

DVD/Blu-ray Roundup for Feb. 1, 2019

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
Friday, 08 February 2019 08:31



Time for another look at new releases arriving on Blu-ray and DVD. It's another busy week, with discs 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!

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Blood Brother - An ex-con decides to take revenge on a group of childhood friends that he believes set him up and sent him to prison. Naturally, this is very upsetting to those being targeted, one of whom has grown up to become a police officer. The group does their best to survive the ordeal. This independent action picture got a mixed reception. One or two thought the lead (R&B singer Trey Songz) showed some promise, but more stated that this was a cheesy effort that resorted to clichés and didn't give its characters much motivation for their actions. Jack Kesy, China Anne McClaine and Lindsay Musil also appear.

Boy Erased - This tale is based on a true story and follows a gay teenager who is forced to attend a conversion therapy program by his pastor father. The youngster endures incredible hardships through the extreme methods used and must eventually find a way to remove himself from the organization. Reviews were quite strong for this drama. A small percentage stated that while the story was powerful, it lacked passion and fire. However, the vast majority complimented the work of the cast and thought it did a good job of making its characters authentic and believable. It stars Lucas Hedges, Russell Crowe, Nicole Kidman and Joel Edgerton.

Dead in a Week: Or Your Money Back - A suicidal young man fails in numerous attempts to end his own life. Frustrated, he enlists the services of a hired killer to do him in. But after turning a corner and deciding that he does have a reason to live, he learns that the assassin doesn't believe in breaking contracts. This dark action/comedy received more negative reviews than positive ones. Some thought there were enough funny moments from the leads to get viewers through the sections that didn't work, but the consensus was that the movie never quite finds the right tone and doesn't engage viewers. Tom Wilkinson, Aneurin Barnard, Freya Mavor and Christopher Eccleston headline the feature.

Honeyglue - Made in 2015, this independent drama played at various film festivals, but had difficulty finding a distributor. It is now making its debut on disc. The story follows a conservative woman who learns that she has only three months to live. She makes big changes to her life, befriending a transvestite and heading off on an adventure to scratch as much off of her bucket list as she can. The movie didn't generate a lot of buzz. A few appreciated its efforts and thought its heart was in the right place, but most suggested it was overly sentimental and ineffective. The cast includes Adriana Mather, Zach Villa, Booboo Stewart and Amanda Plummer.

Hunter Killer - After a U.S. submarine goes missing while tracking a Russian ship, a newly recruited Commander is sent out to investigate. While doing so, he discovers the Russian defense minister has staged a coup and kidnapped the country's president. The protagonist

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teams with Navy Seals to rescue the hostage and eliminate the threat. Critics were not taken with this action picture. A small group called it a simple and fun little thriller. However, most suggested this flick was well out-of-date and came across as clunky and bland. It stars Gerard Butler, Gary Oldman, Common, Michael Nyqvist and Linda Cardellini.

Indivisible - This faith-based feature is inspired by real events. A soldier moves with his family to an army base after completing basic training, only to be immediately sent to the front lines of Iraq. The film follows the struggles the wife and children face as they wait for news and await his return. Critics were more positive about this effort than others of its genre. A few did say that the movie wasn't as enthralling as it should have been. Still, many complimented it for focusing more on the family and showing the effects of PTSD rather than taking the more typical approach to the story. It features Sarah Drew and Justin Bruening.

The Night Is Short, Walk On Girl - A group of teens decides to go out and have some fun in Kyoto in this Japanese animated film. The main character, a sophomore student, begins drinking and partying, which lead to her having some surreal experiences in the city. These encounters distract her from another student that is harboring a crush and trying desperately to get her attention. The foreign-language comedy seems to have impressed reviewers. One or two had difficulty getting onto its eccentric wavelength. Yet almost all others were taken by the creativity on display and impressive visuals. They called it unpredictable, fascinating and unique.

The Nutcracker and the Four Realms - This adaptation of the famous short story and ballet involves a young girl still stinging from the recent death of her mother. When her dad takes the child to a holiday party, she escapes into another realm filled with strange, scary, wondrous creatures. There's some dancing, too. Reaction this elaborate Disney family film was not overwhelming. A small percentage recommended it if only for the production design and valiant attempts by the cast to make something of a slight story. Unfortunately, almost all others stated that the script veered too far from the original story and was poor, leaving its performers completely adrift. It stars Keira Knightley, Mackenzie Foy, Morgan Freeman and Helen Mirren.

Postcards from London - A teenager leaves home for Soho and soon falls in with a crowd of escorts who specialize in conversing with clients. He soon becomes the muse of an artist and is asked to help detect art forgeries. Unfortunately, the lead suffers from Stendhal Syndrome, which causes him to hallucinate and faint while looking at elaborate paintings. Critics were split on this U.K. production. Half thought it was good-looking but that the script and story couldn't keep one's attention for 90 minutes. The other thought that while it had problems, it was original and there were enough effective moments to earn it a recommendation.

