

DVD/Blu-ray Roundup for Nov. 16, 2018

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
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Welcome back to another look at highlights arriving on Blu-ray and DVD. This is jam-packed edition with plenty of noteworthy releases in just about every category. 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!

Alfa - Set during the ice age, this adventure movie follows a young man who gets injured and becomes separated from his tribe. He finds a wolf in a similarly bad situation and manages to tame it. Together, the pair attempts to survive the harsh elements of the wilderness. Reviews for this survival film were fairly good. A small grouping felt the predictable story let the rest of the film down, but most complimented the cinematography and called it a surprisingly involving and exciting tale. It features Kodi Smit-McPhee, Jóhannes Haukur Jóhannesson, Marcin Kowalczyk, Natassia Malthe and is narrated by Morgan Freeman.

Another Time - A successful businessman meets and falls for the woman of his dreams in this romantic comedy. When he learns that she already has a fiancé, he contacts a physicist friend. Apparently, the lead gets his buddy to help him travel back in time so that he can make the woman fall for him before meeting her current love. This independent feature hasn't gotten a wide release and there aren't many write-ups for it online. The ones that have appeared aren't raves, stating the movie's concept of time-traveling solely to impress a woman was hard to buy given the wild possibilities one could imagine. The cast includes Justin Hartley and Arielle Kebbel.

Final Score - Borrowing from flicks like *Die Hard* and *Sudden Death*, this UK production involves an ex-soldier who learns terrorists have taken control of a Euro Cup semi-final soccer match... that his daughter is attending. Naturally, the upset father decides to take out the bad guys himself. Perhaps stunningly, the reaction towards this copycat wasn't all that bad. About a quarter called it preposterous beyond words and full of unintentional laughs (commenting about the likelihood of West Ham making it to, well, any kind of semi-final). However, the majority were amused by the action and believed that the movie was silly entertainment. Dave Bautista, Pierce Brosnan and Ray Stevenson star.

Juliet, Naked - The girlfriend of a university professor becomes frustrated by his obsessive fandom over a reclusive '90s musician. She writes a scathing review of his favorite artist online.

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Besides causing friction in her own relationship, the musician responds and the pair begins to form a connection. Most of the press enjoyed this low-key romantic-comedy, based on the novel by Nick Hornby (*About a Boy*, *High Fidelity*). A small segment suggestion it was all too quirky, but the vast majority found it charming, bolstered by some witty dialogue and fun interactions between the characters. The cast includes Rose Byrne, Ethan Hawke and Chris O'Dowd.

Look Away - This independent psychological thriller follows an alienated and lonely high school student. She begins talking to her reflection in the mirror after her life hits a new low. The being in the glass opposite her comes to life and offers to switch places and help rebuild the teen's life. Of course, it's actually quite mean and goes about creating terror instead. Critics disliked this indie horror movie. They commented that after introducing an interesting concept, the screenplay resorted to a dull series of unexciting clichés and never builds momentum. It stars India Eisley, Mira Sorvino, Jason Isaacs and Penelope Mitchell.

The Meg - Giant killer fish movie fans will be happy to see this box-office hit arrive in high definition. It follows an undersea research team who encounters a pre-historic Megalodon shark. After the beast rises to the surface of the South Pacific, the group does all they can to prevent it from devouring everything in its path. This creature-feature throwback split reviewers. Nearly half described it as goofy and completely absurd, yet entertaining, complimenting the work of the likable cast. Just as many complained about it being dumb and some were even disappointed it wasn't a bloodier, more graphic homage to B-movies.

Mile 22 - A CIA Special Activities Division unit's tasked with sneaking a police officer and informant out of a Southeast Asian country. The mysterious person has made a deal to help the U.S. government stop a Russian plot to transport a radioactive poison called caesium. Naturally, the members must deal with several assassination attempts and double-crosses. Notices were poor for this action picture. A few thought the action and pacing was dynamic enough to earn it a pass, but most found the film to be a confusing jumble of haphazardly edited chaos, with little back story for the unit's characters. Mark Wahlberg, Lauren Cohan, Iko Uwais, Ronda Rousey and John Malkovich headline the film.

The New Romantic - A college senior expresses great frustration at the lack of chivalrous men in her age group. She decides to give up on finding true love, and instead dates an older man in exchange for his elaborate gifts. This independent comedy received a mixed reception. The consensus seemed to be that the movie featured an interesting lead and started well by poking fun at the rom-com formula, but ultimately became old-fashioned and ended up following many of the tropes it parodied. The cast includes Sarah Armstrong, Daina Barbeau and Jessica

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Barden.

Puzzle - The protagonist of this low-key romantic comedy is a shy, introverted, underestimated suburban mom who develops a hobby in the form of jigsaw puzzles after receiving one as a gift. Surprisingly, this new interest ends up drawing her into a completely new world, meeting new people that may end up changing her life. Reaction towards this little picture was very upbeat. Only a few found the material uninteresting, with most calling it a very sweet and inspirational character piece with excellent performances from the three leads. The movie stars Kelly Macdonald, Irrfan Khan, David Denman and Austin Abrams.

