

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
Friday, 27 April 2018 07:34



Time for another look at all of the highlights arriving on Blu-ray and DVD. It's another incredibly busy edition, with so many titles that it would be impossible not to find something to your liking. So if you can't make it to the movies this week, be sure to give one of these titles a try!

Big New Releases!

7 Guardians of the Tomb - In this China/Australia co-production, a group of archeologists unearths an ancient labyrinth and tomb containing a mummified emperor from China. Unfortunately, they soon realize they've released a sinister power, forcing them to fight giant spiders and undead creatures in order to escape. This elaborate adventure flick didn't garner much enthusiasm from the press. They were very disappointed in what they described as a routine and perfunctory script, saying that there was nothing that cast could do to elevate such clunky source material. It stars Kellan Lutz, Li Bingbing, Kelsey Grammer, and Stef Dawson.

Backstabbing for Beginners - Based on a true story, this independent thriller involves a young

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program coordinator at the United Nations who uncovers a conspiracy involving the oil reserves of Iraq. After discovering that his predecessor may have been murdered for discovering the same plot, he begins to suspect that his own life may be in danger. This title hasn't earned a big release and the reviews that have come out haven't been very inspiring. One wrote that while the performers were above average, the story was a bit muddled and unexciting. It features Theo James, Ben Kingsley, Jacqueline Bisset, Rossif Sutherland, and Rachel Wilson.

Den of Thieves - A determined but amoral cop vows to take down a criminal outfit planning to rob the Federal Reserve. When the detective exerts pressure on a young recruit of the crooks and pushes him to turn on his partners, the story takes some twists and turns when the heist begins. This action/thriller earned mixed notices, with a few more negative write-ups than positive ones. A percentage thought that there was enough bombast and fun to earn the movie a pass, but more found it to be overlong, middling fare that didn't compare favorably to its inspirations (essentially, Michael Mann's *Heat*). It stars Gerard Butler, Pablo Schreiber, O'Shea Jackson Jr., 50 Cent, and Meadow Williams.

Film Stars Don't Die in Liverpool - Based on a true story, this romantic drama involves actress Gloria Grahame and her relationship with a much younger man. Older and ill, she returns to Liverpool to visit her ex-lover and his family. It soon becomes clear that the performer's condition is very serious and the young man does his best to comfort her. The press enjoyed the film. While sources admitted it was a straightforward tale, many were impressed by the two lead performances. The cast includes Annette Bening, Jamie Bell, Julie Walters, and Stephen Graham. It appears that this title is arriving exclusively on DVD for the time being. No word yet on a Blu-ray release.

Maze Runner: The Death Cure - The final installment in the *Maze Runner* franchise finds its teen protagonist joining up with a rebel outfit. In an attempt to save their community, they break into the walled city of the sinister WCKD organization. Once there, they face their foes and get the answers to the questions that have plagued them since being trapped in the labyrinth. Press reaction to this finale was mixed, with more negative notices than positive ones. Some appreciated the themes and thought it a fitting close for the young adult series. However, the majority found it curiously heavy and lacking in energy. Dylan O'Brien, Kaya Scodelario, Thomas Sangster, Giancarlo Esposito, Aiden Gillen, Barry Pepper, and Patricia Clarkson headline the film.

Paddington 2 - This sequel to the 2014 hit finds the titular bear doing his best to adapt to his new life in London. While attempting to earn money for a family present, he's framed for a crime he didn't commit and sentenced to prison. As his adopted family attempts to clear his name,

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Paddington considers breaking out with the assistance of some new cellmate friends. Reaction to this follow-up was incredible. In fact, it has a unique distinction of not having received a single pan by critics. They uniformly called it a heartfelt, funny, beautifully shot family film, perfect for both kids and adults. The cast includes Ben Whishaw (as the voice of Paddington), Hugh Grant, Brendan Gleeson, Hugh Bonneville, Sally Hawkins, Julie Walters, and Jim Broadbent.

The Strange Ones - Two men travel across the American landscape in this independent thriller. Along the way, their mysterious behavior causes questions as to who they might be and what they intend to do while on the road. Eventually, secrets are revealed and their motivations become clear. Reviews for this effort were mixed but positive. All believed that the film did a solid job of establishing a feeling of foreboding. Some thought that it didn't ultimately go in a satisfying direction, while others liked the conclusion and enjoyed having something to ponder afterward. It features Alex Pettyfer, James Freedson-Jackson, and Emily Althaus. This title is currently only being made available on DVD.

