

Written by gallupsun
Thursday, 18 March 2021 17:45

By Glenn Kay

For the Sun

Welcome back to another look at new releases arriving on Blu-ray and DVD. There are a lot genre flicks coming your way, as well as one big Academy Award contender. So, since you can't, or likely shouldn't be going out to the movies this week, be sure to give one of these titles a try!

BIG NEW RELEASES!

CastleFreak.jpg

CASTLE FREAK: Horror fans might remember the original 1995 cult flick *Castle Freak*, which was written and directed by late, great genre film veteran Stuart Gordon (*Re-Animator*

,
From Beyond

,
Fortress

,
Stuck

). This remake was actually produced by the co-star of the original film. It is set in Albania and follows a blind woman who inherits a mysterious castle in a small town. After arriving, she begins to believe that there may be a disturbed and dangerous figure living somewhere on site. So far, reviewers have been reasonably positive about this reimagining.

A small contingent called it a sleazy update that didn't work as effectively as the original. However, more suggested that it was well-acted and delivered the required jolts. The cast includes Clair Catherine, Kika Magalhães, Jake Horowitz and Emily Sweet.

Written by gallupsun
Thursday, 18 March 2021 17:45

DARK WEB:CICADA 3301: In this independent cyber-thriller, a genius hacker discovers an incredible online treasure hunt. He teams up with his best friend and a cunning librarian to win the competition, but the trio soon begins to realize that the event itself is a recruitment tool for a secret and sinister society. The three find their lives in great danger as they try to evade these evil forces from the dark web. There aren't a lot of notices out there for the flick at present.

One that did appear online suggested the feature was fun if you didn't take it very seriously. But another stated it was all preposterous and laughable, and that the hacker talk was equally ridiculous. It stars Jack Kesy, Conor Leslie, Ron Funches and Alan Ritchson.

DON'T TELL A SOUL: Two teenage brothers decide to steal some money in order to help their ailing mother. They take more than \$12,000 dollars and a security officer pursues the pair, only to fall into a well. Alone and trapped at the bottom of the pit, the guard attempts to convince the kids to trust him and help get him out. This dangerous choice leaves the youths pondering their next move.

Overall, reaction was positive toward this indie thriller. A group thought it was too grim and didn't find that any of the characters were sympathetic. Still, slightly more believed that the movie was a lean and effectively disturbing effort that benefited from a solid concept and some unexpected shocks. It stars Fionn Whitehead, Jack Dylan Grazer, Mena Suvari and Rainn Wilson.

I AM LISA: A nasty small-town sheriff with a sadistic streak decides to torment a young teenager. She ultimately wounds the youngster and leaves her for dead in the forest. While alone, the kid is bitten by a werewolf. She soon has supernatural powers and a score to settle. But can she adapt to her new, staggering powers and keep her homicidal tendencies under control?

This low-budget horror flick was well-received by genre film critics and bloggers. A few complained that the film couldn't settle on a proper tone, veering between drama and camp and ultimately failed to successfully deliver either. Still, the majority commented that it was fun and that the engaging cast and make-up effects made up for the movie's budgetary issues. Kristen Vaganos, Jennifer Seward, Manon Halliburton and Carmen Anello headline the feature.

ILoveMyMum.jpg

I LOVE MY MUM: In this independent comedy from the UK, a mother and her teenage son struggle with a rocky relationship. After a strange series of events, they get themselves locked in a shipping container. When the doors open, they find themselves in Morocco. Dressed only in their pajamas and with little money or identification, they must find their way back to London, encountering all sorts of strange situations as they try to make their way home.

There aren't many reviews currently available for this title and the ones that have appeared online aren't exemplary. Apparently, write-ups have suggested that most of the gags don't work and the movie feels like a series of sketches that have been hastily thrown together. It features Kierston Wareing, Tommy French, Aida Folch and Dominique Pinon.

KONGA TNT : Looking for something completely ridiculous? This very low-budget independent feature is a monster movie about a lab gorilla who is injected with a strange serum from an alien spaceship. The ape escapes and finds shelter with two kids. After befriending the primate, the pair begin to witness it grow to an immense size.

