Alright, it's time for another look at new arrivals on Blu-ray and DVD. There's lots of interesting stuff coming in a wide 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!

Boo 2! A Madea Halloween - Tyler Perry returns in this holiday-themed sequel. This time out, the lead's 18-year-old granddaughter heads out to a frat party at a campground. Madea does not approve and heads out with her friends to retrieve the youngster. Upon their arrival, a gaggle of monsters are unleashed and go on the rampage... that is, until they run into the protagonist. Reaction from the press was extremely negative towards this comedy. They claimed it regurgitated the same crude jokes from previous installments and the feature came across as sloppy and uninspired. It stars Tyler Perry, Cassi Davis, Patrice Lovely and Yousef Erakat.

Last Flag Flying - The latest from director Richard Linklater (*Dazed and Confused*, *Boyhood*) is a drama about three Vietnam veterans who reunite after many years apart. When one reveals that he is in town to pick up and transport the body of his son killed in the Iraq War, the other two decide to offer their assistance and come along. The group discuss their lives and frustrations over the course of the journey. Reaction towards the feature was generally positive. Some didn't buy into the movie's tone and interchanges between the characters, but more complimented the actors and found the feature funny and touching. It stars Bryan Cranston, Lawrence Fishburne and Steve Carrell.

Legend of the Naga Pearls - This action fantasy flick from China involves an ancient winged tribe who have lost the ability to fly after a war with humans. A revenge-seeking leader in the flying community decides to seek out legendary magical pearls. However, the item is discovered by outcasts within the tribe. They find themselves being hunted down by the power-obsessed leader. There hasn't been much of a reaction to the film in this part of the country, with only a few reviews. A couple stated the film was a CGI-heavy but a fun romp, while just as many suggested that the writing wasn't sharp enough to engage viewers. The cast includes Darren Wang, Tianai Zhang and Simon Yam.

Napping Princess - In this fantasy, a high school student begins to notice that her dreams have

a correlation to events in her actual life. When her father is arrested for stealing technology, the teen escapes into her dream world where she is a princess. Once there, she begins to learn secrets that may answer questions about her family and the arrest. Critics gave this animated film from Japan decent marks. There were a few complaints that the visuals were more impressive than the story, but several said it was enjoyably kooky and would certainly garner the approval of animae fans. For those curious, this title was released in some parts of the world as *Ancien and the Magic Tablet*.

Old Stone - This independent, foreign-language drama is a China/Canada co-production and details a taxi driver who accidentally hits a motorcyclist while on the job. He does the right thing and calls for assistance, but is soon ensnared in bureaucracy that tears his life apart; it becomes clear to him that the law criminalizes those who help a victim more than those who simply drive away and leave the person to die. The press responded very favorably to the feature. They called it a striking and compelling effort that decries the loss of compassion in the modern world and spins its protagonist (and the audience) into a Kafka-esque nightmare. It features Gang Chen as the driver with a problem.

Professor Marston and the Wonder Women - Harvard professor Dr. William Marston is the subject of this biopic. While the figure assisted in creating the modern lie detector, the focus of this story is his relationship with his wife and the pair's romantic partner. It details their polyamorous relationship and how it inspired the professor to create the famous Wonder Woman comic book character. Reviews for the drama were quite strong. There were a couple of naysayers who found it a little too subdued, but the vast majority complimented the film as a sensitively portrayed, boundary-pushing tale with phenomenal lead performances. The movie stars Luke Evans, Rebecca Hall and Bella Heathcote.

Rendel: Dark Vengeance - Also known simply as *Rendel*, this Finnish superhero movie adopts a grimmer approach than the typical Marvel film. The story involves a masked vigilante out for vengeance who sets out to take down a criminal organization using any means necessary. Naturally, the violence causes things to escalate, with the villains hiring international mercenaries to assist in eliminating the threat. One guesses it might have the a low-budget, Scandinavian *Deadpool* sort of feel.
The movie came out in the fall of last year in its homeland, but is premiering on disc in these parts, so there aren't any notices as of yet. It features Kristofer Gummerus, Bianca Bradey and Alina Tomnikov.

The Square - This Swedish effort from the director of *Force Majeure* tells the story of an art museum curator striving to generate publicity and donations. Of course, his personal behavior

doesn't necessary follow some of the altruistic ideals presented in the gallery's newest exhibit. The movie earned an Oscar nomination for Best Foreign Language Film and has generated plenty of positive praise. However, those who don't like it absolutely hate it. Those persons wrote that it was overlong and stated that its many parts never came together in a meaningful way. Still, most found it a daring and satirical button-pushing exercise that inspires plenty of thought about our inhumanity towards each other. The cast includes Claes Bang, Elizabeth Moss and Dominic West.