Studio 54 - Studio 54 was one of the favorite hot-spots of New Yorkers in the '70s and has been described at the center of hedonism. The history of the venue is chronicled in this documentary, which uses archival interviews with both co-owners as well as new footage with the surviving operator. The movie shows how they started the enterprise and tells their version of what transpired there (before its eventual closure). The press gave this picture high marks. A few commented that the movie didn't delve deeply enough into its subjects or offered any significant insight. But far more stated that it was an interesting and fun expose on the history of a landmark club.

Suspiria - This very loose remake of the 1977 Dario Argento horror classic involves an American who arrives in Berlin to study at a prestigious dance academy. After she learns that the student whose spot she has taken disappeared under suspicious circumstances, the protagonist investigates. Write-ups for this flick were all over the map, although it received slightly more positive reviews than negative ones. Those who disliked it stated that the movie was overlong, ponderous and at times pretentious. On the other side, slightly more said it was eerie and had plenty of interesting ideas hidden beneath the surface. It stars Dakota Johnson, Tilda Swinton, Mia Goth, Chloe Grace Moretz and Jessica Harper.

The Wife - A famous author's wife accompanies him to Belgium after he is awarded the Nobel Prize for his body of work in literature. On the surface, everything is fine, but tensions and personality clashes begin to surface as events progress. The pair are also hounded by a reporter desperate to get details on the husband and wife's personal relationship. Reaction was upbeat for this drama. A small group complained that beyond the performances, there wasn't much that was surprising about the story. However, the vast majority were greatly impressed by the cast and believed the story packed a punch. Its lead, Glenn Close, was just nominated for an Academy Award for her performance. Jonathan Pryce and Christian Slater also appear.

The Workers Cup - This documentary was shot in Qatar and details the work of the migrant construction team building stadiums for the 2022 World Cup. The filmmakers show the way these people are being shipped in and forced to work in dangerous conditions for long hours with little pay. This picture also follows them as they compete in their own little soccer tournament sponsored by the employers. Response to this movie was very good. A small percentage critiqued the movie by saying there wasn't enough material here to justify a full-length feature, but most thought of it as an engaging film revealing the troubles faced by immigrant laborers.

Blasts from the Past!

It's a slightly quieter week for new Blu-rays of older titles, but there are still a few exciting titles coming your way. Shout! Factory has the action flick, *Deadly Force* (1983). This one stars Wings Hauser as a cop-turned-private-detective who will stop at nothing to take down a psychopathic killer.

They've also got the TV-movie, *Sarah T. - Portrait of a Teenage Alcoholic* (1975). It stars Linda Blair as, well, a teen with a drinking problem. The supporting cast includes Larry Hagman and Mark Hamill. It's actually quite well regarded and was directed by Richard Donner (

The Omen

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Superman

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The Goonies

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Lethal Weapon

). The picture has been given a new 2K scan of the original film elements for Blu-ray and the release includes new interviews with both Blair and Donner.

Sci-fi/horror fans can also pick up *Screamers* (1995), which features Peter Weller. It's about a group of soldiers on a desolate planet who learn that the war robots humanity built to colonize the universe have become sentient and are fighting back. The disc comes with new interviews with the film's director, producer, co-writer and a co-star (Jennifer Rubin).

Finally, Shout! is also releasing a Collector's Edition Blu-ray of *Suburbia* (1983) aka *The Wild Side* . This

well-received feature from director Penelope Spheeris (

The Boys Next Door

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Dudes

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Wayne's World

) is a drama about youths in LA and is set against the backdrop of the early 80s punk music scene. The cult film's original elements have been given a new 4K scan. The Blu-ray also includes two audio commentaries (one with the filmmaker and another that features she and other crew members), a still gallery and trailers.

Criterion's bringing a Blu-ray of the classic, *In the Heat of the Night* (1967). This Best Picture Oscar winner involves an African American Philadelphia detective attempting to help solve a murder in rural Mississippi and encountering plenty of bigoted locals.. The movie has been given a new 4K digital restoration, new interviews with director Norman Jewison and co-star Lee Grant, a 2006 Film Institute interview with star Sidney Poitier, a talk with a Poitier biographer, a 2008 commentary with the director, cast members and cinematographer, a documentary on the production and a program about the film's soundtrack.

Like Tarzan movies? If you do, this is your lucky week, as Warner Archive's making two titles available on Blu-ray. They include *Tarzan Goes to India* (1962) and *Tarzan's Three Challenges* (1963). The flicks feature Jock Mahoney as the title character. Woody Strode also appears in the first flick.

You Know, For Kids!

If you're looking for something for young children, hope you like llamas, because that's all that is available this week.

Llama Llama, Red Pajama: The Animated Series (a collection of a few episodes)

On the Tube!

Here are this edition's TV-themed releases.

Doctor Who: Series 11

Humans 3.0: Uncut UK Edition

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Jamestown: Seasons 1 & 2 (PBS)

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