These kids try to protect the giant but friendly animal from a military general who wants to eliminate the threat. This title is premiering on DVD only and right now there are no notices available for the feature. However, it comes from the director of *Ouija Shark*, *Ghastlies* and *Raiders of the Lost Shark*, so you should expect an intentionally cheesy flick emphasizing laughs over horror. It stars John Migliore, Chance Kelly and Grayson Kelly.

MONEY PLANE: Speaking of so-bad-it's-good entertainment, this low-budget action flick may fall under this heading. The plot follows a professional thief and his team of agents. The group is hired by a demented millionaire who pays them to steal a priceless work of art. However, the hero soon discovers that he has been set up.

With the lives of his wife and daughter at risk, he and his group must steal money from wagering criminals on a bizarre airline casino. Word on this picture is generally negative. Those who recommended the feature stated that it's intentionally bad, provides plenty of laughs and qualifies as a guilty pleasure. Still, most thought it was terribly put-together and made no sense

Written by gallupsun
Thursday, 18 March 2021 17:45

from beginning to end.

The cast includes Adam Copeland, Kelsey Grammer, Thomas Jane, Denise Richards, Katrina Norman, Patrick Lamont Jr. and Joey Lawrence.

PG: PSYCHO GOREMAN: Also known simply as *Psycho Goreman*, this genre flick is made in the spirit of weird and wild independent flicks. The plot follows a pair of small-town kids who find an ancient gem and resurrect an alien overlord who wants to take over the universe. Violence ensues, with more creatures arriving from outer space to do battle. The children soon get themselves involved in the bloodletting.

Perhaps surprisingly, response was very upbeat toward this feature. A small number of critics called it disgusting to watch and unfunny because of its tone. Yet the vast majority wrote that the picture was enjoyably over-the-top and also suggested that it was so insane, it may very well become a low-budget cult classic. It features Nita-Josee Hanna, Owen Myre and Matthew Ninaber.

Pinocchio.jpg

PINOCCHIO: This title was scheduled to be released two weeks ago, but was delayed at the last minute. The tale of a wooden puppet that comes to life is retold in this Italian production. The protagonist, who wants to be a real boy, travels and gets mixed up with bandits and other nefarious types as he attempts to turn his dreams into reality. In 2002, Roberto Benigni starred in another Italian adaptation as the title character.

The movie was well regarded in its homeland, but its North American release suffered from atrocious English dubbing and flopped. This time out, the actor plays puppeteer Geppetto and the distributor has avoided trying to rerecord the dialogue into English. Notices were quite strong for the film. A few couldn't connect with the wooden protagonist.

However, all others said that despite a few bumps in the road, the movie was compelling, beautifully shot, and managed to tell the familiar story in an original manner. The movie was

Written by gallupsun
Thursday, 18 March 2021 17:45

nominated this week for two Academy Awards for make-up and costume design. The cast includes Federico Ielapi, Rocco Papaleo, Massimo Ceccherini and Marine Vauth.

Promisingyoungwoman.jpg

PROMISING YOUNG WOMAN: This dark comedy/drama tells the story of a 30-year-old med-school drop-out who lives with her parents. It is revealed that a horrific crime involving her best friend from university has inspired her to take revenge on male predators. She then targets those directly involved in the incident that scarred her, but questions her own actions after reconnecting with an old acquaintance. Reaction toward the feature was extremely positive and the movie earned several Academy Award nominations.

A few thought the end results were misanthropic and manipulative. But everyone else stated that the lead performance was fantastic and called the movie a clever and effective revenge story with a modern spin. It stars Carey Mulligan, Bo Burnham, Clancy Brown, Jennifer Coolidge, Laverne Cox, Molly Shannon, Alison Brie and Connie Britton.

SOMEDAY ISLES: Sometimes movies arrive with very little press or information available about them. Such is the case with this low-budget title. In fact, there is only a press synopsis that says the following about the story. A man known professionally as PayAttention tries to embrace his destiny through self-actualization.

