same as the broadcast version of NTSC that the LV format is based upon. (The colour signal is set at a different frequency.)

[Maybe it would be opportune to define what is meant by the term 'monitor' here. A monitor is a video display unit able to reproduce direct video inputs from whatever source you supply. Most domestic TVs are 'receivers', where a tuner is incorporated to allow reception of broadcast signals. Any video signal you feed into a receiver has to go through the UHF aerial input and is therefore processed (unnecessarily) by the tuner circuitry. Recently there has been a growth in the number of 'receiver/monitors' where direct access (normally via a BNC or Euro connector) to the display is possible, avoiding passing the signal from your disc player (or VCR etc) through the tuner's circuitry that is likely to degrade picture quality. There is an implied allusion to higher component quality where the term monitor is used in selling TVs, but this does not have to be the case. The measured specification necessary to judge the true merit of any particular TV is rarely quoted, and this is the only means of achieving any valid assessment of picture quality.]

What is relevant to this article is the ability of a multi-standard monitor (or receiver/monitor) to cope with NTSC 3.58 video inputs. We are not interested in whether it will pick up all the various broadcast versions transmitted around the world. You can come across multi-standard TVs that claim 9 and 14 system compatibility (there are lots of minor variations in broadcast signals) but these are only of significance if you are feeding signals through the aerial socket.

Your local dealer's showroom is unlikely to be bristling with multi-standard TVs, but they do exist in far greater quantity than would appear to be



the case. Most of the major manufacturers make something although these products are often only sold on to the export market as, historically, there has been little demand here.

There are quite a few small-screen (below 14") units around but of the

larger screen models the 20" & 27" SONY Profeel range of component TVs is probably the best known, and most easily available. The 20" lists at £575, the 27" £810 although they usually sell below these prices. These items are true monitors and you will need either the additional tuner (the remote control comes with this) or use the tuner in your VCR to pick up broadcast TV (although you lose the option of recording one programme while watching another this way). This concept of component TV is the best way of doing things even though the expense is undoubtedly greater than the 'all-in-one' approach.

For receiver/monitors the manufacturers of another disc system, JVC, offer two suitable models that are true go-anywhere multi-voltage TVs that do far more than is necessary for our requirements. Both 20" (51cm) models the 7755GB lists at £490, and at £689 there is the AV-20GB(B) which is stereo equipped and has three sets of switchable video inputs. Both are remote controlled.



Mentioned last issue, GRUNDIG's new multi-standard TV is now available here at £429-95 for the 22" r/c model. Details were sketchy at the time this article was being prepared so you'd best get in touch with them direct for more info. GRUNDIG's new address is Mill Road, RUGBY, Warks CV21 1PR - Tel: 0788 77155. There does appear to be a larger screen version available on the Continent that may come here. Check with them.

Certain PHILIPS models are available in quad-standard versions (it depends on the chassis, not all are suited to multi-standard expansion). These are not normal stock items but approved modifications done to special order (takes about a month) by OLYMPUS ELECTRONICS, 180 Queensway, LONDON W2 6LY - Tel: 01-229 8983. Speak to Mr. Bates.

A similarly expandable chassis concept allows the LUXOR range of sets to be converted to NTSC use. These are again approved conversions, done this time by PORTATEL, 25 Sunbury Cross Centre, Staines Road West, SUNBURY-ON-THAMES, Middlesex TW16 7BB - Tel: Sunbury-On-Thames 88972. As any number of options are available, depending on screen size etc., this is not the full range but possibilities are the 20" basic model at £442-75, 26" £534-75. The stereo, r/c, teletext version runs to £752-10 for the 26" size.

This is just a brief survey of what is available. If you have an allegiance to a particular brand it may pay you to enquire direct with the manufacturer. It might take some persistence - start off with the TV sales dept. Incidentally, many of the projection TV units incorporate a multi-standard capability which may be of interest to readers consider-

ing getting in to large screen displays.

On the hardware side then, you are faced with an outlay of around £1000 if you have to buy both items - disc player and monitor. The damage is considerably less if you are fortunate enough to already have a suitable TV and this aspect may be of significance to anybody considering changing their TV in the near future, even if NTSC LaserVision is not an immediate priority. If you are contemplating a new TV the extra cost of an NTSC capable set is not particularly great, and if there is the slightest temptation on your part to try NTSC LV sometime in the future (or you wish to swap tapes, say, in conjunction with a multi-standard VCR) a few extra Pounds spent now would make good sense.

The Discs

If obtaining the hardware is relatively easy (it's only money, after all!) the software is another matter. You will have to import all your discs direct from either the USA or Japan although THE INSTANT REPLAY is one US supplier who can obtain Japanese discs too. For further details of US suppliers refer back to Issue 4, p.17.

Making payments in US \$ is considerably easier than many European currencies and can be done through bank or postal offices. Credit cards really come into their own when buying goods from the US as not only is it very straightforward but no currency conversion charge is made on the transaction. And you have the option of telephone ordering. This may seem somewhat extravagant but from experience with THE INSTANT REPLAY I know that it is possible to phone through, enquire after stock availability, order a couple of discs, and authorise payment - all within two minutes (I timed it). Telephone selling is a considerably more advanced concept than here in the UK. Providing the phone call is brief this method of ordering can work out cheaper than sending an IMO.

Speed of delivery depends on your choice of Air or Surface rate. Air can be expensive - but it can be very quick. That 'Duran Duran - Dancing On The Valentine' we wanted to illustrate issue 3 was

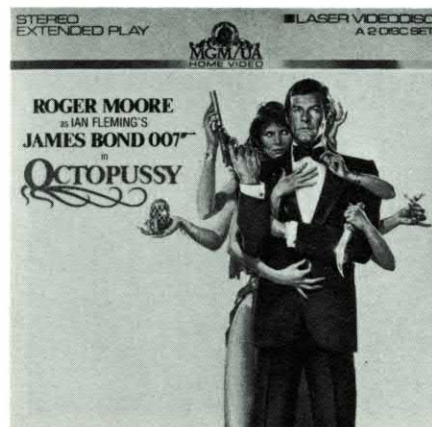


ordered on Monday night (cheap rate telephone) and it arrived Friday morning. That may be a bit optimistic for every delivery but it does show what can be done. We have received a few parcels of discs Surface rate from the east coast and these have taken one month to arrive. The cost of Surface post is very reasonable and runs to a couple of Dollars per disc, depending on quantity.

Customs charges are often levied on imported goods and though you will not always get hit it is wise to assume the

worst in making calculations of cost and you should reckon on paying an extra 20% or so (Import Duty & VAT).

It would be unreasonable to expect NTSC feature film purchases to end up costing much less than £30 (assuming an exchange rate of \$1.40 /£1.00) if sent by air. If the rate goes to \$2.00 /£1.00 UK & US prices will be roughly compar-



able. If it goes the other way and we achieve (if 'achieve' is the right word!) \$/£ parity, then NTSC discs will only be marginally cheaper than UK tape prices. With these variables in mind it may be worth analysing the pros and cons of going NTSC quite thoroughly.

The Quality

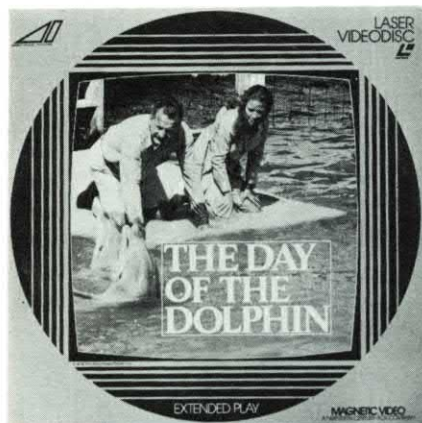
What may put a lot of people off NTSC discs is the quality difference. The commonly held view is that American TV is 'rubbish' - painful to watch. Without wishing to engage in that argument it has to be said that, as far as LV is concerned, the differences aren't so significant. Most obviously we have a 100 line resolution advantage with the PAL system (625 as opposed to 525) and there is undeniably a greater awareness of the line structure on NTSC discs - it's not great but perceptible.

NTSC normally draws criticism for its generally poor colour saturation and consistency, but again discs avoid many of the problems of broadcast signals. Significantly, many PAL LV discs are sourced from NTSC video mastertapes that are converted to PAL before being pressed on to disc here. We are already looking at NTSC video! - often without realising it.

It may help to offer some examples. Many of the CBS/FOX discs here are visually indistinguishable from what you would get off an NTSC disc. One title we have on both formats is 'Day Of The Dolphin'. Switching between NTSC and PAL discs showed neither one to be 'the best' - each had its own characteristics and parts of the film looked better on one format and some on the other. It was that inconclusive. If anything the test just went to show how important the quality of the original master is. 'Day Of The Dolphin' in PAL would only really justify a 'C' for picture quality if it came up for review so it could not be considered a true example of the potential of PAL LV but, look how many other film prints get 'C' grades in the review pages. We have a theoretical advantage in PAL but it has been rarely realised up till now. Of course, with renewed activity in the film sector of the catalogue this may change but for the purposes of this article the point is valid.

For video sourced material we ran the 'Fleetwood Mac - Mirage Tour' discs in tandem (the US disc is only single

sided and the 57 minute running time means that several songs are omitted) and found the definition on the PAL disc better albeit with the presence of grain not evident on the US version. Again both formats exhibited their own characteristics. The 'Grateful Dead - Dead Ahead' disc (PIONEER ARTISTS) looked



better on NTSC than PAL. It was definitely crisper. The programme looks originally to have been carefully prepared and this would no doubt make some differ-

ence. The 'Joni Mitchell - Shadows and Light' disc (again PIONEER ARTISTS) now looks to be a title that PIONEER bought up when they needed programmes to promote LaserVision. Believe it or not, the NTSC disc is only marginally better than the PAL equivalent as far as picture clarity is concerned so our review in issue 3 that questioned the competence of the conversion would now look a wrong guess - the picture started out pretty bad! (Incidentally the US release is two-sided CAV.)

Those few comparisons aren't possibly ideal (they're hardly the latest releases!) but in their way they are quite revealing enough. Where the source material is of sufficient quality many NTSC film discs can look good. You have to accept that colours won't be as vivid as PAL and neither will the definition equal the best examples of PAL LV but it is perfectly possible to forget which format you are watching at times. It's only when you put on a really crisp PAL disc that the difference is brought home. Shown good examples of NTSC LV most people are pleasantly surprised and often impressed.

But what of the sound? As we have commented before, many early NTSC did suffer from poor sound - noisy and distorted in many cases, and a factor that

brought about the introduction of CX noise reduction. If the Joni Mitchell disc is anything to go by even that did not work very well early on! Listening to the NTSC disc you can hear the noise reduction circuitry searching all the time and the hiss and volume level is constantly changing. The disc sounds better with CX switched out. (Note: the PAL disc does not suffer from this problem.)

There is the distinct impression that PIONEER played around with the CX format to get it right and these days CX appears to work well without any side effects and without any incompatibility problems on non-CX equipped players. CX was initially introduced on music discs and films with significant musical content but it has now reached the stage where virtually every stereo feature film is being CX encoded and the resulting sound quality on many of these discs is truly superb. Anybody who is biased towards the sound aspects of LaserVision will find NTSC film discs irresistible. (The quoted dynamic range of CX LV is near on 70dB.)

Other Considerations

In some respects NTSC discs have certain less obvious advantages over PAL equivalents. Due to the necessity to synchronise the 24fps movie film rate to the requirements of the various video formats different transfer methods are adopted for NTSC than in PAL. It is convenient to transfer to PAL video by speeding films up very slightly to 25fps to coincide with our 50Hz based format. NTSC video is dependent on a 60Hz frequency that would necessitate speeding films up to 30fps to achieve a transfer, a far too high an increase unless you didn't mind everything turning out looking like a Buster Keaton production! So for NTSC a 'proper' video transfer occurs and films on NTSC video come out at their correct speed.

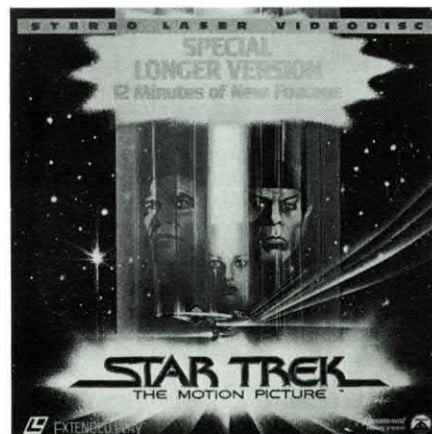
The conventionally propagated view is that this slight speeding up in PAL video (and TV broadcasts) is "imperceptible" and only people with an acutely developed sense of pitch would notice

Irreconcilable Differences?

What happens if you put the 'wrong' type of disc on your player? What will you see and hear? Starting off with the most common UK player, the PHILIPS VLP 600 / 700, attempting to put an NTSC disc into PLAY causes the machine to start up as usual but sensing an unknown quantity the player then slows down and refuses to engage. It is necessary to keep your finger on the SEARCH button while the PLAY sequence is being initiated. Normally without too much persuasion the disc will engage, usually a little way into the side. The result is a black and white picture, slightly compressed, and with a black strip top and bottom. As a result of this compression everyone looks a trifle obese and short! Normally the picture is a bit of a struggle to watch as it is covered with black and white flecks although it does very much vary from disc to disc. What does produce a clear picture is an NTSC disc with Digital Sound. These produce a perfectly sharp, unblemished b&w picture with possibly only a slight shimmer to the image. Only the SCAN function works on NTSC discs and there is no usable sound output. The VLP 830 eliminates the majority of the b&w flecking but unfortunately the shimmer becomes much more pronounced. Again some discs were better than others but the Digital Sound disc was almost unplayable. Interestingly some of the controls did make discs work in other than PLAY modes and it proved possible to initiate REVERSE PLAY and almost possible to achieve STILL FRAME - this all on CLV discs! The PIONEER LD 700 proved to be a great disappointment in the tests and it proved impossible to engage PLAY at all. In summary then it is possible to achieve a marginal b&w picture in most cases (with CLV discs only) although it has to be said that the Digital Sound disc was almost satisfactory (the sound output from this disc was different but still unusable). All tests were done with direct inputs, bypassing RF.

Readers in the US may be interested to know what happens when the situation is reversed. The first information on this came from Douglas Pratt, publisher of The Laser Disc Newsletter, who could not resist buying a copy of 'The 39 Steps' whilst on a visit to London last year. Played on one of the earlier machines, the PIONEER VP 1000, Douglas reported "To my surprise, the picture was pretty good - like looking through a goldfish bowl. There was no sound". Douglas now has a CLD 900 and finds the disc plays with no visual distortion at all. We also sent a couple of discs to correspondent Dwight R. Decker - "My machine is a SYLVANIA VP 7200, more or less the same as the PIONEER LD 1100, and playing a PAL disc nets me a symmetrically wavy black and white picture and, of course, no sound. In fact, the picture is so wavy I'd have to rate PAL discs as unwatchable for any length of time. I did lend the 'Benny Hill' disc to a friend of mine who has a later SYLVANIA VP 7400SL, the PIONEER LD 700 equivalent. He reported he got a beautiful b&w picture, the best he had ever seen, but an uncontrollable vertical roll. (Modern American TV sets no longer have vertical tracking controls.) However, he solved that by hooking up a stabilizer and piping the picture through that, and that cleared up the roll problem."

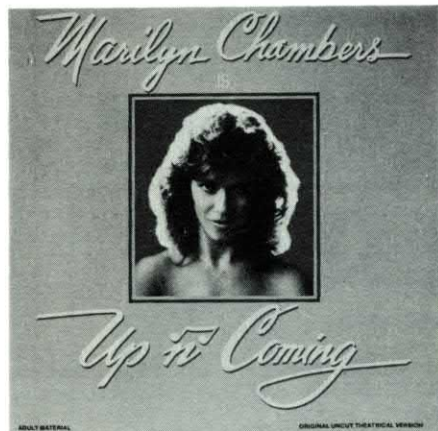
Taking this a stage further, we tried an NTSC LD 700 with PAL discs here and indeed the picture quality is excellent although in this instance you lose a bit off the top and bottom of the picture on a PAL monitor. Additionally the colour signal creeps through, sometimes in unrelated primary bars, but on other occasions you do get some rather strange hues allied to the correct part of the picture. On this machine it is also possible to play CAV discs, but only in regular play mode.



the difference. Don't you believe it! This pitch difference is well in evidence on men's voices and the likes of Harrison Ford and Captain James T. Kirk sound considerably more butch on NTSC LV. If you have ever thought that films on TV and video sounded different from how you remembered them at the cinema this could well be the reason. Similarly, this speeding up means that we get used to seeing everything happen at a marginally faster pace than real life and again PAL video has to an extent corrupted the fidelity of the original.

If your interest is for American

programme material the other advantage of NTSC LV is the opportunity to get closer to the master - whether film or video. It would be hoped that this aspect will be of lesser significance as the studios' increased awareness of the demands of LV will mean that they take more trouble always to do direct PAL transfers from film prints and avoid NTSC - PAL conversions and multi-generation copies.



Harking back to the differences in mains frequencies between NTSC and PAL video, many Americans, though impressed by PAL TV, are bothered by the apparent flicker of the image - again this is something we are not supposed to notice but NTSC LV discs have an undeniable stability to the picture that can only be attributed to this reduced flicker factor and this is one of the more attractive bonuses of the format.

Spoilt For Choice

The premier factor in going for NTSC LV must be the sheer choice of programmes. All those film companies that do not release on PAL LV readily issue product in NTSC. That means you could have 'Pinocchio' and all manner of other DISNEY cartoons and films. RCA and WARNER are two other very active companies in NTSC and there are smaller independent companies springing up who seem intent on developing the market for older film product catering to the true collector. Even those companies that are active in the UK will have good reason not to issue titles that are likely to have limited appeal here. In the same way that PAL catalogue contains many obscurities so does its NTSC counterpart. And it is not only obscure films that are unlikely to surface here. Special Interest titles with a low potential sale are understandably not likely to get issued here - sports, travel, transport (planes, trains, ships etc.), art, documentary, educational/industrial, and space discs that cater specifically to American tastes. We obviously will get discs on these topics in PAL but not the same ones.

If you are into foreign languages and foreign cinema you can have feature films in Japanese, Italian, French, Swedish, Polish, Chinese (Cantonese and Mandarin) etc. How long will it be before we have the forty or more jazz discs that Japanese laser fans already enjoy? Likewise all the comedy discs by American comedians?...and the complete 'Star Trek' TV series (40 discs!)? These queries are not in any way meant as criticism of the still young PAL LV catalogue but as a justification of the concept of choice. There cannot be that many people who would shell out for Japanese animation discs (in original language), but if you want 'em, they're there!

there!

Film fans would also likely appreciate the option of alternate versions of titles. The stereo versions of 'Oklahoma' and 'My Fair Lady' would obviously be preferable to our mono ones and there are many other examples of PAL discs that should have been in stereo but are only available as such in NTSC.

There is the choice of longer and uncut versions of films. 'El Cid' is listed at 189 mins in the US catalogue. Should you want the extended 143minute version of 'Star Trek - The Movie' it is available, as are CAV versions of 'Star Wars', 'The Empire Strikes Back', 'Raiders Of The Lost Ark', 'Citizen Kane' and the original 'King Kong'. There is an increasing number of shorter films that are also appearing with one side in CAV although the X-rated porno discs done in this fashion might be denied LV owners in the UK if recent experience is anything to go by (!). However, for readers residing in more enlightened countries (practically everywhere else it would seem) such limitations of freedom will not affect their access to these more novel areas of the NTSC catalogue.

Following a time when PIONEER, USA has only made a token effort on the music front they are now getting more heavily into pop music releases. Obviously the Digital Sound development has had some effect but even ignoring that factor many of the more obscure American acts are finding their way on to LV and in Japan there seems interest in European artistes that are not even likely to appear on PAL LV.

Owners of NTSC systems are also spared the threat of having titles deleted or being out of stock for any period of time. Discs that become unavailable in one territory are often current stock items elsewhere. Of course, you might just want to be first on your block with the very latest releases regardless of whether they are due for PAL issue later. The gap between UK and USA video releases is becoming progressively less and this is one NTSC advantage that is likely to be of less significance in the future, but everyone has at least a favourite or two that waiting any longer for than is absolutely necessary can be an intolerable burden.

Proceed With Caution

Yes. There is always something. Any one who got to read the first issue of the magazine will appreciate that the earlier launch of LV in the USA has meant that the country has been the main testing ground of LV developments. Anything that went wrong with LV can be found there! Most of the bugs got ironed out before crossing the Atlantic. The disc defects you are likely to encounter while investigating the US catalogue are likely to be far greater in quantity than the UK equivalent. Whereas the quality of older titles can be very variable, some are good, some aren't, many quite recent discs appear to have suffered the dreaded 'laser rot' disease that many owners of UK titles such as 'Poltergeist' and 'The Thing' have experienced. There

is no source of reference to the good and bad discs and so you may find it rather tedious returning faulty titles to your supplier. After all, it's not quite like popping down to the local high street dealer for a replacement! The best piece of advice would be to stick initially to the 1985 releases before going back

THE LASER DISC NEWSLETTER

Covers American and Japanese NTSC releases.

The popular monthly publication is now in its second year, bringing video disc owners timely news and reviews of laser video discs.

We cover both American releases and Japanese releases, and rare or unusual discs. You don't want to miss what we have to say!

