

Blu-ray/DVD Roundup for January 22, 2021

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Welcome back to another look at highlights coming your way on Blu-ray and DVD. Despite it being the middle of January, it's a remarkably busy edition with plenty of notable flicks. So, since you can't or likely shouldn't head out to the movies this week, be sure to give one of these titles a try.

BIG NEW RELEASES!

ASSASSINS: This documentary details the death of North Korean leader Kim Jong Un's brother. The sibling was murdered in a crowded Malaysian airport, causing a media frenzy and

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all sorts of speculation about what occurred. Eventually, two young women at the scene were investigated and charged with murder. The filmmakers attempt to determine whether they were the killers or pawns in a more elaborate scheme.

This film received plenty of raves from the press. In fact, every write-up about it has been positive. The consensus is that the story itself is remarkable and the moviemakers uncover some incredible details about the event that will keep viewers captivated throughout. As of right now, the documentary is being released exclusively on DVD.

A Blu-ray will hopefully follow in the coming months.

THE CLIMB: A man decides to make a horrible confession to his best friend while biking with him in the mountains. Only days before his pal ties the knot, he admits that he recently had an affair with his pal's bride. Naturally, everything falls apart, including the mens' relationship. Some time later, the two damaged men are reunited and try to mend fences.

But when the broken-hearted groom announces he's marrying a new woman, the protagonist begins to cause even more friction. The press really enjoyed this independent feature. A small group found these self-destructive men frustrating to watch and didn't appreciate the film's humor. However, the majority liked the cast and were amused by the twisted bromance on display.

The flick is currently arriving on DVD only, but hopefully a Blu-ray will also appear in the coming months. The cast includes Michael Angelo Covino, Kyle Marvin and Gayle Rankin.

HEARTS AND BONES: A war zone photographer is the focus of this Australian drama. While

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back at home prepping a public retrospective of his work, he is approached by a happily married Sudanese refugee. The visitor asks that the protagonist not include images from a massacre that occurred in his home town 15 years earlier. A friendship forms, but the relationship is challenged when the journalist makes a shocking discovery.

Notices were good for the feature. One or two found it too low-key for their liking. However, most stated that this was a well-acted and engaging drama. They noted that while it wasn't perfect, the movie took a personal approach to the refugee crisis and helped paint a picture of the challenges some immigrants go through. The cast includes Hugo Weaving, Andrew Luri and Hayley McElhinney.

MARTIN EDEN: The well-regarded novel by Jack London about social classes gets a new and unique adaptation in this foreign-language feature. It shifts the story from the U.S. to Italy and follows a young working man who yearns to be a writer. Despite being from a lower-class background, he decides to educate himself and fight against the rigid system that oppresses him. However, after finding success, his actions begin to come into conflict with his original ideals.

The press was very taken with this period drama. There was a group who didn't like the changes from the source material and were confused by the ideas being communicated. Still, the vast majority were engrossed by the lead actor's performance and called it a passionate and ambitious film ... that may find itself being rewarded with an Oscar nomination for Best International Feature. The cast includes Luca Marinelli, Jessica Cressy and Marco Leonardi.

MISS JUNETEENTH: This tale follows a former beauty queen and single mom with a rebellious teenager. When the daughter decides to enter the town's beauty pageant, her mother attempts to prepare her for the competition. Conflict arises between the two as the parent shares her feelings, not just about the big night, but also about her own regrets and frustrations in life. The press responded positively toward this low-key drama.

They really liked the performances, felt that the movie addressed a great many issues and added credibility to the story by avoiding any easy or simple solutions for the characters. This picture is being released on DVD exclusively, but perhaps a Blu-ray will follow in the coming months. It stars Nicole Beharie, Kendrick Sampson, Alexis Chikaeze and Lori Hayes.

ROLLING THUNDER REVIEW: A BOB DYLAN STORY BY MARTIN SCORSESE: Back in 1975, Bob Dylan began what became one of his most iconic tours. The artist set out to play more intimate venues in smaller towns. He devised an elaborate stage show with his opening acts that created a carnival atmosphere at every stop. Using rare archival footage, interviews and other editing tricks, filmmaker Martin Scorsese (*Raging Bull*

,
Goodfellas

,
The Aviator

,
The Irishman

) tells the story behind this famous series of shows.

The documentary hit theaters back in 2019 and is now debuting on Blu-ray courtesy of Criterion (it also comes loaded with extras for those who enjoy bonus features). Notices for the picture were excellent, calling the movie brilliantly edited and stating that it effortlessly showcases the onstage charisma of Dylan and just how amazing the tour was.

BLASTS FROM THE PAST!

Shout! Factory is going back into its vaults to re-release some of its most popular titles in 4K Blu-ray. This week, it's giving John Carpenter's *Prince of Darkness* (1987) and *They Live* (1988) an updated image using the highest possible resolution. The first movie is about PhD students investigating a canister hidden in the basement of a church that may contain Satan himself. And the second flick involves a working man who discovers that the upper classes are actually aliens who are running the world.

Universal Pictures is releasing a group of older Blu-rays that have gone out-of-print or needed a repressing. A wide variety of titles in various genres is being made available again at discounted prices. The titles being offered this week include *Battleship* (2012), *Casper* (1995), *Dracula Untold* (2014), *Glass* (2019), *Homefront* (2013), *Mile 22* (2018), *Mortal Engines* (2018), *Skyscraper* (2018), *Slap Shot* (1977) and *Triple 9* (2016). For those interested, *Slapshot* may be the highlight of the bunch.

It's arguably the best hockey flick ever made and one of the best sports comedies that you're ever likely to see. The feature stars Paul Newman and Michael Ontkean.

YOU KNOW, FOR KIDS!

Here are some new releases for the kids.

Charlie's Colorforms City: Meet Charlie! (Netflix)

Floogals: Season 1

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PAW Patrol: Rubble on the Double (Nickelodeon)

Scooby-Doo and Guess Who? Season 1

ON THE TUBE!

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

Bartender: Season 1 (2006 Japanese Anime)

Driving While Black: Race, Space and Mobility in America (PBS)

Floogals: Season 1

NOVA: Can We Cool the Planet? (PBS)

Scooby-Doo and Guess Who? Season 1

VISIT: WWW.CINEMASTANCE.COM

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