

Blu-ray/DVD Roundup for April 8, 2022

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
Wednesday, 20 April 2022 05:05



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Welcome to another look at the latest highlights arriving on Blu-ray and DVD. This is a big week with some high-profile features, as well as interesting international and independent fare. So, if you can't or shouldn't be heading out to the movies this week, be sure to give one of these titles a try!

BIG NEW RELEASES!

DEATH ON THE NILE: The newest adaptation of the Agatha Christie mystery novel sees detective Hercule Poirot visiting Egypt and being invited to a lavish wedding. Naturally, someone of note is murdered during the elaborate ceremony. After questioning the attendees, it becomes clear that everyone may have harbored some ill-will towards the victim, making the lead's job all the more difficult.

This feature received more positive write-ups than negative ones. Those who didn't care for it found it hammy and unmemorable. Still, more were impressed by the cast and production value on display. They called it a fun and agreeable thriller and appreciated the added backstory for the protagonist.

The movie can be picked up as a 4K UHD and regular Blu-ray set, or one can purchase the Blu-ray on its own. It stars Kenneth Branagh, Gal Gadot, Armie Hammer, Emma Mackey, Annette Bening, Tom Bateman, Ali Fazal, Russell Brand, Sophie Okonedo, Letitia Wright, Dawn French and Jennifer Saunders.

DESPERATE RIDERS: In this western, a grizzled loner rescues a young man from a card-game shootout. The new acquaintance tells the man that his mother has been kidnapped by an outlaw and that he needs help protecting the rest of his family.

The tough guy agrees and the duo try to hunt down the nasty figure. Along the way, they team up with a woman who has escaped the killer and is looking for revenge.

Not many have seen this picture, but a couple of reviews have popped up online. These notices haven't been overly complimentary, calling the story routine and predictable. They also suggest that everyone involved appeared to be simply going through the motions. It features Trace Adkins, Drew Waters, Vanessa Lee Evigan, Sam Ashby, Victoria Pratt, Cowboy Troy and Tom Berenger.

THE ICE DEMON: A man is found in the middle of a snowy forest and is taken to a hospital in a coma. His ex-wife is called in, who reports that she hasn't seen or heard from him in over 10 years. She and their daughter talk to the figure in his hospital bed and try to wake him up.

Meanwhile, the woman's current partner is displeased and distressed by the situation. Further tension arises when supernatural events begin occurring within their household.

This Russian foreign-language feature hasn't been seen by many in this part of the world. There have been a small number of negative reviews posted on websites. They complain that the pacing is slow, focusing too much on family drama and also suggest the decisions and actions of the characters are illogical and unrelatable. Alina Babak, Olga Lomonosova, Aleksey Rozin, Gleb Kalyuzhnyy and Igor Khripunov headline the picture.

THE IMMORTAL: Those looking for more world cinema can also try this feature from France. This movie is a spin-off of a hit French crime show called "Gomorrah" that originally aired in 2014.

As the title suggests, it follows a mobster who has the power of immortality. After the events of the series, he goes into exile, frustrated that he can't lead a normal existence. In order to feel alive again, he gets involved in a fracas that threatens his empire.

There aren't many write-ups available for this feature either, but the ones that have appeared are upbeat. One or two were disappointed that not all of the characters from the show returned for this follow-up. However, most said it was an unpredictable ride with all sorts of wild twists and turns that would impress fans of the program. The cast includes Marco D'Amore, Gennaro Di Colandrea and Nello Mascia.

JOCKEY: In this independent feature, an aging, injury-plagued horse jockey strives to win one last title for a trailer and friend who has purchased what appears to be a championship horse. It's an agonizingly painful process that is further complicated when another young jockey arrives claiming to be the rider's son. The jockey takes the young man under his wing, leading to further conflicts as the big race day approaches.

The press gave this drama very high marks. A handful couldn't quite connect with the characters and found it an emotionally cold feature that didn't resonate.

The vast majority commented that it all felt incredibly authentic and believable from beginning to end. They elaborated by saying that while the approach to the material was low-key, it was still a moving feature with incredible performances.

It stars Clifton Collins Jr., Molly Parker and Moises Arias.

THE LONG NIGHT: A New Yorker searching for parents she has never known finds information that they might be living in the deep south. She convinces her boyfriend to take a trip with her to investigate these claims. But soon after arriving, the pair find themselves being pursued and kidnapped by a cult who want to make them part of a twisted ceremony believed to bring about the apocalypse.