The story is intercut with a young woman from a wealthy Hong Kong-based family who is attending college in Los Angeles. She must also find herself and deal with her family's controlling nature. As mentioned, almost nothing else is currently known about the picture, so interested parties will have to go in completely cold and hope for the best. The cast includes Shawn St. Cyr, Danny Kwok-Kwan Chan and Michelle Ip.

SONGBIRD: Inspired by the recent COVID-19 pandemic, this drama from producer Michael Bay (who directed *Armageddon*, *Bad Boys*, *Bad Boys II* and the *Transformers* movies), is set in 2024 during a new outbreak with an even more deadly coronavirus strain. A courier discovers he is immune from the virus and races against time to save the woman he loves from a quarantine camp. The reaction of reviewers toward this picture was extremely negative. A few critics described the feature as tense and a couple described it as entertainingly

Written by gallupsun
Thursday, 18 March 2021 17:45

dopey.

Still, the consensus was that this film was exploitative and in very poor taste, with a nonsensical story and didn't intelligently address any of the issues it raised. The movie stars K.J. Apa, Sofia Carson, Craig Robinson, Bradley Whitford, Peter Stormare, Alexandra Daddario and Demi Moore.

THE STAY: A couple going through a rough patch decides to work on their marriage by renting a house in the country for the weekend. They also decide to take their best friends on the trip (one would think that their married pals might feel a little awkward about tagging along, but they do so anyway). After they arrive, the visitors are immediately creeped out by the home's gardener. Soon, tensions rise, secrets are revealed, and all of their lives are endangered.

This low-budget independent chiller is debuting on disc, so there are very few reviews available for it, but a couple have appeared online. One appeared to like it, calling the acting decent and calling the movie fun. The other said it was clichéd, predictable and a waste of time. The cast includes Rob Mayes, Michele Martin, Scott Hamm and Nija Okoro.

TheThirdStrike.jpg

THE THIRD STRIKE: This documentary chronicles the implementation of the Three-strikes law in the U.S. For over 20 years, the policy has been tearing families apart. The feature follows the work of The Decarceration Collective, who describe themselves as a small, but mighty team of women who are fighting to release people who have been imprisoned for life for nonviolent drug crimes. Viewers see their work and meet prisoners who are spending their lives in jail because of the law.

The press was exclusively positive about this feature film. They thought that it was direct and to-the-point, effectively making the strong case that many have been wasting away in prison for minor offenses, while those convicted of murder and violent crimes are regularly freed from the system in a relatively short span of time.

BLASTS FROM THE PAST!

There are some fascinating older features arriving on store shelves this week. Arrow is putting out a double feature Special Edition Blu-ray that includes the Japanese feature *The Invisible Man Appears* (1949) and a sequel-of-sorts called *The Invisible Man vs. The Human Fly* (1957). Apparently, they are Japanese riffs on the H.G. Wells classic that also borrow heavily from the classic Universal movie series. The first title is considered the first science-fiction film made in the country and the special effects were created by the man who would go on to bring *Godzilla* to cinematic life.

This is the first time these movies are being released in any form in North America. Besides the high-definition transfers of the flicks, the disc's special features include a short on the history of the character in film; trailers and image galleries for both titles. Looks incredible!

Shout! Factory is offering limited edition Steelbooks of two Japanese well-regarded animated films from Studio Ghibli. The Blu-rays being released are *The Cat Returns* (2002) and *Whisper of the Heart* (1995), which contain all of the familiar bonuses in addition to the new packaging.

InGodWeTrust.jpg

Kino has some excellent Blu-rays. *In God We Trust* (1980) is a satire of organized religion co-written, directed, and starring Marty Feldman (*Young Frankenstein*). It also features Richard Pryor, Andy Kaufman and Peter Boyle. The disc includes a commentary from Feldman's friend Alan Spencer (who created the TV series, *Sledge Hammer*), an entertainment journalist commentary track, trailers, radio spots, image galleries, and more. They also have *The Last Remake of Beau Geste* (1977), another movie in which Feldman worked both behind and in front of the camera.

