

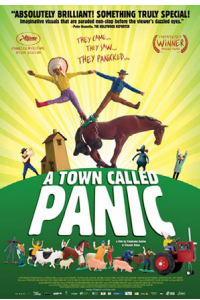
DVD/Blu-ray Roundup for Dec. 22, 2017

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
Friday, 22 December 2017 06:01



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Welcome to another edition chronicling new releases on Blu-ray and DVD. Just because the holidays are here doesn't mean that there aren't plenty of releases coming your way. 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!

Blood Money - In this independent action/thriller, a trio of friends goes into the wilderness for some fun and encounters a white collar criminal on the run. They find his hidden loot and soon become a target of this desperate stranger. Unfortunately, the money also causes the leads to get greedy and turn on one another. Reaction was split right down the middle towards this effort. Half of reviewers disliked the characters and stated that the story took too long to hit its stride. The others enjoyed the unusual twists on the formula and were amused by the film's antagonist. It stars John Cusack, Ellar Coltrane, Willa Fitzgerald, Jacob Artist and Ned Bellamy.

Dunkirk - Director Christopher Nolan (*Memento*, *The Prestige*, *The Dark Knight*, *Inception*, *Interstellar*) tackles a hugely important event during WWII in this picture. It depicts a massive evacuation in which more than 300,000 soldiers attempted to escape encroaching Nazi forces. The film cuts between three groups of characters on land, sea and air. Critics lavished praise on the final outcome. While a few complained that the movie needed more character development, the overwhelming majority felt that the film was a technical masterpiece, perfectly capturing what it must have felt like to be there. The cast includes Fionn Whitehead, Barry Keoghan, Mark Rylance, Tom Hardy, Cillian Murphy and Kenneth Branagh.

Leatherface - This movie was scheduled for release some time ago, but was pulled at the last minute and is now coming out on disc this week. The latest sequel in *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*

series is a prequel that traces the history of the iconic villain Leatherface and how he became a psychopathic killer. The press wasn't as harsh on it as one would expect. About half absolutely hated the new entry or at the very least commented that it wasn't memorable enough to make an impression, but a portion admired the attempts to turn the material into a mystery and enjoyed the out-there antics of the cast members. It features Finn Jones and has bit parts from Stephen Dorff and Lili Taylor.

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The Lego Ninjago Movie - The latest movie in the LEGO film franchise features a group of high school kids that are trained by a ninja master to defend their city against a menacing foe (who also happens to be the father of one of the heroes). When the villain actually succeeds and seizes control, the group must recover an ancient tool to restore order. The press was divided on the animated shenanigans. While just over fifty percent liked the animation and believed it earned enough chuckles to give a pass, almost as many complained that it wasn't as compelling or sharply written as others in the LEGO series. The voice cast includes Jackie Chan, Justin Theroux, Dave Franco, Olivia Munn, Fred Armisen and Kumail Nanjiani.

Mother! - A couple living at a mansion in a remote meadow are the focus of the latest feature from Darren Aronofsky (*Requiem for a Dream*, *Black Swan*). Their tranquil life begins to come apart after the arrival of several nasty, disruptive and unwanted guests. This feature earned more positive responses than negative from reviewers, but it did elicit extreme reactions. Those who enjoyed it admired the impressive photography and allegorical story, along with the impressive photography. Those who panned it appeared to despise everything about it, particularly the brutality shown towards the passive lead character. One way or another, either side can't deny that it's a unique experience. It stars Jennifer Lawrence, Javier Bardem, Ed Harris, Michelle Pfeiffer, Brian Gleeson and Domhnall Gleeson.

Stronger - Based on a true story, this drama is based around the experiences of Jeff Bauman, a survivor of the 2013 Boston Marathon bombing. After losing his legs in the explosion, the story depicts the man's hardships as he attempts to recover from his horrifying ordeal. The movie garnered almost universally positive reviews. There were a few who felt that the heroic tale was overly sentimental. Still, the vast majority praised the performances from the cast as Oscar worthy and felt that the movie effectively chronicled the ups and downs of recuperation and revitalization. It features Jake Gyllenhaal, Tatiana Maslany, Clancy Brown, Miranda Richardson and Frankie Shaw.

Victoria & Abdul - This biopic deals with the unique relationship between Queen Victoria and a young clerk from India. After being sent to England to represent his country during the Golden Jubilee, he finds himself making fast friends with Her Royal Highness. She begins taking advice from him, much to the anger and consternation of officials at Buckingham Palace. The drama earned decent reviews from the press. Some thought the approach was too light and cheeky given the subject of colonialism, but more called it a sweet tale and complimented the interplay between the characters. The cast includes Judi Dench, Ali Fazal, Eddie Izzard, Adeel Akhtar and Olivia Williams.

Blasts from the Past!

Plenty of interesting stuff is arriving this week thanks to the usual suspects. Shout! Factory has the independent horror picture, *American Gothic* (1987) on Blu-ray. It's about a group of young tourists stranded at the house of a family who look like they stepped out of the famous Grant Wood painting. However, the visitors realize the persons living there are insane and have a taste for blood. The movie features Rod Steiger and arrives with a trailer and a new interview with score composer, Alan Parker.

Shout! also has *A Town Called Panic: The Collection*. For those unfamiliar with the property, this is an amusing stop-motion animation series from France about the misadventures of a toy cowboy, a Native American and a horse that live in a farming community. The set includes all of the shorts from the original 2002 series, as well as the 2013 Christmas Special. It also includes other bonuses like a new and original short from the directors (which has nothing to do with the show). There have also been two movies, but they aren't included in this set. Sounds like this is an English language edition, so you'll have to check the box to see if it includes the original French track with subtitles. Still, this is some funny stuff that comes highly recommended.

Kino has plenty of older features arriving on Blu-ray as well. They include *Four Faces West* (1948) and the Burt Lancaster western, *The Kentuckian* (1955). They also have the Orson Welles and Claudette Colbert war drama, *Tomorrow is Forever* (1946). Burt Lancaster is back in the west in *Valdez is Coming* (1971) as a sheriff trying to take down a cruel cattle rancher. Finally, Kino has the drama *The Whales of August* (1987), featuring Bette Davis and Lillian Gish as widowed sisters taking a trip to a cottage.

The same distributor is also putting out some B-movies on DVD. The first is the thriller *Eye in the Labyrinth* (1972). This one is about a woman searching for her boyfriend after his mysterious disappearance. She ends up following the trail to a strange villa populated with eccentric. Naturally, brutal murders soon follow. *Headhunter* (1988) is a goofy supernatural horror flick about a Miami cop who has an affair and then discovers that a terrifying demon has possessed his wife. It stars Kay Lenz.

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Scorpion are releasing a DVD of the Leonard Nimoy TV-movie, *Baffled!* (1973), in which the actor plays a race car driver with ESP who uses his powers to solve crimes. This one sounds like a lot of cheesy fun. The release includes a new transfer (apparently, the previous versions have had issues) and includes both the US and UK versions of the program.

You Know, For Kids!

Just a couple of titles this week, and one is as much for adults as it is for children.

The Lego Ninjago Movie

A Town Called Panic: The Collection

On the Tube!

Here are all of the TV-themed releases.

Baffled! (1973 TV-movie)

Daniel Boone: The Final Season

The Dain Curse (1978 Mini-series)

Frontline: War on the EPA (PBS)

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Nature: Charlie & the Curious Otters (PBS)

NOVA: Ghosts of Stonehenge (PBS)

NOVA: Killer Volcanoes (PBS)

Policewoman: Season 3

Salvation: Season 1

Stan Lee's Lucky Man: Season 1

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For the Sun