





Welcome back to another edition featuring highlights arriving on Blu-ray and DVD. As you might have guessed, there are plenty of new releases hitting shelves. 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!

The Amityville Murders - Believe it or not, there have been about 20 movies inspired by the *Amityville Horror* story. The latest feature attempts to detail the graphic murders that took place at the locale in 1974, with the plot following a father who begins to hear voices in his head, commanding him to execute his entire family. Reviews weren't particularly strong for this horror flick. Now curious parties can watch it and decide for themselves. The cast includes John Robinson, Chelsea Ricketts, Paul Ben-Victor and Diane Franklin.

The Aspern Papers - This period drama takes place in Venice, Italy and involves a writer obsessed with finding the title documents, which are a series of love letters written by a famous poet to his beautiful mistress. While on the hunt, the protagonist follows the trail and locates the actual woman, only to begin falling for her himself and coming under her strange influence. Critics didn't think that this effort made much of an imprint. There were a few who complimented bits and pieces of the movie, but the consensus was that the story came across as flat, lifeless, and stiffly staged, despite the valiant efforts of the cast. It stars Joely Richardson, Jonathan Rhys Meyers and Vanessa Redgrave.

Berlin, I Love You - Following on the heels of *Paris, Je T'aime* (2006) and *New York, I Love You* (2008), this is the latest in a series, featuring a grouping of short films about love. As you might have guessed, Berlin is the metropolis inspiring these tales. Alas, very few press members were feeling the magic this time out, as this sequel is the worst reviewed title in the franchise. Sadly, the overwhelming response was that these clips were poor, and didn't inspire much passion or excitement. Keira Knightley, Helen Mirren, Luke Wilson, Jim Sturgess, Mickey Rourke, Hayden Panettiere and Diego Luna all make appearances.

A Dog's Way Home - A pooch who gets lost and separated from her owner decides to wander across the country and find her way home in this family drama. Along the way, the animal encounters various strangers and brings some happiness to their troubled lives. Reaction towards this flick was generally upbeat. A small percentage complained that the approach taken was very old-fashioned and that the film dealt with the issues raised, in too simple a manner. Still, more found the movie sweet and well-intentioned, suggesting that family audiences would appreciate the cute lead character and the film's positive outlook. The movie stars Ashley Judd, Edward James Olmos, Alexandra Shipp, Wes Studi and Barry Watson.

Golden Job - This Hong Kong action flick involves a team of former mercenaries who decide to

take part in a massive heist. The group plans to steal the contents of a medicine truck headed to a refugee camp. However, they soon discover that the vehicle contains a massive quantity of gold, and that they have been set up by someone within their own ranks. A few write-ups that have appeared online suggest that the movie is a reasonably entertaining, if unexceptional, action picture with a few decent chase scenes. The cast includes Ekin Cheng, Jordan Chan, Michael Tse, Chin Ka-lok, and Charmaine Sheh.

Holmes & Watson - The famous detectives get a reworking in this comedy that presents the characters as dimwitted heroes more likely to accidentally solve crimes than use traditional methods to catch perpetrators. This time out, they're tasked with stopping their nemesis Moriarty in his plot to murder the Queen at the unveiling of the RMS Titanic. Let's just say that this teaming between leads Will Ferrell and John C. Reilly was not as much appreciated as the pair's previous efforts. A small batch did say that there were a few laughs to be had here from the idiotic shenanigans on display, but far more found the gags terribly unfunny (the film ended up winning a Worst Picture Razzie). The movie also features Rebecca Hall, Ralph Fiennes, Rob Brydon, Kelly Macdonald, Steve Coogan and Lauren Lapkus.

Moynihan - Politician and sociologist Daniel Patrick Moynihan is the subject of this documentary. Considered a maverick, the man was a fan of statistics and considered himself a moralist, noting the ways in which many who want to do good are often undone by their desires to succeed in their careers. The press was taken with this non-fiction film about the man's career as a U. S. Senator, U. S. Ambassador to the United Nations and eventual Counselor to the President. They stated that this movie provided a new appreciation for his work, helped to clarify some of his beliefs and theories, and allowed viewers to learn more about this interesting figure.