This one pokes fun at cinematic adventure/romance epics and features an all-star cast. You'll get two commentaries from the same people who recorded tracks on the previous release, as well as a track with co-star Michael York detailing his experiences on the film. Of course, it also comes with all sorts of publicity materials.

The distributor is also releasing *Positive I.D.* (1987) on Blu-ray. This psychological thriller follows a woman out for revenge after being violently attacked. She plans a scheme to get the individual, but her deteriorating mental state causes issues as she goes about it. The disc features a film historian commentary and a trailer.

For those who enjoy action pictures, *Runaway Train* (1985) is about as good as it gets. The story follows two escaped convicts in Alaska who jump aboard a locomotive, only to discover that the conductor has suffered a heart attack. The two find themselves trapped onboard as they hurtle down the tracks at an unstoppable speed. It's a tense and exciting thriller that, strangely enough, is not as well-remembered as it should be.

The movie was even nominated for three Academy Awards. Thankfully, this Blu-ray is helping people rediscover the feature. The movie has been given a new 2K master and extras include a commentary with Roberts and some film historians, as well as a trailer. If you haven't seen it, check it out.

They also have the Irish crime flick, *Taffin* (1988) starring Pierce Brosnan as a tough debt collector. This title has also been given a new 2K master and includes a trailer.

Criterion is putting out the French New Wave film, *Céline and Julie Go Boating* (1974). It's about two women from different backgrounds, who meet, become friends and go on a comic adventure. This two-disc Special Edition presents a 2K digital restoration of the flick, an audio critic commentary, a two-part documentary about the movie and filmmaker, interviews with the cast members, a conversation between critics about the title, archival discussion with the cast and crew, as well as more bonuses.

If you enjoy genre flicks, you can also pick up a Special Edition Blu-ray of the low-budget heist thriller, *Running Time* (1997). It stars Bruce Campbell from the *Evil Dead* series and the entire film plays out in a single shot. You'll also get a commentary with writer/director Josh Becker and

Written by gallupsun
Thursday, 18 March 2021 17:45

Campbell, all-new interviews with the actor, Q & A footage from a film festival and the original promotional trailer.

Those who remember the limited-edition Blu-ray release of the long-lost dirt-bike flick *Rad* (1986) a few months ago. This version sold very well, so fans will be happy to hear that Mill Creek has picked up the rights to re-release the title as a Steelbook. It will include the same transfer and many of the extras as the previously-released edition.

Dark Force has a Blu-ray of the international-set thriller, *Journey into Fear* (1975) with Sam Waterston, Vincent Price, Donald Pleasence and Shelley Winters. Scorpion is releasing *Tower of Evil* (1972) in high definition and Troma is going into its back catalog to deliver the horror pic, *Dolly Deadly* (2016). Full Moon is putting out a Blu-ray of *Night of the Eagles* (1989), while Impulse Pictures is making the Japanese erotic thriller *Flower and Snake* (1974) available.

And there's more in the Grasshopper Film Blu-ray release of *Two Films by Pietro Marcello: The Mouth of the Wolf* (2009) and *Lost and Beautiful* (2015).

Finally, Warner Archive is making some made-to-order Blu-rays available. This week, they have the Robert Mitchum film noir, *Crossfire* (1947), which was nominated for Best Picture back in the day. *Driving Miss Daisy* (1989) won the award several decades later and is also getting a new Blu-ray release. And they are releasing the comedy, *What's Up, Doc?* (1972) starring Barbara Streisand and Ryan O'Neal.

This release includes a commentary with Streisand, a second track with director Peter Bogdanovich, and a featurette on screwball comedies.

YOU KNOW, FOR KIDS!

This is what is arriving for kids.

Bubble Guppies: The New Guppy! (Nickelodeon)

ON THE TUBE!

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

American Experience: The Codebreaker (PBS)

Des (ITV mini-series)

Digging for Britain: Season 1

Family Business: Series 1

Tropical Heat: The Complete Series

VISIT: WWW.CINEMASTANCE.COM

Written by gallupsun

Thursday, 18 March 2021 17:45

