By Glenn Kay

For the Sun

Welcome to another look at highlights arriving on Blu-ray and DVD. There's plenty to choose from, with a wide range of titles in a variety of genres making their debuts on disc. 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!

Along with the Gods: The Last 49 Days - The original *Along with the Gods: The Two Worlds* was a South Korean fantasy epic about a man who died and was forced to defend his soul to learn how he would spend his eternity. This sequel continues the story of the protagonist as his trial to be reincarnated continues. It also examines the histories of the lead's three afterlife guardians. Reviews in this part of the world were mixed, although slightly more seem to like it than not. Some thought it was overly ambitious and tried to do too much, yet more enjoyed the visuals and performances enough to recommend it.

Collette - A woman from the countryside marries a famous Parisian writer in this period drama. When the artist finds himself struggling to create a work, his wife begins to ghostwrite a novel based on her experiences in her rural community. The book is a smash, but it leads to conflict within the household. She naturally resents her writing and talent being unrecognized. Notices were quite good for this effort. A few complained about the protagonist's lack of assertiveness or found the story focused too much on her past and inspiration. However, the vast majority appreciated the film, calling it a well-acted and interesting feature with some still-relevant themes. It stars Keira Knightley, Dominic West and Eleanor Tomlinson.

Death House - This indie horror effort is set in a prison and follows a group of visitors who pick a very unfortunate time to go on a tour. Essentially, the power goes out and releases the prisoners. Even worse, as the protagonists move deeper and deeper into the building to hide, they start to encounter supernatural forces. Overall, the movie earned mostly negative reviews. A percentage enjoyed its camp value and appreciated the cameos from genre film actors. Still,

the consensus was that it simply didn't make any sense and didn't generate the kind of fun B-movie vibe it needed to.

The Equalizer 2 - The hit update of the TV-series gets as sequel and finds its protagonist now working as a Lyft driver who also goes out of his way to protect the innocent. When a hit is taken out on one of his closest friends in Washington, the hero feels compelled to find those responsible and make them pay. His investigation uncovers an elaborate conspiracy. This follow-up split members many of the press. About half called it more of the same and didn't find the action exciting. The remainder were kinder, suggesting the movie fixed a few of the original's faults and provided enough thrills to earn it a pass. Denzel Washington, Pedro Pascal, Ashton Sanders, Orson Bean, Bill Pullman and Melissa Leo headline the film.

Galveston - An alcoholic hit man gets a big surprise when he's double-crossed by his employer and finds assassins out to kill him. He escapes their clutches with a young woman in tow and the pair tries to find safety in Galveston. To save their own lives, the two must come to terms with their past actions and make amends. Notices were good for this independent drama. Some said while the performers were capable, the screenplay did them no favors. Yet more liked the simplicity of the story and believed the character study was engaging. It features Ben Foster, Elle Fanning, Jeffrey Grover, Christopher Amitrano and Beau Bridges.

I Still See You - In this unusual fantasy/suspense picture, an apocalyptic event has left the remaining population surrounded by ghosts. One day, a young woman receives a message from an apparition. It seems to be a strange warning. She sets out with a classmate to identify and stop a murderer before the villain strikes again. Reactions toward this feature (which is based on a Young Adult novel) were quite poor. A few did call it well-produced, but then stopped short of complimenting anything else about it. Instead, they suggested it was needlessly complicated, uninteresting and ineffective. The movie stars Bella Thorne, Richard Harmon, Dermot Mulroney and Amy Price-Francis.

Lizzie - True crime fans may be interested in this biopic on the famous, alleged axe-murderer Lizzie Borden, whom many are convinced chopped her parents into bits. The story focuses on Lizzie's life in the home and her relationship with a housemaid. Did the two get together and hatch a secret plan to commit the crime? Viewers will have to watch to learn what this drama theorizes. Critics found it an intriguing take on the legend. A few complained it didn't offer much that was new, but far more thought the leads were great and that it offered an interesting approach to the murders and why they were committed. The cast includes Chloe Sevigny, Kristen Stewart, Jamey Sheridan and Fiona Shaw.

Peppermint - A young mother awakens from a coma to discover both her infant child and husband have been murdered. Frustrated by a lack of effort on the part of authorities to find the guilty party, she begins turning herself into a fighting machine. As more information about the perpetrators is revealed, the woman heads out to take vigilante justice on the bad guys. This action picture received noticeably weak reviews from critics. One or two enjoyed seeing the lead performer beat up on the antagonists. Yet the overwhelming opinion was that the movie failed to get the blood pumping, was weakened by a routine script and even seemed, at times, in poor taste. Jennifer Garner, John Gallagher Jr., John Ortiz, Method Man and Richard Carbrel headline the feature.

River Runs Red - This hard-boiled action picture follows a young cop who is shot by a pair of corrupt officers. The events greatly displease the recruit's father, who works as a judge. After hiring a private investigator, evidence appears that leads to the nefarious party. The father teams with the PI and a parent of another victim to take on the killers. At the end of the day, the movie earned unimpressive marks from its reviewers. There were a small number who appreciated the themes examined in the story. However, criticisms said the movie’s slow-moving and the action sequences lack any real excitement. It stars Taye Diggs, John Cusack, George Lopez and Luke Hemsworth.

Smallfoot - A Yeti living in the Himalayas has his world turned upside down after he encounters the wreckage of a plane crash... and a human being inside. The Sasquatch and man begin forming a friendship and try to determine what to do next. Each of them attempts to help both humans and Yeti overcome their prejudices about the other species. Overall, the press didn't mind this animated family feature. A few were not impressed with the animation and didn't think the film matched up to Pixar or Disney. Still, most thought it was cute, cheery and fun and would appeal to youngsters.

