

DVD/Blu-ray Roundup for July 12, 2019

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
Thursday, 18 July 2019 23:25



Welcome back to another very busy edition of new release highlights on Blu-ray and DVD. Looks like there's a bit of everything, both new and old to enjoy this time out. 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!

After - Based on a bestselling novel, this teen romance follows a smart and studious young woman who falls for a mysterious, moody new arrival with a rebellious streak. Their passionate and rocky relationship makes the lead question several of the conservative choices she has made in life. This effort was largely panned by the press. Most thought the production was bland and the motivations of the characters tough to buy into. It features Josephine Langford, Hero Fiennes Tiffin, Selma Blair, Jennifer Beals and Peter Gallagher.

High Life - In this arthouse sci-fi drama, a mission to the outer reaches of the solar system hits a major issue when the craft crashes on an alien planet. Filled with convicts sent to repopulate the universe, the story focuses on a father and baby daughter who find themselves separated from the group and struggling to survive the strange elements. Reaction towards the film was positive. Reviewers largely thought the production design and cinematography were excellent and commented that they enjoyed the fact that this film didn't spell things out and left elements open to interpretation. The movie stars Robert Pattinson, Juliette Binoche, André Benjamin and Mia Goth.

I Like Me - An egocentric woman dealing with all sorts of family problems hits rock bottom. When she decides to write about her experiences, the book becomes an unexpected success, turning her into a popular self-empowerment guru who finds popularity with catchy catchphrases like, "Positivi-me." This independently produced comedy has played a few small festivals where it won an award or two, and will be premiering to most of us on DVD and Blu-ray. This means that there aren't any reviews for the feature and interested parties will have to use their personal intuition to determine whether it's the right flick for them. It features Sue Schaffel, Anna Fagan and Chris Kozlowski.

Little - A tech mogul known for her aggressive and bullying business technique is rude to a young magician, who wishes that the adult return to her childhood self. The kid's request works and the lead finds herself in the body of a youngster, complicating professional duties and forcing her to trust in her assistant's abilities. The press appeared to be divided on how effective this comedy was. Almost half wrote that the jokes and situations were fairly predictable, but thought the cast's work was endearing enough to earn it a pass. Slightly more complained that the movie wasn't as funny as it needed to be, was obvious in its themes, and even appeared to contradict some of its own messages. Regina Hall, Issa Rae, Marsai Martin and Tone Bell headline the movie.

Mojin: The Worm Valley - This Chinese adventure film is based on a series of novels and is a

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sequel of sorts to 2015's *Mojin: The Lost Legend* (albeit featuring a different cast this time out). It tells the story of a famous tomb explorer on a dangerous mission to locate the lost tomb of Emporer Xian. To get there, he and his compatriots must find an isolated island and then fight off all sorts of mystical creatures. The movie is making its debut on disc in this part of the world. One online review states that the movie is enjoyably goofy, while the other critiqued it for borrowing elements from other, better action pictures. It features Hang Cai, Xuan Gu and Taishen Cheng.

Outlaws - Set among a violent criminal biker organization, this picture details the difficulties faced by the gang's vice president. Essentially, after getting out of prison, he learns that the troupe is in the midst of a battle with rivals. He's forced to choose between following the orders of his superior, and breaking the rules in order to save his brother. The lead's actions result in a struggle for power within the gang. This is a low-budget Australian production that didn't receive a lot of love from reviewers in these parts. The cast includes Ryan Corr, Abbey Lee Kershaw, Matthew Nable and Simone Kessell.

Pet Sematary - Stephen King's disturbing bestseller gets an update with this new take on the famous novel. A man moves to a Maine university town with his family, only for tragedy to follow. When he hears about a nearby burial ground that can actually raise the dead, he decides to give it a try. Of course, the horrific results end up putting the entire family and friends in danger. The press was divided on the product, although it did garner a few more positive notices than negative ones. It stars Jason Clarke, Amy Seimetz and John Lithgow.

The Professor - A university professor and lecturer is forced to adapt to shocking news when he learns that he has only six months to live. With nothing to lose, the academic adopts a new, wild lifestyle. To the shock of his wife and work associates, the protagonist begins drinking, smoking and telling those around his honest feelings, winning over students in the process. Critics weren't all that thrilled by this comedy/drama. The majority believed that the script didn't probe its characters deeply enough and that it ultimately seemed superficial. Johnny Depp, Rosemarie DeWitt, Odessa Young, Danny Huston and Ron Livingston headline the film.

Shadows of Sofia - This documentary attempts to delve deeply into the world of Russian oligarchs and clandestine activities between those in power and underworld organizations. The filmmaker travels to Bulgaria and interviews a notorious banker who claims to handle the finances of the aforementioned oligarchs. The subject opens up about his dealings with a mob boss, as well as this individual's influence on various powerful politicians within the Kremlin and beyond. According to a synopsis of the feature, the documentarian reveals that most of Russia is under the control of the KGB and the "shadowy mob boss" featured. This non-fiction film is

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making its debut on disc.

