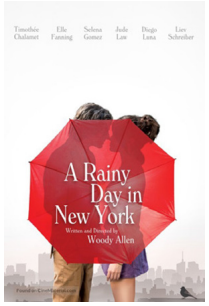
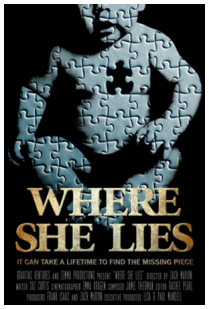

DAVE
NOT
COMING
BACK


A FILM BY ANCA DAMIAN
MARONA'S
FANTASTIC
TALE


MULAN
Disney+


A Rainy
Day in
New York
Woody Allen





Welcome back to an extraordinarily busy column detailing the latest highlights arriving on Blu-ray and DVD. There are several big movies arriving, as well as some well-received smaller features and older titles that have been given high definition upgrades. So, since you can't or likely shouldn't go out to the movies this week, be sure to give one of these titles a try!

BIG NEW RELEASES!

BOOK OF MONSTERS: A young woman's 18th birthday goes off the rails when she holds a party just as monstrous creatures begin to descend on her house. The teenage protagonist and

her guests must fight the invaders off before they get devoured. This low-budget UK production got some decent reviews from the press. There were a few who complained that the story was too simple and that the characters weren't very distinctive and that the script could have developed them further.

However, most stated that the movie exuded a nostalgic '80s vibe with some gooey practical creature effects and described it as a reasonably entertaining and funny B-movie with its tongue planted firmly in its cheek. The movie is also available on Amazon Prime and features Lyndsey Craine, Michaela Longden, Lizzie Aaryn-Stanton and Daniel Thrace.

DAVE NOT COMING BACK: Deep-water scuba diving is the subject of this documentary — specifically, two men obsessed with the sport. This pair became known for breaking a depth-diving record in 1994 by reaching the bottom of a South African cave called Boesmansgat. It seems that while completing the incredible task years ago, the pair noted a body resting on the floor of the underwater cave. This feature tells how, decades later, they assembled a team to repeat the dangerous dive and retrieve the person … as well as the tragedy that followed.

This feature appears to be premiering on disc and on streaming platforms this week, so reviews will likely appear in the coming days. A few articles have appeared in other countries, which are positive and suggest it has a chilling ending.

MARONA'S FANTASTIC TALE: A mixed-breed dog with a big heart is hit by a car at the beginning of this animated co-production from France, Romania and Belgium. As she lies on the ground wounded and alone, her mind takes her through several important memories from her long life. We see the various owners she has loved and individual moments of happiness and joy as the dog struggles to hang on to life. While it probably isn't light entertainment for kids, the feature did receive excellent marks from the press.

One reviewer did complain about the trippy, psychedelic visuals and couldn't engage with the story as a result. All others stated that this was a unique and heartfelt movie with incredible images that would also tug at the heartstrings and ultimately make an emotional impact.

MULAN: With little notice, it appears that Disney has announced the Blu-ray and DVD release of their recent live-action remake of the hugely popular animated film (the movie has also been on the Disney+ streaming service for a few months now). The story follows a young woman in China who disguises herself as a male warrior in the hopes of saving her ailing father from being drafted into the military. She soon finds herself battling invaders and trying to saving her country. Reaction toward the feature was reasonable, but unexceptional.

Many members of the press called it an impressive-to-look-at, but watered-down retelling that was dramatically stiff and, in the end, forgettable. Still, the majority said that while all of the elements may not have come together perfectly, it was still an impressive spectacle that would please families. It stars Yifei Liu, Donnie Yen, Li Gong, Jet Li and Jason Scott Lee.

A RAINY DAY IN NEW YORK: The latest from writer/director Woody Allen involves a pair of college students who decide to head out to Manhattan for the day. One of them is interviewing a famous film director for her school paper, while her boyfriend hopes to show his girlfriend around town, gamble a bit and try to avoid his family. Nothing goes according to plan. The two get separated and both end up having different experiences in the city.

