

DVD/Blu-ray Roundup for June 16, 2017

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
Friday, 16 June 2017 03:22

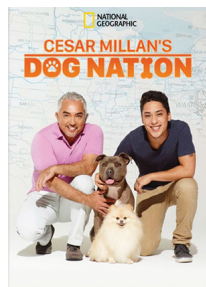


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It's time for another look at new releases arriving on Blu-ray and DVD. This time out, there's a good mix of studio and independently produced titles, meaning there's lots of variety. So, if you can't make it out to the movies this week, be sure to give one of these titles a try!

BIG NEW RELEASES!

Alone in Berlin - Based on a true story, this wartime feature involves a working-class couple who defy the Nazi party after learning that their son has been killed when he resisted the orders of his superiors. They send out postcards with anti-Nazi slogans and find themselves being hunted by the Gestapo. This UK/France/Germany co-production split critics. Half complained that it was muted in its approach and lacked tension, while others enjoyed the strong performances enough to ultimately give it a pass. This title is currently only being released on DVD and Amazon Video. It stars Emma Thompson, Brendan Gleeson, Daniel Bruhl and Uwe Preuss.

Bitter Harvest - In the 1930s, an artist joins a resistance movement in the Ukraine to help rescue his lover from Stalin's Holodomor, a program that caused millions of deaths through starvation. Unfortunately, this independent drama earned a scant few positive notices. A few felt that it raised awareness of this little-known event and was important enough in subject matter to recommend. However, the overwhelming majority felt it didn't do its subject matter justice. They hated the romantic subplot and called it old-fashioned and clumsy. It is debuting exclusively on DVD and features Max Irons, Samantha Banks, Barry Pepper and Terence Stamp.

Growing Up Smith - This comedy follows a 10-year old immigrant from India who arrives in small town America. He attempts to fit in with locals and quickly falls for the girl-next-door, but

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these changes cause stress in his relationship with his father. After being sent back to India by his dad, he returns as an adult to make sense of what happened. Reviews were solid for this indie film. Plenty of compliments suggested that the movie is warm, sweet and reminiscent of the TV-series *The Wonder Years*. At this time, the movie is currently only a DVD and Amazon Video release. The cast includes Jason Lee, Anjul Nigam, Brighton Sharbino, Hilarie Burton, Roni Akurati and Jake Busey.

John Wick: Chapter 2 - The highest profile release of the week is this action sequel to the 2014 surprise hit. This time out the titular assassin is forced against his will to take on one last hit. In doing so, his employer and several underworld organizations come out of hiding, leading to danger around every corner. Notices were very good for the picture. A few didn't care for way the sequel appeared to be setting up a franchise, but almost all praised the action sequences and photography as first rate. It stars Keanu Reeves, Riccardo Scamarcio, Ian McShane, Ruby Rose, Common, Lawrence Fishburne, John Leguizamo and Bridget Moynahan.

The LEGO Batman Movie - Following up on the hit LEGO movie from a few years back, this feature takes one of previous film's most popular characters and sends him out on his own adventure. Bruce Wayne/Batman must contend with a plot by The Joker to take over Gotham City and give up his brooding loner status by taking in a teenage orphan. Critics appreciated the effort to provide a funny, family-friendly animated take on the character. They enjoyed the pop-culture references and appreciated the eye-popping visuals provided. The movie is voiced by Will Arnett, Zach Galifianakis, Michael Cera, Rosario Dawson and Ralph Fiennes and features dozens of cameos.

Mine - A US soldier in North Africa finds himself in deep trouble after an assassination attempt leaves him on his own in the desert. Stranded for a minimum of two days, he must survive the blistering heat, numerous barrages of gunfire and psychological trauma to stay alive. Sadly, the press weren't taken with this effort. While almost all admired the work of the star, they criticized the story for being too clichéd and drawn out, as well as failing to really get under the skin of the protagonist. In essence, they wrote that it was a waste of an excellent premise. It features Armie Hammer, Annabelle Wallis and Tom Cullen.

The Son of Joseph - Details are sketchy for this foreign-language art film, but essentially it tells the story of a Parisian teenager who travels searching for a father figure. Apparently, biblical motifs are plentiful as the movie pokes fun at yuppies and the greed of adults. Word on this effort is that it the style of storytelling takes a bit of getting used to, with characters speaking directly into the camera. Reviewers appreciated it uniqueness, suggesting that while it was bit too long and didn't always work, the results were still original and intriguing. The cast includes

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Victor Ezenfis, Natascha Regnier and Mathieu Amalric.