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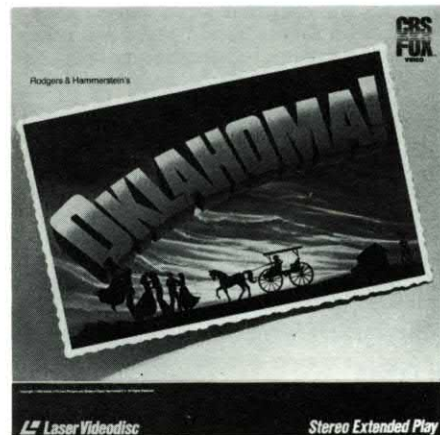
through the older titles.

Both American and Japanese discs can be very well pressed and the best examples can be very near spotless. So far, the two 3M pressed discs we've seen come out just about tops for lack of visible blemishes. And that's compared to discs from any part of the world.

A Conclusion

Is an NTSC system for you? This is not a question this magazine can answer on your behalf but at least the information in this article should help decide. One point worth repeating though is at least to consider the multi-standard option if you are ever in the position of changing your TV at some future stage. At least then you are only ever faced with the one additional step of buying an NTSC player if you ever do decide to take the plunge.

If that time is now we could only but recommend subscribing to the US monthly newsletter, 'The Laser Disc News-



letter', that, like LDR, is now entering its second year, and though differing in style and presentation, does offer the best commentary on the US scene as well as reviewing a substantial proportion of the new releases. See the advert for subscription information.

In the long run, as far as film fans are concerned, the hope must be that improvements in the UK catalogue will make equipping oneself for NTSC of only marginal value. But it is reassuring to know that, regardless of what transpires, a large quantity of titles is readily available on our favourite video system.

REVIEWS

Now that the magazine has looked at a fair selection of LV releases it seems opportune to reassess the review policy in the light of greater knowledge and experience and feedback from readers. Most things we got right....although sometimes for the wrong reasons. It has been a persistent problem to know quite how critical to be of disc quality. Not all readers come to LaserVision for its technical advantages - affordability and permanence may be the dominant reasons for turning to disc. That's as may be. The basic approach to reviews at the outset still seems the most valid, and that is that the near broadcast standard of reproduction promised by the LaserVision format should be fulfilled. This means that the discs themselves should do what they are supposed to, and whatever is selected to be preserved upon them should be of the best available technical merit. In more basic terms that means we don't want any more spotty discs and we can well do without film masters that have gone through goodness knows how many duplication and transfer stages. Neither demand would seem unreasonable at this time.

If only briefly, it may help to deal with the sequence of events leading up to the production of the LV disc. Whether we are dealing with a feature film or a videotape (the latter tend to predominate with music and TV titles), all programmes destined for the disc have to be ultimately transferred to a professional format videotape (ie 25mm C Format) from which the disc master is cut. With feature films that mastertape should be dubbed from the earliest generation film print in existence. Similar access to the original with video sourced material is again the best practice. That completed videotape master, on reaching the Blackburn factory (as far as most UK discs is concerned) is checked and, on approval, is committed to the preparation of the disc stampers from which the resulting discs are pressed. Each side of a LaserVision disc is pressed separately and then bonded together (The join is clearly visible around the inside edge of the centre hole. The outer perimeter of the disc is cleaned up after bonding and the join is barely detectable).

Film Prints

Leaving aside such considerations as to whether a film should be presented cropped from its, more often than not, wide-screen format the requirements for a good film print are quite simple. Any film submitted for disc release should be absolutely sharp, of a correct level of contrast with attention having been paid as to what is transferrable to the video medium, and of good colour. That assumes that no-one would even consider using a scratched and badly graded print of course. As far as the sound is concerned, this should preferably always be sourced from a separate magnetic tape track whenever it exists, and companies should only resort to optical tracks where nothing better exists. It is these optical tracks that account for many of

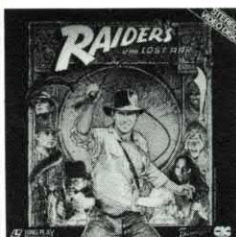
the scratchy, hissy, and crackly soundtracks audible on LaserVision discs.

Review experience so far would indicate that rarely do film masters to fulfill these requirements ever get anywhere near a laser disc! To an extent, the fact that most feature films originate from the USA makes access to original masters that bit more difficult. Rather too many older UK discs have ended up being sourced from films that at one stage have been transferred to NTSC videotape (the US TV standard) and then further converted to PAL (UK) video (and possibly gone through an extra couple of duplication stages between!). No wonder quality deteriorates.

Although some of their earlier titles had problems, some of the later CIC discs have revealed better master quality than most, and in preparing this review it seemed to make good sense to find out what it is that CIC does to achieve this. I spoke to their International Technical Manager, Glen Wingfield, who informed me that all CIC films are transferred direct to PAL video and they will not countenance the use of NTSC conversions. When I commented on the variation in image quality between titles he pointed out that film/video transfer was done in both the UK and USA and that the technicians there, more used to daily exposure to NTSC TV, would be more likely to fine tune the picture to what looked 'right' to them. Not so much a case of better or worse - just different. On this basis it seemed a reasonable guess that '48 Hours' (up until recently one of the best film masters that we have come to review) might have been done in the UK and he confirmed this was the case. That left an inconsistency caused by the less than ideal picture quality of 'Raiders Of The Lost Ark' which we originally considered to be a weak pressing but no longer do so. Apparently there are some films that CIC do not hold the film masters and they are submitted to them for home video release by certain independent production companies - in this instance LUCASFILMS, and this tape of 'Raiders' was as good as they themselves got.

(This would tend to confirm the editor's belief that there is a deliberate tendency to downgrade film masters on occasions to avoid the ravages of illicit piracy and copying. Only the minimum quality print is released to deter such abuse.)

On this example of CIC's method of operation the preparation of suitable masters for LV release would appear to demand no special magic formula, just



sound professional practice. With the standard of VCR tape reproduction being so low the incentive for film companies to prepare high quality video masters of their titles has been minimal. The size of the LaserVision market is too small to demand special treatment. Fortunately, the arrival of Hi-Fi VCRs has given film companies an incentive to pay greater attention to audio performance and with luck some of this will rub off on the visual aspect.

Video Masters

In the mastering specifications for LV PHILIPS lay down they press home the superior picture quality achievable from 35mm film stock. That many of the video originated programmes should look so good on LaserVision would tend to contradict this but we now know the reasons.

So what are the important things to consider with video material? On the sound front videotape has the inherent advantage of being magnetic from the start - no transfers from other formats corrupted by the demands of The Academy Curve. With the added advantage of a bit of DOLBY A noise reduction it doesn't take much to keep professional format video well above the requirements of LV audio. As to picture quality, there is always the threat of a level of grain, especially the more processing and duplication the programme material goes through but, in practice, video originated material appears to get to the LaserVision disc spared the ravages of excessive generation loss.

Many of the live concerts recorded in the USA and Japan are obviously recorded to the NTSC standard (as are possibly quite a few done in Europe too) yet can produce quite good resulting pictures on disc. It is these NTSC originated titles that tend to suffer most from the effects of grain and this is no doubt sometimes due to the natural desire to make NTSC video produce a PAL-like picture. If you accept the reality of the situation and keep the contrast a little lower and the colour balance a little more towards a pastel shade things look decidedly better. But still, there is no beating the superior picture quality achievable with PAL originated material. Both PMI and SPECTRUM have produced some pretty good discs from both NTSC and PAL originated programmes, as have ARTS INTERNATIONAL. Surprisingly, some of the BBC titles do not seem as sharp as could be expected. The 'Fawlty Towers' series are a good example. Nothing there really to criticise to any great degree but none of them have the biting definition one would expect from a studio production.

There have been several occasions when reviews have commented on audio related interference on music discs - narrow stripes, often red, that pulse in time with loud moments on the sound. PHILIPS say that this is always a fault in the original production where the video camera has become microphonic and picked up this audio interference, a problem that has been eliminated on the latest generation of cameras but that

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 25]

PHILIPS



LASERVISION ALBUM LIST AUTUMN '85

NEW RELEASES



NEW TITLES

KEY

L Long play
A Active play
S Stereo
M Mono

ENTERTAINMENT

Airplane II

LM

The sequel to the enormously successful 'Airplane', starring many of the original cast. It doesn't let up for a full 82 minutes with a constant stream of jokes - excellent entertainment.
82 minutes
CIC Video
Catalogue No. LVG 2071

All Of Me

LM

Steve Martin and Lily Tomlin star in this marvellous aching funny comedy. When a guru tried to reincarnate Edwina's soul into a beautiful young woman, and goofed, Roger Gobb finds himself with Edwina's soul controlling half of his body!
Comedy at its best.
88 minutes
Thorn EMI Video
Catalogue No. TLY 903086 1

Bachelor Party

LM

If you think you've seen some raunchy stag nights, think again! Bachelor Party gives Sex 'n' drugs 'n' rock 'n' roll a whole new meaning, and will give the broad minded viewer plenty to laugh about.
101 minutes
CBS/Fox Video
Catalogue No. 1440-70

Blame it on Rio

LM

Matthew, starring Michael Caine, has seen his wife go off to Bahia, his daughter is not speaking to him, but when his best friends nubile teenage daughter sets her sights on him, that's when his trouble really starts! An excellent 'tropical' comedy.
96 minutes
Thorn EMI Video
Catalogue No. TLY 902777 1

Children of the Corn

LM

Written by the author of 'The Shining' and 'Carrie', the adult population of a small drought stricken community in Nebraska find themselves the subject of human sacrifice to restore the dying corn fields, as 'ordained' by a sinister child preacher.
88 minutes
Thorn EMI Video
Catalogue No. TLY 902556 1

Company of Wolves

LM

A stunning visual experience. Little Red Riding Hood and Werewolf legends abound in a film bathed in sexual imagery. A truly fantastic film where nightmarish transformations from men to wolves are as hideous as anything in 'An American Werewolf in London'.
95 minutes
Vestron Video
Catalogue No. VLV 15079

Dune

LS

On the planet Dune giant sandworms guard the spice Melange, for whoever controls the spice controls the Universe. Paul Atreides is chosen to lead his people in battle against the Harkonnens - for possession of the planet. The special effects are out of this world.
130 minutes
Thorn EMI Video
Catalogue No. TLP 903025 1

Empire Strikes Back, The

LS

The battle continues to save the galaxy against the evil of Darth Vader. Will Luke Skywalker be lured to the Dark side of the Force or be killed in his confrontation with Darth Vader? One of the greatest pictures ever to be made!
119 minutes
CBS/Fox Video
Catalogue No. 1425 - 70

Firestarter

LM

Charlie McGee is a happy ordinary 8 year old - until someone angers or threatens her. As she grows up her power to cause incredible fires at a glance becomes more destructive. She does not want it but a sinister government agency wants to control and destroy her!
109 minutes
Thorn EMI Video
Catalogue No. TLY 902873 1

First Blood

LM

Sylvester Stallone plays an ex-Green Beret, a peacetime misfit haunted by memories of Vietnam. Falling foul of the town sheriff, he finds himself hunted by the sheriff, his posse and over 200 national guardsmen!
90 minutes
Thorn EMI Video
Catalogue No. TLY 901720 1

Flash Point

LM

Kennedy was assassinated. The evidence was buried. And someone - someone BIG - wants it to stay that way. Then two men stumble on a secret kept for 20 years, a secret that threatens to bury them. Starring Kris Kristofferson.
89 minutes
Thorn EMI Video
Catalogue No. TLY 903104 1

Footloose

LM

When Ren McCormack moves to a small mid-Western town with his mother, he finds the community is run by an autocratic Minister. With the help of the Minister's free-spirited daughter he sets out to confront the town's narrow-mindedness.
103 minutes
CIC Video
Catalogue No. LVG 2098

Jaws 3

LM

Larger and more terrifying than ever, this new Jaws adventure will keep you on your toes, and out of the water for a long time after you have left your seat. Some excellent heart pounding special effects.
96 minutes
CIC Video
Catalogue No. LVG 1103

Meaning of Life, The

LM

Featuring the Monty Python team including, John Cleese, Graham Chapman, Terry Jones and Michael Palin, you won't discover the meaning of life, but you will probably split your sides. Winner of the special jury grand prize in Cannes.
111 minutes
CIC Video
Catalogue No. LVG 1093

Officer and a Gentleman, An

LM

Occasionally a film arrives that uplifts and grips its audience. This is such a film, starring Richard Gere and Debra Winger, it is a tale of learning about discipline, love, friendship and romance.
126 minutes
CIC Video
Catalogue No. LVG 2085

Once Upon a Time in America

LM

Starring Robert de Niro, the story spans several decades around the era of Prohibition. 'Noodles' Aaronson and his 3 confederates mature into fully fledged hoods, but their violent lives intertwine until death strikes.
219 minutes
Thorn EMI Video
Catalogue No. TLL 902778 1

Partners

LM

Starring John Hurt, as a homosexual police clerk, and Ryan O'Neal, as a womaniser. Their assignment is to go undercover into a gay community to solve the murder of a known homosexual. The result is a humorous, but often serious mystery.
90 minutes
CIC Video
Catalogue No. LVG 2102

Philadelphia Experiment

LM

Two young seamen find themselves catapulted 41 years into the future due to a fault when testing a new camouflage system for the Navy. Their fight to return in time is imperative to stop the Earth being sucked back to the past.
96 minutes
Thorn EMI Video
Catalogue No. TLY 902782 1

Places in the Heart

LM

Sally Field, won the best Actress Oscar for her portrayal of Edna, as wife of the murdered sheriff. With the help a black worker, hunted by the Klu Klux Klan, and a blind ex-serviceman she fights to hold her family together during the depression.
113 minutes
CBS/Fox Video
Catalogue No. 6836-70

Romancing the Stone

LS

Starring Michael Douglas and Kathleen Turner, a sophisticated New York lady and a gun toting jungle hustler team up to find a priceless emerald in the Colombian jungle. Who will win - our hero's, the con-men or the crocodiles!
102 minutes
CBS/Fox Video
Catalogue No. 1358 - 70

Smokey and the Bandit 3

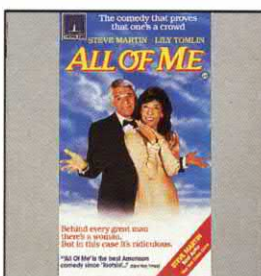
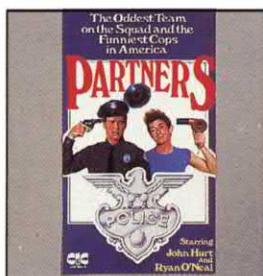
LM

Another wild free-for-all adventure film with a special guest appearance from Burt Reynolds, as the Real Bandit. Featuring some of the most incredible driving stunts ever filmed, who will win the race Smokey or the Bandit?
83 minutes
CIC Video
Catalogue No. LVG 1094

CIC VIDEO

THORN EMI

CBS FOX VIDEO



NEW TITLES

Star Trek 3 The Search for Spock

Kirk and his crew set out on their most personal and dangerous mission – a journey that will confront the final frontiers of evolutionary science and the arcane rituals of Vulcan mysticism – a must for sci-fi fans.
100 minutes
CIC Video
Catalogue No. LVG 2118

Streets of Fire

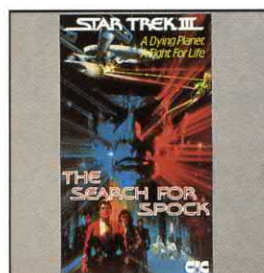
From the Director of "The Warriors", "Streets of Fire" captures a world where street gangs rule and violence is real. "High Noon on Wheels. If there is a more dazzling movie this year, I will be surprised" Daily Mail.
90 minutes
CIC Video
Catalogue No. LVG 1136

Tank

James Garner, as Sergeant-Major Carey, finds himself doing battle with the towns maniacal sheriff after defending a prostitute. When the sheriff jails his son on a phoney drugs charge, Carey takes matters into his own hands – with the help of his personal tank.
113 minutes
CIC Video
Catalogue No. LVG 1140

Terms of Endearment

Starring Shirley Maclaine, Debra Winger and Jack Nicholson, this picture picked up 5 Academy awards. From grand slapstick to deepest sentiment, 'Terms of Endearment' is a film which will move everyone who sees it.
126 minutes
CIC Video
Catalogue No. LVG 2105



Top Secret

Created by the makers of the original 'Airplane', this film is a hilarious parody of every conceivable genre – teenage rock stars, espionage, war plus the proverbial love story. The gags come thick and fast – a hilarious movie.
86 minutes
CIC Video
Catalogue No. LVG 2135

Trading Places

The Duke Brothers, owners of a Wall Street firm, wager a bet whether a born loser could be a successful investment executive, and a successful 'prig' turn to crime if turned out into the streets. When the 'prig' and the loser meet they set some hilarious revenge plans in motion.
112 minutes
CIC Video
Catalogue No. LVG 2101

Uncommon Valour

Starring Gene Hackman, as an army veteran obsessed with finding his lost son listed as 'missing in action' in Vietnam. With the help of his son's five marine buddies, they set off to carry out a dangerous daring mission.
100 minutes
CIC Video
Catalogue No. LVG 2103

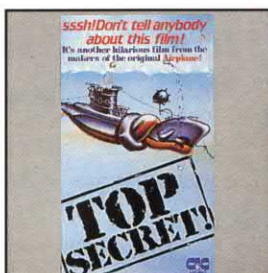
Watership Down

A beautifully animated feature length cartoon strip, introduced by Art Garfunkel's 'Bright Eyes' hit, this is a heart rending story of a group of rabbits and the fear and problems they face as they move to a new burrow on Watership Down.
88 minutes
Thorn EMI Video
Catalogue No. TLY 900682 1

MUSICAL FEATURES

Flashdance

A musical box office smash, Flashdance tells the story of Alex Owens, a welder by day and a dancer at night, who struggles for independence, love and her dream – to dance at the Pittsburgh Conservatory of Dance.
91 minutes
CIC Video
Catalogue No. LVG 2078



Give My Regards to Broad Street

McCartney and friends, including Ringo, Barbara Bach, Tracey Ullman and Dave Edmunds, sing old Beatles classics and new McCartney numbers on the trail of the missing master tape. If it's not found by midnight McCartney loses control of his music empire!
109 minutes
CBS/Fox Video
Catalogue No. 1448 - 70

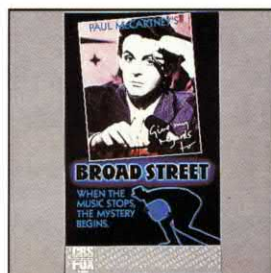
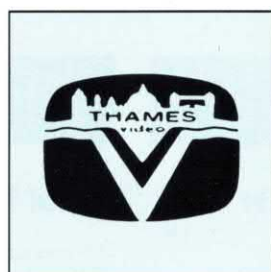
Staying Alive

'Saturday Night Fever' is still burning in Tony Manero, played by John Travolta. A spectacularly visual musical that pulsates with the musical excitement of 5 new Bee Gee songs, and also features Cynthia Rhodes of 'Flashdance' fame.
94 minutes
CIC Video
Catalogue No. LVG 2099

MUSIC PROGRAMMES

Elton John – Nighttime Concert

A showman par excellence. Filmed performing to an audience of over 70,000, Elton John gives a stunning live show with songs including Crocodile Rock, Blue Eyes, Goodbye Yellow Brick Road and Twist and Shout.
53 minutes
Vestron Music Video
Catalogue No. MLV 11011



Neil Diamond – Live at the Greek

Probably one of his best performances captured on film, Neil Diamond sings many of his best loved hits, including Sweet Caroline, Lady Oh, Song Sung Blue, Cracklin' Rosie and I am... I said.
52 minutes
Vestron Music Video
Catalogue No. MLV 11005

Paul Young – The Video Singles

A compilation of all Paul's video chart busters since he left the Q Tips taken from the Albums 'No Parlez' and 'The Secret of Association', including 'Wherever I Lay My Hat/That's My Home' and 'I'm Gonna Tear Your Playhouse Down'.
26 minutes
CBS/Fox Video
Catalogue No. 6456-70

Rolling Stones – Video Rewind

The Rolling Stones, pioneers of mayhem, appear in 12 complete unedited versions of their most innovative music videos, including Too Much Blood, Undercover of the Night, Angie and Start me up.
60 minutes
Vestron Music Video
Catalogue No. MLV 11016

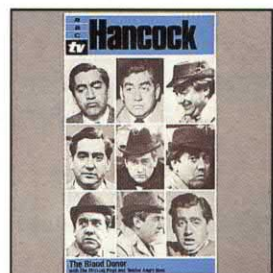
Wham! – The Video

George and Andrew are Wham! singing 5 of their major hits: Wham Rap, Club Tropicana, Wake Me Up Before You Go-go, Careless Whisper and Last Christmas.
21 minutes
CBS/Fox Video
Catalogue No. 3048-70

HUMOUR

Tony Hancock – The Blood Donor

Also included is 'The Missing Page' and 'Twelve Angry Men', taken from Hancock's unsurpassable BBC television series. This is a must for all Hancock fans and comedy lovers everywhere.
90 minutes
BBC Video
Catalogue No. BBCL 7004



SPORT

Botham's Ashes

Taken from the 1981 Cornhill Test series, Richie Benaud and Ian Botham analyse the highlights of that historic Headingly Test when Botham struck with a spectacular innings.
109 minutes
BBC Video
Catalogue No. BBCL 5015

CHILDRENS

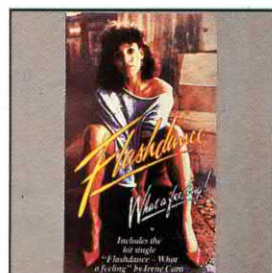
Best of Danger Mouse, The

One of the kids favourite animated TV comedy series, if you want to get the kids off your hands this is a must for all parents!
120 minutes
Thames Video
Catalogue No. LVDM 1001

SPECIAL INTEREST

World at War Compilation

Taken from the successful TV series, the World at War comprises 13 discs including a paperback book boxed set for a fully comprehensive and in depth coverage.
26 one hour episodes
Thames Video
Catalogue No. LVW AW1301



RECENT RELEASES April to July

KEY

L Long play
A Active play
S Stereo
M Mono

ENTERTAINMENT

All Creatures Great and Small

99 Minutes
BBC Video
Catalogue No. BBCL 2006

Reuben Reuben

90 minutes
Embassy Home Entertainment
Catalogue No. ELV 6001

MUSICAL FEATURES

Splashin' the Palace '84

59 minutes
ON TV Productions
Catalogue No. ONTV-05

MUSIC PROGRAMMES

Camel Live in Concert

Polygram Video
Catalogue No. 041 058 1

Daniel Barenboim — Ludwig Van Beethoven

Metropolitan Video
Catalogue No. MET 101 — MET110

Duran Duran — Sing Blue Silver

85 minutes
Picture Music International
Catalogue No. PMI 99 1063 1

Eric Clapton — On a Whistle Test

60 minutes
BBC Video
Catalogue No. BBCL 3025

OPERA

Arabella

160 minutes
RM Arts
Catalogue No. 05 A1 032

Così fan tutte

160 minutes
RM Arts
Catalogue No. 05 A1 033

Julius Caesar

180 minutes
RM Arts
Catalogue No. 04 A1 031

Tosca

120 minutes
National Video Corporation
Catalogue No. 05 A1 035

Turandot

120 minutes
National Video Corporation
Catalogue No. 05 1A 034

HUMOUR

By the Sea and The Picnic

79 minutes
BBC Video
Catalogue No. BBCL 7024

Fall and Rise of Reginald Perrin, The

107 minutes
BBC Video
Catalogue No. BBCL 7012

Fawlty Towers

The BBC have released four volumes each with three episodes:

1. The Germans with The Hotel Inspectors and A Touch of Class.
2. The Psychiatrist with The Builders and The Wedding Party.
3. The Kipper and the Corpse with Waldorf Salad and Gourmet Night.
4. Basil the Rat with Communication Problems and The Anniversary.