This comedic effort received middling reviews from critics. Roughly half of them admitted it wasn't one of the filmmaker's best, but was still an engaging confection with a few amusing scenes. Just as many didn't think that the casting and onscreen chemistry worked, and suggested the movie didn't reach the heights of other Allen titles. Timothée Chalamet, Elle Fanning, Liev Schreiber, Selena Gomez, Jude Law, Rebecca Hall and Diego Luna headline the feature.

WHERE SHE LIES: This documentary tells the story of a woman in Tennessee who was assaulted when she was young. After giving birth to a child, the new mother was ultimately informed that the baby was stillborn. Decades later, the woman's mother gives a strange deathbed confession that contradicts everything. It soon becomes clear that this infant may have, in fact, not passed away, and was instead given up for adoption.

The filmmakers follow their subject as she attempts to get the full story, come to terms with what happened and decide whether or not she should try to contact her offspring. This movie is being released on disc and on streaming platforms at the same time. As a result, no one has seen it yet and there is no consensus on the quality of this documentary.

BLASTS FROM THE PAST!

Kino is debuting some remarkable titles on Blu-ray, too. Back in the days of VHS, a really popular cult flick was *Amazon Women on the Moon* (1987) a wild and raunchy comedy featuring loads of sketches inspired by programs you might see on late-night TV. It was not a success during its initial release, but quickly developed a cult following due to some standout bits, including "Mondo Condo" which features Arsenio Hall being attacked by his own condominium, "Son of the Invisible Man" (a comedic sequel to the horror classic), a hilarious show posing ridiculous solutions to unsolved mysteries called "Bullshit or Not?" as well as "Reckless Youth" which recreates social hygiene films from the 1930s. The character of Don "No Soul" Simmons, who appears throughout, also stands out as a highlight.

Full Moon Features is a little independent outfit created by Charles Band. For several decades, it has been producing and releasing features (including the *Puppet Master* series, which has a new release this week). They're upgrading many of their classic titles to Blu-ray with special VHS Retro Packaging. These discs all cost less than $10 too, making them appealing to anyone who remembers these genre flicks.

The titles arriving this week are *Tourist Trap* (1979), the comedy *Cannibal Women in the Avocado Jungle of Death*
(1989),
Creepozoids
(1987),

Dark Angel: The Ascent
(1994),
Laserblast
(1978),
Meridian
(1990),
Slave Girls from Beyond Infinity
(1987),
Sorority Babes in the Slimeball Bowl-o-rama
(1988) and
Robot Wars
(1993).

YOU KNOW, FOR KIDS!

Here are some new features that might impress youngsters.

Molly of Denali: Molly's Awesome Alaskan Adventure (PBS Kids)

PAW Patrol: PUP-tastic! 8-DVD Collection

Sesame Street: Old School Volume 1 (1969 - 1974)

Sesame Street: Old School Volume 2 (1974 - 1979)

ON THE TUBE!

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

The Christmas Club (Hallmark TV-movie)

Dark/Web: Season 1

A Godwink Christmas: Meant for Love (Hallmark TV-Movie)

Entertaining Christmas (Hallmark TV-Movie)

Holiday for Heroes (Hallmark TV-Movie)

The Last Dance (ESPN TV-Miniseries about the Chicago Bulls)

Letterkenny: Seasons 5 & 6

Molly of Denali: Molly's Awesome Alaskan Adventure (PBS Kids)

Monty Python's Flying Circus: Series 1 - 4 (1969 - 1974)

The Office: The Complete Series (2005 - 2013)

Our Christmas Love Song (Hallmark TV-movie)

PAW Patrol: PUP-tastic! 8-DVD Collection

Schitt's Creek: The Complete Collection

Sesame Street: Old School Volume 1 (1969 - 1974)

Sesame Street: Old School Volume 2 (1974 - 1979)

The Trouble with Maggie Cole (PBS)

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By Glenn Kay
For the Sun