Table 19 - A maid of honor at a wedding is dumped by the best man, but decides to attend the ceremony anyway. She finds herself seated at a table of odd outcasts who come together to try and support each other as they determine how they ended up seated together. Awkward! No less uncomfortable was the critical drubbing the movie took. While critics admired the numerous familiar faces headlining this comedy and thought they managed to eke out a chuckle here and there, the consensus was that the movie didn't have the laughs or emotional depth to make an impression. It stars Anna Kendrick, Lisa Kudrow, Craig Robinson, Stephen Merchant, June Squibb and Tony Revolori.

Un Padre No Tan Padre - This Mexican, Spanish-language comedy/drama involves an elderly man who finds himself evicted from his retirement home. He travels to his adult son's hometown to reconnect and live there. However, he's surprised to find his child living in a commune environment with some eccentric residents. Notices were generally good. While it was mentioned that the film follows a recognizable formula, the charming cast earned adoration as being entertaining and likable. The title is arriving exclusively on DVD only this week. The movie features Jacqueline Bracamontes, Camila Selser and Zamia Fandino.

BLASTS FROM THE PAST!

Some interesting classic titles are arriving in high definition as well. Most assuredly not to be confused with the 1990 John Larroquette/Kirstie Alley comedy of the same name, *Madhouse* (1981) is a horror flick arriving as a 2 disc Blu-ray/DVD combo pack courtesy of Arrow Video. It's about two twin sisters who take sibling rivalry to new levels. After one twin breaks out from an insane asylum, the other gets a surprise guest for her birthday party. This release features a new 2K restoration from the original camera negative, new interviews with the cast and crew, an audio commentary with fans of the film, alternate opening titles and theatrical trailer among many other extras.

Shout! Factory also have some amusing Blu-rays. *Alienator* (1990) is a ridiculous sci-fi action flick about a big-haired alien convict who escapes an intergalactic prison and crashes to Earth. This release features a director's commentary, a trailer and behind-the-scenes footage. They also have *Cheech and Chong's Next Movie* (1980) which finds the comic duo stoned and in LA, encountering the likes of Pee Wee Herman and even

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aliens. This release includes a new interview with co-star Cheech Marin and publicity materials.

Criterion are delivering the film-noir *They Live By Night* (1948). This one follows an escaped convict who is injured and nursed back to health by a woman. The two fall for each other, but with authorities closing in, how long will they be able to avoid capture. The Blu-ray includes a new restoration of the feature, a film historian commentary and interviews with film critics about the movie's importance in cinema history.

Warner Archive have an updated, hi-def transfer of the car-race comedy *The Gumball Rally* (1976). Preceding *The Cannonball Run* (1981), this effort follows a group of car enthusiasts who decide to race each other from New York, New York to Long Beach, California, providing plenty of vehicle related mayhem along the way. Familiar faces involved include Michael Sarrazin, Raul Julia and Gary Busey.

And there are a couple of B-movies making their high definition debuts as well. Brink have a double-feature of *Don't Look in the Basement* (1973) and *Don't Look in the Basement II* (2015). Yep, I had no idea that they made a sequel either, but you can now pick them both up in one package. Finally, Mondo Macabro have the Paul Naschy flick

Inquisition (1978) on disc as well.

YOU KNOW, FOR KIDS!

Here are some upcoming releases that kids may enjoy.

An American Tail: 4 Movie Complete Collection

Dinosaur Train: Dinosaurs Take Flight!

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The LEGO Batman Movie

Shaun the Sheep: Animal Antics

ON THE TUBE!

And here are some TV-themed titles for your enjoyment.

American Epic (PBS)

Aquarius: Season 2

Baa Baa Black Sheep: Season 1

Bones: The Complete Series

Bones: Season 12

Cesar Millan's Dog Nation (National Geographic)

Dark Matter: Season 2

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Grimm: Season 6

Grimm: The Complete Collection

McCloud: Season 1

Shooter: Season 1

The Vampire Diaries: The Compete 8th and Final Season

The Vampire Diaries: The Complete Series

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