BBC Video
Catalogue No. BBCL 7003 and 7029/30/31

Last of the Summer Wine

87 minutes
BBC Video
Catalogue No. BBCL 7028

More Ripping Yarns

92 minutes
BBC Video
Catalogue No. BBCL 7039

Ripping Yarns

90 minutes
BBC Video
Catalogue No. BBCL 7013

Three of a Kind

90 minutes
BBC Video
Catalogue No. BBCL 7033

CHILDRENS

Animal Magic

59 minutes
BBC Video
Catalogue No. BBCL 9013

Doctor Who — Brain of Morbias, The

60 minutes
BBC Video
Catalogue No. BBCL 2012

Doctor Who — Revenge of the Cybermen

90 minutes
BBC Video
Catalogue No. BBCL 2003

Play School

60 minutes
BBC Video
Catalogue No. BBCL 9011

Secret Garden, The

107 minutes
BBC Video
Catalogue No. BBCL 9014

Take Hart

91 minutes
BBC Video
Catalogue No. BBCL 9033

SPECIAL INTEREST

Ensemble

121 minutes
BBC Video
Catalogue No. BBCL 1027

Get Fit with the Green Goddess

60 minutes
BBC Video
Catalogue No. BBCL 1028

Show '84 East of England Show

47 minutes
Interactive Pictures Ltd
Catalogue No. EES

Wine Programme, The

52 minutes per disc
Artel Video International
Catalogue No. 0002, 02006/1/2/3



This list contains the titles of programmes from a number of independent programme contributors, produced and/or distributed under their own labels in the LaserVision format for the benefit of LaserVision system users. The information contained in this leaflet was correct at the time of going to press, but may be subject to alteration.

TRADE SUPPLIES

Lightning,
841 Harrow Road, London, NW10 5NH.
Tel No. 01-969 5255
Trade Order Desk: 01-969 8344

S Gold & Sons,
69 Flempton Road, London E10 7NL.
Tel No. 01-539 3600.

KEY

- Stereo ★ Active play
- Discontinued line - available only while trade stocks last

ENTERTAINMENT

Absolution ■ LVPB 032
Adventures of Sherlock Holmes
Smarter Brother, The 1063-70
Airplane! LVG 2029
Airplane II LVG 2071
Alien ● 1090-70
All Creatures Great and Small BBCL 2006
All of Me TLY 903086 1
Alone in the Dark ● D2034
Amateur, The 1147-70
Amazing Spider-Man, The 888 8913 3
American Werewolf in London, An 7904041
An Eye for an Eye EVL 1601
Apocalypse Now ● LVH 2030
Atlantic City ■ LVPB 001
Author! Author! 1181-70
Avalanche Express 1138-70
Back Roads 7071-70
Baltimore Bullet, The 72500510
Bandolero 1203-70
Barbarosa LVITC 0025
Bachelor Party 1440-70
Bedazzled 1120-70
Being There 7025-70
Beneath the Planet of the Apes 1013-70
Best Little Whorehouse in Texas, The ● LVG 1072
Big Red One, The 7052-70
Black Marble, The ■ ELV 1617
Blame it on Rio TLY 902777 1
Blow Out ● D0161
Blue Max, The ● ■ 1062-70
Border, The LVG 1055
Boston Strangler, The 1015-70
Boy Named Charlie Brown, A 7121-70
Boys in Blue, The D1065
Brainstorm ● UMLV 10314
Breaking Away ● 1081-70
Breathless D0200
Brubaker ● 1098-70
Buck Rogers in the 25th Century ● LVG 1015
Butch Cassidy and The Sundance Kid ● ■ 1061-70
Cannonball Run, The 6208-70
Capricorn One ● LVITC 0008
Captain Scarlet Vs The Mysterons LVITC 0005
Carbon Copy 955 9417 4
Carnal Knowledge 4006-70
Casanova 1220-70
Cat on a Hot Tin Roof UMLV 10060
Cat People ● LVG 1053
Challenge, The 7137-70
Champ, The UMLV 10034
Champions ELV 6000

Chariots of Fire ● 1118-70
Chel! 1163-70
Children of Rage 6251-70
Children of the Corn TLY 902556 1
Chinatown LVH 2005
Chosen, The ELV 1365
City on Fire 72500500
Clash of the Titans UMLV 10074
Class D1081
Class Reunion D1076
Codename: The Soldier ELV 2001
Coma UMLV 10013
Coming Out of the Ice 791 542 1
Company of Wolves VLV 15079
Conquest of the Earth ● ■ LVG 1054
Conquest of the Planet of the Apes 1137-70
Cruising 7029-70
Culpepper Cattle Company 1189-70
Dain Cruse, The ■ ELV 1800
Damien - Omen II ● 1087-70
Damnation Alley 1202-70
Day of the Dolphin 4004-70
Deadly Blessing 790 405 1
Death Hunt ● 1124-70
Death Valley ■ LVG 1048
Death Wish LVG 2004
Dirty Mary, Crazy Larry ● 1053-70
Doctor Dolittle 1025-70
Dracula ● ■ LVG 1011
Draughtsman's Contract, The 955 8928 1
Duchess and the Dirtwater Fox, The 1059-70
Dune ● TLY 903025 1
Eagle Has Landed, The ● LVITC 0009
Educating Rita D0206
El Cid ■ A-AE 0202
Electric Horseman, The LVH 1003
11 Harrowhouse 1197-70
Emperor of the North 1166-70
Empire Strikes Back, The ● 1425-70
Endless Love 790 4031
Enemy Below, The 1133-70
Escape from Alcatraz LVG 2015
Escape from New York ● ELV 1602
Escape to Victory 888 8906 1
Exterminator, The ■ A-A 0353
Fall of the Roman Empire, The ■ A-AE 0203
Fantastic Voyage 1002-70
Fan, The LVG 2054
55 Days at Peking ■ A-AE 0205
Final Conflict, The 1115-70
Final Exam ELV 1618
Firestarter TLY 902873 1
First Blood TLY 901720 1
Flash Point TLY 903104 1
Fog, The ■ 4067-70
Footloose LVG 2098
Forbidden World ELV 4030
48 Hours ● LVG 2074
Fourth Man, The ELV 1378
French Connection, The ● 1009-70
French Connection II 1127-70
Friday 13th Part II LVG 2035
Fruit is Ripe, The LVHPV 0523
Funhouse ■ LVG 1058
Fury, The 1097-70
Gallipoli ■ LVG 3001
Games, The 1176-70
Getting Wasted 6257-70
Goin' All The Way 791 539 1
Goldengirl ELV 2069
Gorky Park D0213
Great Muppet Caper, The LVITC 0001
Great White Hope, The 1151-70
Green Ice LVITC 0004
Gwendoline ● ELV 6103
Hands of the Ripper 72520 000
Hawk The Slayer LVITC 0003
Heaven Can Wait LVG 2012
Henry V ■ 73500 100
High Anxiety 1107-70
High Ice 791 510 1
High Risk 955 9415 0
Highest Honour, The ELV 6104

History of the World Part I ● 1114-70
Hoodwink LVSPV 0524
Hot Bubbegum D1037
Hound of the Baskervilles, The ELV 1364
House of the Long Shadows 955 9418 1
Howling, The ELV 1615
Humongous ELV 1613
Hunger, The UMLV 10281
Hunter, The LVG 2017
I Ought to be in Pictures 1150-70
Inferno 1140-70
Invaders from the Deep LVITC 0006
Ipcress File, The 72500 150
Island, The ● ■ LVH 1012
Jaguar Lives ■ 72500 480
Janitor, The 1116-70
Jaws LVH 1001
Jaws 3 LVG 1103
Julia 1091-70
Just Before Dawn D2027
Kagemusha ● ■ 1109-70
Kelly's Heroes UMLV 10168
Key, The ELV 1374
Killing Machine ELV 1386
Kremlin Letter, The 1207-70
Lady Vanishes, The (1938) 72500 260
Lady Vanishes, The (1978) 72500 090
Last American Hero, The 1227-70
Last American Virgin, The ■ 888 8908 5
Lianna ELV1359
Liar's Moon 6220-70
Little Big Man 7130-70
Lone Wolf McQuade D0197
Longest Day, The 1021-70
Lords of Discipline LVG 1072
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M*A*S*H ● 1038-70
McVicar ● 7904791
Meaning of Life, The LVG 1093
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LaserVision



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Private Lessons ■
Private Popsicle
Producers, The
Prom Night
Quest for Fire ●
Race for Your Life Charlie Brown
Race with the Devil
Raiders of the Lost Ark ●
Raise the Titanic
Rats, The
Red Sun
Return of the Pink Panther, The
Return of the Soldier, The
Reuben Reuben
Revenge of the Ninja
Riddle of the Sands, The ■
Rider on the Rain
Ring of Bright Water
Road Games
Romancing the Stone
Rough Cut
Royal Flash
Ruckus
Sahara ●
Sailor Who Fell From Grace with the Sea
Salamander, The
Saturday the 14th
Saturn 3 ●
Scanners
Sea Wolves, The
Seduction, The
Seven Ups, The
Shock Treatment
Sign of Four, The
Silkwood
Silver Dream Racer ●
Silver Streak ● ■
Sisters
Skyriders
Smokey and the Bandit
Smokey and the Bandit 2
Smokey and the Bandit 3
Snoopy Come Home
S.O.B.
Soldier Blue
Sophie's Choice
Spetters
Spinal Tap
St. Valentine's Day Massacre, The
Starflight ●
Starting Over
Star Trek - The Motion Picture ●
Star Trek 2: The Wrath of Khan ●
Star Trek 3 - The Search for Spock
Star Wars
Sting, The
Strangers Kiss
Straw Dogs
Street of the Damned
Streets of Fire ●
Stunt Man, The
Sword and the Sorcerer, The ●
Tank
TAPS
Tarzan the Apeman
10 to Midnight
Terms of Endearment
They Call Me Trinity
Thing, The ●
Thirty-nine Steps, The (1935)
Those Magnificent Men in Their
Flying Machines ● ■
Thunderbirds in Outer Space ●
Top Secret
Tora! Tora! Tora!
Trading Places
Trinity is Still My Name ■
Turkey Shoot
2001 a Space Odyssey

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UMLV 10165
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955 8921 2
4058-70
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73500490
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ELV 2020
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72500 250
1033-70
LVITC 0013
LVG 2135
1017-70
LVG 2101
ELV 2021
955 9421 5
UMLV 10002

Uncommon Valour
Undeclared, The
Underfire
Unmarried Woman, An
Vanishing Point
Vice Squad
Victor Victoria ●
Visiting Hours ●
Warning, The
Warriors, The
Watership Down
Wedding, A
When a Stranger Calls
Who Dares Wins
Whose Life is it Anyway?
Why Not Stay for Breakfast?
Wicked Lady, The
Wildcats of St. Trinians
Wild Geese, The ■
Winter Kills
XTRO ●
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Yellowbeard
Young Doctors in Love
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Young Warriors
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Zardoz
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Zorro, The Gay Blade

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ELV 2015
UMLV 10151
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888 8900 9
LVG 2007
TYL 900682 1
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888 8904 7
D0125
UMLV 10141
LVGP 004
955 8922 9
LVEK 001
73500 130
ELV 2056
790 648 1
UMLV 10243
D1068
D1064
1103-70
955 8925 0
ELV 1604
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MUSIC FEATURES

ABC - Mantrap ●
All That Jazz ● ■
Band Wagon, The
Blue Hawaii ● ■
Blues Brothers, The ■
Bugsy Malone
Cabaret
Caledonian Dreams ● ★
Compleat Beatles, The ●
Cool Cats ●
Easter Parade
Fame ●
Flashdance ●
Gigi
Give My Regards to Broad Street ●
Grease ●
Grease 2 ●
Guys and Dolls
Hello Dolly ●
Jesus Christ Superstar ●
King and I, The ●
My Fair Lady
Oklahoma
On the Town
Pippin ●
Pirate Movie, The ●
Quadrophenia ●
Rose, The ●
Saturday Night Fever ●
Show Boat
Sound of Music, The ●
Splashin' the Palace '84 ●
Staying Alive
Tropical Hi-Noon ●
Xanadu ●
Yes, Giorgio

790 671 1
1095-70
UMLV 10113
2001-70
LVM 1013
72570 000
73570 090
ME060-E
UMLV 101166
UMLV 10317
UMLV 10256
UMLV 10027
LVG 2078
UMLV 10050
1448-70
LVG 2003
LVG 2066
7039-70
1001-70
LVG 1008
1004-70
7038-70
7020-70
UMLV 10057
MP-119-E
1185-70
790 1861
1092-70
LVG 2001
UMLV 10167
1051-70
ONTV-05
LVG 2099
ME104-E
LVG 1018
UMLV 10208

MUSIC PROGRAMMES

Abba ● ★
Abba in Concert ●
Abba, The Movie ●
Academy of St. Martin in the Fields
at Longleat, The ●
Adam and the Ants Live in Japan ● ■

LVG 1016
MP066-E
UMLV 10215
PMI 90 1962 1
LVPL 034

Barclay James Harvest Berlin ● ★
Big Country - Live ●
Black Sabbath & Blue Oyster Cult -
Black and Blue ●
Bob Marley & The Wailers ●
Camel Live in Concert ●
Chris Barber Band, The ●
Chris Rainbow - Body Music ●
Claude Bolling: Concerto for Classic Guitar
and Jazz Piano ●
Cliff Richard and the Shadows:
Thank You Very Much ■
Cliff Richard - The Video Collection ●
Daniel Barenboim -
Ludwig Van Beethoven
David Bowie - Love You Till Tuesday ●
David Essex - Live at the Albert Hall ●
DIO Live in Concert
Dire Straits - Alchemy - Live ●
Donna Summer - A Hot Summer Night
Dr. Coppelius ●
Duran Duran ●
Duran Duran - Sing Blue Silver ●
Earth, Wind and Fire in Concert ●
Elkie Brooks - Pearls The Video Show ●
E.L.O. - Live at Wembley
Elton John in Central Park ● ★
Elton John - Nighttime Concert ●
Elvis 'That's The Way It Is' ●
Elvis on Tour ●
Englebert Humperdink Live in Las Vegas ● ■
Eric Clapton - On a Whistle Test
Essential Mike Oldfield, The ■
Every Brothers Reunion Concert, The ●
Fleetwood Mac in Concert
From the New World ● ★
Gary Numan's Micromusic ●
Girl Groups
Grateful Dead/Dead Ahead ●
Grover Washington Jnr. - In Concert ● ★
Hip Hop History ●
Itzhak Perlman - Beethoven Violin Concerto
in D. Opus 61 ●
Jam, The - Video Snap
Japan - Oil on Canvas ●
Jerry Lee Lewis Live ●
Joni Mitchell: Shadows & Light ●
Kajagoogoo - White Feathers Tour ●
Kate Bush Live at the Hammersmith Odeon ● ■
Kate Bush - The Single File ●
Kevin Rowland & Dexy's Midnight Runners -
The Bridge ●
Kids Are Alright, The - The Who ●
Little River Band: Live Exposure ●
Loretta ● ★
Making Michael Jackson's Thriller ●
Manhattan Transfer In Concert, The ●
Manilow Live at the Greek
Marillion ●
Marillion - Recital of the Script ●
Ma Vlast ●
Mikado, The ■
Mink de Ville - Live at the Savoy ● ■
Music & Lights by Imagination ●
Music of Don McLean, The ●
Music of Melissa Manchester, The
Neil Diamond - Live at the Greek ●
New York City Ballet ● ★
No Nukes - The Muse Concert
Now That's What I Call Music 1 ●
Now That's What I Call Music 2 ●
Nutcracker, The ●
Olivia Newton-John: Live! ●
Olivia Newton-John: Physical ●
Olivia Newton-John: Two Of A Kind ●
Other Side of Nashville, The ●
Paul Simon ● ★
Paul Young - The Video Singles ●
Pavarotti ● ★
Peter Tosh Live ●
Phil Collins - Live at Perkins Palace ●
Pink Floyd Live at Pompeii ● ★
Public Image Limited
Queen: Greatest Flix ●
Rainbow - Live Between the Eyes ●

790 499 1
040 3141
791 5491
MP106-E
041 058 1
BBCV 3018L
PMI 99 0014 1
MJ127-E
6132-70
PMI 90 1960 1
MET 101-MET 110
040 3131
040 3481
040 365 1
040 2691
040 1921
LVAPV 0519
PMI 90 0984 1
PMI 99 1063 1
MP098-E
791 559 1
7021-70
405 3110
MLV 11011
UMLV 10373
UMLV 10153
LVBP 048
BBCL 3025
LD011C
UMLV 10331
790 649 1
MC036-E
PVC 3001L
UMLV 10194
MP120-E
MJ077-E
041-0251
PMI 90 0493 1
040 1901
VVDLD 055D
6340-70
MP086-E
PMI 90 2049 1
6135-70
PMI 90 1430 1
790 5861
791 5141
6137-70
LVG 1017
VL 1000
MJ090E
955 8931 2
PMI 99 0008 1
PMI 90 1954 1
MC034-E
73570 050
791 553
LVRPV 0520
PMI 90 1961 1
MP076-E
MLV 11005
790 140 1
7065-70
PMI Now 1
PMI Now 2
MC091-E
ELV 1241
6134-70
PMI
UMLV 10351
MP054-E
6456-70
790 588 1
PMI 99 1000 1
PMI 90 1963 1
790 1821
VVD LD022
6133-70
790 587 1

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Rock Flashback - Deep Purple - California Jam	BBCV 3000L
Rod Stewart: Tonight He's Yours	ELV 1211
Rolling Stones - Video Rewind	MLV 11016
Rostropovich	MC085-E
Roxy Music - The High Road	790 585 1
Rush - Exit Stage Left	791 558 1
Saxon - Live	040 2491
Sheena Easton - Live at the Palace Hollywood	PMI 90 1273 1
Simon & Garfunkel: Central Park Concert	MP080-E
Siouxsie and the Banshees - Nocturne	040 191 1
Sky at Westminster Abbey	BBCV 3017L
Soft Cell - Non Stop Exotic Video Show	PMI 90 1478 1
Status Quo - Live in Concert	790 688 1
Steve Millar Band - Live	PMI 90 2050 1
Stevie Nicks	MP100-E
Strangers - Video Collection 1977-1982, The	PMI 90 1032 1
Style Council, The - Far East and Far Out	040 3691
Tears for Fears - In My Mind's Eye	040 3491
Thomas Dolby - Live Wireless	PMI 90 1957 1
Thompson Twins - Side Kicks The Movie	PMI 90 1955 1
Tina Turner Live - Nice 'n' Rough	PMI 90 0986 1
To Russia with Elton	LVITC 0007
Toyah at the Rainbow	BBCV 3012L
Tubes Video, The	6136-70
UB40 Live	VVD LD025
Urg! A Music War	888 8909 2
Video Hits	ON-TV 04
Video Rock Attack - Various Artists	790 5331
Videostars	ON-TV 02
Videotheque	ON-TV 03
Video Waves - Various Artists	046 2481
Wham! The Video	3048-70
Whitesnake Live	PMI 90 2032 1
Who's Last Concert Tour in America, The	6234-70