On the Basis of Sex - Ruth Bader Ginsburg is the main figure in this biopic, which focuses on the early part of the Supreme Court Justice's life, as well as her groundbreaking work taking on a sex discrimination claim. Early sections of the feature focus on her mistreatment in a male-dominated field and how these experiences helped develop her arguments in this historic case. Reviews were decent for the feature, although not outstanding. Some thought that it was merely a standard biography of a truly exceptional person, although they all complimented the performances and thought the feature brought attention to some of her work. It stars Felicity Jones, Armie Hammer, Justine Theroux, Kathy Bates, Sam Waterston and Jack Reynor.

Touch Me Not - This European art house film is described as being, "on the fluid border between reality and fiction." It follows a moviemaker and her characters as they address intimacy. Three of the main characters have serious issues with the subject. They are placed in

a lab where they attempt to deal with their relationship issues and break the ties binding them to their patterns of behavior. Notices were all over the place for this drama. Laura Benson, Tómas Lemarquis and Christian Bayerlein headline this title.

We Die Young - A 10-year-old boy in Washington, DC is recruited into a drug-running gang against the wishes of his teenage brother. The older sibling requests the assistance of an Afghanistan war veteran to help him get the youngster away from a life of crime. Together, they infiltrate the organization and attempt to rescue the child. There aren't a lot of reviews. The ones that have popped up, call it a nice change of pace for its star, although some suggest that this B-movie might have benefited from higher production values. The cast includes Jean-Claude Van Damme, David Castañeda and Elijah Rodriguez.

Welcome to Marwen - Based on the true story and documentary *Marwencol*, this biopic tells the story of a man struggling with PTSD. After being beaten to within an inch of his life by white supremacists, the lead begins designing a fantasy world populated by action figures of women whom he admires. In the process, the protagonist tries to rebuild his own life. Sadly, the majority of press members didn't think this fantasy/drama worked. A small selection thought that the movie's heart was in the right place and that it attempted something new and different. It stars Steve Carell, Leslie Mann, Diane Kruger, Merritt Wever and Janelle Monáe.

Blasts from the Past!

Lots of interesting older titles are hitting Blu-ray as well. Arrow has the horror/giallo picture, *The Iguana with the Tongue of Fire*
(1971). Despite being an Italian murder/mystery, this one is actually set in Dublin and is famous for having a very over-the-top plot with an almost nonsensical amount of red herrings. The movie has been given a new 2K transfer from the original camera negative and comes with a giallo expert commentary, as well as a video critic appreciation of the film, a discussion about the film's composer, an interview with the feature's assistant director, the editor, one of the actresses involved and numerous publicity materials.

Mélo (1986) is also arriving on Blu-ray courtesy of the same distributor's arthouse line, Arrow Academy. This Special Edition includes a 2K restoration of the film, a critic introduction, archived interviews with the director, producer, actors, script supervisor and set designer. It also comes with a theatrical trailer.

MVD Marquee Collection has an interesting Blu-ray title in *Enigma* (1982). This well-regarded Cold War, Russian-set spy thriller with Martin Sheen and Sam Neill has kind of disappeared since its initial release at theaters and debut on VHS. It's great to see this lost flick get a high definition upgrade, and the release includes a stills gallery and trailer. Looking forward to catching up with this one.

However, it's the next Blu-ray title that this columnist is most excited about. Shout! Factory is bringing *The Legend of the 7 Golden Vampires* (1974), an amazingly crazy action/horror co-production between UK's Hammer Films and the Shaw Brothers from Hong Kong. It features Peter Cushing as Van Helsing, who travels to China on a search for Dracula. Buyers will get two cuts of the film (including Hammer's original uncut version) presented in 2K and scanned from the original elements, a new film historian commentary and interviews with an actor and a Hong Kong movie expert, as well as loads of trailers and publicity materials

Shout! Select also has some fun Blu-rays as well. The first is the film noir, *This Gun for Hire* (1942) adapted from the Graham Greene novel and starring Veronica Lake and Alan Ladd.

