



Hello again. It’s another busy week with plenty of new releases arriving on Blu-ray and DVD. Once again, they include blockbusters and Oscar nominees. 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!

The Breadwinner - After her father is taken away and put in prison by members of the Taliban, a young girl is forced to find a way to provide for her mother and siblings. She does so disguising herself as a boy and trying to make ends meet without being discovered for who she really is. This animated tale was nominated for an Oscar and earned impressive marks from almost all critics. The overwhelming majority complimented the gorgeous imagery on display and found the themes both stirring and compelling. Saara Chaudry, Soma Chhaya and Noorin Gulamgaus provide the voices.

The Clapper - This romantic comedy follows a pair of individuals who earn their living as infomercial audience members. The host of a spot takes a personal interest in one of the men and decides to use public media to find out who he is. Her actions, however, put a great strain on the man's current relationship. Reviews weren't very complimentary towards this independent film. A few found the cast charming enough to earn it a pass, but most felt the humor fell flat and that the story simply wasn't interesting enough. It stars Ed Helms, Amanda Seyfried, Tracy Morgan, Adam Levine and Russell Peters.

The Man Who Invented Christmas - Charles Dickens is the subject of this holiday-themed biopic which adds fantasy elements to a true story. It goes into the mind of the financially-strapped writer as he begins and tries to land a publisher for *A Christmas Carol* (which would eventually become one of his best known works). In doing so, he ends up interacting with a version of Ebenezer Scrooge existing in his head. Notices were quite positive. A few criticized it as being decent but unmemorable, but many more complimented the movie, calling it amusing, likable and well-performed. It features Dan Stevens, Christopher Plummer, Jonathan Pryce and Miriam Margoyles.

Novitiate - The story of this drama set in the late 1950s and early 60s follows a young woman fascinated by the Catholic church. As she trains to become a nun, she deals with many extreme ideas from persons in power. The protagonist begins to experience conflicting feelings about her calling and what the future will hold for her. Reviews were very good for this independent drama. A few thought it was too long for its own good, but the consensus was that it featured strong performances and asked interesting questions about faith, without providing direct answers or sermonizing. The cast includes Margaret Qualley, Melissa Leo and Julianne Nicholson.

Thor: Ragnarok - The biggest release of the week is this Marvel superhero sequel. The third Thor flick finds the Norse god imprisoned in a faraway world while an evil force threatens to bring a world ending cataclysm Ragnarok to Asgard. While finding his way home, the protagonist teams with some eccentric space creatures and a familiar face or two. The press was extremely taken by this entry, calling it the best of the series starring the character. They appreciated the elaborately staged action and stated that addition of quirky humor made the experience all the more enjoyable. The cast includes Chris Hemsworth, Tom Hiddleston, Mark Ruffalo, Cate Blanchett, Anthony Hopkins, Benedict Cumberbatch, Idris Elba, Tessa Thompson, Karl Urban, Taika Waititi and Jeff Goldblum.

Wonder Wheel - The latest from Woody Allen is a drama set in the 1950s at a Coney Island

amusement park. When the carousel operator's troubled daughter arrives from out of the blue, his wife is longs for her days as a young woman and actress. Feeling jealous of her step-daughter, she decides to drastic action in order to improve her own situation. Critics weren't as taken with this picture as with previous entries from the writer/director. They complimented the photography and some of the performances, but felt others were miscast and that the film had some strange shifts in tone. It features Jim Belushi, Kate Winslett, Justin Timberlake and Kate Winslett.

Blasts from the Past!

Lots of interesting classic titles arriving in high definition this week. Arrow Video is releasing a two-disc (Blu-ray and DVD) limited edition of *The Cat O'Nine Tails* (1971). This is the second film of Italian horror filmmaker Dario Argento and involves the investigation of a string of murders at a scientific institute. The release includes a new 4K restoration of the film from the original camera negative, a film critic audio commentary, new interviews with Argento, co-writer Dardano Sacchetti, actress Cinzia De Carolis and production manager Angelo Iacono. It also comes with the script pages for the original ending, the Italian and international theatrical trailers and other bonuses.

Arrow also has a Blu-ray of *Donnie Darko* (2001). This was released as a 4-disc limited edition (with multiple versions of the film) some time ago but sold out. Now, the 4K restoration is being made available again as a single disc that features the theatrical cut, multiple audio commentaries, brand new interviews, a short film from the director and 20 deleted scenes with optional director commentary.

Jim Henson enthusiasts will be happy to learn that Sony has given the puppet fantasy flick *The Dark Crystal*
(1982) a new release. It's been a new 4K restoration from the original camera negative. There's also a new documentary that goes behind-the-scenes during production. The disc also includes previously releases features including a commentary, deleted scenes, featurettes and of making-of documentaries.

Finally, Code Red has a double feature B-movie Blu-ray that includes the Italian horror/thriller, *House on the Edge of the Park*
(1980), along with
Last House on Massacre Street

(1973).

You Know, For Kids!

Here are some titles that may be of interest to youngsters.

Blue Planet II

Paw Patrol: Sea Patrol (Nickelodeon)

Teen Titans Go! Pumped for Spring

On the Tube!

And these are the TV highlights arriving this week.

Blue Planet II

Campfire Kiss (Lifetime TV-movie)

Crossbow: The Complete Series

Newton's Law: Season 1

By Glenn Kay

For the Sun