

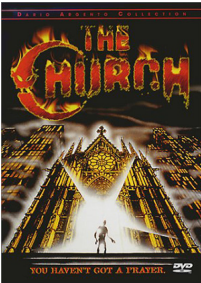
DVD/Blu-ray Roundup for March 23, 2018

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
Friday, 23 March 2018 10:27



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It's time for another look at new release highlights arriving on Blu-ray and DVD. There's an interesting variety coming your way with several genres represented. 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!

Downsizing - When scientists develop the technology to shrink humans, a couple decides to try living on a much smaller scale. After setting up digs in a new community, the husband is forced to deal with the unanticipated consequences of his choice and the foibles of humanity. Critics were completely divided on the end results, with all sorts of extreme reviews that varied from praise to hatred. A percentage thought it was too long and unfocused. Some called it amusing with big ideas and interesting things to say. Others questioned the portrayal of a supporting character (while another segment called her a highlight). Basically, it's impossible to predict how one might respond to the movie, but it appears to provoke strong reactions. The cast includes Matt Damon, Kristen Wiig, Christoph Waltz, Jason Sudeikis, Neil Patrick Harris and Laura Dern.

Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle - This box-office smash and reboot of the 1995 hit updates the concept of a board game that allows players to enter into a wild fantasy world. It's a video game in this version; four teens are sucked into a jungle environment, take on adult avatars and must work together to find their way out. In addition to huge numbers generated at cinema, it managed to earn decent reviews. There were a minority of negative notices that described it as noisy and unmemorable. However, most called the cast charming and appreciated the unusual approach taken to a coming-of-age story. It features Dwayne Johnson, Karen Gillan, Kevin Hart, Jack Black, Nick Jonas and Rhys Darby.

Pitch Perfect 3 - The third chapter in this musical/comedy series finds the lead women's a cappella group out of school and unhappy with their jobs. They are roped into reuniting and performing on a USO tour in Europe. While in Spain, a member encounters a long lost family member and becomes involved in a strange criminal plot. Reaction to the latest chapter was fairly muted. A portion appreciated the cast and felt that they had enough charisma to get the story through some rough patches, but most didn't feel that the screenplay took advantage of its exaggerated concept and couldn't match the previous installments. The movie stars Anna Kendrick, Rebel Wilson, Brittany Snow, Anna Camp, Hailee Steinfeld, Elizabeth Banks, John Michael Higgins and John Lithgow.

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Small Town Crime - An alcoholic ex-cop sees the potential for redemption after discovering the body of a young woman in his community. He goes all out in an attempt to catch the killer, but his obsession soon puts both himself and his entire family in grave danger. This independent drama received good reviews. Admittedly, some said the talented cast was the best thing about it and that the story was fairly routine. Yet those reviewers commented that the lead was so talented you'd be enthralled watching him read a phone book for 90 minutes. It stars John Hawkes, Octavia Spencer, Anthony Anderson, Robert Forster and Clifton Collins, Jr.

Blasts from the Past!

It's an incredibly busy week for classic titles hitting high definition and the first is from Arrow Academy, with Robert Altman's *Images* (1972). This horror picture involves a schizophrenic housewife killing off apparitions, unaware of whether her tormentors are real or imagined. The Blu-ray includes a new 4K restoration from the original negative, two commentary tracks, an interview with director Altman, a new conversation with actress Cathryn Harrison and other bonuses.

Shout! has a trio of intriguing titles arriving on Blu-ray. *The 'Burbs* (1989) stars Tom Hanks and is about a suburbanite who believes his neighbors may be murderers. It's become a big cult item over the years and has now been given a special Collector's Edition. Besides a brand new 2K scan, this release includes new interviews with director Joe Dante (*Gremlins*), a commentary track with the screenwriter, a documentary on the production, an alternate ending and publicity materials. The big nifty bonus is a workprint cut of the film with extra scenes that includes alternate material not in the final cut that reveals a lot of back story about the lead character.

Well Go USA is putting out *Ichii the Killer* (2001) in high definition. This ultra-violent title comes from Takashi Miike (*Audition*, *13 Assassins*) and features a Yakuza assassin hunting for his missing boss who crosses paths with a psychopathic killer.

The stylized Italian horror film, *The Church* (1989), is arriving on Blu-ray from Scorpion Releasing. It involves an assortment of characters who are attacked by demons and become trapped in the titular location. There's no word as of yet if any extras are included on the disc.

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Finally, Warner Archive is giving a fun old monster movie the high definition treatment. *The Black Scorpion* (1957) features the giant titular creatures as they wreak havoc on Mexico after being released from the earth by a volcanic explosion.

You Know, For Kids!

Here's something that might appeal to kids.

P. King Duckling: Lights, Camera, Duckling!

On the Tube!

And these are the week's TV-themed releases.

Archer: Season 8

Living Single: Season 4

When Calls the Heart: The Heart of Homecoming

By Glenn Kay

For the Sun