

DVD/Blu-ray Roundup for Aug. 10, 2018

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
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It's time for another look at highlights arriving on Blu-ray and DVD. This is a very busy edition, with numerous features 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!

Aardvark - A therapist at a mental institution meets with admiration from one of her new and mentally ill patients. However, when she begins a relationship with the asylum resident's brother, conflicts and actions become increasingly strained and tense. This independent drama did not earn favorable response. While the cast members were complimented, there was much criticism of the script and the tone, which many said didn't do much to develop momentum or excitement. The title is getting a DVD only release for the time being. It stars Zachary Quinto, Jenny Slate, Sheila Vand and Jon Hamm.

Breaking In - In this thriller, a mother and her children living in a high security home find themselves coming under attack from a group of threatening invaders. She gets separated and must fight her way back into the house in order to rescue her kids and stop the bad guys. The press didn't find a whole lot about this feature that gripped them. A few thought it was well shot and moved at a very quick clip, but the vast majority complained that events were too predictable and that there was little about it that surprised or entertained them. The cast includes Gabrielle Union, Billy Burke, Richard Cabral and Ajiona Alexus.

The Death of Superman - Comic book fans will already be familiar with this tale, based on the Superman story from some years back. It follows an epic battle between the heroic figure and an all powerful foe named Doomsday. This made-for-DVD animated feature retells the story and reportedly focuses more attention on Clark Kent's interactions in the events leading to his final battle. There haven't been a lot of reviews, but the ones that have popped up online are mostly positive, saying it does a better job with characters than recent live-action DC superhero flicks. It features the voices of Jerry O'Connell, Rebecca Romijn, Rainn Wilson, Rosario Dawson and Nathan Fillion.

Flora - Set in the 1920s, this historical drama/adventure film involves a pair of botanists who travel into an uncharted forest region on the hunt for new plant life. They discover a dangerous and ancient organism that forces them to quickly retreat... with the strange lifeform in pursuit.

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This small production hasn't received many notices yet, but there have been a few good reviews that have appeared from festival screenings. They noted that the film does a great deal on a limited budget and manages to make the unseen, sinister flora seem menacing. Teresa Marie Doran, Dan Lin and Sari Mercer headline the movie.

Life of the Party - The latest from comedian Melissa McCarthy finds the actress playing a housewife seeing her daughter off to college. When her marriage ends very suddenly, she decides to start a new chapter in life and heads back to school in the hopes of attending class with her less-than-excited daughter. Reaction to the comedy was muted. A few thought it provided enough mindless gags to earn a pass, but more suggested that the script was too clichéd and didn't provide enough funny material for its otherwise talented leads. The movie also stars Matt Walsh, Molly Gordon, Gillian Jacobs, Ben Falcone, Stephen Root and Maya Rudolph.

Lowlife - Told in three overlapping segments, this independent crime/dark comedy follows a trio of troubled individuals and their exploits in the LA criminal underworld. One is a drug addict, the other an ex-con and the third a luchador, The group tangle with a vicious crime boss in charge of an organ harvesting operation. Critics gave this little flick reasonable marks. A few thought it borrowed too much from filmmakers like Quentin Tarantino, but most found it to be an enjoyably over-the-top B-movie and a strong debut feature for its director. It features Nicki Micheaux, Ricardo Adam Zarate and Jon Oswald.

Marrowbone - This English-language Spanish period horror picture is about a group of siblings whose mother dies. In order to stay together, the four young adults find an old manor to live in. Unfortunately, it appears to be occupied by a threatening spirit... its presence causes the group to try and determine what sinister event occurred in the building. This effort split reviewers. About half found it creepy and appreciated the attempts to deliver more than the typical scare picture jolts. Others complained that it ultimately didn't provide the necessary shocks. George MacKay, Anna Taylor Joy, Charlie Heaton and Mia Goth play the leads.

Measure of a Man - A fourteen-year-old heads off with family members to spend another summer at the lake. While there, he's forced to deal with bullies, a difficult summer job, his bickering, estranged parents and other personal issues. This indie comedy/drama got a mixed reception. Some liked that the film took a sweet and low-key approach to growing up, but the remainder felt that the screenplay offered nothing new and took the same old approach to its subject matter. For the next little while, the movie will available exclusively on DVD. It stars Donald Sutherland, Blake Cooper, Judy Greer and Luke Wilson.

On Chesil Beach - This UK drama involves a young pair of newlyweds in 1962 from very different backgrounds. As they head out for their honeymoon, the nervous pair are forced into dealing with personal issues regarding their marriage and societal pressures to start a “normal” life. The press liked the movie. About a third of reviewers suggested that the movie fails to clearly deal with the class and collective issues that it tries to raise, while others felt that this was the entire point and appreciated the excellent, restrained performances. The cast includes Saoirse Ronan, Samuel West, Emily Watson and Anne Marie Duff.

Pickings - A mobster and his gang set out to shakedown a small bar in their neighborhood. They soon find the establishment owner, a mom from the south with an undetermined path, is a whole lot more than bargained for. Her wrath causes the criminals a whole lot of anguish. There aren't many reviews as of yet for this small, independently-produced feature, but those who have seen it at festivals have been relatively complimentary. They say that while a bit uneven, the movie is stylish and takes some interesting turns, making this neo-noir better than expected. It features Michelle Holland and Katie Vincent.

Pyewacket - This small horror picture involves a teenage girl struggling with life at home. Perturbed, she begins using occult rituals in the hopes of awaking a witch that will get rid of her mother. Unfortunately, the girl's actions result in a death curse. The regretful youth must then fight off a dangerous threat to both her mom as well as herself. The press gave this feature generally good notices. A couple complained that it was too low-key for its own good, but most could overlook its flaws, calling the characters interesting and the moody approach effective. Nicole Munoz, Laurie Holden and Chloe Rose headline the film.

