

DVD/Blu-ray Roundup for Nov. 27, 2015

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
Friday, 27 November 2015 06:50



Hello folks, it's a very busy week once again for releases on Blu-ray and DVD. There's something for horror, drama, comedy and even a picture or two for the whole family. So if you can't make it out to the movies tonight, be sure to give one of these titles a try!

Big New Releases!

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American Ultra - Jesse Eisenberg and Kristen Stewart star in this dark comedy about a stoner who is activated as a sleeper agent for a government organization. Reviewers were split on this effort. While many felt that it had its share of laughs, some believed that it went off on strange tangents (from comedy to action film to introspective drama), and was too uneven and schizophrenic to recommend. Now viewers can make up their own minds. The cast also includes Topher Grace, Tony Hale, John Leguizamo and Bill Pullman.

A Christmas Horror Story - There appears to be a big push towards horror-themed festive entertainment this year, especially with Universal's *Krampus* arriving in cinemas in a couple of weeks. This feature features numerous intertwined tales set around the holiday - characters face of against an evil tree, zombie elves, and a demonic anti-Santa (among many others). Notices were decent for this low-budget independent. While just about everyone wrote that tales were hit-and-miss, most believed that the successful ones were entertaining and zippy enough to earn the title a passing grade. It features William Shatner and George Buza.

Cut Snake - Set in the 1970s, this Australian thriller involves an angry ex-con who has just been released from jail and is attempting to restart his life with a new fiancé. Things get complicated when a fellow inmate (with whom he had a relationship while in prison) arrives unexpectedly and recruits the main character to help him burn down a nightclub. Critics gave the movie good notices; while some found it uneven, others praised the film's authentic look and complimented the attempt at a different spin with a familiar plot. Sullivan Stapleton, Alex Russell and Jessica De Gouw take on the lead roles.

No Escape - An American moves with his family to Southeast Asia. No sooner do they arrive than a revolution breaks out, with armed mobs out to kill foreigners. The clan must survive numerous attacks as they flee the country. There was more negative reaction to this thriller/horror flick than there was positive. While the majority found it technically accomplished and tense, more than half found the tone prejudiced and xenophobic in its view towards other nations. It stars Owen Wilson, Lake Bell and Pierce Brosnan.

Ricki and the Flash - An aging and forever-touring rock star decides to return home try and reconnect with her estranged daughter in this comedy/drama written by Diablo Cody (*Juno*) and directed by Jonathan Demme (*Philadelphia*). Reviews were slightly more upbeat than dismissive for this effort. While a few found it to be a run-of-the-mill redemption story, more found the cast charming enough to make it worthwhile.

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The impressive talent involved include Meryl Streep, Rick Springfield, Kevin Kline and Mamie Gummer.

Shaun the Sheep Movie - Kids are certain to get a kick out of this amiable kids film (based on the TV series) from the makers of *Wallace & Gromit*. Using stop-motion animation, it follows the animal residents of a farm who break free and head for the big city. It's only after they arrive that they begin to miss the farm owner and attempt to find their way back, getting into all kinds of trouble along the way. This is the best reviewed film of the week, receiving raves for its impressive animation, charming characters and mischievous streak. As a family entertainment option, you can't go wrong.

Blasts From the Past!

Wow, this is an enormous week for Olive Films - they're releasing Blu-rays of several catalog titles and viewers will be sure to find something that suits their cinematic tastes.

Paul Hogan stars as crook who believes he's been given supernatural powers to help others in the comedy/drama *Almost an Angel* (1990). Critically acclaimed director John Sayles tackles the famous 1919 Chicago Black Sox baseball scandal in the drama, *Eight Men Out*.

It's a very strong film (the cast includes John Cusack, Christopher Lloyd and Michael Rooker among many others) and readers would be well advised to check out a full review of the movie right here.

Heartbreakers (2001) is a romantic comedy about a mother and daughter who run a con to meet men and steal their money. It stars Sigourney Weaver, Jennifer Love Hewitt, Gene Hackman and Ray Liotta. Simon Pegg headlines the New York set dark comedy *How to Lose Friends & Alienate People* (2008).

It Runs in the Family

(2003) is a family drama featuring three generations of the Doulgas brood, Kirk, Michael and Cameron.