OPERA

Aida	04 AI 026
Arabella	05 AI 032
Così fan tutte	05 AI 033
Der Freischütz	04 AI 016
Die Fledermaus	04 AI 028
Ernani	04 AI 025
Falstaff	04 AI 023
Gloriana	04 AI 029
Idomeneo	04 AI 019
I Lombardi	04 AI 030
Il Trittico	04 AI 008
Intermezzo	04 AI 013
Julius Caesar	04 AI 031
La Bohème	04 AI 010
La Cenerentola	04 AI 014
La Fanciulla del West	04 AI 004
Les Contes d'Hoffmann	04 AI 001
Madama Butterfly	04 AI 015
Manon Lescaut	04 AI 022
Mary Stuart	04 AI 005
Messiah	04 AI 012
Nabucco	04 AI 027
Otello	04 AI 024
Peter Grimes	04 AI 007
Samson and Delilah	04 AI 003
Tosca	05 AI 035
Turandot	05 AI 034

BALLET

Catherine Wheel, The	04 AI 017
Don Quixote	04 AI 018
Giselle	04 AI 009
La Fille Mal Gardée	04 AI 011
Manon	04 AI 002
Sleeping Beauty, The	04 AI 006
Spartacus	04 AI 021
Swan Lake	04 AI 020

HUMOUR

Best of Kenny Everett Video Show, The Vol. 1	9062075
By the Sea and The Picnic	BBCL 7024
Elephant Parts	MP109E
Fall and Rise of Reginald Perrin, The	BBCL 7012
Fawlty Towers	BBCL 7003, 7029/30/31
Last of the Summer Wine	BBCL 7028
Mike Harding Goes Over the Top	BBCV 7001L
More Ripping Yarns	BBCL 7039
Nine Lives of Fritz the Cat, The	791 5201
Ripping Yarns	BBCL 7013
Three of a Kind	BBCL 7033
Tony Hancock - The Blood Donor	BBCL 7004
World of Morecambe & Wise, The	9005075

SPORT

Botham's Ashes	BBCL 5015
Focus on Soccer	74550140
Harry Carpenter's Videobook of Sport	BBCV 5011L
Harry Carpenter's Videobook of Sport Volume Two	BBCV 5019L
Henry Cotton Celebrity Golf Lesson, The	ON-TV 01
Horseback	BBCV 1011L
Play Golf with Peter Alliss	BBCV 1004L
Play Tennis - with Derek Horwood	BBCV 1010L
Soccer The Game of the Century	790 0311
Squash Rackets	72500250

CHILDRENS

Animal Magic	BBCL 9013
Animalympics	LVBPV 0518
Asterix the Gaul	SV 7001
BBC Children's Favourites	BBCV 9000L
Best of Danger Mouse, The	LVDM 1001
Blue Peter Makes	BBCV 9007L
Calimero	790 105 1
Captain Future I and II	LVPA 030/LVPA 029
Cartoon Show from Terrytoons	2911-70
Dastardly and Muttley	955 9419 8
Doctor Who - Brain of Morbiss, The	BBCL 2012
Doctor Who - Revenge of the Cybermen	BBCL 2003
Flight of Dragons, The	791 563 1
Gulliver's Travels	BBCV 9002L
Little Brown Burro/Tukiki and His Search for a Merry Christmas	ELV 1347/8
Lucky Luke - Daisytown	SV 7002
MGM Cartoon Magic Vol. I	UMLV 10230
Peter Ustinov Tells Stories from Hans Christian Andersen	790 0271
Pied Piper and Cinderella	9005095
Play School	BBCL 9011
Popeye & Friends in Outer Space	SV 7003
Raccoons & The Lost Star, The	ELV 1352
Raccoons on Ice and the Christmas Raccoons	ELV 1350
Scooby and Scrappy-Doo	888 8901 6
Secret Garden, The	BBCL 9014
Sinbad the Sailor	LVPB 027
Superted	955 8932 9
Take Hart	BBCL 9033
Tom & Jerry Vol. II	UMLV 10146
Tom & Jerry Vol. III	UMLV 10298
Tom & Jerry - Cartoon Festival	UMLV 10019
Top Cat	955 8933 6
Wind in the Willows, The	791 562 1

SPECIAL INTEREST

Colonel Culppeper's Flying Circus	BBCV 6014L
David Attenborough presents the BBC Videobook of British Garden Birds	BBCV 1005L

Delia Smith's Home Baking	(Dual) BBCV 1009L
Ensemble	BBCL 1027
Falklands Task Force South	BBCV 6016L
Feeling Fit	72550240
Great Railways Volume I	BBCV 1008L
Get Fit with the Green Goddess	BBCL 1028
Helping Your Child to Read	BBCV 1015L
Mr. Smith's Flower Garden	BBCV 1001L
Mr. Smith's Indoor Garden	BBCV 1002L
Mr. Smith's Vegetable Garden	BBCV 1000L
Paint!	BBCV 1016L
Queen's Birthday Parade, The	BBCV 5000L
Royal Wedding, The - The Full Day - Commentary by Tom Flemming	BBCV 5013L
Sea Power	BBCV 6011L
Show '84 - East of England Show	EES
Story of English Furniture, The	BBCV 1006/7L
Tarka the Otter	72500080
Training Dogs the Woodhouse Way - with Barbara Woodhouse	BBCV 1003L
Treasures of the British Crown - presented by Sir Huw Wheldon	BBCV 6000L
Vincent Van Gough - A Portrait in Two Parts	VVG
Wine Programme, The	0002, 02006/1/2/3
World at War Compilation (13 discs)	LVW AW 130
World's Great Paintings, The : Adoration	BBCV 1013L

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is still likely to crop up now and again while older equipment is still in use. PHILIPS have apparently suggested that some mention of this sort of defect be mentioned on the sleeve so as to avoid confusion but software companies have resisted in the belief that it would act as a disincentive to sales. Something of a dilemma. The closest thing to such a notice that we've seen is the BBC 'Deep Purple-California Jam' disc that apologises for the inferior NTSC derived picture quality. In fact the picture quality is none too bad but the disc does have some colossal red stripes flash across the picture every now and again and there is no mention of these at all. There is nothing that off putting about these that would deter a fan who appreciates the value of the historic contents but the initial impression is of pressing defect.

Pressing Quality

It now seems generally accepted that the quality of UK pressings has improved markedly in the last six months. The turnabout has been greater than is apparent to us. If you are a manufacturer it is just as important to achieve a high yield from your production, and not only are we getting better pressings but the Blackburn plant is experiencing substantially lower in-plant rejection rates. But there is still the need to push for further improvement. Even though the newer discs are sharper and stronger we still have the intermittent manifestation of spots and speckles to contend with. The elimination of these annoying blemishes would appear to be the final major hold-up to totally satisfactory pressings.

Mind you, it is not only the press-

ings themselves that affect the picture quality of the discs. How the disc masters are cut also influences image quality. Although we have no confirmation of what changes have been made, there do seem to be visual indications that many of the older titles were 'limited' in some manner to aid satisfactory transfer to disc.

We have still not found a CAV disc that matches the best of the CLV titles for definition but this may be the result of inadequate source material.

There have been complaints of streaky lines on discs - often most visible on plain backgrounds and dark scenes. This would seem to be a player characteristic rather than a disc fault. Discs exhibiting this streaking have come up free of this on the new PIONEER LD700 and such an improvement looks encouraging for future players. Without doubt there is fine balance between disc quality and player compatibility.

Sound quality of discs is proving hard to assess. How do you tell whether hiss is on the disc or the submitted master tape? Some discs, older ones mostly, do have some low level 'spitting' noise - rather like noisy vinyl discs.

New Grades For Old

The grading system has undergone minor revisions in the light of previous experience. There is no way that three grades can do justice to the demands of the task - twenty would probably be nearer the mark if one was to allot a grade mark to each significant characteristic. Three grades is a compromise but one that is preferable to no grades at all. As before, the grades do need to be used in conjunction with the text of the review. Readers should find titles

attributed 'A' & 'B' grades satisfactory. 'C' & 'D' graded discs would still be found 'acceptable' by many but they do exhibit less than ideal master/disc quality. (There are now lots of film masters graded 'C'. Most of these are quite watchable once or twice but, really, they are hardly truly representative of the potential quality of 35mm film stock. Also, in the year that LDR has been going there has been an increased expectation of the sound quality of film soundtracks and the new grading system reflects this.)

ORIGINAL MASTER - FILM/VIDEO

'A' is the ideal grade and though not perfect, masters so graded should show negligible generation loss etc. All 'B' grades should be acceptable. Anything with a 'C' will probably exhibit poor definition, colour, excessive grain etc. 'D' indicates dubious preparation of master material.

ORIGINAL MASTER - AUDIO

Bear in mind that LDR is not a purist Hi-Fi magazine. Any master considered 'A' grade will have good dynamic range. With films it would indicate the use of a magnetic track. 'B' is still quite a good grade but the audio might not stand up without an accompanying picture. Any film with a 'C' will have a thin sounding optical track that is starting to go crackly and distorted or possesses a high level of hiss. A 'D' indicates a major sound defect.

DISC QUALITY - MASTERING & PRESSING

'A' indicates a blemish free 'strong' image. 'B' discs might contain blemishes

that are not disruptive to viewing. It is unlikely that older pressed discs will ever manage better than this grade. 'C' grade discs are invariably those with too many spots and speckles. Any 'D' grade indicates a disc that we have either been unable to get a clean copy of or we would wish to infer you avoided.

Remember: There are variations in LV disc pressings and if you receive an especially spotty or speckly disc it is well worth seeking a replacement. This is particularly important with older pressings where the variation is much greater.

The following index of all previous reviews carries revised gradings in accordance with the new system wherever we still have the disc. Some opinions have been revised! The sequence of grades is PICTURE/SOUND/PRESSING.

Film Titles

AIRPLANE! 1 - 18
Definition poorer on side two but generally OK.
[B / B] [B -]

THE BLACK MARBLE 1 - 13
Reduction from wide-screen causes shifts in definition. Harsh optical soundtrack.
[C + / C +] [B -]

BRAINSTORM 4 - 26
Slightly pale colour and soft definition. Excellent sound.
[C + / A -] [A -]

BUGSY MALONE 4 - 27
Slightly hissy sound.
[B - / B -] [B -]

CALIGULA 4 - 29
Bit of a murky print but acceptable. An oldish pressing prone to spots.
[C / B -] [C +]

CARNAL KNOWLEDGE 2 - 31
NTSC conversion. Background hum on soundtrack which is a bit thin and indistinct at times. Label on disc says stereo - don't think so!
[C / C] [B]

CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF 1 - 23
Definition and colour diminished but quite watchable.
[C + / C +] [B]

CLASS REUNION 4 - 29
Contrasty print with diminished colour. Hiss on sound. Should have been in MP STEREO!
[C + / C +] [A -]

EDUCATING RITA 4 - 20
Watchable but slightly disappointing print quality. Faint whistle on soundtrack.
[B - / C +] [A -]

ELVIS ON TOUR 3 - 22
A multi-screen film possibly difficult to transfer to the small screen but watchable nonetheless. Rather too many white spots on reviewed copy.
[B - / B] [C +]

ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK 4 - 23
Grainy image quality does not do justice to the excellent sound. Dark scenes show pressing spots.
[C + / A] [C +]

FORBIDDEN WORLD 4 - 25
Very sharp film print spoilt by occasional scratches of equal clarity!
[B / B] [A -]

48 HOURS 1 - 11
Crisp image quality, if a little contrasty. Excellent sound. Pressing a little speckly.
[A - / A] [B -]

THE FRUIT IS RIPE 2 - 29
Well reduced from wide-screen original, very sharp image if a little contrasty. Thin optical sound.
[A - / C +] [B]

THE FURY 3 - 24
Watchable picture but poorish definition.
[C / B] [B -]

GOING ALL THE WAY 1 - 20
Average picture, sound a little thin though.
[B / B -] [B -]

HEAVEN CAN WAIT 1 - 16
Good image quality that becomes outstanding half way through side two, now believed due to inconsistent disc mastering. Optical sound.
[B + / C +] [B -]

HIGH ANXIETY 2 - 28
NTSC conversion. Soft definition, poor colour.
[C / B] [B]

HIGH RISK 3 - 25
Nice sharp print carelessly transferred to video resulting in flared image at times. Thin sound.
[C + / C +] [B -]

THE KIDS ARE ALRIGHT 4 - 21
Random noises on soundtrack.
[B - / C +] [B -]

MODERN PROBLEMS 3 - 25
Dull in both picture and sound.
[C - / C +] [B]

THE NIGHTCOMERS 2 - 22
Crackling distortion on sound.
[B / C -] [B]

THE NINE LIVES OF FRITZ THE CAT 1 - 12
The integral (& excellent) soundtrack is extremely muffled and undynamic.
[B / D] [B]

99/44 100% DEAD 3 - 23
NTSC conversion. Sound a little hissy.
[C / B -] [C +]

NO NUKES - THE MUSE CONCERT 1 - 13
Originally filmed in wide-screen. Definition soft and image grainy. Excellent sound.
[C + / A] [B]

OKLAHOMA 2 - 25
Slightly grainy transfer from wide-screen original. Hiss on sound. Should have been in stereo!
[B - / C +] [B]

ONE SHOE MAKES IT MURDER 1 - 21
Poor definition, sound a little hissy. A few too many speckles on pressing.
[C / B -] [C]

RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK 2 - 31
Not as good a print as could be hoped for but no problems with sound. Note: The latest pressing we saw showed rather a lot of blue speckles not evident on earlier reviewed copy.
[C + / A] [B]

RAISE THE TITANIC 1 - 21
Cropped wide-screen image, passable. Good sound except for peak distortion during couple of explosions.
[C + / A -] [B]

RETURN OF THE PINK PANTHER 3 - 24
Scrappy transfer - jumpy panning, poor colour, light leaks top & bottom of frame.
[C - / B] [C]

ROAD GAMES 2 - 29
Scanned wide-screen print. Voices a little sibilant but music OK.
[B - / C] [B -]

SHOCK TREATMENT 1 - 16
Diffused but watchable picture. In Stereo!
[C + / B] [B]

SHOWBOAT 3 - 24
Sound dropout on part of side two.
[B / D] [B -]

STARFLIGHT ONE 3 - 27
Usual RANK image quality. Stereo not pronounced and hiss quite audible.
[B + / B -] [B]

STAR WARS 1 - 17
Picture quality OK at beginning but deteriorates. Intermittent focus fault apparent on side two.
[C / A -] [B]

STAR TREK - WRATH OF KHAN 1 - 19
Annoying hiss on sound and intermittent thumping noise. Some readers consider the sound on this disc to be of reject quality.
[B - / C -] [B -]

TARZAN THE APE MAN 4 - 28
Better than average cropped wide-screen transfer.
[B - / A] [B -]

10 TO MIDNIGHT 2 - 30
Looks and sounds like it was mastered from a U-matic tape. Hissy, crackly sound, poor picture.
[D + / D +] [C]

THIS IS SPINAL TAP 4 - 21
This is supposed to look like a documentary. Faint whistle on early part of soundtrack.
[B - / B -] [B -]

2001 4 - 26
Variable definition from scanned transfer.
[C + / B +] [B]

URGH! - A MUSIC WAR 3 - 26
Sharp and colourful picture with clear sound that should have been in Stereo. A few spots visible.
[B + / B +] [B -]

WINTER KILLS 4 - 28
Variable definition and grain resulting from reduced wide-screen original. Slight sound hiss.
[C / B -] [B -]

YOUNG DOCTORS IN LOVE 1 - 19
Slightly grainy and contrasty.
[A - / B] [B]

ZAPPED 4 - 29
Pleasant picture if a little diffused. Slight hiss on sound.
[C + / B -] [B +]

ZORRO THE GAY BLADE 2 - 26
Diffused picture quality in addition to what may have been intended originally. In Stereo!
[C / B] [B]

Others

CHRIS BARBER BAND 1 - 14
With minor reservations a presentable early disc.
[A - / A] [B -]

BARCLAY JAMES HARVEST 2 - 28
Sound and picture out of sync. Good sound but slight hiss on quieter numbers.
[B / B +] [B -]

BEST OF BENNY HILL 3 - 23
[A - / B +] [B +]

BIG COUNTRY - LIVE 3 - 28
[B + / A] [B]

LA BOHEME 4 - 22

CARTOON SHOW FROM TERRYTOONS 3 - 29

LA CENERENTOLA 3 - 30

PHIL COLLINS - LIVE AT PERKINS' 3 - 22

CONTESS D'HOFFMANN 3 - 30

COOL CATS 3 - 25
Slightly grainy but reasonably well compiled collection of archive material.
[B / B +] [B +]

DIE FLEDERMAUS 3 - 29

DIRE STRAITS 3 - 28
A softly filmed concert that has transferred badly to video. Some people like it but the picture is no match for the sound.
[C + / A -] [B]

DON QUIXOTE 4 - 24
NTSC conversion with unremarkable definition. Good sound. Pressing shows spots in dark scenes.
[B - / A -] [C +]

EVERLY BROTHERS - REUNION CONCERT 4 - 28
Very slightly grainy but generally impressive.
[A - / A -] [A -]

FEELING FIT 2 - 26
Picture a little grainy.

- FLEETWOOD MAC - MIRAGE TOUR** 1 - 18
Quite good US sourced concert video.
[B-/B+] [B-]
- JERRY LEE LEWIS - LIVE** 1 - 22
Harsh stage lighting diminishes the perceived quality of the original video master.
[A-/A-] [B-]
- LORETTA LYNN** 1 - 15
Do not expect too much from this American originated TV show. Watchable enough for fans though.
[C-/B-] [B-]
- MAZE - HAPPY FEELIN'S LIVE** 4 - 25
Poor image quality that could be mistaken for VCR tape! Sound impressive but for a little sibilance, hence grade reduced from potential 'A'.
[D+/B+] [B]
- MEETING OF THE SPIRITS** 3 - 27
Similar softly defined quality as Pavarotti disc. Intermittent picture striping. Feint hiss.
[B/B+] [B-]
- JONI MITCHELL - SHADOWS & LIGHT** 3 - 27
Fuzzy image, like Maze disc.
[C-/B] [B]
- OLIVIA NEWTON-JOHN - TWIST OF FATE 2** 2 - 33
Diffused and grainy video but sound on songs (only!) impressive. Should have had Chapters.
[B-/A-] [B]
- THE OTHER SIDE OF NASHVILLE** 3 - 28
Slightly grainy, softly defined, low-budget documentary style image. Seems OK for what it is. The copy reviewed was a bit spotty.
[B/B] [C+]
- PAVAROTTI - ROYAL GALA CONCERT** 2 - 25
One of those CAV discs that never seem to be as sharp as you would expect. Slight hiss.
[B/B+] [B-]
- READY STEADY GO - Volume 2** 2 - 32
Good archive transfer.
- SHOW '84** 4 - 22
- DURAN DURAN - SING BLUE SILVER** 4 - 21
A change of opinion! The picture quality now looks a bit grainy and off-colour. A bit NTSC-ish.
[B-/A] [A-]
- SPARTACUS** 4 - 27
Nice sharp picture.
[A-/B+] [B-]
- STATUS QUO - NEC CONCERT** 2 - 23
Generally excellent master material but does suffer from intermittent noise striping.
[A-/A] [B]
- ROD STEWART - TONIGHT HE'S YOURS** 3 - 22
NTSC originated and a little grainy. Seems a bit spottier than first thought.
[C/B+] [C+]
- DONNA SUMMER - HOT SUMMER NIGHT** 4 - 20
Good American sourced master. Hiss on otherwise good audio.
[B/B] [B-]
- TEARS FOR FEARS - IN MY MIND'S EYE** 4 - 25
Excellent sound and very sharp picture that unfortunately does not show on older players.
[A-/A] [B+]
- TROPICAL HI - NOON** 4 - 23
Excellent sound and image quality. CAV not totally successful - partial jitter of picture occurs.
[A-/A] [A-]
- VIDEOHITS** 2 - 24
- VIDEOWAVES** 3 - 26
Picture quality varies from clip to clip - some are a bit grainy.
[B-/A] [B-]
- THE WIND IN THE WILLOWS** 3 - 31

Many of this edition's reviews were from pre-production samples. Sleeve artwork was often not available and 'creative' substitutions have been made. Similarly it seemed unwise to give pressing grades that might prove unrepresentative.

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GIVE MY REGARDS TO BROAD STREET



CBS / FOX	1448 - 70	£19.99
CLV	COLOUR	STEREO MP
1984	104 mins	Rated PG

Starring: Paul McCartney, Bryan Brown, Ringo Starr, Linda McCartney, Tracey Ullman, Ralph Richardson
Director: Peter Webb
Songs: Yesterday/Here There & Everywhere/Wanderlust/Ballroom Dancing/Silly Love Songs/Not Such A Bad Boy/No Values/So Bad/For No-one/Eleanor Rigby/The Long & Winding Road/No More Lonely Nights

Already well roasted it is something of a pleasure to offer a few more positive comments. Provided you are half way inclined towards the musical content the weakness of the plot and the momentary indulgences will be of minor significance. Side one does tempt a wish for some more disciplined direction but by the time side two is underway the concept has become the film and it all flows quite easily. That may be due to the fact the second side is almost completely musical and this is where the strength of 'Give My Regards To Broad Street' lies. All the songs are presented respectfully and there are no annoying dialogue interrupt-

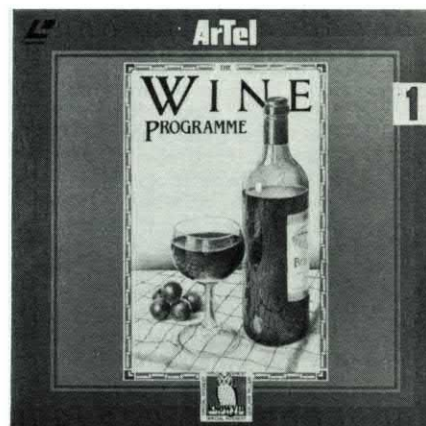
ions. (Of course, there is no Chapter facility!!)

