

Blu-ray/DVD Roundup for September 24, 2021

Written by Gallupsun Staff

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It's time for a look at some of the latest Blu-rays and DVDs arriving at retailers. Some weeks are busy and others are quieter, but this edition is jam-packed with new material, including studio blockbusters and notable independent efforts. So, if you can't or shouldn't be heading out to the movies just yet, be sure to give one of these titles a try!

BIG NEW RELEASES!

CRUELLA: The Disney 1961 animated classic, "101 Dalmatians" gets a live-action prequel detailing the life story of villainess Cruella de Vil. As a young woman, de Vil is forced to endure

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a tragedy before growing up and making a start in the fashion industry. The lead attracts the attention and tutelage of a famous designer, but the relationship turns sour as the two butt heads. Critics generally enjoyed this reimagining, but with some reservations.

About one quarter of reviews suggested that the movie looked good, but felt overlong and was a bit too cute and sweet for a tale about the origin of a famous villain. However, most stated that they were able to overlook the film's narrative flaws and found cast and visuals a delight to behold. It stars Emma Stone, Emma Thompson, Joel Fry, Paul Walter Hauser, Emily Beecham, Mark Strong, Kirby Howell-Baptiste and Jamie Demetriou. Many versions of the title will be available on disc, including a 4K version, regular Blu-ray, elaborate Steelbook packaging and a double feature release that also includes the original animated film.

A DARK FOE: An FBI agent lives with guilt and remorse for over a decade after his sister is abducted and mother murdered by a serial killer. Suffering from nyctophobia (an irrational fear of the dark), the lead finds evidence suggesting that the psychopath has returned. The officer attempts to overcome his phobia and catch the maniac before more lives are lost. This independent thriller received decent marks from the press.

A number thought that it had difficulty balancing its psychological themes with suspense elements and didn't gel cohesively. Still, the majority explained that while flawed, the story presented a fascinating character study with some chilling moments. For the time being, this title is only being released on DVD. The cast includes Oscar Cardenas, Kenzie Dalton, Selma Blair, Graham Greene, Bill Bellamy and Glenn Morshower.

THE EVIL NEXT DOOR: Looking for more creepy entertainment? This Swedish chiller follows a new family who move into a duplex. When the husband heads off for work, the wife and child begin to witness strange and supernatural occurrences. They also learn that the attached home next to them has been abandoned for years.

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Could the source of their problems be from something existing on the other side of the wall? Reviewers didn't seem to care and generally disliked the picture. Some stated that while the story was predictable, the filmmakers did a decent job at generating atmosphere and thought it was reasonably successful in sending chills down the spine. However, the consensus was that the flick was an ineffective knock-off of ghost stories like "The Conjuring," and didn't make a lasting impression.

It features Jakob Fahlstedt, Janna Granström, Dilan Gwyn and Sander Falk.

F9: THE FAST SAGA: The other big blockbuster this week is this latest, "Fast and Furious" sequel. It begins with protagonist Dominic Toretto living off the grid with his wife and young son. That is, until he learns of a new threat to the world. After being told the villain is a close family member whom he has never spoken of before, Dom, his spouse, and the rest of the team head out to stop the threat.

This follow-up earned more positive notices than negative ones, but wasn't quite as well received as recent titles in the franchise. A large number of write-ups thought it pushed its outrageous plot twists and over-the-top action just a bit too far this time. Still, more thought that the cast was charismatic enough for the movie to overcome its plot holes and stated that it delivered plenty of fun. You can pick up the film on regular Blu-ray, as well as in 4K HD. There's also a Steelbook edition arriving at stores for those who collect them.

It stars Vin Diesel, Michelle Rodriguez, Jordana Brewster, Tyrese Gibson, Ludacris, Nathalie Emmanuel, Charlize Theron and John Cena.

GAIA: This South African feature involves a park ranger doing rounds deep in a primordial forest. She unexpectedly encounters a man and his son in a remote cabin who have devised their own religion and are living off the grid. The pair warn of strange monsters that are about to

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emerge from the wild and wipe out humanity. Disbelieving at first, her feelings change when the cabin is attacked by these horrifying creatures.

Critics were disturbed by what they saw and gave the movie some praise. A small portion described the film as being style-over-substance and thought that the story was difficult to follow. Still, the majority found it scary. They complimented the make-up effects and thought it offered plenty of food for thought.

The movie is arriving on shelves as a DVD exclusive. Monique Rockman, Carel Nel, Alex van Dyk and Anthony Oseyemi headline the feature.

I CARRY YOU WITH ME: Based on a true story, this drama details an aspiring chef and a teacher from Mexico who fall in love. The two men decide that their best chance for a happy life together may be in the United States. Hoping to secure citizenship and then get his partner across the border, several years pass as the chef's long and difficult journey progresses. Critics responded very positively to this story.

There were only a tiny number of negative responses who called the film well-intentioned, but blunt and obvious in its delivery. Everyone else thought the performers were exceptional and the message was inspiring. They were also intrigued by how the movie attempted to meld different film styles to different parts of the story. Armando Espitia, Christian Vasquez, Michelle Rodríguez and Ángeles Cruz headline the feature.

SIBYL: A psychotherapist feeling unfulfilled with work decides to quit her profession and become an author. It isn't long before she suffers from writer's block and doesn't know what to do with herself. When a friend who works as an actress calls to complain about having an affair with a co-star behind the back of her director husband, the protagonist sees the situation as inspiration for her work and gets into the middle of the awkward situation. This French/Belgian

foreign-language drama/comedy received mixed reviews in North America.