But that's not all. *The Kid From Cleveland* (1949) is another baseball drama about a

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professional team who help out a teenager with a troubled home life. Bill Murray fans can pick up *Larger Than Life* (1996), a comedy that pairs the actor with an elephant - it's part of a very strange inheritance. It also features an early appearance from Matthew McConaughey.

And there's more, John Malkovich plays a scientist and robot attempting to woo the same woman in *Making Mr. Right* (1987). *Mr. Saturday Night* (1992) is a drama starring and directed by Billy Crystal depicting the lifelong struggles of a fictional comedy performer.

Of Mice and Men (1992) is a well-regarded adaptation of the John Steinbeck novel that also stars John Malkovich along with Gary Sinise.

Romance & Cigarettes (2005) is a musical comedy directed by John Turturro and starring James Gandolfini, Susan Sarandon and Kate Winslet. There's also a Blu-ray of the Laura Dern coming-of-age drama *Smooth Talk* (1985). Dennis Quaid and Kathleen Turner play ex-spies with newborn babies who end up engaged in work-related shoot-outs in the goofy effort, *Undercover Blues* (1993). Finally, *Voodoo Man* (1944) is a creaky old zombie/ supernatural B-picture that teams Bela Lugosi and John Carradine.

And Kino have some very interesting titles arriving on Blu-ray too. *A Child is Waiting* (1963) is a drama starring Burt Lancaster and Judy Garland about teachers working at a boarding school for developmentally disabled kids.

The Devil's Disciple (1959) is a comedy about a man whose identity is mixed up with another during the Revolutionary War. It features Lancaster along with Kirk Douglas and Laurence Olivier. If you're looking for classic disaster films, one of the first is

The Hurricane (1937). The Oscar winning effort was directed by John Ford and includes Dorothy Lamour, John Hall and John Carradine in a Tahiti-set effort with heavy doses of romance, that climaxes with the title event. It one of the films that set the template for the genre.

There are some fun B-movies arriving as well. *The Incredible 2 Headed Transplant* (1971) is a cheesy, so-bad-it-might-be-good effort that features a scientist who transplants the head of a

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killer onto that of a slow-witted man. Unsurprisingly, it results in a troublesome monster. The cast includes Bruce Dern, pat Priest and Casey Kasem. Finally,

The Mask 3-D

(1961) is noted as one of the first Canadian horror movies. It tells the tale of a psychiatrist who receives a mark from an archeological expedition in the mail, and begins to experience hallucinations and nightmares (resulting in some goofy, trippy 3-D visions).

Shout! Factory also have a couple of cult flicks on the way. *Blood and Lace* (1971) is considered by some cult movie fans as an entertainingly bad terror flick about a teenage girl who is sent to a creepy orphanage after the death of her mother and brother. Just about everyone running the place is deranged and the lead finds herself stalked by a sledgehammer wielding killer. This violent film comes with an audio track featuring a film historian talking about the movie and its impact in the genre.

Ghost Story (1981) didn't get much love upon its theatrical release, but it has found a small following over the years. It follows a group of older gentlemen who find themselves stalked by a vengeful ghost for something that occurred 50 years previous. One of the men's young sons attempts to solve the mystery for himself before everyone meets a nasty end. The cast includes Fred Astaire, Douglas Fairbanks Jr, John Houseman, Melvin Douglas, Craig Wasson and Alice Krige. The Shout! Factory release comes with a director's commentary and new interviews with several of the stars.

As always, there are some impressive art films coming from Criterion. *Don't Look Back* (1967) is a documentary about Bob Dylan, following the musician as he toured the UK in 1965. In addition to a new digital transfer of the title, some of the other numerous bonuses include a commentary track with director D.A. Pennebaker, a documentary about the filmmakers, short non-fiction films from the man, outtakes, interviews with participants and an alternate version of the famous Subterranean Homesick Blues cue card sequence featured in the movie.

Ikiru (1952) is a Japanese film from iconic director Akira Kurosawa. about a bureaucrat who is diagnosed with a terminal illness and attempts to make sense of it all. It also comes with a commentary, a feature length documentary on the move and a production feature including interviews with Kurosawa and other cast and crew members.

You Know, For Kids!

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Here's some entertainment that should please the young ones in your family.

Adventure Time - Finn the Human (Cartoon Network)

Shaun the Sheep: Season 1

Shaun the Sheep Movie

Thomas & Friends: Tales on the Rails