

Blu-ray/DVD Roundup for August 28, 2020

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Welcome back to another look at some of the highlights arriving on Blu-ray and DVD. There's a solid mix this week of big features, independent titles and documentaries. So, since you likely can't make it out to the movies this week, be sure to give one of these titles a try!

BIG NEW RELEASES!

ATYPICAL WEDNESDAY: A man goes to visit his therapist for a weekly meeting. While there, he encounters a young boy at the institute who has been accidentally "left behind" and needs to get home. The lead decides to help the boy out and their journey takes them across town, where they run into various people in Gabe's troubled life. The kid starts making observations about the protagonist, which results in some treatment sessions on the fly.

This comedy/drama has recently received an internet and disc release so there aren't many reviews for it yet. One critical review that appeared suggests that there are some funny moments, but that the dramatic moments aren't as effective. It stars J. Lee, Cooper J. Friedman, Emmy Raver-Lampman, Michael Ealy, Seth Green, Sujata Day and Bresha Webb.

THE KING OF STATEN ISLAND: One of the first high profile Hollywood titles to debut online after the pandemic outbreak is the Universal comedy/drama. It details the life of a man whose firefighter dad dies and leaves him psychologically scarred. Now in his mid-20s, living at home with his mom and possessing little ambition or drive, a series of new events forces him to grapple with his issues and move forward. The press generally liked what they saw.

A smaller group didn't think it balanced the comedy and drama very well and took too long to get to the heart of the story. Still, most thought that while it took some time to build momentum, the supporting cast was funny and the movie ended on a strong and compelling note. It stars Pete Davidson, Marisa Tomei, Bill Burr, Bel Powley, Maude Apatow and Steve Buscemi.

THE BURNT ORANGE HERESY: This neo-noir thriller is set in Italy and follows a charming art critic who falls for a visiting American with a mysterious background. The pair head to Lake Como where a powerful and wealthy art collector makes them a very strange offer that is difficult to pass up. They are asked to befriend and steal a painting from a reclusive artist. The leads ingratiate themselves with the artist, but as the plan progresses both begin to suspect that things aren't as they seem.

This effort scored generally favorable reviews from critics. About a third of them complained that the movie wasn't exciting and that they found the plot twists implausible. However, the majority stated that while low-key, it was impressively shot, entertaining and ended on a high note. The cast includes Elizabeth Debicki, Claes Bang, Donald Sutherland and Mick Jagger.

FULCI FOR FAKE: This picture is described as the first ever biopic of Italian horror filmmaker Lucio Fulci (most famously known for *Zombie*, *City of the Living Dead*, *The Beyond* and

The House by the Cemetery

, although he worked in other genres as well), which purports to tell the story of the moviemaker and includes never-before-seen footage, photos and interviews with many genre figures from Italy like Antonella Fulci, Fabio Frizzi, Sergio Salvati and Michele Soavi. There haven't been many reviews for the picture yet, but the ones that have appeared from genre critics have been upbeat. A few of them describe it as essential viewing for those who love Italian horror cinema of the '70s and '80s and suggest that it provides a detailed overview of the man's career with discussions and interpretations of his pictures by many of those who worked with him.

DEEP BLUE SEA 3: The surprise 1999 killer shark hit film *Deep Blue Sea* spawned a straight-to-DVD sequel a couple of years ago and now a second follow-up has been made for the home market. This time out, a group of scientists studying climate change off the coast of Mozambique encounter more super-intelligent sharks. Naturally, the heroes have to use their brains to avoid being devoured. Surprisingly, more members of the press liked the flick so far than have disliked it.

Those who panned it said that it was an improvement over the previous installment, but still didn't offer enough to justify its existence. Still, most have said that the talent behind the camera (the writer/director who also helmed *The Quiet Ones*) elevates it over other recent shark movies and that it delivers some B-movie thrills. It features Tania Raymonde and Nathaniel Buzolic.