There are some nice little touches scattered around the story. The Elstree gatemanager requesting an autograph 'My wife likes your music. I don't' gives McCartney an opportunity to pass comment on the unfeeling (and often unintentioned) rudeness meted out to those in the public gaze. As usual Ringo gets the best one-liners. Forget about this being a film in the accepted sense and view it as a concept video.

Quite unlike the picture quality usually associated with previous CBS/FOX discs this is all very crisp and tonally pleasing yet there has been a little too much grain picked up in the transfer - but it was almost an 'A'. Sound is bad news. There is a really good hi-fi soundtrack there somewhere but it has been obscured by a level of hiss that, while it only marginally affects the songs, gives the dialogue a rather muted feel. This looks like careless attention to detail on someone's part and hi-fi freaks are bound to be disappointed.

[B+/B] [B+]

THE WINE PROGRAMME



ARTEL	0002.02006/1	£13.99
	0002.02006/2	£13.99
	0002.02006/3	£13.99

CAV	COLOUR	DUAL MONO - English/Dutch
1983	52 mins	per disc

A set of three interesting discs from both a content and LaserVision point of view. All in CAV, the programmes have dual sound - English on channel one, and Dutch on channel two. Although there is of course no leakage between channels the Dutch version has obviously been added as an afterthought and the English dialogue on channel two is not totally suppressed (in order to retain the sound effects etc.). Being able to hear, albeit faintly, the English voices does mean that the discs do not additionally function as language learning aids - there is always the temptation to 'listen through' to the English. (The discs will obviously function for Dutch people wishing to increase their comprehension of spoken English.)

Originally a Channel 4 production written and presented by Jancis Robinson, the six episodes of 'The Wine Programme' are presented in their entirety. You get full beginning and end credits each time. There is a certain overlap between each but essentially the contents are these:

- 1) A WINE PRIMER - A basic introduction to tasting, buying, production.
- 2) GREAT WINE IF YOU CAN AFFORD IT - A look at Bordeaux wines including Chateaux Margaux & Latour.
- 3) FIZZ - Champagne & sparkling wine.
- 4) THE WINE BUG - Wine drinking as a hobby.
- 5) WINE BUSINESS - Wine broking and dirty deeds in adulterated wine.
- 6) TOMORROW'S WINE - New techniques in California.

(The programmes are in correct sequence on disc. 1 & 2 on disc 1, 3 & 4 on 2 etc.)

Disc one is probably the strongest of the trio. A few of the intimidating aspects of wine tasting and purchase are dealt with and on side two a feature on the Bordeaux region focussing on Chateaux Margaux and Latour, gives some background to what ends up in the bottle on your table. The other two discs are a little more erratic in content. Both have an educational side but some may find 'The Wine Bug' and 'Wine Business' of only passing interest. 'Champagne' is quite informative as regards the history and evolution of production methods. In 'The Wine Bug' you are confronted with a selection of enthusiasts (both here and in the USA) talking about their pursuit of 'the grape'. 'Wine Business' is more serious stuff and touches on some dubious attempts to adulterate French and German wine with cheap imported product. 'Tomorrow's Wine' is fairly meaty and in showing what is going on in California to achieve greater and more predictable output harks back to points raised earlier in the series about the mystique of some of the French chateaux.

It is difficult to say how much use you might find these programmes after more than a couple of viewings. Some of the advice imparted might quickly recoup the cost of the discs if buying wine is your big thing. The Active Play facet is of no great advantage though I can appreciate why it might have been done. Exorcising 'The Wine Bug' episode and removing some of the overlaps would have got the series on to one CLV disc without any diminution of appeal.

The programmes themselves have been quite well made though they only appear to be on 16mm film and are a bit grainy now and again but are better than some of the BBC sourced discs we have seen recently. Indeed, programme six looks quite outstanding - it bears no relation to the picture quality on the other discs. Oddly, the English soundtrack on programme one is a bit hissy but otherwise all the discs have satisfactory sound. Certainly the overall quality is adequate for the intended use.

DUNE



THORN EMI	TLP 90 3025 1		£ 24.99
CLV	COLOUR	STEREO	MP
1984	130 mins		Rated 15

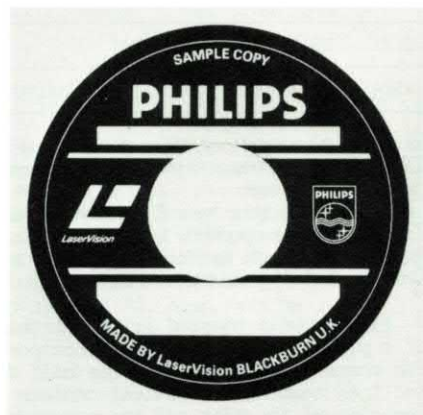
Starring: Kyle MacLachlan, Kenneth McMillan, Max Von Sydow, Sting
Director: David Lynch

In retrospect, 'Dune' appears to be one hugely underrated movie. Being both ambitious and demanding in concept, it's perhaps not surprising that it's original theatrical release suffered from the grumblings of critics (who expected less) and the howls of devotees (who expected more). Serious Science Fiction rarely pleases a mass audience. And make no mistake, this most decidedly is a serious movie. Plot and characters unfold with almost laboured complexity and there's little compromise offered to the casual viewer. Ironically this complexity, which originally alienated so many, is now precisely what makes 'Dune' such an ideal LV release. The machinations of the principal characters absolutely demand re-viewing and director David ('Eraserhead', 'Elephant Man') Lynch's incredible attention to detail reveals new delights with every play.

Visually the film is stunning. Instead of the usual Lucasfilm SF gloss, 'Dune' offers baroque, almost Victorian splendour. A large portion of it's mammoth budget clearly went in to the set and costume design. The special effects are also consistently good (and often grisly) although some rather tacky optical effects (particularly featuring Carlo 'ET' Rambaldi's monstrous spice worms) tend to cheapen the overall effect.

Unfortunately, despite the steep asking price the disc's quality is only average to good. Once again grain is a minor irritant (as you would expect from a scanned 70mm original), but the picture is acceptably sharp. The stereo soundtrack is effective, although a little muddy at times (I think this is due to the original mix). In conclusion then, a superior laser release (in terms of content) and naturally a 'must buy' for any science fiction/fantasy collector.
[C + / A -] [B +] [STEVE KEATON]

STAYING ALIVE



CIC VIDEO	LVG 2099	£ 19.99
CLV	COLOUR	MONO
1983	94 mins	

Starring: John Travolta, Cynthia Rhodes, Finola Hughes
Director: Sylvester Stallone

Six years on from 'Saturday Night Fever', and Tony Manero, former disco dancing supremo of Brooklyn, has now moved to Manhattan where he is a struggling professional dancer. When he is given the chance of a Broadway show, he grabs it!

Perhaps a familiar sounding story, but well mounted nonetheless. 'Staying Alive' is more of a family film than its predecessor whose foul language has been left behind in Brooklyn. Travolta puts in a very credible performance as the brash Manero, as does Cynthia Rhodes as his on/off girlfriend. Only Finola Hughes leaves room for doubt in the acting department; she seems uncomfortable with her role - except when she is exercising her undoubted talent as a dancer. The choreography and photography of the dance sequences are obviously designed to make the most of Travolta's limited formal dance training - rather too heavy on the slow motion and lap dissolves. The music, by the Bee Gees and Sylvester Stallone's brother, Frank, is not particularly memorable but, perhaps perversely, I wonder whether this might enhance the repeatability of this disc rather than detract from it.

The picture is sharp but marginally grainy and contrasty. The sound is good, but be warned; although this film was issued in DOLBY stereo in the cinemas, this disc soundtrack is in glorious mono!
[B / B] [B +] [PAUL RONCHETTI]

COSI FAN TUTTE



ARTS INT	05 AI 033	£ 23.99
CLV - Ch	COLOUR	STEREO
1984	160 mins	

Featuring: Anne Christine Biel, Maria Hoglund, Lars Tibell, Magnus Linden, Ulla Severin, Enzo Florino
Conductor: Arnold Ostman with the Chorus and Orchestra of The Drottningholm Theatre

A Swedish Television production

Mercifully, since no English libretto is supplied with the disc issue, the plot of 'Cosi Fan Tutte' is not too demanding. It's two acts are split into a total of nine scenes making the well-written synopsis easier to follow than some of those which accompany other operas. The Italian only libretto supplied departs from the performance at several points.

The plot deals with the comic consequences that follow from two young officers, Ferrando and Guglielmo, making a wager that their fiancées would remain faithful - regardless of any temptations that might be placed in their paths. Don Alfonso, the older man with whom the wager is made, has 24 hours in which to

prove that his young friends' belief in fidelity is ill-founded, and it is a condition of the bet that Ferrando and Guglielmo do whatever he requires of them. Needless to say, the girls are not to know about the bet. The two young men soon find themselves forced to adopt Albanian disguise in order to attempt the seduction of their own fiancées.....

The recording, made at Sweden's 18th century Drottningholm Court Theatre, uses a young cast of Swedish singers. The orchestra play period instruments. The performing workload is distributed fairly evenly among the cast, who are uniformly good. Although there are occasional signs of strain in some of the more demanding passages, these are never enough to detract from the enjoyment of a fine performance.

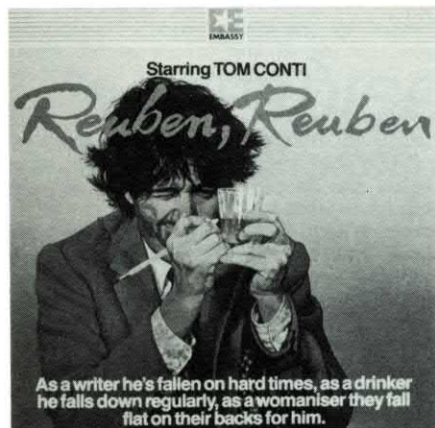
The sound quality is very listenable, with admirable balance between the voices and the orchestra. Inevitably there are odd creaks and footsteps but these are not distracting, and as the performances seem to have been recorded without an audience we are spared intrusive coughs and sweet-wrapper noise. There has been little attempt to place voices across the soundstage (indeed, there is frequently a pronounced left-hand bias), but the acoustic is spacious nonetheless.

The picture definition is good, although not outstanding. Much of the action takes place in the daytime and the stage set is bright and airy which greatly benefits the colour balance of the picture.

With only a few reservations this set can be warmly welcomed. The welcome would be warmer if only more care were taken with the presentation of the discs; purchasers of audio only recordings of operas receive sturdy storage boxes and multi-lingual libretti. Frequently the accompanying booklets also contain extensive notes on the background to the recording and biographical details of the performers. Even videocassette purchasers of this recording can look forward to a dual-language libretto - why not us? The inclusion of an English libretto unannotated with timings and chapter numbers would be an enormous step forward.

[B + / A -] [B] [PAUL RONCHETTI]

REUBEN REUBEN



EMBASSY ELV 6001 £ 13.99

CLV COLOUR MONO

1983 96 mins

Starring: Tom Conti, Kelly McGillis, Roberts Blossom

Director: Robert Ellis Miller

Shambling and invariably drunk,

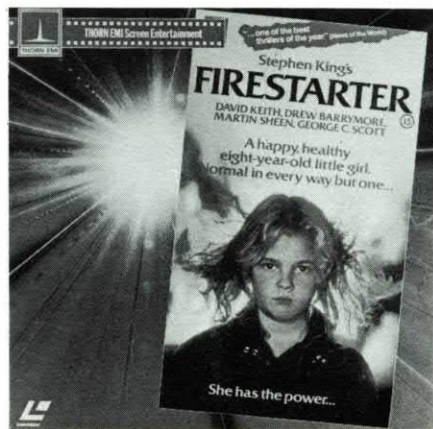
Gowan McGland is eeking out an existence giving readings to groups of admiring and prosperous middle-aged American housewives. He is a poet....was a poet. He has written nothing for five years. While dried up he is rarely dried out and even a forthcoming biography shows little prospect of halting the decline. That possibility comes in the form of a romance with a young college graduate but the outcome is never predictable and this is a story that is only resolved in its closing moments.

The touted Academy Award nominations may lead one to expect maybe a little too much here but the humourously observed performances make 'Reuben Reuben' more than just run-of-the-mill.

More than anything the disc deserves better master material than this. The colour and definition are quite poor and although the soundtrack is generally clear there are moments where handling damage has caused the print to become noisy and muffled. Neither criticism is likely to spoil your enjoyment of a good film such as this but it certainly detracts from the pleasure of owning it.

[C / C +] [B]

FIRESTARTER



THORN EMI TLY 90 2873 1 £ 19.99

CLV COLOUR MONO

1984 109 mins Rated 15

Starring: David Keith, Drew Barrymore, Freddie Jones, Heather Locklear, Martin Sheen, George C. Scott, Art Carney, Louise Fletcher
Director: Mark L. Lester

Based on Stephen King's best seller, 'Firestarter' tells the story of a young girl whose parents participated in a government organised drug test. As a result of exposure to the drug, her father (David Keith) is gifted with hypnotic powers over both humans and inanimate objects. The child's inheritance is the power to cause spontaneous combustion at a glance. Understandably, the agency which organised the original tests want both father and daughter back - they are on the run.

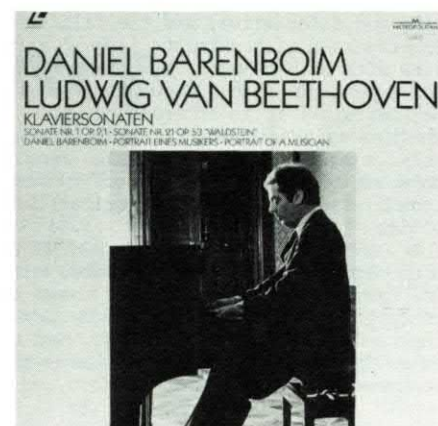
'Firestarter' is a gripping, well-acted film. Drew Barrymore playing the child is especially good and the special effects are convincing.

Although the colour balance is quite reasonable there is nothing special about the picture definition. This is a wide-screen film and has been reasonably well scanned to fit the TV format. The disc has a mono soundtrack, presumably from an optical original. While the dialogue is clearly intelligible there is some distortion (be it fairly soft-edged) in the louder portions, and unfortunately the

music by Tangerine Dream suffers accordingly.

[C + / C +] [B +] [PAUL RONCHETTI]

BARENBOIM BEETHOVEN



METROPOLITAN VIDEO MET 101 £ 15.99

CLV - Ch COLOUR STEREO + DUAL GERMAN ENGLISH

1984 90 mins (First in series of 10 discs)

Side 1: Beethoven piano sonata no. 1 F# Op 2,1
Beethoven piano sonata no. 21 C Flat Op 53

Side 2: Daniel Barenboim - Portrait in Music

As can be expected, Barenboim turns in first-rate polished interpretations of two of Beethoven's piano sonatas. All the performances in the series were filmed on location in great houses connected in some way with the composer at the time the works were written. In the case of sonata no.1, the location is Vienna's Schloss Hetzendorf. The 'Waldstein' sonata, number 21, was filmed in the ornate surroundings of the Palais Kinsky, also in Vienna. The sonatas are presented as two separate programmes, each with its own opening and closing credits.

The picture quality is problematic. The photography is superb and the director, Jean-Pierre Ponnelle, never permits the sumptuous backdrops to overpower the performance. However, the original film has that misty, soft-focus quality which does not transfer especially well to video. As a consequence, the image tends to have a disappointing washed-out look although the eye soon becomes accustomed to the haze.

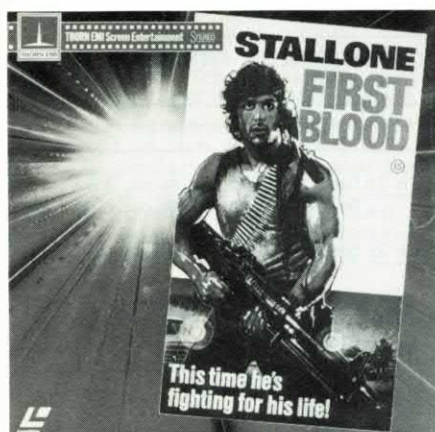
The sound causes some problems. The original digital masters have a spacious acoustic and the tone of the piano is faithfully captured. But, in the transfer to disc some background mush has been picked up; this does not intrude at low listening levels, but obviously increases as the volume control is cranked up. If this is representative of the set, it seems perverse for these discs to be singled out for their 'must be heard to be believed' sound quality. Chapter stops are incorporated, but the only cue point is between the two works. With a basic player it is difficult to locate individual movements quickly.

Unheralded by the catalogue, side two of the first disc carries a 42minute documentary film portrait of Daniel Barenboim. In addition to showing some of the background to the filming of the Beethoven sonatas, we see Barenboim at work as a soloist, a conductor (both

orchestral and operatic), and as a member of a chamber trio. The filming, which must have taken many months to complete, covers a wide variety of locations and there are plentiful, if brief, musical extracts. There is switchable dual language (English/German) narration and the soundtrack must therefore be monaural. The narration (by an American) is concise and informative, and the film is interspersed with extracts from an interview with Barenboim. It is hard to judge how repeatable such a documentary might be; certainly it is interesting, but whether one would want to watch it regularly is another matter entirely. Seen in relation to the whole series of 10 discs though it would appear the logical thing to do.

[B / A] [D] [PAUL RONCHETTI]
Note: Since preparing this review, PHILIPS have advised that they are themselves unhappy with the quality of these pressings and are likely to withdraw them from sale. It is not known whether they will reappear at a later date.

FIRST BLOOD



THORN EMI TLY 90 1720 1 £ 19.99

CLV	COLOUR	STEREO	MP
1982	90 mins		Rated 15

Starring: Sylvester Stallone, Richard Crenna, Brian Dennehy
Director: Ted Kotcheff

'First Blood' is about as perfect an action film as it is possible to imagine. There is hardly a moment where you would question the plausibility of the whole episode - of the ex-Vietnam veteran rebuffed by the backwoods community and hunted like an animal for no apparent reason - other than the fact that he doesn't fit. Even the opening scene where Stallone walks down the hillside to reacquaint himself with a former comrade (who has subsequently died of cancer as it turns out) touches a nerve - and that is without a word of dialogue needing be said. There is a temporary jolt where the format of the picture changes from wide-screen to a cropped image (why, oh why do they do this?), but after a readjustment the immersion in the plot becomes complete. In the finale Stallone blurts out a justification for all the mayhem and, on first hearing, you can't understand a damn word but find yourself agreeing with everything he says. In a few years there may be aspects of 'First Blood' that will look contrived and embarrassing, but such an occasion seems remote.

An unintentioned strength of 'First Blood' is that it should still function

through such a tacky transfer as this. At the opening and closing when the picture is in wide-screen the image quality just about hangs in there - but with the TV screen filled the definition drops and what you see is often softened. While Rambo traipses among the dark foliage a grid-like veil obscures the image as is the case with many of the night scenes - is this solid-state imaging on the telecine as opposed to a flying spot transfer? Can anyone comment? Whatever the reason the picture quality is only passable, and to add insult to injury the pressing of the review copy was quite spotty - quite unlike anything we have seen since early this year. Be careful of the copy you obtain.

In spite of the technical failings, anyone with the slightest hankering for this title might still be advised to follow through with a purchase - but those readers who consider picture quality to be of significance should maybe pause for thought.

[C / A -] [C]

STAR TREK 3



CIC VIDEO LVG 2118 £ 19.99

CLV	COLOUR	STEREO	MP
1984	101 mins		Rated PG

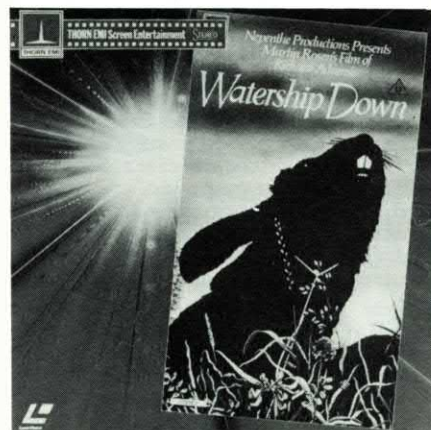
Starring: William Shatner, Leonard Nimoy, DeForest Kelley, James Doohan, George Takei, Walter Koenig, Nichelle Nichols, Mark Lenard, Merritt Buttrick, Judith Anderson, Robin Curtis, Christopher Lloyd
Director: Leonard Nimoy

The shortest of the Star Trek series, 'Star Trek 3' still stoops to lifting actual footage as well as utilising flashbacks to tell it's story. And there is a story here; Spock makes a reappearance (well, you knew he would, didn't you!), and the relationship between Kirk and his son David is developed to a 'conclusion' - but really 'Star Trek 3' is just an interlude. This looks like the Star Trek crew are taking a breather, saving themselves for something stronger for number 4. 'Star Trek 3' even avoids cheap spectacular effects to bolster up a restrained plot. There are occasional action sequences, but the bulk of the story is about the characters themselves. As part of a series fans will no doubt find it irresistible - even if the visual impact of 'Khan' is not in evidence.