Almost half said the lead wasn't very relatable and the film came across as surprisingly dry and bland. Slightly more thought that the performances were great and that there were some clever observations about relationships among the story's more predictable elements. This is a DVD-only release that stars Virginie Efira, Adèle Exarchopoulos and Gaspard Ulliel.

THE VIGIL: After the passing of an elderly woman in a Brooklyn Hasidic community, a young man is assigned against his will to serve as an overnight watchman/guardian for the deceased. He arrives at the home, only to experience odd and eerie phenomena. The lead begins to learn that he possesses strange, supernatural gifts and discovers a malevolent force in the home with whom he must do battle. Response was very positive toward this independent chiller.

A handful of critics thought that while the setting was unique, the story only presented familiar and ineffective ghost story tropes. However, the majority was very impressed by what was accomplished on such a small budget and called it a claustrophobic and scary feature. The cast includes Dave Davis, Fred Melamed, Menashe Lustig and Malky Goldman.

BLASTS FROM THE PAST!

It's another excellent week for upgrades of studio catalog titles. Arrow Video is releasing a 2-disc Blu-ray of "Immoral Tales," (1973), an anthology dealing with themes of sexuality. This controversial film was made by Walerian Borowczyk and individual episodes take place over various time periods. This release comes with two different versions of the feature (one of which

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features an extra segment).

It also arrives with an introduction from a Borowczyk historian, as well as a collection of interviews with the movie's production manager and cinematographer. There's also an archived discussion with the filmmaker on the themes in his movies, a visual essay on the picture, and a trailer.

The distributor is also presenting the Japanese feature "The Snake Girl and the Silver-Haired Witch" (1968) on Blu-ray. It's a well-regarded chiller about a troubled family who moves into a home and has visions of a serpentine figure. It is making its debut on Blu-ray for the first time outside of its homeland. The disc includes a movie expert commentary describing the themes and giving background information on the production.

It also comes with an interview with a manga and folklore scholar, along with publicity materials.

Shout! Factory is presenting Steelbooks of some notable Japanese animated films from Studio Ghibli. "From Up on Poppy Hill" (2011) is a well-regarded coming-of-age tale, while "Porco Rosso" (1992) from Oscar-winner Hayao Miyazaki ("Spirited Away") is about a flying ace-turned-bounty-hunter whose face has been transformed into that of a pig. Both of these discs come with the same bonuses featured in previous releases, but the packaging is new and improved.

Kino also has plenty of new discs on offer. "Bird on a Wire" (1990) is a hit comedy starring Mel Gibson and Goldie Hawn about a man under witness protection who is recognized by an old flame. With his cover blown, the two find themselves on the run from gangsters. The Blu-ray presents the feature with a new 2K master, a director commentary, and a trailer.

"Dead Men Don't Wear Plaid" (1982) is an under-rated little period comedy starring Steve Martin as a detective investigating a mysterious disappearance. The movie is shot in black and white and uses pre-existing clips from about 17 classic film noirs and crime pictures, allowing the star

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to interact with and have conversations with the likes of Humphrey Bogart and James Cagney. The results are quite amusing. This Blu-ray comes with a film historian commentary, multiple radio spots, and TV commercials, as well as a pair of trailers.

Looking for some action? “Golden Needles” (1974) features Joe Don Baker and Jim Kelly as desperate individuals hunting down a mystical Chinese statue that may restore the youth of its possessor. The picture has been given a new 2K master.

The David Janssen western, “Macho Callahan” (1970) arrives on Blu-ray with a 4K restoration. This release includes a commentary from western authority and filmmaker Alex Cox (“Repo Man”).

This week, Disney is slated to release an “Ultimate Collector’s Edition” 4K Ultra HD/Blu-ray/Digital copy of the thriller “Unbreakable” (2000) from writer/director M. Night Shyamalan. It was his follow-up to the breakout hit “The Sixth Sense,” and this story about a man with incredible strength still stands as one of the filmmaker’s best titles.

Discount Blu-ray distributor Mill Creek Entertainment is digging into the studio vaults to re-release some interesting movies. They have the well-regarded biopic drama “Frost/Nixon” (2008), and are putting out a double-feature Blu-ray containing the Brad Pitt drama “Meet Joe Black” (1998), and the romantic-comedy “Wimbledon” (2004) starring Kirsten Dunst and Paul Bettany.

YOU KNOW, FOR KIDS!

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There are a number of great options in kid's entertainment this week. The Studio Ghibli titles from Japan may skew slightly older, but they've been listed here too, for those curious about them.

"Baby Shark's Big Show!" (Nick Jr.) 8 Episodes, 4 Shorts

"Cruella"

"From Up on Poppy Hill" (2011) Steelbook

"G.I. Joe: A Real American Hero" The Complete First Series

"Nancy Drew" Season 2

"Paw Patrol: Pups Save the Kitten Catastrophe Crew" (Nickelodeon)

"Peppa Pig" Season 1

"Porco Rosso" (1992) Steelbook

"Pufinstuf" (1970) Code Red

"Sonic Boom" Season 2, Volume 2

“The Wiggles: Halloween Party”

ON THE TUBE!

And here are all of the TV-themed releases headed your way.

“Baby Shark’s Big Show!” (Nick Jr.) 8 Episodes, 4 Shorts

“Batwoman” Season 2

“Blacklist” Season 8

“Doctor Who: Sylvester McCoy” Season 1

“The Equalizer” Season 1

“G.I. Joe: A Real American Hero” The Complete First Series

“I Dream of Jeannie” The Complete Series

“Nancy Drew” Season 2

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“Peppa Pig” Season 1

“Resident Alien” Season 1

“Sonic Boom” Season 2, Volume 2

“Star Trek: Enterprise” The Complete Series (2001 - 2005)

“When Calls the Heart: Year 8 Collection”

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