

By Glenn Kay

For the Sun

Welcome to another look at highlights arriving on Blu-ray and DVD. This edition includes plenty of quirky offerings as well as a number of older features receiving high-definition upgrades. So, if you can't make it out or shouldn't be attending the movies just yet, be sure to give one of these titles a try!

### ***BIG NEW RELEASES!***

***ADORATION:*** This Belgian/French drama follows a 12-year-old who lives in the country. The boy spends days on his own while his mother heads off to her job at a nearby psychiatric hospital. One day, he meets a teenage girl who happens to be a patient from the institute. The youngster becomes infatuated with her and agrees to help her escape.

However, as they travel into the woods, her condition worsens and she begins acting out in rash and unpredictable ways. Critics were very taken by this foreign-language feature. One or two had issues with the lead's unfailing puppy love and were frustrated by his poor choices. But all others commented that the movie was intriguing throughout and, for a story about a pair of lovelorn kids, managed to address and examine serious issues.

The cast includes Thomas Gioria, Fantine Harduin, Benoît Poelvoorde and Gwendolyn Gourvenec.

***DONNY'S BAR MITZVAH:*** A lost videotape from 1998 shows a young man celebrating his Bar Mitzvah with a large gathering of friends and family. A camera crew follows the lead and other attendees through the entire event. It becomes clear that the youngster's parents aren't the nicest people in the world and that undercover agents may be readying a sting operation as the party progresses. Obviously, this independent mockumentary was shot to look like an old home

video and the press appeared to be split on the results.

About half thought the movie was obnoxious and over-the-top in every way imaginable, making it a chore to sit through. The same number appreciated it for that very reason, saying they found the many uncomfortable and awkward moments extremely amusing to watch. It stars Steele Stebbins, Jeremy Tardy, John DeLuca, Tricia O'Kelley, Noreen DeWulf, Wendy Braun and Danny Trejo.

**HERE ARE THE YOUNG MEN:** A trio of unstable teenagers in Dublin, Ireland skip class and go on a wild rampage in this drama. Initially, the truant kids simply drink and party among themselves. But as time passes, their behavior becomes brasher and more destructive. Soon, they're committing crimes and causing havoc around the community.

Naturally, as things get out of hand they must grapple with their own instincts and actions. Reaction was mixed-negative toward this feature. Some found it to be an effective and disturbing portrait of disaffected young men on a sharp and toxic downward spiral. Unfortunately, the majority commented that the message of the film felt muddled and that the supporting characters were actually better written than the protagonists.

Dean-Charles Chapman, Finn Cole, Ferdia Walsh-Peelo and Anya Taylor-Joy headline the feature.

**MAIL ORDER MURDER: THE STORY OF W.A.V.E. PRODUCTIONS:** Press releases for this documentary from Severin, say that the movie is the first true and uncensored account of W.A.V.E. Productions, a New Jersey-based independent horror movie studio. The company has made more than 400 extremely low-budget, straight-to-video titles since the 1980s. Oddly enough, many of these flicks are scripted by fans, who also provide funding for the outfit. Using interview footage with W.A.V.E. founder/director Gary Whitson and those who have worked on various projects, viewers get a behind-the-scenes look at this unusual company and their eccentric working methods.

There currently aren't any reviews available for the film. It will be available to purchase on Blu-ray exclusively on the Severin website. Tina Krause, Pamela Sutch, Debbie D, Dave Castiglione, Laura Giglio, Deanna Demko, Aven Warren and Clancy McCauley make

appearances in the film.

**PERCY VS GOLIATH:** Based on real events from a 1998 lawsuit, this movie tells the story of a farmer who was sued by global conglomerate Monsanto. Decades after the company's genetically modified canola seed is accidentally blown onto his field from a neighboring farm, executives assert that the resultant crop is their property and insist that the landowner pay them an enormous licensing fee. The shocked farmer fights them in court to maintain control of his farm. Write-ups were generally positive for this drama.

A few complained that the movie wasn't memorable enough compared to other underdog stories about individuals forced into fighting greedy corporations. Still, most thought that the cast was excellent and that the low-key feature was not only compelling, but inspiring as well. For the time being, it is only being released on DVD. It stars Christopher Walken, Zach Braff, Christina Ricci, Adam Beach and Martin Donovan.

**SHIVA BABY:** This tale follows a college student attending a wake with her parents. The somber occasion is stressful enough, but things get out of hand when the lead's sugar daddy and ex-girlfriend arrive to pay their respects. They decide to take the opportunity to address their own personal issues with the protagonist, creating a tense situation all around. Critics were impressed with this independent comedy.

There were only a few negative notices that said the central character was unlikable and that the concept had been stretched out to an interminable length. Still, the vast majority called the movie extremely sharp and clever. They stated that they were impressed by the performances and darkly humorous examinations of jealousy and other complicated aspects of relationships. It was also described as a memorable debut film for the writer/director and lead actress.