One advantage over 'Khan' is that there are no obvious sound defects this time - the sound is spacious and free from blemish. The same could not be said of the picture. In spite of the proclamations of CIC (see review forward) this disc looks exactly like the NTSC version, and, if anything, there may even be a

touch more grain to this picture! It's not outstanding but watchable nonetheless.
[C + / A] [Test pressing]

WATERSHIP DOWN



THORN EMI TLY 90 0682 1 £ 19.99

CLV	COLOUR	STEREO	MP
1978	88 mins		Rated U

Producer/Writer/Director: Martin Rosen
Director Of Animation: Tony Guy
Music: Angela Morley & Malcolm Williamson
Songs composed by: Mike Batt
From the book by Richard Adams

After one of their number sees a vision of destruction, a small group of rabbits leave their home to make a fresh start in a new warren. Overcoming all manner of obstacles to reach Watership Down, they set about rescuing a group of female rabbits from the totalitarian warren ruled by General Woundwort.

A film for all age groups - children will be enthralled, and the most cynical of adults must soon forget that the protagonists are cartoon rabbits. The voices of the animals are superbly characterised by a distinguished cast - mysteriously uncredited on the sleeve - John Hurt, Richard Briers, Harry Andrews, and Sir Michael Horden are just a few of the list of well-known names.

The sound is of demonstration quality; the telling of the tale is greatly enhanced by the almost uncannily accurate positioning of the voices across the picture. The musical score is spaciously recorded.

[PAUL RONCHETTI]
[Note: It is at this point that the Ed tends to disagree with Paul's approval of the picture quality. Although acceptable, the Ed reckons that it's not sharp enough - with the delicate style of drawing employed he reckons that there is a loss of fine detail, otherwise, why are the opening and closing credits not sharp? If there were more time we might be able to resolve this, but suffice it to say that the Ed would only give this a C+ for picture quality, although, as Paul says, the sound is excellent. The pressing looked OK, there were a few white spots but these looked to be on the film print and not the pressing.]

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THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK



CBS / FOX 1425 - 70 £19.99

CLV COLOUR STEREO MP

1981 119 mins Rated U

Starring: Harrison Ford, Mark Hamill, Carrie Fisher
Director: Irvin Kershner

The saga continues (at last!). 'The Empire Strikes Back', long regarded as the UK's most desired laser disc, has finally made it out. Without question the best of the Star Wars trio, 'Empire' is bolder and more confident than 'Star Wars' and free from the gimmicks that punctuated 'Return Of The Jedi'. It's a flawless example of superior space opera. The effects are awesome and the pace is dazzling. From the opening confrontation on the ice planet of Hoth, through Luke's apprenticeship with Yoda and Darth Vader's final revelations there's barely time to breath. The thing's a gem.

The stereo soundtrack is superb - bright, dynamic and clean. The aura FX are stunning and even cranked up really loud there's little in the way of hiss or garbage. All 119 minutes of 'Empire' have been crammed on to a single disc. The familiar 20th CENTURY FOX logo has gone, along with the opening Lucasfilm credit but they're the only trims. **Disc Quality:** Although the reduction from wide-screen has been very well done the image quality is not outstanding. The picture is quite sharp but the colour is poor (looks like a standards conversion) and the tape used to master the disc looks to have a fair level of grain. (The grain does seem to have come from tape duplication rather than the wide-screen reduction.) Several of the new CBS/FOX titles have exhibited excessive grain.

The disc itself might cause problems on the more basic players. It looked OK on the new PIONEER machine and would probably be OK on the PHILIPS 830 but on two PHILIPS 700s there was a certain turbulence in the picture towards the latter part of each side - it is likely to be of only minor annoyance but would have been even less so if the original master had been a bit stronger.

[C + / A] [Test pressing]
[Steve Keaton]

ROMANCING THE STONE

CBS / FOX 1358 - 70 £19.99

CLV COLOUR STEREO MP

1984 102 mins Rated PG

Starring: Michael Douglas, Kathleen Turner, Danny de Vito, Zack Norman, Alfonso Arau, Manuel Ojeda
Director: Robert Zemeckis



The setting is the Columbian jungle. Joan Wilder, the romantic novelist, trying to rescue her kidnapped sister finds herself inextricably involved in the battle for possession of a priceless emerald. Stranded in the middle of nowhere she is forced into an uneasy alliance with an American adventurer parrot hunting in the jungle depths (Michael Douglas). The duo have to contend with the sinister Dr Zolo and the inept gangsters who are holding her sister. (Danny De Vito is great!)

The plot of this tongue-in-cheek adventure defies belief but it is difficult not to be drawn along by the enthusiasm of the performances. There are generous humorous interludes and the action sequences are all immaculately done. 'Raiders Of The Lost Ark' spawned many pale imitations and though the larger than life style of 'Romancing The Stone' shows echoes of that movie it definitely does not fall into the "cash-in" category.

Evidence of this film's wide-screen origins is virtually non-existent except for the beginning and end credits. The picture definition is good with only minor variations. The colour balance, always a matter of personal taste, is less than ideal although far from unacceptable; once the fiery reds are toned down we are left with a somewhat muted balance which, while easy on the eyes, tends towards pastels and shades of beige rather than the vividness one expects in such Latin American locations.

The sound quality is outstanding. Although the dialogue is clearly intelligible it is restricted to a centre position and it is the ambient noises and the musical score that are bestowed the benefits of the stereo image.

[B - / A] [Test pressing]
[PAUL RONCHETTI]

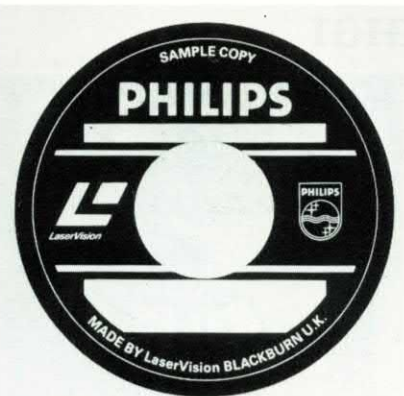
BACHELOR PARTY

CBS / FOX 1440 - 70 £19.99

CLV COLOUR MONO

1984 101 mins Rated 18

Starring: Tom Hanks, Tawny Kitaen, Adrian Zmed, George Grizzard
Director: Neal Israel



The glut of teen-orientated sex comedies in recent years have been most notable for the banal plotlines and faceless casts which they all seem to contain. Despite this, 'Bachelor Party' achieved considerable box office success and followed this up with a steady Top Ten rating in the national video charts. It's rising star, Tom Hanks ('Splash'), and higher than usual production values were the main reasons, along with an extensive advertising campaign.

The film follows Hank's preparations for his impending marriage to the delightful Tawny Kitaen and on the way treats us to a cocaine-snorting donkey, a human hot dog and a variety of characters ranging from a jive-talking Pakistani pimp to a roomful of randy Japanese businessmen. Add to these a psychotic ex-boyfriend, a very unhappy prospective father-in-law and a suicidal junkie and you get a pretty good vehicle for a string of jokes.

Hanks has created a likeable character (much in the Bill Murray style) and is well supported by Tawny Kitaen (also to be seen in 'Gwendoline') and the rest of the oddball cast. Combined with a good contemporary soundtrack (Wang Chung etc) this constitutes a welcome addition to an otherwise inauspicious genre though one might have doubts about it's repeat appeal.

[TERRY JOHNS]
Disc quality: A vivid and reasonably sharp picture but somewhat grainy - could be a standards conversion. Optical soundtrack - thin but listenable.
[C + / C +] [Test pressing]

AIRPLANE 2



CIC VIDEO LVG 2071 £19.99

CLV COLOUR MONO

1982 80 mins Rated PG

Starring: Robert Hays, Julie Hagerty, Lloyd Bridges, Raymond Burr, Chuck Connors, Peter Graves, William Shatner, Stephen Stucker
Written & Directed by: Ken Finkleman

[CONTINUED ON PAGE 39]

GIGI



MGM / UA UMLV 10050 £ 9.99

CLV COLOUR STEREO

1958 111 mins Rated U

Starring: Leslie Caron, Hermione Gingold, Isabel Jeans, Eva Gabor, Maurice Chevalier, Louis Jordan
Director: Vincente Minnelli

Musical Score: Frederick Loewe & Alan Jay Lerner
Musical Numbers Include: Thank Heaven For Little Girls/The Night They Invented Champagne/Gigi/Ah Yes, I Remember It Well

'Gigi' has a stylish pedigree, a fact which is illustrated by its 1958 Academy Awards when it romped home with glittering prizes for best musical score, best director, and best costumes to name a few. The plot, based upon a Colette story, is set in gay Paree at the turn of the century and centers around Gigi, a tomboy schoolgirl. She is trained to follow the family tradition by her ex-courtesan, great-aunt Alicia, and after a somewhat fraught and brief romance with Gaston (a play-boy friend of the family) she eventually marries him.

It's a witty and romantic story, sumptuously costumed by Cecil Beaton. Not least of the principle characters is Gaston's uncle, Honore Lachaille, played with great style and panache by Maurice Chevalier. His presence in the film is an inspiration and, whilst it could be argued that he simply plays himself, the role nevertheless fits him like a glove (or strawboater?). I also commend the rest of the cast, especially Hermione Gingold as grand-mama, and the suave and sophisticated Louis Jourdan. Leslie Caron's singing voice is dubbed by Betty Wand (who also sang for Rita Moreno in 'West Side Story'). Along with these fine performances there is a tuneful score with several songs that have since become standards.

I have to admit that I found 'Gigi' an aquired taste. In 1958 I compared it, perhaps unfairly, with Lerner & Loewes earlier work, 'My Fair Lady', and considered it lacking. But really, 'Gigi' is a more intimate piece with very little chorus and few principle singers. With the passage of time I can now accept the film for its own individual charm.

Unfortunately the duet, 'I Remember It Well', suffers from the dreaded panning and scanning disease and only one character appears at a time. Generally though, the transfer from silver screen to silver disc has worked well (I'll only be able to use that one the once!). I would make no apologies for reviewing yet another disc from the MGM Classic

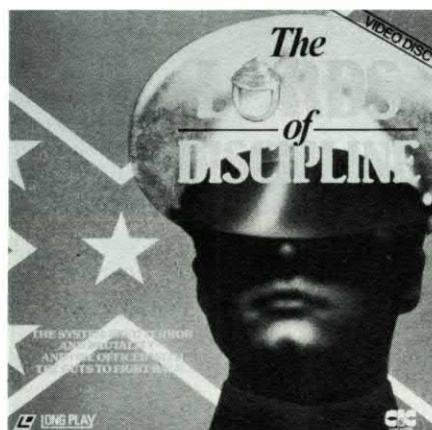
Collection. For musical film buffs this is a bargain not to be missed - and it's in stereo. We must have more of this super series on LaserVision.

[KEITH ARNOLD]

Disc quality: What we see here is undeniably a bit soft in definition and the colour more than a little washed out. The picture quality did not match the previously reviewed (and older) 'Showboat'. The soundtrack contains a little background mush but would be considered acceptable for its vintage. The pressing seemed OK.

[C- / B-] [B-]

THE LORDS OF DISCIPLINE



CIC VIDEO LVG 2073 £ 13.99

CLV COLOUR MONO

1983 103 mins Rated 15

Starring: David Keith, Robert Prosky, Barbara Babcock, G.D. Spradlin, Michael Biehn
Director: Franc Roddam

At the Carolina Military Institute traditional values are held in high esteem. This is 1964 and America is on the verge of going soft. The latest

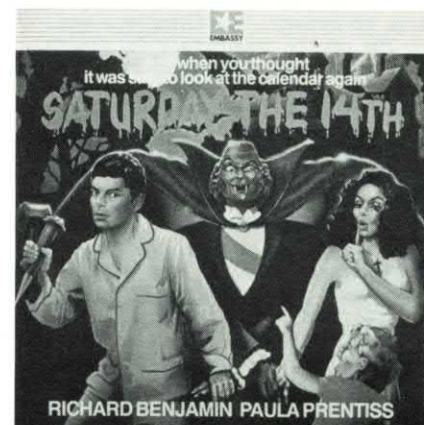
chink in the armour is the admission of the first black cadet, an event that galvanises 'the Ten' in to action. This self-ordained and secretive group have historically brought their influence to bear whenever they have seen the Institute powerless to act in public. Will McClean (David Keith) finds himself the unwilling guardian of the controversial new entrant, and what starts out as a minor detail evolves into a major upheaval for all concerned, including the Institute itself.

Unlike many of the obscurer film titles in the catalogue, 'The Lords Of Discipline' has considerable merit. The camaraderie of Will and his room-mates rings true and there is not really a weak piece of acting anywhere. Similarly authentic is the location photography of the Institute which was surprisingly done in the UK. Rarely do attempts to recreate American backdrops stand anything more than a superficial inspection, but even the editor, with his greater than average attention to such trivia, could only detect a rather British looking TV in one of the common rooms! 'The Lords Of Discipline' has substance and may be worth investigating.

Although taken from a wide-screen original the print has been well cropped and the image quality is good - sharp with good colour if possibly a little blocked up in the shadow areas at times. The soundtrack appears to be a reasonable quality optical track. It is undistorted and quite listenable but one might have hoped for something more hi-fi to go with the picture. The pressing was OK except when dark scenes occurred and one was aware of some blue flecking and spots. These may vary from copy to copy.

[B+ / C+] [C+]

SATURDAY 14th



EMBASSY ELV 4004 £ 13.99

CLV COLOUR MONO

1981 76 mins Rated 15

Starring: Richard Benjamin & Paula Prentiss
Director: Howard R. Cohen

Richard Benjamin and Paula Prentiss play the two unsuspecting parents who inherit the traditional haunted house that contains more monsters than anyone has a right to, even in the best of neighbourhoods. That's about as much of the plot as there is really - 'Saturday 14th' is just an excuse to poke fun at all the recent horror biggies (though you also get an appearance from the Creature from the Black Lagoon).

Seventy-six minutes should mean a nice tight-paced featurette but it

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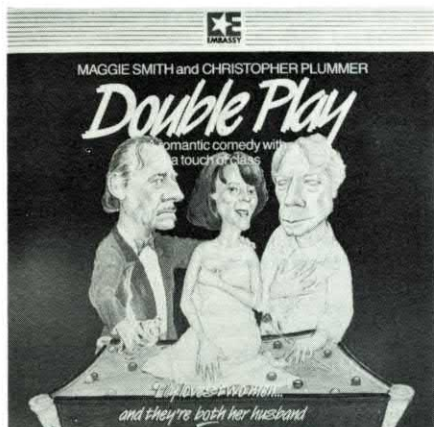
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doesn't really work out that way. There are too many unintentionally bad horror films to leave much room for something as well done as this to register. Even Richard Benjamin, who can normally be relied upon to pull something out of the bag, fails to lift 'Saturday 14th' into a higher gear.

The disc is pressed from a very sharp master tape that is unfortunately a little too contrasty for comfort and there is a slight diminution in the colour as a result. Fortunately, for a film that is composed almost entirely of dark scenes, the pressing is very clean. The sound is a bit edgy, not really quite good enough for a 'B' grade.

[B + / C +] [A -]

DOUBLE PLAY



EMBASSY ELV 7505 £13.99

CLV COLOUR MONO

1984 102 mins Rated 15

Starring: Maggie Smith, Christopher Plummer, Elke Sommer, Adolph Green
Director: Karoly Makk

Some films do work better in the home than in the cinema. What might be described as a light romantic comedy, 'Double Play' presents Christopher Plummer as Fitz, the established and successful New York stage star, still trying to hit the big time in the movies. That 'great' part always eludes him but with his writer/wife (Maggie Smith) looking for an Italian leading man to star in her forthcoming film the opportunity presents itself for Fitz to adopt the disguise of one Roberto Terranova in order to win the part - a feat which Plummer achieves with remarkable apparent ease. He loses a good ten years in the transition but you do wonder whether the make-up would really sustain detailed inspection outside of a film set. On location in Hungary (it's a film within a film) the intrigue develops and, in spite of a rather muddled climax towards the end that gives the impression of being overplayed for the benefit of cinema audiences expecting a dynamic conclusion, the deception finally resolves itself.

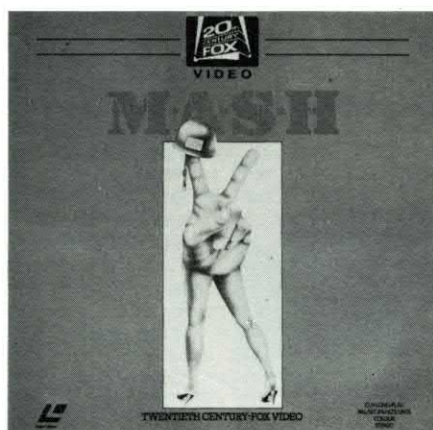
No doubt figuring that lack of cinema success warranted minimum attention be paid to the home video release EMBASSY have deemed to confer 'Double Play' with an inferior transfer - the tonal range is somewhat compressed and in parts the definition suspect. Grainy too. One surprise bonus is the omission of the customary logo and prohibition notice and the disc just starts straight into the opening credits of the film -

wonderful! As if to emulate EMBASSY's careful preparations PHILIPS have taken to listing this disc as 'Playing For Keeps' prior to release thereby making it just that bit more difficult to get hold of.

The sound, though not wonderful, is undistorted and quite listenable. The pressing is adequate considering the number of dark scenes (and featureless shadow regions!) but there were moments of spots (some of which were on the film) and dropout more noticeable than one would consider normal these days. This isn't a stunning film and it isn't going to sell on the basis of prior reputation but it is worthy of a more careful video transfer the inadequacies of which are, as usual, shown up by the all-revealing laser disc.

[C / B -] [B]

M.A.S.H.



CBS/FOX 1038 - 70 £13.99

CLV COLOUR STEREO

1969 111 mins

Starring: Donald Sutherland, Elliot Gould, Tom Skerritt, Sally Kellerman, Robert Duvall, Jo Ann Pflug, Rene Auberjonois, Gary Burghoff, Roger Bowen, Bud Cort, Michael Murphy
Director: Robert Altman
Music by: Johnny Mandel

'M.A.S.H.' made something of an impression at the time of its original release. Not that a comedy about army doctors in a Korean War field hospital was particularly controversial as much as the fact that cinema audiences were for once not being spared the gory realities of the operating theatre. Fifteen years on the original impact is diminished. A derivative TV series that excluded the more vivid scenes of war and overtook the success of the film in terms of audience popularity annoyed many who resented the loss of reality. Both presentations have their strengths. One of the film's is that the entire production will fit on to one laser disc.

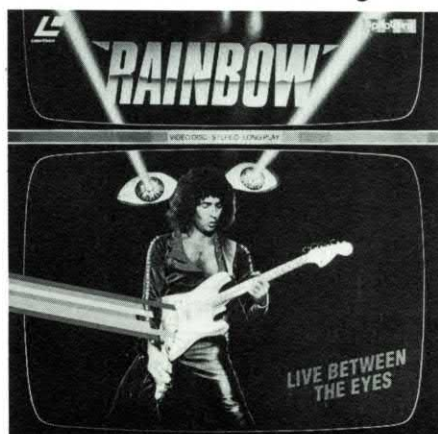
This transfer to disc also reveals something of the film's weakness. Side one is 'M.A.S.H.' - meandering between fiction and reality with no apparent control and viewable on several different levels. The style changes noticeably over on side two and reveals a possible attempt to make the production more palatable before the final credit roll. We even get a football match thrown in. As a result you end up the film wanting to see more of the earlier character interactivity and this too probably occurred to the producers of the ensuing TV series.

The gritty image quality resulting

from the scanning and cropping of the original format does lend some unintentional 'authenticity' to the documentary style of the movie - but the composition of many of the scenes is unfortunately sacrificed. The sound also does not appear ideal. What stereo there is would seem to be of the re-processed type. The left channel is uniformly dull (it even gets quite hissy on side 2) while the right is reasonably clear. Seeing as 'M.A.S.H.' is very much the sort of film you would expect to be in the LV catalogue it is something of a disappointment that it should appear in this diminished form and one would hope that some future resurgence of interest in 'M.A.S.H.' might provoke a re-issue from a somewhat improved master.

[C - / C] [C]

RAINBOW Live Between The Eyes



SPECTRUM 790 587 1 £9.99

CLV - Ch COLOUR STEREO

1982 75 mins

Side 1: Opening - Over The Rainbow/Spotlight Kid/ Miss Mistreated/It Can't Happen Here/Tearing Out My Heart/All Night Long/Stone Cold
Side 2: Power/Blues Interlude/Beethoven's Ninth/ Long Live Rock'n Roll/Smoke On The Water

Oh dear....more neighbour trouble. Can this really be the same Ritchie Blackmore who claims to play the cello in his spare time? It's hard to believe he would show the slightest interest in anything not plugged in to a wallfull of Marshalls.

Deep in the heart of Texas (San Antonio, Summer 1982) Ritchie and the boys plough through a bunch of melodies in authentic style. Vocalist Joe Lynn Turner is hard pressed to establish his stage presence while our Ritchie, looking somewhat like a crazed Jasper Carrot, pulls every trick out of the book in order to please. To this end he even gets round to the inevitable 'smash the guitar' trip during 'Long Live Rock'n Roll', but more alert viewers might notice a brief disappearance behind the PA beforehand in order to substitute a cheapo copy more suited to the task than his precious Stratocaster that reappears unscathed in time to finish the number.