Blasts from the Past!

It's an incredibly busy week for older titles hitting Blu-ray. Horror/sci-fi cult fans will likely be thrilled to hear that Arrow Video is releasing *Killer Klowns from Outer Space* (1988) in high definition with a new transfer taken directly from the original film negative. The story involves the arrival of a spaceship filled with aliens that resemble clowns. They go on the rampage in a small town using circus and clown props on their victims. The disc comes with more extras than can be described here.

If Spaghetti Westerns are your thing, then you'll be happy to hear that Arrow is also putting out a Blu-ray double feature called *A Pistol for Ringo & The Return of Ringo: Two Films by Duccio Tessari*. Both of these titles were released in 1965 at the height the genre's popularity. They're also well regarded, with many citing the impressive scores from Ennio Morricone. The films have been given a 2K restoration from the original camera negative, critic audio commentaries for the two films, archival interviews with a pair of cast members and a technician on the film, and publicity materials.

Olive Films also have some noteworthy releases. *Hope and Glory* (1987) is an Oscar-nominated, period drama detailing the actions of a family in London at the onset of WWII. It mostly follows a youngster and how he reacts to the events occurring around him.

The distributor is also putting out the acclaimed drama, *Joe* (1970). It's about two angry conservatives who eventually go on a murder spree, taking out hippies. Of course, things don't end up panning out very well for the pair. On a lighter note, they also have the drama/comedy, *Mermaids*

(1990) a coming-of-age tale about a young woman and her eccentric family members. It stars Cher and Winona Ryder.

Action fans may be happy to learn that Shout! Factory has a "Collector's Edition" Blu-ray of the Jean-Claude Van Damme dystopian/sci-fi/martial-arts flick, *Cyborg* (1989). The movie has been given a 4K scan and arrives with an audio commentary from the director. It also includes a new making-of feature that includes numerous cast and crew members (every cast member, it seems, except Van Damme), as well as a make-up and special effects featurette. The disc also includes extended interviews that were used in the excellent *Electric Boogaloo: The Wild, Untold Story of Cannon Films* documentary from a couple of years ago.

The Virgin Suicides (1999) is also coming to Blu-ray. This title marks the first feature from director Sophia Coppola, and it's a haunting tale revolving around a group of siblings in a suburban home. This edition arrives with a new 4K restoration of the film, new interviews with cast and crew, a 1998 documentary on the production, a short from Coppola, and a music video featuring Air (who composed the score). If you haven't seen it, this is really good arthouse flick that is well worth your time.

You Know, For Kids!

Loads of stuff is arriving this week for the youngsters (and those who were young in the 60s and 70s).

The Dogfather

Gumby: The Best of Gumby

DVD/Blu-ray Roundup for April 27, 2018

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Misterjaw (1974-1975 - 34 Cartoons)

Mr. Peabody & Sherman WABAC Adventures: Volume 2

Power Rangers: KyuuKyu Sentai GoGoFive: The Complete Series

Rocky & Bullwinkle & Friends: The Complete Season 1

Rocky & Bullwinkle & Friends: The Complete Season 2

Rocky & Bullwinkle & Friends: The Complete Season 3

Rocky & Bullwinkle & Friends: The Complete Season 4

Rocky & Bullwinkle & Friends: The Complete Season 5

Wacky Races: Start Your Engines!: Season 1, Vol. 1

On the Tube!

And here are highlights of the TV-themed releases arriving on store shelves.

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1864 (Danish Mini-series)

Gumby: The Best of Gumby

Impossible Builds: Volume 1 (PBS)

Jesus: Countdown to Calvary (PBS)

Monster Croc Wrangler: Season 3 (National Geographic)

Mr. Peabody & Sherman WABAC Adventures: Volume 2

NATURE: Animals with Cameras (PBS)

POV: Bill Nye: Science Guy (PBS)

Power Rangers: KyuuKyu Sentai GoGoFive: The Complete Series

Saltwater: Atomic Shark

Shameless: Season 8

Unforgotten (Masterpiece Mystery): Season 1 (PBS)

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