The cast includes Rachel Sennott, Molly Gordon, Polly Draper and Danny Deferrari.

**STARDUST:** Iconic musician David Bowie is the focus of this biopic. It details the artist at the beginning of his career and making his first visit to the U.S. in 1971 to promote the album "The Man Who Sold the World." While traveling with his publicist, Bowie becomes upset at the lack of press he's receiving from the record company. The highs and lows of the trip ultimately inspire him to create his Ziggy Stardust stage persona.

The press didn't have a favorable reaction toward this biopic (which was not officially endorsed by the Bowie estate and does not use music from the artist). Those who enjoyed it said that it was a small but interesting take on Bowie that featured strong performances and effectively detailed the difficulties he had breaking into the North American market. However, the majority complained that the film didn't offer anything new or exciting about its subject and wanted actual Bowie songs to be featured. Johnny Flynn, Marc Maron, Jena Malone, Anthony Flanagan and Aaron Poole headline the film.

### ***BLASTS FROM THE PAST!***

There are plenty of options this week if you're looking to watch something a little older. Arrow Video is releasing a 2-disc Limited Edition Blu-ray of *Major Dundee* (1965). This western from legendary director Sam Peckinpah (

*The Wild Bunch*

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*Straw Dogs*

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*The Getaway*

), follows a demoted but vainglorious Union Cavalry officer who decides to assemble a team of criminals to help him track down an enemy force. It stars Charlton Heston, Richard Harris, James Coburn and Warren Oates.

The disc includes 4K scans of the theatrical and extended versions, multiple audio commentaries with film historians, a visual essay on the movie, a feature-length making-of documentary, an interview with filmmaker Mike Siegel about his ongoing project on the life and work of Peckinpah, extensive publicity materials and much, much more.

AFGA is putting out a Blu-ray of the British feature, *The Leather Boys* (1968). It's a drama about a teenage girl who weds a biker gang member and quickly becomes disillusioned with married life. Directed by Sidney J. Furie (

*The Ipcress File*

,

*The Entity*

), the movie has been given a new restoration from the original 35mm negative. In addition to the picture upgrade, you'll also get an audio commentary with Furie, audio interviews with stars Rita Tushingham and Dudley Sutton, as well as a short from the era dealing with some of the

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themes of the feature.

Shout! Factory has a new Limited Edition Steelbook Blu-ray of the low-budget, Roger Corman *Star Wars*

knock-off,

*Battle Beyond the Stars*

(1980). This movie is perhaps most notable for the crew members involved in the production, who would all go on to greater things. The disc features a new 2K scan of the interpositive, one audio commentary with Oscar-nominated screenwriter John Sayles and producer Corman, a second with producer Gale Anne Hurd (

*The Terminator*

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*Aliens*

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*Armageddon*

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*The Walking Dead*

TV-series). It also comes with a featurette on the technical challenges of creating a low-budget sci-fi movie, an interview with star Richard Thomas and all sorts of publicity materials.

*Just a Gigolo* (1978) is a drama that features a starring role for musician David Bowie (it was his second onscreen appearance after *The Man Who Fell to Earth*). In this title, he plays a veteran who can't find work after the end of WWII and becomes a gigolo in Berlin. The Blu-ray arrives with a 32-page booklet about the movie, a making-of featuring the writer/producer and the director, as well as an audio commentary with the filmmaker.

If you like Mae West movies, you're in luck this week. Kino has collected a number of her features together for the *Mae West Collection (1932-1940)* Blu-ray box set. Alphabetically, it includes *Belle of the Nineties* (1934),  
*Every*

*Day's a Holiday*

(1937),

*Goin' to Town*

(1935),

*Go West Young Man*

(1936),

*I'm No Angel*

(1944),

*Klondike Annie*

(1936),

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*My Little Chickadee*

(1940),

*Night After Night*

(1932), and

*She Done Him Wrong*

(1933). Many of the titles have been given restorations (some in 4K) and it looks like every disc comes with at least one film historian commentary and other trailers.

If the set is a bit of an overload, all of the titles included can also be purchased individually.

And for those looking for something more recent, Kino also has a Blu-ray of the Jessica Lange/Kathy Bates drama, *Bonneville* (2006). The disc includes a trailer for the film.

Those looking for art house classics can pick up a Blu-ray of *Pariah* (2011) courtesy of Criterion. It's an award-winning coming-of-age tale detailing the experiences of a Brooklyn teenager wrestling with her sexual identity. The movie has been given a 2K digital transfer and bonuses include a discussion with the director, a cast and crew reunion, a new program on the making-of the film (that features interviews with most of the cast and crew), as well as an interview with a scholar who discusses the story's themes.