GORDON LIGHTFOOT: IF YOU COULD READ MY MIND: Famous Canadian

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singer/songwriter Gordon Lightfoot is the subject of this documentary. It explores the life, career, music and influence of the legendary performer responsible for tracks like *If You Could*

Read My Mind, Sundown, Carefree Highway, The Wreck of the Edmund Fitzgerald and numerous others). It also catches up with the 81-year-old, who continues to perform to this day. Notices were generally excellent.

One or two write-ups were from those who didn't care for the performer and, as such, weren't very interested in the movie. However, almost all others thought that this was simple and straightforward, and an enjoyable and finely delivered overview of an incredible performer. For now, this title is being released on DVD only. Besides Lightfoot himself, it also features Sarah McLachlan, Steve Earle, Anne Murray and Alec Baldwin.

IN MY ROOM: This eccentric foreign-language feature from Germany is about an aging bachelor unhappy with his life, but unwilling or unable to change anything in it. When he wakes up the following morning, he's shocked to discover that almost every human being on the planet has completely disappeared. Not knowing how or why any of this happened, the man is forced into coming to terms with his issues and starting fresh. The picture was nominated for plenty of awards at various European film festivals and earned the praise of critics.

A few couldn't relate to the lead character and needed a more detailed explanation of why the event occurred. However, the consensus was a fascinating slow-burn of a movie with plenty of atmosphere and ideas to contemplate. Hans Löw and Elena Radonicich headline the film. Presently, it is only available on DVD.

THE TOBACCONIST: This Austria/Germany co-production is based on a bestselling novel by Robert Seethaler. Set in the late 1930s, the plot involves a 17-year-old who moves from the country to Vienna in order to apprentice at a tobacco shop. He soon becomes close friends with customer and psychoanalysis founder Sigmund Freud. When Nazi forces arrive and occupy the country, the two discuss their next move and whether to stay or flee Austria.

Reaction was generally positive toward this historical drama. Those who disliked it said it was certainly well-shot and performed, but thought the screenplay simplified the historical events too much, leaving the picture feeling a little run-of-the-mill. However, more were impressed by the understated work of the actors and believed that they were enjoyable to watch. It features Simon Morzé, Bruno Ganz and Johannes Krisch.

ONE NIGHT IN BANGKOK: This action picture begins with a hitman arriving in Bangkok on assignment. He hires a driver who soon realizes the trouble she's gotten into after the body count starts. But of course, she can't escape the killer's reach. As it turns out, he's seeking revenge on other baddies who caused the death of his wife and child.

When a sharp detective ends up on their trail, more conflicts arise and a battle of fists and wits ensues with the driver pulled right into the middle of the fracas. There isn't any information currently available about this independent effort, so there is no critical consensus about the movie's quality. Interested parties will have to go in cold. The movie is directed by Wych Kaos (*Ballistic: Ecks vs. Sever*) and features Mark Dacascos, Vanida Golten, Prinya Intachai and Kane Kosugi.

THE TRIP TO GREECE: For those unfamiliar with this title, this UK production from Michael Winterbottom (*Welcome to Sarajevo, 24 Hour Party People*) is actually a TV series in its homeland. The plot involves fictionalized versions of actors Steve Coogan and Rob Brydon doing restaurant tours, reviewing cuisine and discussing their own personal issues with one another during the journey. Each season has been edited down into a feature-length movie for international audiences. This release marks the fourth and final film (or series, if you've been watching the UK TV show) as the characters eat in Greece and try to sort out their complicated lives.

Like the other pictures, this understated comedy received high marks from the press. One or

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two have still expressed issues with the improvised talks and loose narrative structure. All others said that the bickering between the leads was endlessly amusing and hoped the pair might return to the franchise at some point in the future.

BLASTS FROM THE PAST!

This is a particularly busy week for older flicks receiving high definition upgrades. Arrow Video gets the ball rolling with a Special Edition Blu-ray of *The Comic* (1985), a UK horror/sci-fi flick about a struggling stand-up comedian who starts murdering his competition to rise through the ranks of talent and become a star. Described as a bizarre and at times baffling '80s cinematic oddity, it certainly sounds like the kind of flick that needed some time to find its audience. The distributor is providing a new 2K restoration of the movie from the original camera negative and has included a newly filmed interview and introduction to the flick with the director.