Originated on NTSC video the picture quality suffers when the level of illumination drops - lots of grain and noise. When the stage lights are full on the picture is OK although there is intermittent 'pin-striping' interference on the picture from the audio signal, some-

thing that crops up on more than a few music videos. The sound is good but being close-miked lacks the natural acoustic one would expect of the concert environment, and with the audio/video sync being quite badly out at times it doesn't always make for comfortable viewing. The disc would have been more enjoyable if the pressing had been a bit cleaner - it had its fair share of spots and dropout so be warned.

[B - / B +] [C]

GISELLE



ARTS INT. 04 AI 009 £19.99

CLV - Ch COLOUR STEREO

1983 105 mins

Featuring: Galina Mezentseva, Konstantin Zaklinsky
Conductor: Viktor Fedotov
Music by: Adolph Adam

A Kirov Ballet, Leningrad production

Giselle is probably the most famous romantic ballet. The plot was proposed by the French poet, Theophile Gautier, after he had read about the old German legend of 'the wilis'; night spirits of unmarried betrothed maidens who have died and passed into limbo. Whilst in limbo the girls' spirits appear as wilis and haunt graveyards at night to wreak vengeance on any passing male.

The plot opens in the village square with the villagers going to the wine harvest. Count Albrecht has disguised himself as Loys, a village lad, in order to court the peasant girl Giselle. Hilarion, a forester who loves Giselle also, and Bertha, Giselle's mother, do not trust Loys - with good reason as it turns out. The Duke of Courland arrives with a hunting party which includes his daughter Bathilde who is engaged to Count Albrecht. Eventually Albrecht is compromised and in Giselle's presence is forced to acknowledge Bathilde as his intended. Giselle, seeing Albrecht's duplicity, loses her reason and in madness and grief grabs Albrecht's sword in order to attempt suicide. She staggers and collapses into Albrecht's arms and falls dead at his feet.

Act 2 is set in a forest glade at midnight where Giselle's grave is lying in unconsecrated ground. Hilarion comes to mourn at the grave but midnight is the time the wilis appear and dance any man they come across to death. Hilarion flees as the queen of the wilis appears and calls her ghostly minions to welcome Giselle into their ranks. Albrecht comes to place flowers on the grave and sees her ghost. The wilis return and drive

Hilarion to his death in the lake. Myrtha, the queen, condemns Albrecht to dance to the death but Giselle reappears and helps him hold out till the sunrise and the wilis, like Dracula vampires, are forced to return to their graves. Giselle then bids farewell to Albrecht and returns to the earth leaving him alone but alive.

Adolph Adam adhered strictly to the plot given by Gautier and the choreographer Perrot. He produced a suitable musical score using mostly short sections and reminiscent tunes. Each dance is treated differently in speed and style but it builds to a dramatic whole.

No other ballets from this period (1841) survive. In the Soviet Union a number of 19th century ballets are retained but they are so edited and re-vamped that they bear hardly any resemblance to the originals.

Viktor Fedotov holds the orchestra well in control and treats the dancers to a strict but sympathetic tempo. The whole production is well done. Albrecht is suitably vigorous and athletic and Giselle conveys the naive innocence of the simple peasant girl convincingly. Hilarion would be a difficult role to make into a great part; as a humble forester he is well played.

The Act 1 pas de deux for the village boy and girl is charming and Olga Vtorushina and Sergei Vuharev are obviously a pair of rising stars. Myrtha, Tatyana Terekhova, copes well with the taxing role of the queen; she is on stage for almost the entire second act. The corps de ballet show good discipline and their set numbers come off very convincingly - the slow hop of the wilis across the stage whilst holding an arabesque in perfect formation must be seen.

There are some uncomfortable changes from long-shot to close-up and back but generally the camera shots change at the right time to coincide with the relevant action.

This Kirov version of Giselle is a most welcome addition to the catalogue. It is the definitive version of this Romantic ballet and can be recommended for its artistic treatment.

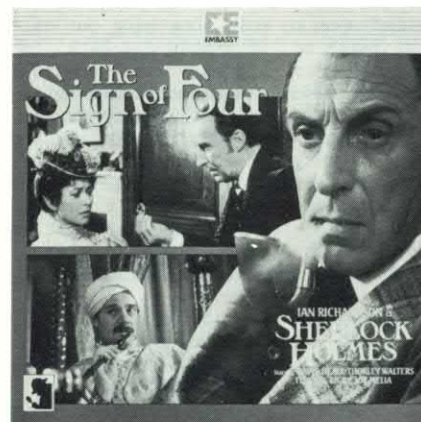
[TONY WELLS]

Disc quality: Generally a good video master though there was the slightest hint of smearing of the colours but this was of no great significance in practice. The illumination on side one produced a pleasing picture though the darker scenes on side two did induce some video lag where fast movement occurred. This was of only marginal importance as the preponderance of white spots on this side were of greater annoyance.

The quality of the sound recording was a little peculiar. The orchestra appears to have been closely miked and the resulting recording has then been 'enhanced' by a rather exaggerated echo/reverberation effect. Musical crescendos linger somewhat longer than the natural acoustic of the hall would suggest. 'The Sleeping Beauty' recorded at the same venue does not exhibit this characteristic. That said, the sound quality is acceptable if not up to the standard where it could be enjoyed for its own sake.

[B + / B] [C]

THE SIGN OF FOUR



EMBASSY ELV 1865 £13.99

CLV COLOUR MONO

92 mins 1983

Starring: Ian Richardson, David Healy, Thorley Walters, Joe Melia, Terence Rigby, Cherie Lunghi
Director: Desmond Davis

Do we really need any more Sherlock Holmes' films? Possibly not, but these two British productions, if lacking the 'big film' treatment, are more about good acting than anything else. 'The Sign of Four' deals with a one-legged villain and his cannibalistic midget side-kick trying to repossess some jewels dubiously appropriated in the East.

Ian Richardson is common to both films and one wouldn't want it any other way. Readers are bound to draw comparisons but the initial impression is that someone said "Look, Ian Richardson is free, let's make some Sherlock Holmes' films!" Here he receives Watsonian support in the shape of David Healy, a rather uptight soul who fancies his chances with the heroine (Cherie Lunghi) but you sort of hope she doesn't get lumbered with him and they'll go their separate ways when the rightful ownership of the jewels is established.

So long as nobody steps out of the studio the locations are perfectly credible but a chase sequence along the Thames shows a deserted London Docks which you know could not have existed in anything but the most recent times. Both of these films might have limited repeat appeal but that should not be seen as a criticism in any way.

The master submitted here is almost on the button - the contrast is marginally high, but only really noticeable in some of the interiors where you feel you should be able to see a little deeper in to the shadow areas. The sound is good without being special - at the kind of listening level the film functions at no cause for criticism is likely to arise.

The catch? The pressing is one of the good recent ones, no spots or anything but three copies inspected had a rolling narrow white band around the twenty minute point on side one and it would seem unlikely that the copy you get will be much different. It's not on the screen long enough to be a major annoyance but the disc would have looked better without it. If anyone has a copy free of the problem let us know.

[A - / B] [?]

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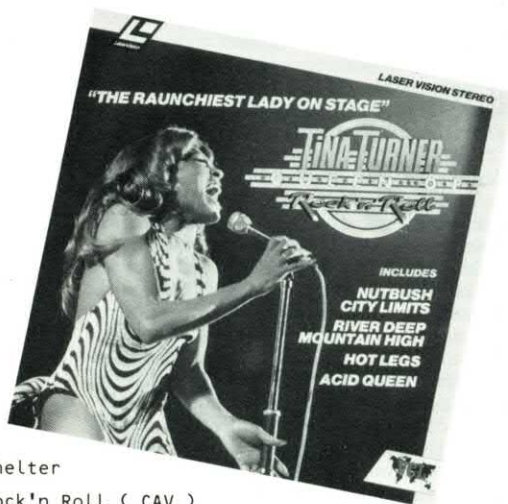
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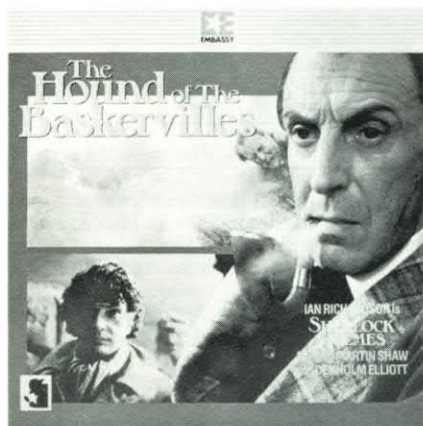
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HOUND OF THE BASKERVILLES



EMBASSY ELV 1364 £13.99

CLV COLOUR MONO

99 mins 1983

Starring: Ian Richardson, Donald Churchill, Glynis Barber, Denholm Elliott, Brian Blessed, Eleanor Bron, Edward Judd, Ronald Lacey, Martin Shaw, Connie Booth, Nicholas Clay
Director: Douglas Hickox

This one is about a dog. You also get more stars.

Dr Watson here is Donald Churchill, a magnificent bumbler who freed Holmes overseeing eye becomes confident and resourceful. It's only when they are together that Watson collapses and falls

for every trick the master can throw at him. Again this comes over as the part being made for the actor - some of Churchill's scattier ejaculations cause Richardson to visibly drop his guard and be almost on the point of breaking out into spontaneous laughter.

The supporting cast is obviously a strong one and only Martin Shaw calls for any special criticism. His American accent looks dubbed on and it is obvious enough to detract from the flow if you are sensitive to such things. Apart from that one aspect this would be the disc to choose if it was a case of having only one.

Similar master quality is in evidence here. If anything this disc is a little more contrasty and some interiors block up completely in the shadow areas even with TV contrast reduced. The pressing should be first-rate as the review copy was only flawed by some partial line dropout in odd moments which should be just a sample defect. On that basis...

[A- / B] [A-]

YES GIORGIO

MGM / UA UMLV 10208 £9.99

CLV COLOUR STEREO MP

1982 107 mins

Starring: Luciano Pavarotti, Kathryn Harrold
Director: Franklin J. Schaffner
Songs include: If We Were In Love / I Left My Heart In San Francisco / O Sole Mio / Ave Maria / Nessun Dorma

My first reaction on seeing the name Pavarotti on LV was one of scepticism. Until then I had never heard of him and



a great tenor doesn't appear overnight, especially when he is fast approaching fifty years of age. The first disc I bought, the Royal Albert Hall/SPECTRUM recital, allayed all my fears. Luciano Pavarotti has actually been singing before the public since 1961 following seven years of hard vocal training and musical study. His first big break came when he won a singing competition in Reggio Emilia, Northern Italy, near his home town of Modena. By 1965 he had built up a reputation in the great opera houses but has only recently become a star - like Gigli for example.

During the film we are treated to no less than five arias and eight songs complete plus many other excerpts. 'Yes Giorgio' opens with Giorgio Fini (Pavarotti) singing 'Ave Maria' at his friend's wedding. After the ceremony everyone is saying their goodbyes - in Italian with English subtitles. I felt a wave of dismay at this the first time I viewed it - not the language barrier

again! However this lasted only a few minutes - the rest of the film is in English. One familiar face is that of Eddie Albert who has taken time off from being a General in the US Army to play the part of Henry Pollack, Giorgio's manager.

One day Giorgio receives a request to sing at the Metropolitan Opera House, New York where he once had an unforgettable disaster. The memory of causes him to lose his voice and the throat specialist Pamela Taylor (played by the attractive Kathryn Harrold) called in to lend assistance provides the love interest of the film. Eventually she is able to give him the confidence to make his return to the Met.

'Yes Giorgio' is not, nor is it intended to be, Luciano's lifestory but it does embody many of his characteristics. I certainly got the impression that I was watching Luciano rather than the fictitious Giorgio. His love of sport and cooking is authentic, but above all, his zest for life and sense of humour shine out like a torch. There is a good mixture of humour, slapstick and pathos which make it good family entertainment. The colourful scenery, both on and off stage, combine to make this one of the most enjoyable discs it has been my pleasure to own.

Picture quality throughout I found excellent but the sound, although good for the most part somehow doesn't seem to be able to cope with Pavarotti's high notes at full volume. Switching in a 6KHz steep cut filter virtually eliminated the problem and this was the only fault I could find.

[B+ / B+] [A-] [R.S. CHAMBERLIN]

UNDER FIRE



RANK VIDEO	D 0211	£ 13.99
CLV	COLOUR	STEREO MP
1983	123 mins (3 sides)	Rated 15

Starring: Nick Nolte, Gene Hackman, Joanna Cassidy
Director: Roger Spottiswoode

Although released in 1983, many of the incidents and political statements contained in this film look as though they had appeared on this morning's breakfast time TV news. 'Underfire' is that topical in the way it deals with the lives of three journalists in Nicaragua. The time of the story is 1979 but, like the Irish situation, it is no different in 1985.

The three stars give good and believable performances. Nick Nolte has never been better as a hot-shot photographer with an eye to the main scoop.

Gene Hackman - always a most watchable actor - is every inch the mature journalist with a cynical view of the world ('You know where Nicaragua is, Charlie. You look at a map, find New Orleans and turn left.'). And it's nice to have a leading lady with a lived-in face - Joanna Cassidy convinces us that she is a tough journalist and does not look out of place among the machine guns and helicopters. Her role, however, is not as well-written as it should be. Nolte and Hackman have most of the dramatic meat - but she does have an infectiously fruity laugh and the triangle affair between her and the two men seems natural and uncontrived.

Two names in the supporting cast that are worth mentioning are Jean-Louis Trintignant (as a shady French businessman who gets in over his head) and Ed Harris (quite the most loathsome character in the film - he is wonderfully effective as an insensitive mercenary).

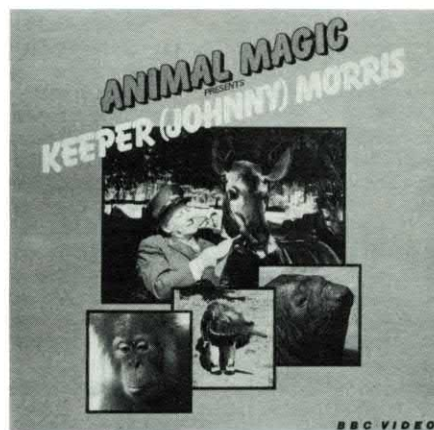
The script - a deeply committed one - is by Ron Shelton and Clayton Frohman. It comes down firmly on the side of the revolutionaries and makes its points without being too talky. It is a loosely structured piece allowing events to grow naturally out of the situation. British director, Roger Spottiswoode, handles both the characters and the action with cool professionalism. While the pace of the film is rather leisurely it is never tedious, and when the action and the dramatic shocks arrive they really hit hard.

John Alcott's fine photography and Jerry Goldsmith's atmospheric music combine to keep the images firm in the viewer's mind.

'Under Fire' is an intelligent film. It may lack the power and passion of 'The Killing Fields' but, in its own way, it is just as good. So I would give the film three stars out of a possible four.

[A- / A-] [B+] [KEN BARNES]

ANIMAL MAGIC



BBC VIDEO	BBCL 9013	£ 9.99
CLV	COLOUR/B & W	MONO
1962 - 1978	59 mins	

Even the most intelligent of people talk to animals. With the assistance of Johnny Morris some of them have the opportunity to talk back. Whether the conversations turn out as you would imagine is neither here nor there as the aim is to entertain rather than educate.

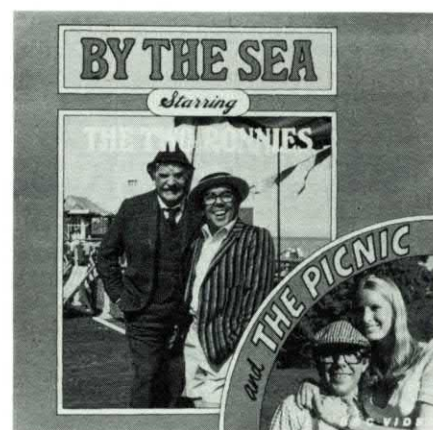
The disc comprises 14 short films made over the period 1962 - 1978 and yes, you guessed it, there is no Chapter

facility. This might have come in handy for replaying favourite episodes. Some of the earlier clips are in black & white. Most of the films have been shot in various zoos - Whipsnade, Bristol, Paris, Antwerp, Barcelona etc - although there are conversations with some slightly less animate exhibits at the Natural History Museum. You get a chance to see a white gorilla, some elephants being washed, Flo the giant anteater, penguins, okapis, Percy the pelican, and of course, some chimpanzees.

All pleasantly diverting - but you'd have to make allowances for the grainy and colourless image for most of the time. One doubts that anyone had the faintest notion that these things would one day end up on a laser disc. The b&w segments would have been quite acceptable but for the fact that the frame appears neutral on the left hand side and decidedly magenta on the right. This effect creeps through on some of the colour sequences too. The sound is a little hissy though otherwise fine.

[C+ / B-] [B]

BY THE SEA/ PICNIC



BBC VIDEO	BBCL 7024	£ 11.99
CLV	COLOUR	MONO
1982/1975	79 mins	

Two semi-silent (nobody gets to speak but there are sound effects) short films from Ronnies Barker & Corbett. Both done entirely on location. 'By The Sea' runs for 50mins and centres around the family holiday at Tiddley Cove. Plenty of predictable humour occurs, as is the case with 'The Picnic', a briefer foray in to the English countryside for a day out. Fans will know what to expect in both instances.

Dubbed audience laughter has been added to both films - it appears genuine but just sounds terrible on the hi-fi and one wonders who really thought it necessary. Ideally we could have had a disc with the original soundtrack on one channel and the dubbed version on the other.

Both shorts are originated on 16mm film and 'The Picnic' holds up reasonably well but 'By The Sea' is horribly grainy, especially at the beginning. The overall presentation of this disc inevitably restricts the appeal.

[C+ / B+] [B+]

'Ripping Yarns' - Too late for inclusion this time, these two discs are again mostly 16mm film originated (there are some video segments too) and are very variable in picture quality. Again the soundtracks contain dubbed laughter.

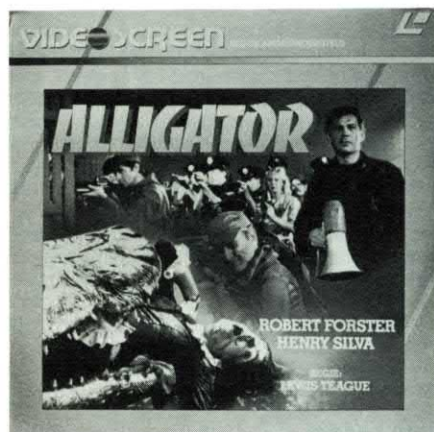
IMPORTS

All the German & Dutch LaserVision discs reviewed in the following section are compatible with UK (and all other) PAL players.

At present, none of the discs are available in the UK and must be obtained by personal import. For German discs refer to the address on page 39 although LASER SOUND & VISION (see advert on page 35) plan to stock music discs - and they already have three titles in stock!

Dutch film titles may be obtained from VIDEO-SCREEN (details last issue) although RELIABLE VIDEOS are presently negotiating to import a selection of titles - probably nearer Xmas.

ALLIGATOR



VIDEOSCREEN VLP 2075E (Holland) fls-79

CLV	COLOUR	MONO	Dutch subtitled
1980	92 mins		Rated AA

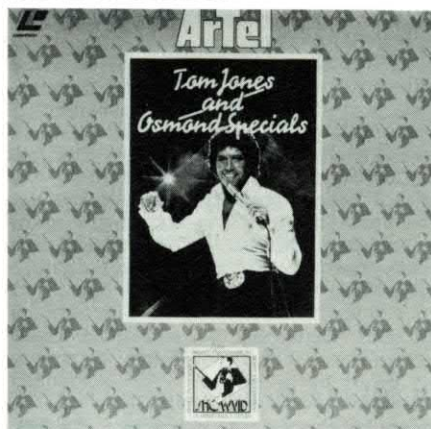
Starring: Robert Forster, Robin Riker, Michael Gazzo, Dean Jagger, Henry Silva
Director: Lewis Teague

This is quite good fun. The one sentence summary given last time round is about as much of the plot as is necessary to know, but some additional comments may be in order. The script by John Sayles ('Lianna' & 'Brother From Another Planet' etc) may be a little too carefully written for its own good. Sometimes it's better when these things are a bit tackier. It's still possible to anticipate though and it's usually only a matter of time before the characters you have selected get the dentured handbag treatment. It is a modest production, but not a cheap one. When the occasion demands cars and boats are dispatched with as much abandon as members (?) of the cast. You only catch glimpses of the alligator earlier on but it does stand up to closer inspection during the finale where it thrashes about in good view for several minutes. Well...it's good enough for CLV inspection. It's not a man in an alligator suit.

The sub-titles on this one consist of white writing straight on the picture - no black block. That makes them fairly unobtrusive. Image quality is quite good (looks a bit like a RANK type image) but the print has a lot of black spots in places and this dirt has left a constant low level spitting on the optical soundtrack that would have otherwise been considered quite good (say a B-). The pressing is an older one and is only troubled by a certain amount of flecking in the sewer scenes.