Transit - This drama from German director Christian Petzold (*Phoenix*) involves a man trying to get out of Nazi-occupied France. To do so, he takes on the identity of a deceased writer. Things get complicated when the protagonist encounters the wife of the man whose identity he has stolen and begins to fall for her. Based on a 1944 novel, this foreign-language effort earned raves from film reviewers. Most called it an incredible accomplishment, filled with tension and despair, while noting that the tale itself still seemed to be very relevant in today's world. It stars Franz Rogowski, Paula Beer and Godehard Giese.

Blasts from the Past!

It's a busy week for many distributors of classic and older titles. Shout! Factory is getting the ball rolling with the western, *The Great Northfield Minnesota Raid* (1972). This hard-to-locate effort stars Robert Duvall and Cliff Robertson and details the story of the James-Younger gang; specifically, Jesse James and his crew's attempts to rob the biggest bank west of the Mississippi. The Blu-ray includes a new film historian audio commentary, an image gallery, and a trailer.

Video game fans might be excited to see a Collector's Edition Blu-ray of the horror flick, *Silent Hill* (2006). The plot involves a mother and daughter who pass through a strange portal into a horrifying town filled with grotesque monsters. It's a good-looking film, although one that didn't do much for me, personally. Still, it has earned plenty of devoted fans over the years.

They'll be happy to learn that the movie has been given a new DH master approved by the director. It also comes with a cinematographer audio commentary, trailer, recent interviews with the director, two cast members, a make-up effects artist, as well as a making-of, behind-the-scenes footage, a featurette and promotional materials.

Shout! has the sci-fi classic, *This Island Earth* (1955) on Blu-ray. It's about an atomic scientist trying to save the world from an alien invasion. This release presents a new 4K scan of the film inter-positive and presents the movie in both a 1.85:1 and 1.33:1 aspect ratio. Other new bonuses include the original Perspecta stereophonic soundtrack (along with facts about the

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sound design), a commentary with visual effects artist Robert Skotak, a film historian interview about the movie's importance, an interview with filmmaker Luigi Cozzi on his love for the film, a lengthy documentary about the production process,

War of the Planets

(a film reel released in 1958 presenting a 9 minute home version of the movie), multiple trailers for the flick (including a Joe Dante commentary via

Trailers From Hell

), and still galleries.

On a completely different note, they also have a Special Edition of the cheesy action picture, *The Annihilators*

(1985). The complete film has been given a 2K update and arrives with a new interview with the director and cast member Lawrence Hilton-Jacobs, as well as a comparison between the censored and uncensored UK versions of the film. You'll also get a trailer. The Anthony Perkins thriller,

The Champaign Murders

(1967) is receiving a high definition upgrade too, and this Blu-ray includes a film historian audio track, a Trailers from Hell look at the film with Tim Hunter and a trailer.

The next Special Edition title from Kino is a really incredible one for fright fans. *Dead of Night* (1945) was one of the first horror anthologies ever made and it remains one of the all time best. This British title features a group of characters at a country estate sharing some creepy personal experiences. Most of it is phenomenal, including a tale involving a ventriloquist and his very sinister dummy.

They are also putting out *Peter Pan* (1924) on Blu-ray. This live-action version of a play based on the James Barrie book was apparently a massive box office hit during its original release. The silent film has been given a 2K restoration from 35 mm elements and extras on the disc include a historian commentary, an interview with one of the stars, the orchestral score as a separate track, and an essay on the feature.

The '80s were a fascinating decade that spawned an incredible number of teen-related dramas, comedies and action films. *Tuff Turf* (1985) was one of the craziest and most over-the-top of its era, combining, well, all three to tell the story of a new kid at a California high school who ends up squaring off against a dangerous gang. The movie stars James Spader and Robert Downey Jr. and...it is utterly ridiculous. In fact, this is one of the weirdest and campiest '80s efforts that you'll find out there. This gloriously bizarre movie has gotten a new 2K master, and the Blu-ray also comes with a director audio commentary and trailer.

Andy Sidaris fans will find the company also updating a couple of his B-movie action favorites for Blu-ray. *Picasso Trigger* (1988) is about a trio of female agents assigned to take down a criminal mastermind. You'll get an all new 4K transfer by the American Genre Film Archive, presenting the film in widescreen for the first time ever. It also comes with an audio commentary, trailers and behind-the-scenes footage. *Savage Beach* (1989) boasts a similar plotline and similar disc extras. Expect a lot of big hair and ridiculous action. And Mill Creek is also putting out a Blu-ray of the made-for-TV movie and crime biography, *The Stranger Beside Me: The Ted Bundy Story* (2003)

On the Tube!

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

American Experience: Chasing the Moon (PBS)

Arthur Celebrates Community (PBS Kids)

Breakthrough: The Ideas That Changed the World (PBS)

Broad City: The Complete Series

Broad City: Season 5

Dr. K's Exotic Animal E.R.: Season 7

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Endeavour: The Complete Series

Forever Knight: The Complete Series

FRONTLINE: The Last Survivors (PBS)

FRONTLINE: Trump's Trade War (PBS)

Gotham: The Complete Series

Gotham: Season 5

Lonesome Dove (1989 Miniseries)

The Magicians: Season 4

Ready, Jet, Go!: One Small Step (PBS Kids)

Savage Kingdom - Narrated by Charles Dance: Season 3 (National Geographic)

The Stranger Beside Me: The Ted Bundy Story (2003) (TV movie)

Sun, Sand and Romance (Hallmark TV-movie)

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