Unbroken: Path to Redemption - This sequel to the 2014 film *Unbroken* continues the story of WWII hero Louis Zamperini. However, it features an entirely new cast and focuses on the subject's discovery of religion. After returning from war, the lead finds himself suffering from mental trauma and falling for a woman. As he continues to struggle with feelings of revenge, his new wife finds inspiration from a Billy Graham appearance and tries to help him. Notices were poor for this follow-up. A few found it inspiring and well-produced. Unfortunately, more criticized it for being overlong and simplistic.

Welcome Home - A battling couple decides to work on their relationship by renting a villa in the

Italian countryside and enjoying some time alone together. However, they soon learn that not only is their neighbor creepy, but they discover that cameras may be set up within the abode. The pair soon begins to fear for their safety. This thriller struggled to impress critics. A few thought the leads were better than expected given the genre and felt that the story delivered some tense moments. Yet the majority said that the eerie moments early on didn't last and the movie unraveled as more was revealed. The cast includes Aaron Paul, Emily Ratajkowski and Riccardo Scamarcio.

Blasts from the Past!

Plenty of great older titles are also coming your way. Arrow Academy has a Special Edition Blu-ray of the classic comedy, *The Apartment* (1960). This effort is about a Manhattan office drone who lends his apartment out to various bosses for romantic trysts, all so that he can win their favor and be promoted. However, his attitude changes after one of his employers hooks up with the girl of his dreams. This comedy from Billy Wilder (
Double Indemnity
,
Sunset Boulevard
,
Ace in the Hole
,
Sabrina
,
Some Like It Hot
) is extremely well-regarded and many also see it as a sharp critique of the corporate world. It has been given a new 4K from the original negative and comes with numerous extras.

Shout! Select has a 50th Anniversary Blu-ray of the Clint Eastwood western, *Hang 'Em High* (1968). It's about a man who takes revenge on a group of men after surviving their attempt to lynch him. This release includes two audio commentaries — one with a film historian and another with a western authority. The disc also includes a trailer.

Shout! has some horror pictures as well. *The Mangler* (1995) is a bizarre little monster movie based on a Stephen King short story. It's about a demonically possessed, industrial

laundry-folding machine. The Blu-ray release includes a new 4K scan of the original negative of the uncut version of the flick, plus a new audio commentary with the film's co-writer and an interview with star Robert Englund. Additionally, it comes with behind-the-scenes footage, a TV spot and a trailer.

"Garbage day!" They also have a Collector's Edition Blu-ray of the holiday-themed slasher picture, *Silent Night, Deadly Night 2* (1987). This is not a quality horror flick and in fact, nearly half of it is reused footage from the first film. Still, it does provide plenty of really cheesy moments that may amuse B-movie fans. This release includes plenty of new features, including a 2K scan of an archival theatrical print, audio commentary with the director and cast members, lengthy interviews with cast and crew, a look at the movie's locations, a short interview with the lead, an extended interview with the make-up effects man and a previously issued commentary and trailer.

And finally, remember reading about *Texas Chainsaw Massacre: The Next Generation* (1994) Collector's Edition Blu-ray a few weeks back? Well, it was delayed, but is arriving on store shelves today.

Much like they did with the 1979 movie *Zombie* a few weeks back, Blue Underground is delivering a three-disc Limited Edition of the slasher film,
Maniac
(1980). The movie itself has been given a new 4K restoration from the recently discovered original camera negative. It also comes with all of the bonuses from earlier versions, along with some new clips featuring director William Lustig (the
Maniac Cop
series,
Uncle Sam
) and never-before-released outtakes.

Kino has a Special Edition Blu-ray of the Joan Crawford film-noir, *Female on the Beach* (1955). It arrives with a pair of film historian audio commentaries. You can also now pick up a Blu-ray of the Jane Russell effort,
Foxfire
(1955).

And there's more. Criterion has the Oscar-nominated drama *A Dry White Season* (1989)

on Blu-ray. It has been given a new 4K digital restoration, a new interview with the director, an interview with star Donald Sutherland, footage of the film's director talking with Nelson Mandela, as well as other extras.

The distributor's also releasing Sam Fuller's *Forty Guns* (1957) on Blu-ray. This western stars Barbara Stanwyck and comes with a 4K digital restoration. It also includes an interview with filmmaker Fuller's widow and daughter, as well as a feature length documentary about the director. There's also a 1969 audio interview with Fuller and a critic analysis of the feature.

Sony's making the musical *Oliver!* (1968) available on Blu-ray.

Scorpion's debuting a Special Edition Blu-ray of the cheesy horror flick, *Death Ship* (1980). It stars Richard Crenna and George Kennedy as part of a group of shipwreck survivors who climb aboard a haunted freighter. I saw this flick many years ago, but remember absolutely nothing about it. Still, the movie has fans and has been given a 2K scan along with color correction. Therefore, one assumes it'll at least look dramatically better now.

And finally, Full Moon Features is releasing a Blu-ray of the family-friendly movie, *Pet Shop* (1994). This one is about a young girl who opens a store featuring creatures from another dimension.

You Know, For Kids!

Here are some titles that may appeal to kids.

Pet Shop

SGT. Stubby: An American Hero

Smallfoot

On the Tube!



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

The Christmas Cure (Hallmark)

Christmas in Homestead (Hallmark)

Death in Paradise: Season 7

Don Cherry's Rock'em Sock'em Hockey 30

Father Brown: Season 6

Frontline: Trump's Showdown (PBS)

The Grind: The Series: Episode 1

The Grind: The Series: Episode 2

The Grind: The Series: Episode 3

The High Chaparral

The Last Kingdom: Season 3

The Orville: Season 1

Secrets of the Dead: Woman in the Iron Coffin (PBS)

The Shield: The Complete Series (Blu-ray)

Top of the Lake: China Girl (BBC)