Revenge - Three wealthy, philandering executives head out for a weekend hunting getaway to catch up and have a good time. Bad idea! One of them decides to bring his mistress along, who is really good with a rifle and ready to cause suffering to the sleazy corporate heads during their desert-set trip. This French action/horror picture received strong write-ups. They stated that the foreign-language film was incredibly violent and unsettling, but said they were engrossed by the nastiness on display. The cast includes Matilda Anna Ingrid Lutz, Kevin Janssens, Vincent Colombe and Guillaume Bouchede.

The Rider - A cowboy who rides broncos in rodeos goes down hard and suffers a near fatal head injury. He survives a skull fracture and decides to get back to business, against his doctor's warning that another fall will result in death. The character struggles, knowing he must eventually change his work and life. One or two couldn't get past the mumbling lead and the fact

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that non-actors/family members were playing supporting roles, but almost all raved that this was a unique and powerful western that stood apart from others of its ilk. It stars Brady Jandreau, Tim Jandreau, Lilly Jandreau and Cat Clifford.

Wildling - This independent coming-of-age horror feature involves a mysterious, isolated young girl raised only by a father figure. Kept away from the general public, an event forces the teen to be reintegrated into a local community. It soon becomes clear that she has werewolf-like tendencies and must fight off her growing bloodlust for human flesh. Overall, critics liked the movie. About a third of write-ups disliked where the story's eventual focus went and believed that it was a waste of a good opportunity. However, most called it a well-acted and effectively creepy. It features Liv Tyler, Brad Dourif and Bel Powley,

BLASTS FROM THE PAST!

Shout! Factory have a bizarre masterpiece in the form of *Mac and Me* (1988). This was supposed to be fast-food chain McDonald's big foray into the world of filmmaking. They chose an *ET*-like story about a young boy who befriends a magical infant alien named Mac that is searching for its parents. And in case you were wondering, the alien loves Coca-Cola. The flick is extremely clumsy and absolutely hysterical for unintended reasons. As such, it has developed a massive following over the years.

John Carpenter enthusiasts will be happy to see a Blu-ray of *Someone's Watching Me!* (1978). This was actually a TV-movie (although it did get a theatrical release in other parts of the world) made by the director immediately after finishing work on *Halloween* (1978). It follows an apartment-dwelling woman being stalked by someone in her immediate neighborhood. For many years, it was difficult to come by, but now it has hit high definition. The disc includes a 2K transfer of the original movie elements in widescreen and full-screen, a TV-movie critic audio commentary, interviews with Adrienne Barbeau and Charles Cyphers, a special on the movie's locations and other extras.

Synapse have a Limited Edition Blu-ray of the haunted house flick, *The Changeling* (1980). The movie stars George C. Scott as a pianist who loses his wife and daughter in a fatal accident. He moves into a Victorian mansion and experiences supernatural phenomena. Naturally, he tries to get to the bottom of the haunting, leading to plenty of chills. Director Martin Scorsese thinks this

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is one of the scariest movies ever made. The disc arrives with a director commentary, a documentary on the feature, interviews with the film's art director and music arranger, comments from director and fan Mick Garris (

Critters 2

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Psycho IV: The Beginning

,
The Stand

mini-series) as well as trailers and commercials.

Kino also have some great titles arriving on Blu-ray. They include the well-regarded and star-studded drama, *Cradle Will Rock* (1999). It's set in the 30s and follows a cast of performers determined to put on an infamous, leftist musical despite attempts at censoring them. The disc includes a commentary with director Tim Robbins as well as a production featurette and trailer.

The distributor are also releasing the disturbing drama, *The Day After* (1983). This TV-movie depicted nuclear war and its horrific and devastating aftermath. This 2-disc Blu-ray contains both the TV-movie and international theatrical release of the picture, along with interviews with the star and director, as well as a film historian commentary.

Fox have given the 80s action staple *Predator* (1987) as well as its sequels *Predator 2* (1990) and *Predators* (2010) a 4K upgrade. They've packaged them all together in a *Predator 4K 3 Movie Collection*, meaning you'll be able to hear and see Arnold Schwarzenegger scream, "Get to the chopper!" like never before with crystal clarity. If you only want the original, it will also be available individually.

Mill Creek are releasing a Double Feature disc containing the William Castle B-thrillers *Strait-Jacket* (1964) and *Berserk* (1967). Both of these cheesy pics star Joan Crawford playing crazed (and even psychotic) individuals.

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Warner Archive are putting out the Frank Sinatra/Gina Lollobrigida war picture *Never So Few* (1959) as a made-to-order Blu-ray. It also features Steve McQueen in an early role.

Finally for those interested, Code Red are putting out a Blu-ray of the crazed, killer nun horror flick, *Desecration* (1999).

YOU KNOW, FOR KIDS!

If you like *Power Rangers*, then this is your week. If you don't... well... you'll have to wait for the next edition.

Mighty Morphin Power Rangers: The Complete Series

ON THE TUBE!

And here are the latest TV-themed releases, including the very funny *Documentary Now!* which parodies famous non-fiction films and trends.

Documentary Now!: Seasons 1 & 2

Earth's Natural Wonders: Life at the Extremes: Season 2 (PBS)

Get Shorty: Season 1

The Good Doctor: Season 1

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Happy Endings: The Complete Series

Kingdoms of the Sky (PBS)

Masters of Sex: The Complete Series

Moonlight in Vermont (Lifetime)

No Offence: Series 1

Riverdale: Season 2

Six: Season 2

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