[B - / C -] [C]

TOM JONES & OSMONDS SPECIALS



ARTEL (0005.07141)
In Germany - 405.3134 Price DM 39.50
In Holland - VLP 1023M Price fls- 69

CLV	COLOUR	MONO
1978/9	66 mins	

Two US TV variety shows - the kind of programmes you might find used as filler material here. Both shows are rather short although as nobody ever seems to pause to take breath they appear crammed full as far as content goes. Their appeal on disc is more than likely going to be restricted to anyone who has a particular interest in the artistes involved.

On side one, 'The Osmond Special' opens with a couple of song and dance numbers followed by a similar solo effort from Ann Margret. A switch to a more concert-like environment allows brother Merrill to introduce Rita Coolidge for a version of 'Higher & Higher', later joined by Kris Kristofferson for a medley of 'Help Me Make It Through The Night' and 'For The Good Times'. Merrill joins the duo for 'Me & Bobby McGhee' but we never get to hear anything from Billy Swan who can be seen strumming away on rhythm guitar for the duration of this live set. All of the Osmonds and guests then re-appear for a variety song and dance interlude and after a couple more short numbers from the Osmonds alone (which like everything bar the mid show concert segment appear mimed) it's over.

Tom Jones at Knotts Berry Farm (which isn't visibly a farm!) is more of a live stage show in front of an enthusiastic audience. Tom starts out with a couple of uptempo numbers and then introduces Tanya Tucker for one solo number followed by a duet with Tom on...oh...'Help Me Make It Through The Night'.

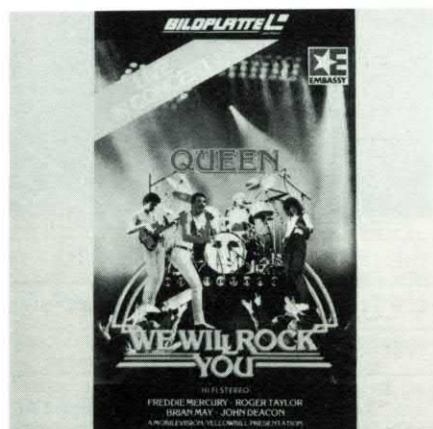
So far so good, but after this we are 'treated' to a couple of ice dance displays from the Knotts Berry Farm Ice Spectacular - gripping stuff! Relief follows in the shape of Evelyn 'Champagne' King doing 'Musicbox' - it is live I think though the strange fadeout would imply otherwise. Tom reappears and thanks to the diligence of his tailor's stitchwork manages to conclude the show with an energetic interpretation of 'Old Fashioned Strut'. The opening

credits on this side promised comedy appearances from Will Shriner and Dick Shawn but these have unfortunately been edited out. Now, if only somebody had turned the central heating up.....

Neither show has particularly good sound although the Osmonds show suffers from 'enhanced' audience response to compound matters. Through the hi-fi this disc still sounds as though you are listening to the TV, except it's louder. Picture quality is typical American TV style and here a little grainy. The transfer to disc is not that wonderful either as the brilliant colour stage sets always seem to produce a slightly turbulent image no matter how much you reduce the colour. The pressing, a UK one, is a bit spotty in parts - adequate but no more than this.

[C + / B -] [C +]

QUEEN We Will Rock You



EMBASSY 405.3150 (Germany) DM. 49

CLV - Ch	COLOUR	STEREO
1982	90 mins	

Side 1: We Will Rock You/Let Me Entertain You/Play The Game/Somebody To Love/Killer Queen/I'm In Love With My Car/Get Down Make Love/Save Me/Now I'm Here/Dragon Attack/Love Of My Life
Side 2: Under Pressure/Keep Yourself Alive/Crazy Little Thing Called Love/Bohemian Rhapsody/Tie Your Mother Down/Another One Bites The Dust/Sheer Heart Attack/We Will Rock You/We Are The Champions

A live 1982 Queen concert featuring some 20 tracks but before going any further your attention needs to be drawn to an annoying sound defect in this disc. Somewhere along the line the soundtrack has been carelessly transferred and sections of this disc sound distinctly muffled and unsteady. Some improvement was achieved by reversing the speaker leads but that this disc might be out of phase would only appear to be part of the problem. It's not totally unlistenable by any means and viewed as more of a documentary type recording the sound is passable, especially on side two - but it's not real hi-fi which is what it states on the sleeve.

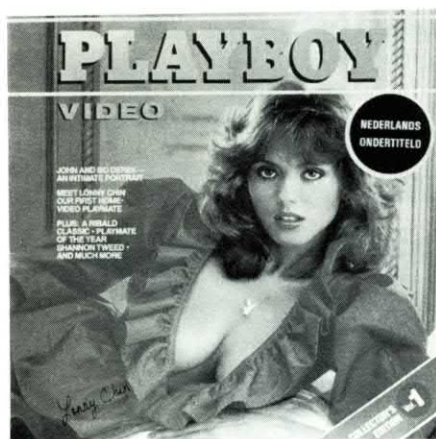
Seeing as the concert was originated on 35mm film the picture quality less than might be expected. It gives the impression of being done on video. Everything is reasonably sharp

but the screen is often dark and featureless and there is minimal colour throughout. The pressing coped quite well with the large areas of black often dominating the screen although side two did get a bit spotty on the sample reviewed.

Queen exert quite a lot of energy throughout even though one might doubt this is all presented in consecutive order, or even whether the disc is assembled from only one show. As it stands this disc could only be recommended to committed fans though the potential appeal would be far greater given a better quality standard of release.

[C + / D] [C +]

PLAYBOY Vol.1



CBS/FOX VLP 2104E (Holland) fls-79

CLV COLOUR STEREO Dutch subtitled

1982 79 mins

The early days of home video saw a proliferation of magazine format tapes (...well... a few companies tried it) that have all but disappeared from view. So what is the magic ingredient that allows the 'Playboy Collector's Edition' series to survive? In the USA the series has now reached number 7 and now in Europe, Holland to be exact, the first volume is now available.

Anybody who has ever seen a copy of the magazine itself will no doubt appreciate the faithful manner in which the printed page has been transformed into the electronic image. Playmates Lonny Chin and Shannon Tweed appear as real, moving people (ah!...the magic ingredient). They also talk. There is also a commentator who talks. His smooth and somewhat smug style of delivery grates but he serves to introduce an interview with film actress Barbara Carrera, a brief plug for the Crazy Horse Saloon, a video conceptualisation of a Ribald Classic, and a twelve minute interview with John and Bo Derek. He is not present between all segments where instead excerpts from Michael Nesmith's 'Elephant Parts' video (some of which are not on the PIONEER disc) are used to aid the transition. Their snappy style adds much needed pace and they work better in these brief doses than the hour-long compilation.

Avoiding the obvious appeal of the female nudity two things stand out (!). Early on side one there is an eight minute compilation of Playboy memorabilia - a skilfully assembled montage of visuals with good accompanying audio. This

leads into some excerpts from the TV shows, 'Playboy's Penthouse' and 'Playboy After Dark', where a variety of show biz stars are seen doing their bit and one hopes that some more complete performances might someday find their way on to a disc.

The other frustratingly brief highlight is an excerpt from the Fourth Annual Playboy Jazz Festival where but six minutes are given over to Nancy Wilson, Weather Report, Manhattan Transfer, and Maynard Ferguson.

In essence though this disc is what you would expect it to be and is not likely to disappoint. The conversion from NTSC video has been well done (the concert clips look especially good) and it is unfortunate that the extensive use of soft-focus photography does tend to make the image look a little grainy now and again. But overall disc quality is good, the pressing too (it's a fairly recent UK one).

[B / B +] [B +]

REGGAE SUNSPASH Vol.2



VCL

In Germany - 405.3114 Price DM.59

In Holland - VLP 1033M Price fls-69

CAV - Ch COLOUR STEREO

1983 60 mins

Side 1: CHALICE - This Is Reggae Music/A Song/Shanty Town/I've Got To Go Back Home/BYRON LEE & THE DRAGONAIRS - Gypsy Girl/BIG YOUTH - Mind Blowing Decision/TOOTS & MAYTALS - Sweet & Dandy/Everyday Is A Holiday/TAJ MAHAL - Mailbox Blues/EEK-A-MOUSE - A Wa Do Dem
Side 2: MUTABARUKA - Hard Times Love/YELLOWMAN - My Life Story/Amen/Nick Nack Patty Wack/Banana Boat Song/DENICE WILLIAMS - Free/My God's Amazing/TWINKLE BROTHERS - Since I Throw The Comb Away/CHALICE - Good To Be There/Army Life

From 25 hours of Festival footage comes this reggae/soul compilation recorded in Montego Bay, Jamaica and apparently edited together for commercial TV broadcast - halfway through each side you get a brief title credit where presumably the adverts would appear. These are all outdoor performances, mostly at night, and the sound is not only good quality but it retains that subtle atmospheric out of doors feel. It helps to play the disc fairly loud.

With ten acts no-one stays around long enough either to satisfy or displease. This may be good politics but the disc deserves to be better than just a repackaged TV programme and a more considered selection of material might

have been hoped for.

Side one is a little lighter in vein and it isn't until Taj Mahal starts into 'Mailbox Blues' that the music starts to settle down to a groove. Unfortunately it's not the same one as the indigenous artistes and both this and the Deniece Williams tracks, while enjoyable in their own right, don't really blend smoothly into this compilation.

If you get to see the sleeve of this disc first do not be misled by the listing of the Home T Four and Lloyd Parkes as these artistes do not appear. Someone has made a right pig's ear of the track listing - it's all out of sequence and wrongly numbered.

The original recording has been done with a selection of camera angles not all have which have been mixed to a matching contrast level. At least it didn't work out that way on setting up the disc picture and settling for something a bit contrasty and gaudy seemed the best compromise. This made the grain show up a bit but anything flatter resulted in a rather ill-defined image. Of all the VCL discs seen so far this was the spottiest, uncomfortably so in parts, and one would hope this to be an unlucky sample. If enough of the tracks on this disc mean anything to you the picture quality would no doubt prove adequate and the sound would satisfy anyone, even as a listening only disc.

[B - / A -] [C]

JACQUES TATI Seine Schonsten Film



ATLAS 405.4050 (Germany) DM. 99

CLV COLOUR / B & W MONO 4 - Discs

1948 - 68 375 mins

Disc One: JOUR DE FETE (1948) B & W 74 mins
Disc Two: MR HULOT'S HOLIDAY (1953) B & W 83 mins
Disc Three: MON ONCLE (1958) COLOUR 104 mins
Disc Four: PLAYTIME (1968) COLOUR 114 mins

When Ken Barnes talked about boxed sets of films as a possible future LV development in his recent article the realisation of such a concept seemed remote, but in Germany such things have been done. This four-films-in-a-box set of Jacques Tati features says a lot for the concept. Jacques Tati should be reasonably well known to readers. There have been recent TV showings of at least a couple of these titles and there is appeal here to anyone interested in comedy - from the silent era right up to the present day.

The earliest film, the 1948 'Jour De Fete', depicts a sleepy French village when the fair comes to visit. Tati is the local postman who, on viewing a newsreel about the newly automated American post office through the flaps of the cinema tent, is goaded on by the villagers to emulate some of this progressive technology. There is little dialogue. Tati often takes on the appearance of an agile Adolph Hitler and spends most of his time struggling to retain his composure. The snail-like pace of rural French life is realistically portrayed but the film never becomes 'slow'. The action often bursts upon the viewer unwittingly and, though you may anticipate some of the jokes, none are superfluous, and none are prolonged past their rightful duration.

Much the same could be said of the approach to 'Mr Hulot's Holiday' where the recognisable character of Hulot emerges, enjoying his Summer vacation at a seaside hotel. It is 1953 and his fellow tourists of French, German, and English nationality each speak in their native tongue although the dialogue is of little significance. Hulot doesn't quite fit in here. His activities upset the routine of the other guests though he intends no malice. He's just not one of the crowd. As everyone is packing to return home at the end, few of the farewells are said to Hulot.

The Hulot character is in 'Mon Oncle' - filmed in colour this time but, incredibly, only five years on from the previous film. This is a glimpse of the modern France, tomorrow's France, where the regimented lifestyle of the prosperous middle-class couple in the ultra modern home shows mankind achieving total control over its environment. Hulot is the relative who they'd rather exclude from the new order of things as he can't make the transition from the disordered past. His own penthouse apartment perches precariously aloft a building that defies an existence in anything other than someone's imagination. Hulot is a nuisance - he induces malfunction in every part of the new house when he comes to visit and is a bad influence on the son; they have fun together. Hulot enjoys life for its own sake. At the end of the film the brother in law boss sends him off to work in distant Africa and it is tempting to think that Tati could find no other means of drawing things to a close. For an audience more than likely irretrievably committed to the better life through material prosperity, seeing Hulot succeed would no doubt have proved an unpalatable conclusion.

In 'Playtime' Hulot returns once more. He is still out of place. Many of the situations he finds himself in are but a continuation of what was touched upon in the previous film, but while Hulot is still able to poke fun he no longer comes out triumphant. In 'Playtime' Hulot appears beaten. You reason that the pressures of the big budget wide-screen production have caused this. Instinct, a more reliable gauge, tells you otherwise.

But anyway, three out of four isn't bad, and if it takes a boxed release such as this to make 'Mon Oncle' available, the exercise would be worthwhile. You do not have to worry about language problems with these discs. Comprehension of the dialogue is not a prerequisite to enjoyment, although the presence of sound is. They are not quite silent films.

The concept of a collectors' edition is not fully realised. While the box is nice, and you get a little four page

flyer with some blurb (in German), the prints are of only average quality. The earliest film has some annoying painted in colour added to the B&W picture. In fact, due to hue variations in the film stock on both the B&W films, they are better viewed with the colour control at minimum. 'Mon Oncle' is not too bad but 'Playtime' shows no improvement in spite of its undoubted higher standard of origination. Print quality and disc transfer are everything in these films. Tati's style is one of observation. You never get any close-ups. The viewer is presented with a complete scene from which to select a chosen area of interest. Often several themes are developed simultaneously. Taking the price of this set into consideration though, the discs will do until something better comes along.

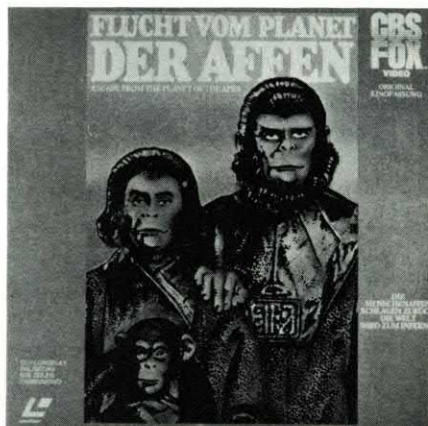
That such a time should be sooner rather than later is of some significance. All the ATLAS discs we have seen so far have succumbed to the laser rot syndrome (detailed elsewhere) to a greater or lesser extent. In this set only 'Playtime' shows signs of being troubled so far, and only to a slight degree, but it cannot make any sense to recommend these discs to readers without them being aware that they are only ever going to be 'renters' of these films. With the news from Germany being what it is there seems little likelihood of an imminent repressing.

Mr Hulot would probably derive a certain reassurance from seeing some of the modern world's technological advances fail. That it should include these LaserVision discs might not strike him as the most desirable manifestation of this wish.

APES

Apes' fans wishing to complete their collections will have to resort to acquiring these dubbed German language versions of 'Escape From The Planet Of The Apes' ('Flucht Vom Den Planet Der Affen') and 'Battle For The Planet Of The Apes' ('Die Schlacht Um Den Planet Der Affen'). Both discs are fairly typical earlier CBS/FOX masters. 'Escape' is quite good, 'Battle' a little less sharp but both would be considered watchable, and in common with most dubbed films, the sound is clear. 'Escape' has no closing credits - it just ends - and 'Battle' follows conveniently on following a brief reprise. There are credits on 'Battle'....but in French. These Apes do get around! Both discs were pressed in the UK and are relatively clean.

FLUCHT VOM PLANET DER AFFEN - 1971,
93mins, Colour, Mono.
Catalogue no: 405.1627 Price DM 59



AIRPLANE 2 [Continued from page 31]

Even though 'Airplane 2' is set a generation on from its predecessor it looks as though the film makers just took a break and kept on shooting. The story is almost a complete re-run of the earlier film but revolves around a flight of the lunar passenger shuttle. The wisdom of duplicating, almost frame perfect, some of the original gags is questionable - there are times when it is possible to forget which film is being viewed. Really, it is necessary to watch 'Airplane 2' a first time without any strong involvement in order to exorcise the memory of the original. You miss a lot of jokes and characterisations a first time round because you think you know what is going to happen. Zucker & co, the driving forces behind the original, give the impression of being upset that anyone should have made this film, but their subsequent effort, 'Top Secret', is certainly no stronger than this.

One of 'Airplane 2's' strengths is that many of the original cast have been retained and they make unreserved commitment to this production. William Shatner has to be the most sparkling addition. If you have been thinking he has shown a tendency to ham Kirk up in the recent 'Star Trek' films, the wonderfully over the top lunar base commander seen here only goes to show what he can do given free reign! In many ways the producers of 'Airplane 2' were also in a 'no-win situation', but if you were left wanting more the first time round this could be for you. 'The Big Bus' next?

The original image is very much on a par with the earlier film except that CIC have managed a very contrasty transfer from a faded and reddish film print. Often faces appear bleached white even with a minimum of TV contrast. It could have almost been a 'B-'. The image is at least sharp and strong. The sound is optical and verging on being a bit scratchy.

[C + / C +] [Test pressing]

GERMAN LV DISCS

MANY OF THE GERMAN LASERVISION DISCS REVIEWED IN THIS MAGAZINE CAN BE OBTAINED FROM:

AV REPORT,
KURFURSTENDAMM 71,
1000 BERLIN 31,
WEST GERMANY

WRITE TO THEM FOR A FULL LIST OF WHAT IS AVAILABLE.

DIE SCHLACHT UM DEN PLANET DER AFFEN
1973, 83mins, Colour, Mono,
Catalogue no: 405.1698 Price DM 59



LASER CALENDAR

Previously announced titles, now available

THE HIGHEST HONOUR, DOUBLE PLAY (aka PLAYING FOR KEEPS), REUBEN REUBEN, BLUE OYSTER CULT - BLACK SABBATH / BLACK & BLUE, RIPPING YARNS, MORE RIPPING YARNS, GRANGE HILL, DR WHO - THE BRAIN OF MORBIUS, DR WHO - REVENGE OF THE CYBERMEN, ALL CREATURES GREAT & SMALL, THE SECRET GARDEN, BARENBOIM / BEETHOVEN - ALL 10 DISCS, ARABELLA, COSI FAN TUTTE, TOSCA, TURANDOT, BOTHAM'S ASHES, ALL OF ME, BLAME IT ON RIO, CHILDREN OF THE CORN, DUNE, FIRESTARTER, FIRST BLOOD, FLASHPOINT, ONCE UPON A TIME IN AMERICA, PHILADELPHIA EXPERIMENT, WATERSHIP DOWN, GIVE MY REGARDS TO BROAD STREET, THE BEST OF DANGER MOUSE, STYX / CAUGHT IN THE ACT LIVE, ASIA IN ASIA, TAKANAKA WORLD, TENMEI & CARIOCA / PALE MOON

Previously announced, could arrive anytime

ERIC CLAPTON / WHISTLE TEST (new tape now received), THREE OF A KIND, TAKE HART, THE KEY.

AIRPLANE 2, THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK, THE MEANING OF LIFE, PLACES IN THE HEART, STAR TREK 3, STREETS OF FIRE, TANK, STAYING ALIVE, VIDEO REWIND.

Previously announced, due to follow on from above titles

BACHELOR PARTY, COMPANY OF WOLVES, FOOTLOOSE, JAWS 3, AN OFFICER AND A GENTLEMAN, PARTNERS, ROMANCING THE STONE, SMOKEY & THE BANDIT 3, TERMS OF ENDEARMENT, TOP SECRET, TRADING PLACES, UNCOMMON VALOUR, ELTON JOHN / NIGHTTIME CONCERT, NEIL DIAMOND / LIVE AT THE GREEK, PAUL YOUNG / VIDEO SINGLES, WHAM! - THE VIDEO, HANCOCK / THE BLOOD DONOR, FLASHDANCE, THE WORLD AT WAR.

DER ROSENKAVALIER, ROMEO & JULIET, LES SYLPHIDES (these three probably October)

Forthcoming - no known time

DOLLY PARTON IN LONDON, POLICE / SYNCHRONICITY CONCERT, HALL & OATES / ROCK'N SOUL LIVE (ALL PIONEER ARTISTS discs).

BARYSHNIKOV BALLET COMPILATION (due October probably), THE EVIL THAT MEN DO, THE KILLING FIELDS, MONTY PYTHON 1, MONTY PYTHON 2, BEACHBOYS / AN AMERICAN BAND, U2 / UNDER A BLOOD RED SKY.

Titles previously o/s, due to be re-pressed

ESCAPE FROM NEW YORK, TOM & JERRY 1, ABBA / THE MOVIE, OLIVIA NEWTON-JOHN / LIVE, OLIVIA NEWTON-JOHN / PHYSICAL, THE SOUND OF MUSIC, ALIEN, MY FAIR LADY, KATE BUSH / SINGLES FILE, READY STEADY GO 1, QUEEN / GREATEST FLIX, ANIMAL HOUSE, RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK, 48 HOURS, HELLO DOLLY, THE KING & I, VIDEOSTARS, DEEP PURPLE / CALIFORNIA JAM, TEARS FOR FEARS / IN MY MIND'S EYE, QUADROPHENIA, PAVAROTTI.
(No scheduled delivery time on the above.)