Ray Meets Helen - This independent feature is about a man and woman who, independent of each other, suddenly come into money. Each decides to reinvent and present new versions of themselves as they try to navigate the world of the wealthy and their updated social status. The pair meets and begins to fall for one another, leading to various complications as they try to keep up their fake personas. This comedic effort split the press. About half didn't believe there was much spark to the story and didn't think it all gelled. However, just as many called it charming, elegant and wise.

Blasts from the Past!

Arrow Video's releasing a Special Edition Blu-ray of *The Wizard of Gore* (1970). This is an extremely cheesy, low-budget horror film that was previously released by the distributor as part of a box set, *The*

Hershell Gordon Lewis Feast

(which included titles like

2000 Maniacs

and

Blood Feast

). Now those looking for this film exclusively can pick it up - it comes with all of the same and very numerous bonuses from its previous release.

The same distributor's art house division, Arrow Academy, brings the drama *Gas Food Lodging* (1992) to Blu-ray. This title is about a waitress and single mom struggling to make ends meet, who soon learns her teenage daughter has gotten pregnant. The release includes a retrospective documentary on the movie and a featurette on the challenges female directors have faced over the years.

The MVD Rewind Collection's bringing *Bright Lights, Big City* (1988) to Blu-ray. This title featured star Michael J. Fox in a more dramatic turn as an aspiring writer whose life spins out of control after moving to Manhattan. It comes with a screenwriter commentary and cinematographer commentary, as well as production featurettes and publicity materials.

VCI's got the ghost-centric comedy *Topper Returns* (1941) on high definition. And the American Film Genre Archives delivers a Blu-ray of the, umm, sleazy soft-core flick, *Take it Out in Trade* (1970). It features Ed Wood in a lead role. This one is painfully hard to watch and exclusively for aficionados of the filmmaker. It includes a commentary from filmmaker Frank Henenlotter (*Basket Case*) as well as 70 minutes of unused footage from the shoot. It also includes a bonus Ed Wood feature, *The Love Feast* (1969), so at least you're getting plenty of extras for your dollar.

It's a remarkably busy week for Shout! Factor, too, with several great titles coming your way. *The Blue Dahlia* (1946), a well-regarded film-noir with Alan Ladd, is arriving on Blu-ray. The company's also putting out the Best Picture Oscar-winner *Dances with Wolves* (1990) as a Limited Edition Steelbook. It includes the theatrical and extended cuts of the film with multiple commentaries. A third disc has all sorts of bonus features like a making-of and a retrospective documentary, as well as publicity materials and a music video.

They also have a 40th Anniversary Edition of the Steve Martin comedy, *The Jerk* (1979). The film has been remastered with a new 2K transfer and a recent conversation with Martin and director Carl Reiner, as well as another with the movie's screenwriters. There are other bonuses like publicity materials and featurettes, including one that teaches you to play a song from the film on the banjo.

You can also pick up a Collector's Edition of *Texas Chainsaw Massacre: The Next Generation* (1994). This sequel is really terrible, unexpectedly suggesting the Sawyer cannibal clan may have ties to mysterious Men in Black figures. However, it does feature early appearances of stars Renee Zellweger and Matthew McConaughey. The release includes a theatrical and a director's cut, a filmmaker commentary, an interview with the cinematographer and more.

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Additionally, the distributor's offering an action Double Feature Blu-ray *Naked Vengeance* (1985) and

Vendetta

(1984) aka

The Hit

. Finally, they are also bringing the Jennifer Jason Leigh/Bridget Fonda thriller,

Single White Female

(1992). This hit was about a psychotic young woman who tries to take over her roommate's life.

This disc includes new interviews with cast and crew members (with the exception of the two stars) and a director commentary.

Criterion's got one of the funniest comedies ever made on Blu-ray. *Some Like it Hot* (1959) stars Tony Curtis and Jack Lemmon as two men on the run from the mob who dress in drag and join an all-female band fronted by Marilyn Monroe. The film has been given a 4K restoration and comes with a film scholar commentary, a short on the film's costuming, three behind-the-scenes documentaries and numerous television interviews and promotional appearances of the director and stars.

Code Red's delivering a Blu-ray and/or DVD of the asylum-set horror flick *The Fifth Floor* (1978), starring Dianne Hull, Bo Hopkins and Robert Englund. Mondo Bizarro are putting out the genre flicks

Bloodlust

(1977) and the Lucio Fulci flick, *Perversion Story* (1969) aka *One on Top of the Other*. They both arrive on Blu-ray in their uncut editions with new transfers and bonus interviews.

Finally, Arbelos Films is releasing *The Last Movie* (1971) on Blu-ray. This feature was director Dennis Hopper's follow-up to

Easy Rider

(1969) and has developed its own cult following. The flick has received a 4K restoration and arrives with a one-hour documentary from Alex Cox (

Repo Man

) on its production, as well as a 30-minute doc on Hopper and interviews with the crew. Looks pretty cool.

You Know, For Kids!

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Based on this week's releases, it looks as if kids are supposed to be getting in the holiday spirit.

A Christmas Story Live!

On the Tube!

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

Ancient Invisible Cities (PBS)

Breaking Big (PBS)

The Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy (BBC)

The Librarians: Season 4

A Sister's All You Need: The Complete Series

Star Trek: Discovery: Season 1

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