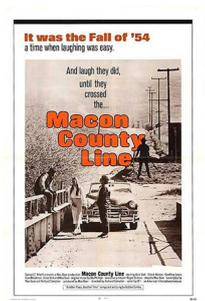


DVD/Blu-ray Roundup for Jan. 19, 2018

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
Friday, 19 January 2018 09:11



Welcome back to another edition of new releases coming your way. Once again, there's plenty of fun stuff to choose from in a variety of genres. 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!

Beyond Skyline - Anyone out there clamoring for a sequel to the 2010 alien-invasion sci-fi flick, *Skyline*

? If so, then today's your lucky day. This follow-up involves a detective who finds that most humans on planet Earth have been sucked into the spaceships of invaders. He decides to storm his way through a alien craft and free his young son. The original was widely derided but this chapter has earned better notices, although with caveats. Most suggest that it works better than its predecessor, but some maintain that events are quite dopey and it is really only enjoyable as absurd B-movie fodder. The cast includes Frank Grillo, Bojana Novakovic, Jonny Weston and Iko Uwais.

Blade Runner 2049 - Here's another sci-fi sequel, this time to a genuine classic. It is set 30 years after the events of the first film, with a new blade runner retiring rogue replicants. While on a case, he discovers strange evidence that reveals a remarkable secret. In order to discover the truth, he sets out to find and question original blade runner Rick Deckard. Reviews were positive overall. There were a few who found it too long, ponderous and somber for its own good, but the majority thought the movie was a technical marvel. They also felt it possessed plenty of intriguing subtext about whether a machine's lifespan can have meaning and value. It stars Ryan Gosling, Harrison Ford, Ana de Armas, Robin Wright and Jared Leto.

Cook Off! - This mockumentary follows a group of amateur chefs competing to win a prize of a million dollars. As the competition begins to heat up, the contestants start taking extreme measures in order to win the prize. One thing this comedy didn't earn was the affection of critics, who strongly disliked the movie. While they commented that the stars were all talented performers, the story succumbed to low-brow gags and stereotypes. It features Cathryn Michon, Wendy McLendon-Covey, Melissa McCarthy (who reportedly only appears briefly), Ben Falcone, Niecy Nash, Jack Plotnick, Diedrich Bader and Louie Anderson.

Crooked House - Based on the Agatha Christie novel, this mystery involves a diplomat turned

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detective. When a wealthy tycoon is found dead, the lead is called in to help with the investigation. Things get complicated when a prime suspect in the case turns out to be the sleuth's former lover. In order to get to the truth, the protagonist realizes he must tread very carefully. Reaction was complimentary towards the crime flick. Those who complained said the source material the filmmakers were working with was a little dry and slow-moving. However, most gave the production design high marks and called it an enjoyable little thriller. The cast includes Christina Hendricks, Gillian Anderson, Glenn Close, Max Irons, Terence Stamp and Julian Sands.

Happy Death Day - A college student is brutally killed by a masked assailant in this horror/comedy. But that isn't the end of her existence; she soon discovers that she is doomed to relive her final day over and over. Determined to find out who is responsible for her murder, the woman begins hanging out with various suspect in the hopes the villain will reveal themselves. The press gave this feature good notices. Some commented that it didn't make the most of its *Groundhog Day* premise and had little to say thematically, but more found it zippy and enjoyed enough of its gags to recommend. It stars Jessica Rothe, Isreal Broussard and Ruby Modine.

I, Daniel Blake - This UK production won the BAFTA award for Best British Film last year and took home the Palm d'Or at Cannes, but has taken quite a while to get noticed in North America. Criterion is finally giving the film its due with an extras-packed release. It tells the story of a 59-year-old carpenter who suffers a heart attack and can't find work after being released from hospital. The film chronicles his struggles to receive health benefits and assistance from the government as well as his attempts to help a single mother in his neighborhood. Based on the awards it earned, the movie received nothing but praise during its original run for its great performances and important message. Dave Johns and Hayley Squires headline the feature.

