

DVD/Blu-ray Roundup for May 26, 2017

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Friday, 26 May 2017 03:05



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It's time for another look at what is coming your way on Blu-ray and DVD. There are several huge movies arriving and you can read all about them below. So if you can't make it out to the movies this week, be sure to give one of these titles a try!

Big New Releases!

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Get Out - An African-American man agrees to visit his Caucasian girlfriend's family in this thriller. Shortly after arriving, he begins witnessing strange behavior from the clan as well as area locals. He slowly begins to fear that something sinister may be lurking beneath the family facade. This low-budget flick written and directed by Jordan Peele was a massive hit at the box-office and scored with critics. They called it a complex and engaging thriller that both entertains and makes effective points on the issue of racism. It stars Daniel Kaluuya, Allison Williams, Catherine Keener, Bradley Whitford, Caleb Landry Jones and LilRed Howley.

The Great Wall - Two European mercenaries out to discover the formula for gunpowder find themselves at the Great Wall of China. They are recruited to help a secret military sect face off against a monstrous threat. This big-budget, multinational production didn't make a very good impression with reviewers. A few found it to be a fun diversion with entertaining action, but most complained that resources were wasted on a very silly creature feature that doesn't engage on any emotional level and strands a good cast. It features Matt Damon, Tian Jing, Willem Dafoe, Andy Lau, Pedro Pascal and Hanyu Zhang.

I Am Heath Ledger - Actor Heath Ledger is the subject of this documentary. The feature combines home video shot by the performer and personal recollections from co-workers, friends and family to pay tribute to his life and accomplishments. Reaction to the feature was generally positive. While a few critiqued that it didn't go into as much depth on its subject as it could have, most found it to be a sweet and genuine reflection on a much-admired entertainer. Sounds like it will certainly please fans of the actor. Naomi Watts, Ben Mendelsohn, Djimon Hounsou, Emile Hirsch, Ang Lee and Ben Harper all share stories.

Jonny's Sweet Revenge - This small, independent comedy involves a couple who decide to see a therapist in the hopes of salvaging their flailing relationship. Unfortunately, the counselor's sessions lead the pair to begin plotting a heist in the hopes of bringing some excitement back into their lives. As one might imagine, the robbery doesn't go as planned. This one is also making its debut on disc, so there aren't any write-ups to go on as of yet. The cast includes Jeff Lorch, Andrea Bowen, Kacy Owens, Ronnie Gene Blevins, Bradley Fowler and Priscilla Barnes.

Logan - Another massive success from the early part of the year was this grim take on an *X-Men* superhero. Set in the future where most mutants have died off, Wolverine finds himself living a quiet existence, trying not to attract attention. However, he's forced back into action one last time when he encounters and must protect a young girl with similar abilities. Notices were strong for this one, with the overwhelming majority praising its down-and-dirty, soulful approach and calling it one of the best superhero efforts in recent memory. It stars Hugh Jackman, Patrick

Stewart, Boyd Holbrook, Stephen Merchant, Dafne Keen and Richard E. Grant.

Max 2: White House Hero - In this sequel to the 2015 film, the title ex-Marine canine is assigned to provide security at the White House when the regular secret service dog takes maternity leave. Specifically, the animal must follow and assist the President's 12-year-old son while he entertains the daughter of a foreign dignitary. The pooch forms a bond with the boy and tries to help the kids get themselves out of some trouble. This one is "premiering" on Blu-ray and DVD and hasn't been seen by the press, so make what you will out of that. It features Zane Austin, Francesca Capaldi, Lochlyn Munro, Andrew Kavadas and Reese Alexander.

My Life as a Zucchini - A depressed young boy must deal with tragedy after his mother passes away and he is placed into an orphanage. Struggling to fit in with other children suffering from similar circumstances, he makes friends with a local police officer and eventually learns how to assimilate. This French animated film drew raves from critics. They described it as a heartfelt and powerful little movie, punctuated with bright and beautiful imagery. It also earned a nomination for Best Animated Film at last year's Academy Awards. The disc includes a subtitled French version and an English dub voiced by Will Forte, Nick Offerman, Ellen Page and Amy Sedaris.

Rock Dog - This animated feature involves a Tibetan Mastiff who spends his days in the mountains protecting sheep from wolves. To the chagrin of his music-banning father, the lead dog discovers that he can't resist the urge to rock. After picking up a guitar, the animal decides to head for the big city to start a career as a musician. Notices were pretty terrible for this feature. A couple of write-ups thought it was innocuous enough for small children, but most found it to be bland in execution and unmemorable. J.K. Simmons, Luke Wilson, Eddie Izzard, Lewis Black and Kenan Thompson lend their vocal talent to the production.

Seeking Dolly Parton - A lesbian couple decide they want to have a child together. When their initial plans fall through, they opt to use one of the pair's ex-boyfriends as a live-in donor. The man is unsure if he still carries feelings for his ex, and old feelings are brought up and examined after he moving in. This small, independent title has played at a few film festivals, but was only recently picked up for distribution. It is debuting on disc so unfortunately there aren't any reviews available as of yet. The cast includes Kacey Clarke, Anya Monzikova and Michael Worth.