This distributor is also releasing the Don Cheadle biopic, *Talk to Me* (2007), in which the actor plays the famous radio personality "Petey" Greene. This Blu-ray comes with a featurette including interviews with the cast and crew, a behind-the-scenes promotional piece, deleted scenes and a theatrical trailer.

Kino has some unusual Blu-rays coming your way, as well. The first is the early Charles Bronson action picture, *Cold Sweat* (1970). It's about a man living a quiet life in France who has a criminal past. When some thugs show up to threaten the hero and his family, he fights back. This disc includes a film historian commentary, a trailer and a chase-chase promo for the movie.

Bronson fans can also pick up *Rider on the Rain* (1970), another picture the actor made in France. This one is a thriller, with Bronson trying to find out what happened to investigate a murder. The disc includes the US and extended French cuts of the movie, along with a film historian commentary and trailers.

For those interested in more exotic material, Kino also has Special Edition Blu-rays of the French features *Emmanuelle* (1974), *Emmanuelle 2* (1975) and *Emmanuelle 3* (1977), which involve a woman visiting foreign lands and embarking on romantic trysts. All three of these releases come with interviews with the director and star about each particular movie, as well as trailers.

Criterion has a Blu-ray of Jim Jarmusch's *Night on Earth* (1991), a movie involving brief interactions between a taxi driver and passengers in five cities. The cult film has a quirky, comedic bent and was very well received during its original release. This disc includes a director-approved restoration of the film, along with an archival selected scene commentary track with the cinematographer, a Belgian television interview with Jarmusch and a second Q & A with the creator from 2007.

They are also putting out a Blu-ray of the director's second feature, *Stranger Than Paradise* (1984). This one follows a New Yorker who is unexpectedly visited by his cousin and the trouble they get themselves into over the course of the visit. This film has also been given a high definition visual restoration approved by Jarmusch, an actor and director commentary, Jarmusch's debut film,
Permanent Vacation
(1980), a German television interview show about these two features, behind-the-scenes Super 8 footage of the 1984 production, as well as US and Japanese trailers.

And there's more. Warner Archive is releasing *Frankenstein 1970* (1958) on Blu-ray. Truth be told, I missed this title and haven't yet seen it, but it is set after WWII, and involves Victor Frankenstein's attempts to use atomic power to raise the dead. Boris Karloff stars as the mad doctor and the disc includes a film historian audio commentary, as well as a trailer.

Kit Parker Films is making a Blu-ray box-set available that features quite a few lost titles. Their *Noir Archive Volume 1: 1944 - 1954*
features nine film noir titles, including the likes of
Address Unknown
(1944),
Escape in the Fog
(1945),
The Guilt of Janet James
(1947),
The Black Book
aka

The Reign of Terror
(1949),
Johnny Allegro
(1949),
711 Ocean Drive
(1950),
The Killer That Stalked New York
(1950),
Assignment Paris
(1952) and
The Miami Story
(1954).

Finally, the AGFA or American Genre Film Archive has a DVD of the slasher film, *Blood Lake* (1987). This made-for-video woods-set slasher involves party animals being taken down a peg by a supernatural killer. The movie has been rescued from the vaults and is transferred from the original 1” master tape. Extras include a director commentary, a Q & A with the filmmaker, an investor trailer, and short also made by the director.

You Know, For Kids!

Here are some highlights of kid-friendly titles coming your way.

Paw Patrol: Ultimate Rescue (Nickelodeon)

Pokemon: Diamond & Pearl 4-Movie Collection

Ready Jet Go! Chasing the Sun (PBS Kids)

Wild Kratts: The Briny Blue Sea (PBS Kids)

On the Tube!

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

Masterpiece: Mrs. Wilson (PBS)

Project Blue Book: Season 1 (History Channel)

Ray Donovan: Season 6

You're the Worst: Season 5

By Glenn Kay
For the Sun