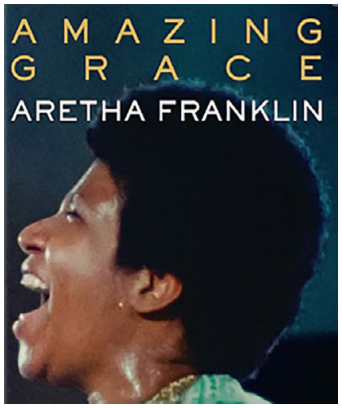
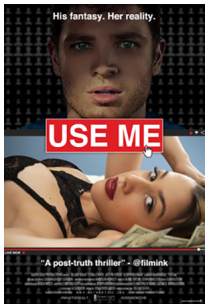
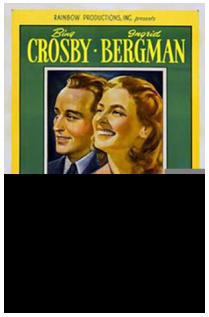

AMAZING GRACE
ARETHA FRANKLIN


DON'T LET GO


STAY OUT
STAY ALIVE


His fantasy. Her reality.
USE ME
"A post-truth thriller" - @filmink


PART MAN
PART MACHINE
ALL COP
ROBOCOP
THE FUTURE OF LAW ENFORCEMENT


RAINBOW PRODUCTIONS, INC. presents
Bing
CROSBY · BERGMAN
Ingrid


it's
all
about
women...
and
their
men!
"all about eve"
BETTE DAVIS
ANNE BAXTER
GEORGE SANDERS
CELESTE HOLM
ALL ABOUT EVE


Let Yourself Believe that Once Upon a Time
Good Prevailed Where Evil Existed and Puppets
Walked Without Strings...
Nutcracker Fantasy

The holidays may be here, but that doesn't mean there aren't plenty of new features arriving on Blu-ray and DVD. In fact, it's time for another look at some of the highlights coming your way. 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!

Amazing Grace - Using footage recording in 1972 of Aretha Franklin performing songs at the New Temple Missionary Baptist Church in L.A. from her best-selling gospel album, this documentary records incredible footage of the artist at the top of her game. Viewers witness her vocal chops and learn more about the legendary talent. The press appeared to be similarly blown away by what they saw. Only one complained that the movie didn't focus on the right elements. All others stated that discovering this previously lost footage (from an unfinished documentary), was a revelation and stood as one of the best concert films ever captured on camera.

Angel Has Fallen - The third chapter in this action trilogy follows the events of Olympus Has Fallen and London Has Fallen. This time out, heroic Secret Service agent Mike Banning is framed for an assassination plot on the President. With his employer in a coma and both criminal and government agents looking to take him down, the lead must prove his innocence and save the day. Critics weren't all that enamored with this effort.

About a third called it a decent action movie bolstered by some good action. Still, most suggested that this was an uneventful thriller with nothing new and noted that viewers wouldn't remember anything ten minutes after it ended. It stars Gerard Butler, Morgan Freeman, Jada Pinkett Smith, Lance Reddick, Tim Blake Nelson, Piper Perabo and Nick Nolte.

Christmas Survival - We're already being bombarded with holiday-themed releases on Blu-ray and DVD and this week sees yet another. Also known as *Surviving Christmas with the Relatives*, this movie is a comedy from the UK about two sisters and their families who are forced to spend Christmas at their late parents' dilapidated country home. Chaos follows as sibling rivalries and personal issues heat up. Response towards the picture was incredibly negative.

There currently aren't any positive write-ups. The consensus is that while the cast ise talented, the overall effect is generic, bland, and the movie simply doesn't deliver the required laughs. Gemma Whelan, Julian Ovenden, Joely Richardson and Michael Landes headline the feature.

Don't Let Go - A policeman's sister, brother-in-law, and niece die suddenly in what seems to be a murder. Devastated, the lead begins receiving frantic phone calls from his deceased niece, who appears to be calling from a time when she was still alive. This sends the protagonist on a strange and surreal search to try to change the horrible events that have transpired. The press gave this thriller mixed reviews.

A small group called the story absurd, but described it as an engaging and energetic effort with solid work from the lead performer. More complained that despite some interesting elements, the story didn't make much sense and fell apart as it stumbled forward. It stars David Oyelowo, Storm Reid, Mykelti Williamson and Alfred Molina.

Mary - In this independent horror effort, a blue-collar captain heads out to an auction and buys an abandoned ship. After taking it on the sea with his family, he realizes what a bad idea it all was. Strange and terrifying events begin plaguing the clan, causing them to turn on one another and question their own sanity. They even begin to believe that an evil force out at sea may be behind their troubles.

Critics really hated this picture, almost uniformly panning it. All of them wrote that while the movie looked well-produced, the story was a wreck, filled with clichés and provided little in the way of thrills or suspense. The cast includes Gary Oldman, Emily Mortimer, Jennifer Esposito, Stefanie Scott and Owen Teague.

Stay Out Stay Alive - Five young hikers head out into a redwood forest and come upon a mine in the wilderness that dates back to the Gold Rush. Well, more like one of them falls through a hole and ends up in a mine. Anyway, they set up camp and decide to investigate, hoping to find some riches. Unfortunately, the group begins seeing ghostly activity and starts acting strangely, becoming greedy and turning on one other as the tale progresses.