BLASTS FROM THE PAST!

This week sees plenty of interesting old films making their high-definition debuts. Arrow Academy have a Blu-ray of *Viva L'Italia* (1961). Also known as *Garibaldi*, this is director Roberto Rossellini's biopic of Giuseppe Garibaldi, a famous Italian historical figure known for taking Sicily and Naples during a military campaign. This release features a 2K restoration of the film from the original camera negative, a shorter cut of the film made for the US market, a new interview with Rossellini's assistant on the movie (Ruggero Deodato, who became a B-movie director), a visual essay on the movie, and other bonuses.

If you grew up in the 80s, then you surely got the wits scared out of you by the 1983 TV-movie *The Day After*. It depicted nuclear war and its effects on the population. In the UK, *Threads* (1984) was the movie that terrified a generation. And where I originally came from, it was a double blast, with both productions terrifying viewers. Truth be told, *Threads* is even more effective at depicting the horrors of a nuclear holocaust. It uses documentary techniques to show the event and then follows it up with society slowly falling to pieces as radiation sickness takes its toll. This is an incredibly effective feature that really nails the absolute devastation these weapons can create. Severin are putting out a new Blu-ray of telefilm with a director audio commentary, cast and crew interviews and other features. It's a great movie and one that will ensure that you don't sleep for days.

If you want something goofier, LionsGate's Vestron line of releases should do the trick. They have the a Blu-ray of the sci-fi action flick, *Class of 1999* (1990). This is a semi-sequel to *Class of 1984* (1982), that flips the original formula. Its predecessor was about teachers being tormented by nasty students. In this follow-up, the teens are being menaced by sinister cyborg teachers. Amusingly enough, the villains are essayed by Malcolm McDowell, Stacey Keach and Pam

Grier. I don't remember it well, but the casting alone makes me want to revisit the film. This marks the movie's hi-def debut, and the disc includes an audio commentary with director Mark Lester, as well as interviews with the filmmaker, the producer, screenwriter, special effects team and cinematographer. It also comes with publicity materials. Might provide some pulpy fun for viewers in the right frame of mind.

They're also putting out a Blu-ray of *Gothic* (1986). This one is from director Ken Russell (*The Devils*
,
Altered States
,
The Lair of the White Worm
) and is an exaggerated depiction of a real life event in which a group of visitors at a manor challenge themselves to write a horror story. Their stay is said to have inspired guests Mary Shelly to write
Frankenstein
and John Polidori to create the vampire. This disc includes a historian audio commentary with Russell's daughter, an isolated score and interview with composer Thomas Dolby, as well as interviews with cast and crew.

Warner Archive are releasing DVDs of a pair of Lucille Ball/Desi Arnaz comedies. They include *Forever Darling*
(1956) and
The Long, Long Trailer
(1954). Appropriately enough, the latter features the pair traveling for their honeymoon in a ridiculously oversized trailer. The studio also have the Charles Bronson action picture,
Telefon
(1977). In this one, Bronson plays a Russian spy out to eliminate a sleeper agent who is about to be set off by a special code word.

Finally, Kino are putting out a DVD of the Australian low-budget thriller, *Savage Attraction* (1983) aka
Hostage
. It's about a runaway who marries the wrong guy (in this case, a Nazi) and tries to escape from his clutches.

YOU KNOW, FOR KIDS!

Here are some releases that may appeal to youngsters.

The Pink Panther Collection: Vol. 1

Power Rangers: Super Sentai: Seijuu Sentai Gingaman: The Complete Series

Static Shock: Season 3 (Warner Archive)

Transformers: Rescue Bots: Outdoor Adventures

ON THE TUBE!

And here are this week's TV-themed releases.

Christopher Kimball's Milk Street: Season 1

Dr. Oakley: Yukon Vet: Season 5

East West 101: Series 1

Explorer: Season 10

Frontline: Putin's Revenge (PBS)

Masterpiece: Victoria: Season 2

Nova: Bird Brain (PBS)

Nova: Killer Floods (PBS)

The Pink Panther Collection: Vol. 1

Power Rangers: Super Sentai: Seijuu Sentai Gingaman: The Complete Series

Ray Donovan: Season 5

Slavery and the Making of America (PBS)

Static Shock: Season 3 (Warner Archive)

Steven Universe: Season 1

By Glenn Kay

For the Sun