*Pickup on South Street* (1953) is a film noir about a New York City subway pickpocket who ends up accidentally stealing top secret government information. It leads to a lengthy chase in which authorities try to hunt him down and retrieve the important details. This Oscar-winning classic from Samuel Fuller ( *Shock Corridor*, *The Naked Kiss*) has been released on Blu-ray in the past, but went out-of-print a few years ago. It has now been re-pressed and comes with a new 4K digital restoration, a critic interview detailing the film's importance, an archival interview with Fuller and plenty more.

Genre fans have a few items to choose from. Code Red is releasing a Blu-ray of the Italian slasher, *Delirium* (1987). It's about a psychopath targeting models doing photo spreads for a men's magazine. Besides a 2016 HD master of the film itself, it includes interviews with the director, cinematographer, art director and cast members. In addition, there are vintage interviews with the participants and trailers for other features from the distributor.

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Scorpion has *Night Terror* (1977) aka *Night Drive* on Blu-ray. This is a well-regarded made-for-TV thriller starring Valerie Harper as a housewife who witnesses a murder on the highway and then becomes the target of the killer. This release includes a TV-movie critic audio commentary who gives viewers details about the production and how effective and successful the program was when it first aired.

Those who enjoy anime can pick up a Blu-ray of the Japanese feature *Memories* (1995) from Discotek Media. It's an animated anthology featuring a trio of science-fiction stories. The picture has been restored for disc and there's a new subtitle translation. A recently recorded English-language audio track is also present on this disc, as well as publicity materials and featurettes about the movie.

Arthouse film enthusiasts can now purchase *Poison* (1991) on Blu-ray from Zeitgeist Films. It's the first feature from writer/director Todd Haynes (*Far from Heaven*

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*Carol*

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*Wonderstruck*

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*Dark Waters*

). The narrative drama involves three different stories about outsiders whose lives intersect as events progress. The disc includes a new introduction by Haynes, a Sundance Film Festival Q&A with the filmmaker and producers celebrating the movie's 20th anniversary, an archival director commentary track and other extras.

Paramount is also digging into its back catalog. It is releasing the war flick *Flight of the Intruder* (1991) on Blu-ray. The story follows an unauthorized bombing mission and features Danny Glover and Willem Dafoe. On a similar bent, *The General's Daughter* (1999) is a military base-set murder-mystery starring John Travolta.

John Wayne and Kirk Douglas lead the cast of *In Harm's Way* (1965). It is about a disgraced captain in the U.S. Navy who tries to make amends by completing a dangerous and potentially deadly mission. The studio is also putting out a Blu-ray of the Steve McQueen racing drama, *Le Mans* (1971). This movie is noted for its authentic mood and many critics praised it upon its release as feeling almost like a documentary.

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Warner Brothers is giving the 4K treatment to a family favorite this week. *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory*

(1971) was the first adaptation of the beloved Roald Dahl book, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*

. For those unfamiliar, it's about a poor, starving child who wins a ticket to tour the enormous workshop of a very eccentric chocolatier. The movie features some trippy psychedelic imagery and an iconic performance from Gene Wilder as the title character. Bonuses on the 4K are identical to previous releases, just with improved picture quality.



And finally, Warner Archive is making the biopic *Madame Curie* (1943) available as a made-to-order Blu-ray. The movie details the life of the famous female physicist who conducted ground-breaking research on radioactivity. It was nominated for seven Academy Awards and is finally making its high definition debut.

### **YOU KNOW, FOR KIDS!**

Here are some titles that may appeal to youngsters.

*Kipo and the Age of Wonderbeasts: The Complete Series*

*Nyanbo!: The Complete Series*



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### ***ON THE TUBE!***

And these are some of the TV-themed releases coming your way.

*Bloodlands* (Acorn Original)

*Christmas in Evergreen: Bells Are Ringing* (Hallmark Channel) DVD

*Drunk History: The Complete Series*

*A Fixer Upper Mystery: 3-Movie Collection* (Hallmark Channel) DVD

*Hallmark 3-Movie Collection: Bottled with Love / Follow Me to Daisy Hills / Falling for Look Lodge* DVD

*Hallmark 3-Movie Collection: Crown for Christmas / A Christmas Melody / It's Christmas, Eve* DVD

*Hallmark 3-Movie Collection: Just Add Romance / The Sweetest Heart / Easter Under Wraps* DVD

*His Dark Materials: Season 2*

*Kipo and the Age of Wonderbeasts: The Complete Series*

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*I Know This Much Is True* (HBO movie) DVD only

*Masterpiece: Us* (PBS)

*The Murders: Season 1*

*Nyanbo!*: The Complete Series

*The Purge: The Complete Series*

*The Purge: Season 2*

*The Watch: Season 1*

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