Critics were not impressed with this independent horror feature. A few enjoyed the film's use of dark humor and were grimly amused with what they witnessed. But the consensus was that the feature was derivative and dull, picking elements from better genre pictures and pasting them together in an unsuccessful fashion. The cast includes Scout Taylor-Compton, Nolan Gerard Funk, Deborah Kara Unger and Jeff Fahey.

SCREAM: Some 25 years after a brutal series of slayings by a "Ghostface" killer, a new lunatic

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begins targeting a group of college students in the same town. The kids investigate the patterns behind the murders and ask for advice from survivors of previous instalments. The entire group learn that to survive, they will have to use their knowledge of various horror movies trends.

The fifth movie in this popular series is the first not to be directed by late horror legend Wes Craven or written by Kevin Williamson. Regardless, it received more upbeat notices than negative ones. About one quarter of write-ups thought this entry was one-too-many, noting that the new characters weren't interesting and that the characters made too many questionable decisions for a flick poking fun at the genre.

Still, more thought it was an effective update with some clever observations that would deliver what horror fans required. Neve Campbell, Courtney Cox, David Arquette, Melissa Barrera, Kyle Gallner, Mason Gooding, Mikey Madison and Dylan Minnette headline the film.

BLASTS FROM THE PAST!

If you get a kick out of martial arts movies, Arrow Video are presenting "The 8 Diagram Pole Fighter" (1984) as a "Special Edition" Blu-ray. This Shaw Brothers production from Hong Kong begins with a battle that wipes out a family patriarch and his two sons.

His one surviving boy joins a monastery. When he learns that his sister has been taken by enemies, he decides that he must fight to rescue her and take vengeance on the outlaws responsible.

The picture has been given a 2K restoration and the disc includes a film historian commentary, a newly filmed critic appreciation of the title, interviews with the cast members recorded in 2004, a short that commemorates the life of one of the stars (who passed away during production), alternate opening credits and plenty of publicity materials.

Speaking of Kino, they also have several Blu-rays arriving for purchase. “Armageddon” (1977) is a European crime thriller with Alain Delon as a psychologist helping police catch a psychopath with aspirations of being a terrorist. Bonuses include a film historian commentary track and a trailer.

“The Body of My Enemy” (1976) is a French drama about a man who hates the textile barons that seemingly run his town. All that changes when he falls for one of their daughters. But sometime later, the lead discovers the family connections to the mob and is framed for a murder. He attempts to extricate himself from his in-laws. Special features on this disc are the same as those listed for the previous title.

They also have the silent German effort “The Indian Tomb” (1921). It was written by Fritz Lang several years before he went on to co-write and direct the 1927 science-fiction classic “Metropolis”. This four-hour, two-part epic follows two adventurers who run afoul of a sinister prince in Bengal. Extras include a 45-minute visual essay from movie historians on the feature.

Finally, Unearthed Films have a Blu-ray of the independent Japanese feature, “2LDK” (2003). It’s about two desperate actresses living together who ultimately turn on one another in shocking and violent ways. The Blu-ray arrives with a commentary track featuring the cast, a making-of, video from a production briefing, a message recorded for the audience, footage from preview screenings, archived interviews and a photo gallery.

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YOU KNOW, FOR KIDS!

Here are some new arrivals that may appeal to kids.

“Charlie’s Colorforms City” Season 1 (Netflix) DVD

“Nick Jr. Spring is Here” (Nickelodeon) DVD

“Pokemon Journeys: The Series – Destination: Coronation!” DVD

“Superior 8 Ultraman Brothers” (2008) Blu-ray

“Ultraman Ultraseven X” The Complete Series Blu-ray

ON THE TUBE!

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And you'll find all of the week's TV-themed releases listed below.

"Before We Die" Season 1 (PBS) DVD

"Charlie's Colorforms City" Season 1 (Netflix) DVD

"CSI: Vegas" Season 1 Blu-ray

"Doctor Who" Galaxy 4 (BBC) Blu-ray

"Doctor Who: Tom Baker" Complete Season Six (BBC) Blu-ray

"The Handmaid's Tale" Season 4 DVD

"Ken Burns: Benjamin Franklin" (PBS) Blu-ray

"NATURE: Animals with Cameras" Season 2 (PBS) DVD

"Nick Jr. Spring is Here" (Nickelodeon) DVD

"NOVA: Butterfly Blueprints" (PBS) DVD

"Of Mice and Men" (1968) TV-movie - Liberation Hall DVD

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“Pokemon Journeys: The Series – Destination: Coronation!” DVD

“South Beach Love” (Hallmark Channel) DVD

“Ultraman Ultraseven X” The Complete Series Blu-ray

“Up All Night” The Complete Series Blu-ray

“You Had Me at Aloha” (Hallmark Channel) DVD

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