Loving Vincent - This remarkable animated film examines the death of famed artist Vincent Van Gogh, exclusively using oil painted animation. A young man sets out to deliver the final letter written by the painter before his death and becomes obsessed with determining what caused the man's untimely demise. Critics were very taken in by what they saw. There were a couple of naysayers who thought the visuals took them out of the experience emotionally, but the majority were wowed by the overwhelming imagery and ambition of the project. The voice cast includes Douglas Booth, Jerome Flynn, Chris O'Dowd and Saoirse Ronan.

The Snowman - Norwegian detective Harry Hole (yep, that's the character's actual name) is faced with hunting down a serial killer with a bizarre modus operandi... taking victims during snowfalls and building a snowman at the scene of his crimes. The hero teams with a new recruit

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to study the deaths and try to find a connection. Sadly, this thriller got panned by reviewers. They called it a preposterous effort more likely to earn baffled expressions from viewers than any thrills or chills. Some claim it to be one of those so-bad-it's-good kind of disasters. Other simply found it dull and ineffective. It stars Michael Fassbender, Rebecca Ferguson, Charlotte Gainsbourg, Val Kilmer, J. K. Simmons and Chloë Sevigny.

Blasts from the Past!

It's a fun week for older titles arriving on disc too. In honor of its 15th anniversary, Mill Creek is releasing a Special Edition Blu-ray of *S.W.A.T.* (2003). This was a film adaptation of the TV series and starred Samuel L. Jackson, Colin Farrell, Michele Rodriguez and LL Cool J. This release includes two previously unavailable commentary tracks from the cast and crew.

But the big new thing is that they also have a 35th anniversary edition Blu-ray of the goofball action/sci-fi flick, *Yor, the Hunter from the Future* (1983). For those who missed it during its original run, the story involves prehistoric man who sets out on a quest to find the meaning of a medallion given to him long before he can remember. Our hero fights ape-men, dinosaurs, romances women and eventually faces off against alien invaders. This low-budget Italian production was based on a comic book and appeared to be attempting to mash-up elements of *Conan the Barbarian*

with

Star Wars

. Of course, the results were totally ridiculous. The movie earned plenty of Razzie nominations during its release, but has made fans over the years who have enjoyed its bad acting, effects and generally cheesy charms. This is the first time the film is being released on Blu-ray and it comes with a brand new commentary track from Yor himself, actor Reb Brown.

Shout! has some notable titles arriving as well. They include the quirky thriller, *Eye of the Cat* (1969). It features Michael Sarrazin as a greedy crook trying to get his hands on his aunt's inheritance. Unfortunately, he's afraid of cats and must plot his way through a house full of felines. They also have the drive-in flick,

Macon County Line

(1974). It's about a pair of brothers traveling through the country who are mistaken for killers and pursued by a crazed lawman out for vengeance. This Blu-ray features a director commentary, an interview with the editor, a vintage featurette and theatrical trailer.

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Kino has plenty of interesting titles arriving as well. They include *The Cemetery Club* (1993), a comedy featuring a group of widows who get together to reminisce and get involved in each others lives. It stars Olympia Dukakis, Ellen Burstyn and Diane Ladd. The Blu-ray includes an interview with director Bill Duke and a trailer. They also have the Ken Wahl action picture, *The Taking of Beverly Hills* (1991). A notable extra on this release is a commentary track with film historian. Finally, they are also putting out the Michael Madsen/Patricia Arquette/Billy Bob Thornton crime flick, *Trouble Bound* (1993).

And ClassicFlix has a Blu-ray of *Raw Deal* (1948) for any film noir collectors out there.

You Know, For Kids!

Here are some releases that might appeal to youngsters.

Caillou: Caillou's Kitchen

Horseland: The Complete Series

Rusty Rivets (Nickelodeon)

Street Sharks: The Complete Series

On the Tube!

And you'll find this edition's TV-themed releases listed below.

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Alibi (Mini-series)

Better Call Saul: Season 3

The Commander: The Complete Series

The Doctor Blake Mysteries: Season 4

Horseland: The Complete Series

The Story of Us with Morgan Freeman (National Geographic)

Street Sharks: The Complete Series

S.W.A.T.: The Complete Series (1975-76, 2 Seasons)

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For the Sun