XX - This horror anthology features four scary tales all directed by women. The first features a

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strange old man with a red box, the second tells the tale of a birthday party gone horribly awry, the third is about a desert-expedition gone wrong and the final segment involves a single mother who discovers her child may be Satan. Critics were generally enthusiastic about the compilation. While there were complaints that the short film format didn't allow enough time to develop much suspense, more thought it was a capable and at times very effective anthology boasting a strong female perspective. It stars Natalie Brown, Melanie Lynskey, Breeda Wool and Christina Kirk.

Blasts From the Past!

Wow! There's a lot of great, quirky stuff this week, so let's get right to it. Arrow Video are delivering *Cops vs Thugs* (1975), a well-regarded Japanese crime flick from Kinji Fukasaku (*Battles Without Honor or Humanity*

,
Battle Royale

) that involves a Yakuza gang war over a plot of land that escalates into brutality. The 2-disc Special Edition includes the movie on Blu-ray and DVD as well as other extras, including a video appreciation of the film from a Fukasaka biographer and another featurette with a film scholar examining the director's crime flicks.

They also have *Wolf Guy* (1975), a bizarre cult oddity that has been next to impossible to locate. After remaining unreleased in this part of the world, it's finally arriving in a Blu-ray/DVD combo package. Based on the Manga comic series, Sonny Chiba (perhaps most known for *The Street Fighter*

films) plays the title character. He growls and kicks his way through an outrageous supernatural plot that features manifestations of evil spirits, gang violence and evil government officials who plot to steal his wolf-man powers. The disc includes interviews with the director, producer as well as star Chiba. As for the movie itself, it's utterly fascinating because of its sheer weirdness.

Arrow Academy, the arthouse division of the distributor, have a nice Blu-ray box set called *The Jacques Rivette Collection*

. It includes three of the French filmmaker's titles remastered in high definition -

Duelle

(1976),

Noroit

(1976) and

Merry-Go-Round

(1981). Among the many extras, the discs also include archival interviews with the director, cast

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interviews and an interview with a critic who was present on set for two of the productions.

Shout! have a cult oddity of their own arriving on Blu-ray. *The Vagrant* (1992) is a dark horror/comedy that follows a business executive and new home owner who just can't get rid of a tramp hanging around his property. Events escalate when the homeless man starts playing tricks, getting the owner in trouble and causing the executive's sanity to be questioned. The movie stars Bill Paxton, Marshall Bell and Michael Ironside. A theatrical trailer is included.

The powerful French drama *Dheepan* (2015) is getting the Criterion Blu-ray treatment. This Palm d'Or Winner is about a Tamil fighter struggling to make a new start after escaping his war-torn country. He ends up escaping to France with a woman and young girl posing as his wife and daughter. However they are placed in a tenement populated with drug dealers who push him to his limit. The disc includes a director commentary, interviews with the filmmaker and star, deleted scenes, trailer and a critic's essay on the feature.

Kino have some quirky offerings arriving on Blu-ray. *The Funny Farm* (1983) is a Canadian comedy about the life as a stand-up comic trying to make it in their field. It stars Howie Mandel and Peter Aykroyd (Dan Aykroyd's brother).

How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying

(1967) is a comedy/musical with Robert Morse and Michelle Lee, while

Those Redheads From Seattle

(1953) is a western-themed musical. Finally, there's

The World of Henry Orient

(1964), starring Peter Sellers as an egocentric pianist whose life is turned completely upside down by a pair of mischievous teenage girls.

Finally, Massacre Video have a Special Edition of the slasher flick, *Hack-O-Lantern* (1988).

Also known as

Halloween Night

, the Blu-ray/DVD combo release includes a 2K restoration of the feature, producer audio commentary and featurettes, a public access show interview with the cast and director, as well as stills and trailers.

You Know, For Kids!

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There are a lot of kid-friendly options in this edition. You'll find them all listed below.

Max 2: White House Hero

My Life as a Zucchini

My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic: Twilight and Starlight

Peg + Cat: Peg and Cat Save the World

Power Rangers: Mystic Force: The Complete Series

Rock Dog

Spongebob Squarepants: The First 100 Episodes

Static Shock: Season 2 (Warner Archive)

Teletubbies Classics: Fan Favorites

On the Tube!

And here are all of the TV-related releases.

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Call the Midwife: Season 6

David Holt's State of Music: Season 2 (PBS)

Grace Under Fire: Seasons 1 - 3

Grace Under Fire: Seasons 4 - 5

Independent Lens: Birth of a Movement (PBS)

In Search of With Leonard Nimoy: Seasons 1 - 3

Martial Law: Season 1

Masterpiece: Dark Angel (PBS)

Outsiders: Season 2

Power Rangers: Mystic Force: The Complete Series

Spongebob Squarepants: The First 100 Episodes

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Static Shock: Season 2 (Warner Archive)

Teletubbies Classics: Fan Favorites

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