Kino is releasing *Hollywoodland* (2006) on Blu-ray. This biopic deals with the unsolved murder of George Reeves (who played Superman in the 1950s TV-series). It's a well-regarded drama with a great cast including Ben Affleck, Adrian Brody, Diane Lane, Bob Hoskins and many others. This one comes loaded with bonuses, including a new entertainment journalist commentary discussing the film and real-life crime, an archived director commentary, numerous featurettes on the production, deleted scenes and a trailer.

If you enjoy Japanese animated features, you'll be excited to learn that Shout! is presenting special Steelbooks of two Studio Ghibli Hayao Miyazaki classics. Those titles are *Kiki's Delivery Service* (1989) and *Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind* (1984). Features like audio commentaries and storyboards will be the same as with previous editions, so this release is really more about the collectable packaging.

They are also putting out a Collector's Edition of the horror anthology, *Tales from the Darkside: The Movie* (1990). This trilogy features all sorts of spooky creatures. If memory serves, the first segment featuring a

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mummy stars Christian Slater and features Julianne Moore and Steve Buscemi in supporting roles. This release includes a new commentary with co-producer David R. Kappes.

Additionally, there's an archived commentary that includes the director with co-screenwriter George Romero. You'll also get a new feature-length documentary on the making of the film including interviews with the director, make-up team, producer, director of photography, editor and cast members James Remar and Rae Dawn Chong. It also comes with a wealth of publicity materials and behind-the-scenes material.

You can also pick up their latest genre film box set, the *Universal Horror Collection: Volume 6*. This one contains

The Black Castle

(1952),

Cult of the Cobra

(1955),

The Thing That Couldn't Die

(1958) and

The Shadow of the Cat

(1961).

The Beast Must Die! (1974) is an entertaining little Amicus horror flick from the UK about a series of murders at a large estate that have been committed by a werewolf. It's something of a mystery film in which the guests have to determine which of them is responsible for the killings. The flick is also famous for having a thirty-second break during the climax with a ticking clock, in which you can process the evidence and discuss with your friends who *you* think is the monster before the final reveal. The movie has received a 4K restoration and comes with a director commentary, an archival interview with the filmmaker, additional discussions with crew members and a trailer with an optional genre scholar track.

Flicker Alley is putting out a Blu-ray of the Austrian silent feature *The City Without Jews* (1924). This remarkable picture tells a story about an antisemitic metropolis removing all Jewish citizens from the population and suffering as a consequence. According to reports, it depicts a shocking forecast of what happened in Europe shortly after the movie was released. All copies of the movie itself were thought to have been destroyed by the Nazis after their rise to power.

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A few bits and pieces were located, for the most part the film was believed to have been lost. Yet nearly a century after its release, a complete nitrate print of the film was found in 2015 at a Parisian flea market. In addition to the movie, this release includes numerous discussions with historians about the importance of the film and its rediscovery.

Finally, Warner Archive has three more made-to-order Blu-ray selections. They include the romance/war picture *The Big Parade* (1925) as well as two Spencer Tracy/Katharine Hepburn rom-coms, *Pat and Mike* (1952) and *Without Love* (1945).

YOU KNOW, FOR KIDS!

It's a quiet week for kid's entertainment, but there is one release featuring a famous Looney Tunes character.

Taz-Mania: Season 3 (Warner Archive)

ON THE TUBE!

Here is a selection of TV-themed releases.

Chicago Fire: Season 8

Chicago Med: Season 5

Dead Still: Season 1

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Endeavour: Season 7

The Flash: Season 6

SEAL Team: Season 3

Strike Back: Season 7 - Final Season (Warner Archive)

Taz-Mania: Season 3 (Warner Archive)

Washington (History Channel Biopic)

VISIT: WWW.CINEMASTANCE.COM

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