This little horror flick is debuting on disc and hasn't been screened for anyone yet. As such, one should exercise caution around this one. It features Barbara Crampton, William Romano-Pugh,

Brandon Wardle, Sage Mears, Christina July Kim and Brie Mattson.

Use Me - An aspiring documentary filmmaker meets a young woman whom he decides to use as a subject for a film. She works as a woman who humiliates men for money. Alas, she appears to be very good at her job, as the director starts to find himself feeling manipulated and pulled into her unusual and potentially dangerous world. This small indie feature earned a lot of good notices at film festivals.

While one or two write-ups suggested that it only worked as a mockumentary and struggled to make an impression otherwise, the consensus was that the writing was sharper than anticipated and the movie offered some surprises and good performances. Ceara Lynch, Julian Shaw and Jazlyn Yoder headline the film.

Where'd You Go, Bernadette - Based on the bestselling book by Maria Sample, this comedy follows a mom who begins to reconnect with her creative juices after sacrificing her life for many years to her husband and family. After numerous troubles and conflicts arise at home, she decides to step away and disappears, leaving her relatives to try to find her and come to a resolution about what should follow. This picture split the press.

About half thought that it didn't match the source material, oversimplifying the events and resolving things too quickly. Just as many commented that while uneven, the movie was interesting and featured a complex and fascinating protagonist. It stars Cate Blanchett, Billy Crudup, Kristin Wiig, Emma Nelson, James Urbaniak and Judy Greer.

Blasts from the Past!

It's an incredibly busy week for older films receiving high definition upgrades. Arrow Video is getting it all off to a great start with a new "Limited Edition" Blu-ray of the brilliant action classic, *Robocop*
(1987). The film is about a nice guy cop who is brutally wounded in the line of duty and repurposed as a cyborg cop. While that may sound like any other low-budget genre picture, this film is much sharper, featuring fantastic action and undercurrents and satire flowing throughout that addresses private companies and what happens when an employee is essentially turned into a corporate product.

It's one of the best movies of its era, and the new package certainly treats its as such. The release comes in a box and contains both the unrated and R-rated versions of the film scanned in 4K from the original camera negative. You'll get an audio commentary with director Paul Verhoeven (*The 4th Man*, *Total Recall*, *Starship Troopers*) along with two new tracks, one from a film historian and the other with fans. The release includes a new interview with co-writer Michael Miner, and another recent talk with the other co-writer, Ed Neumeier.

There are also new discussions with co-star Nancy Allen, as well as the casting director and the second unit director. You'll also get featurettes on the visual effects, Basil Paledouris's memorable score, a look at the props used, a 2017 Q&A with the director, writers and stars of the picture, as well as every archival special feature from every previously released version. This is the perfect package for a perfect action film.

Going My Way, starring Bing Crosby, was the highest grossing film of 1944 and earned its star an Academy Award. This week, Oliver Films is presenting the sequel, *The Bells of St. Mary's* (1945) as a Signature Release Blu-ray. The follow-up follows the same unconventional priest from the original as he attempts to help save and help an inner-city school (and sing a few songs as he does so). In addition to improved picture quality for its hi-def premiere, this disc includes a film critic essay on the picture.

Criterion has two classics coming to Blu-ray. *All About Eve* (1950) is about a Broadway legend who discovers that she's being used by an up and coming starlet. It stars Bette Davis. The film has been given a 4K digital restoration and comes with two audio commentaries, a feature-length documentary about the director, episodes of *The Dick Cavett Show* from 1969 and 1980 with the cast, an interview with a costume historian about the duds in this movie, a 2001 documentary about the making of the film, a radio adaptation of the picture from 1951 and promotion for the title featuring Davis.

I'll be honest and say that I completely missed the Japanese animated feature *Nutcracker Fantasy* (1979) during its original release. It presents the story of a girl who finds herself transported into a magical realm with living toys. Discotek Media is releasing this title on Blu-ray and presenting both the Japanese version with English subtitles and the English dub with a remarkable voice cast that includes Michele Lee, Melissa Gilbert, Christopher Lee, Roddy McDowell and Eva

Gabor.

Distrib Films is putting out the French drama *Olivia* (1951) in high definition. And ClassicFlix is about to make the comedy, *Out of the Blue* (1947) available. It's about a mild-mannered married man who innocently befriends a woman while his wife is out of town. When she passes out at his home, he thinks she might have died and tries to cover up the incident to avoid trouble, but finds his actions get him in over his head. It arrives with trailers for other releases from the company.

And Warner Archive is putting out a made-to-order Blu-ray of the Virginia May/Robert Stack adventure flick, *Great Day in the Morning* (1956), which can be ordered through its website or on Amazon (if it's in stock).

You Know, For Kids!

Here are some kid-friendly releases coming out this week.

Nutcracker Fantasy (1979)

The Pink Panther Cartoon Collection: Volume 6 (1978 – 1980)

On the Tube!

And here are some TV-themed highlights arriving on store shelves.

American Masters: N. Scott Momaday: Words from a Bear (PBS)

Blindspot: Season 4

Coincoin and the Extra Humans (French TV mini-series)

Line of Duty: Series 1 - 5 Collection

London Kills: Series 2

Masterpiece: The Chaperone (PBS)

Mystery Science Theater 3000: Season 12 - *The Gauntlet*

The Pink Panther Cartoon Collection: Volume 6 (1978 - 1980)

The Returned: Season 2

Wild Metropolis (PBS)

By Glenn Kay
For the Sun