

Blu-ray/DVD Roundup for October 20, 2023

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Welcome to another look at highlights arriving on Blu-ray and DVD. This edition announces the arrival of the year's highest grossing blockbuster on disc, as well as plenty of other notable features.

BIG NEW RELEASES!

BARBIE: Surprisingly, the year's biggest box office hit is this film adaptation of the Mattel doll line. Barbie lives in a colorful and matriarchal world with other versions of herself and various Kens. When she begins noticing issues with her body, she becomes gravely concerned. The lead and Ken decide to leave their home for Los Angeles, where they are met with challenges after comparing their world and human existence.

The press was very upbeat about this comedy. A number did complain that the film's satire and social commentary was on-the-nose, that its novelty wore thin quickly, and that it didn't generate a lot of laughs. However, the majority found the sets and photography incredible, the humor sharp-witted and the performances excellent. They also thought it presented a positive message for women of all ages.

BRING IT ON: CHEER OR DIE: The hit 2000 cheerleading teen comedy *Bring It On* has inspired a series of direct-to-disc sequels. This seventh installment is somewhat different in that it includes horror elements in its story. When a squad of cheerleaders are forbidden from adding dangerous moves to their routine, they decide to train secretly in an abandoned school. Unfortunately, there is a killer residing in the building and the group must fight for survival.

Notices were largely negative for this follow-up. One critic or two was amused by the new formula wrinkle and called it an intentionally campy and fun effort. Everyone else wrote that the movie was terrible. They stated that it couldn't find the right balance between comedy and horror and that it fell entirely flat.

THE DIVE: In this thriller, two sisters decide to take a deep-sea diving expedition in one of the most remote locations in the world. Guess what happens? An underwater landslide causes one of the siblings to be trapped under rocks 100 feet below the surface of the water. With little oxygen left, the other family member must do whatever she can to keep her sister alive and prevent herself from perishing too.

This is a remake of the 2020 Swedish/Norwegian film *Breaking Surface* and response towards the redo was more positive than negative. About one-third of reviewers called the story cliched and thought that the characters weren't developed enough for audiences to root for them. However, more thought that the movie was tense throughout and noted that it would make anyone think twice about diving alone.

GOLDA: Israeli Prime Minister Golda Meir is the subject of this biopic that focuses on her

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handling of the Yom Kippur War in 1973. After receiving word that Syria and Egypt are preparing a surprise attack on her nation, viewers see the leader discount the threat before eventually being drawn into armed conflict. After 20 days of fighting, the battle concludes and the leader spends the next few years defending her actions.

Response towards this picture was split. Almost half suggested that the drama was dry and felt like a history lecture, lacking finesse and simplifying the complexities of the war. The same number plus one or two complimented the lead performance and thought that her believable portrayal carried the picture.

HAUNTED MANSION: Set in New Orleans, a downcast widower and ex-scientist spends his time providing ghost tours for tourists. He's unexpectedly approached by a priest, who asks that he use one of his inventions to help prove that a nearby property is haunted. Despite being a skeptic, he agrees and ends up encountering a house full of spirits.

The press didn't take to this effort, which is based on the popular Disney Park attraction. More than one-third thought that the picture was entertaining, providing impressive effects work as well as a few genuinely amusing moments that fans of the ride would appreciate. The rest stated that it was a missed opportunity, failing to maximize the concept and presenting a bland and unmemorable translation to audiences.

INSIDE MAN: Based on a true story, this crime/drama follows a cop who discovers that his wife is having an affair. He beats up her lover, creating personal and professional strife. His spouse leaves him and he receives a sudden demotion at work. Determined to turn things around, he takes a tough assignment and goes deep undercover as a grunt in an organized crime syndicate.

There aren't a lot of reviews for this independent feature yet and the online write-ups that have

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appeared so far are middling. Most comment that the movie is well-shot and features a good cast, but that the storytelling is choppy and that elements feel borrowed from other, better, mobster movies.

THE LAST VOYAGE OF THE DEMETER: If you have ever read the Bram Stoker novel *Dracula*, one chapter in the novel briefly tells of the ill-fated voyage of the ship that brought the famed vampire across the Black Sea to England. This chiller expands the segment into a feature film. It introduces viewers to members of the boat's crew and the terror that overtakes them as people start disappearing mysteriously.

Reaction for this adaptation was split. Half thought that the picture was stylish, created a sense of claustrophobia and delivered plenty of jolts. The same number (plus one or two) didn't think that there was enough material here to warrant a feature film. They also complained that the movie wasn't scary because anyone familiar with the original tale should already know how it plays out.

MORTAL KOMBAT LEGENDS: CAGE MATCH: Set in 1980s Hollywood, this R-rated animated feature based on the popular martial arts video game features heroic Johnny Cage struggling to make his mark as an action film actor. After being cast in a motion picture production, his co-star disappears and he sets out to locate them. The trail leads to an evil cult of martial artists who want to take over the world.

It appears that there is a lot more humor in this effort and that the characters have fun with the '80s backdrops and fashions. There aren't many notices for the picture yet, but a few online ones have been complementary. They comment that while the picture could do with more character development and has a few slow spots, the action is solid and there are several laugh-out-loud moments.

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SHORTCOMINGS: Based on a popular 2007 graphic novel by Adrian Tomine, this tale follows a struggling California-based moviemaker who manages an arthouse movie theater while his girlfriend works for an Asian American film festival. He spends his days watching Blu-rays from Criterion and discussing them with a best friend. When his girlfriend accepts an internship in New York, the lead has to figure out his next step in life.

This rom-com was well liked by the press. A small contingent felt that the film wasn't an ideal adaptation and failed to alter aspects that now felt a little out-of-date. Yet the vast majority thought the movie was very amusing and avoided all the genre tropes. They wrote that the cast were charming and the end result was quirky and fun.

YOU KNOW, FOR KIDS!

The following releases may be of interest to children.

Barbie: A Touch of Magic Season 1 (animated series) (nCircle) DVD

Shrek: 6-Movie Collection (also includes 11 shorts and five TV specials) (Universal) Blu-ray

ON THE TUBE!

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Additionally, all the week's TV-released discs can be found below.

ALF The Complete Series (Deluxe Edition) (Shout! Factory) DVD

Brothers in Arms: WWII & Vietnam War (History) DVD

Centennial The Complete Limited Series (1992) (Universal) DVD

The Crown Season 5 (Blu-ray) Sony

Heroes The Complete Series (Universal) DVD

VISIT: WWW.CINEMASTANCE.COM

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