

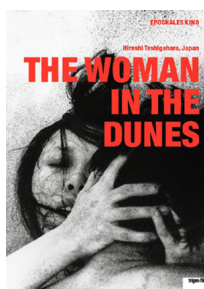
DVD/Blu-ray Roundup for Aug. 26, 2016

Written by By Glenn Kay

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Another week, another impressive grouping of titles arriving on Blu-ray and DVD. Read below to look at all the highlights. Overall, there's an incredible variety of releases in various genres. So if you can't make it out to the movies this week, be sure to give one of these titles a try!

Big New Releases!

Already Tomorrow in Hong Kong - This independent flick is a U.S./China co-production that follows a Chinese American girl who visits Hong Kong, only to fall for an ex-pat. Can their love survive bad timing and the great distance between them? Notices weren't half bad for this romantic feature. Apparently, some found it too slight and uneventful to recommend, but more considered the pretty photography as well as the sweet and breezy tone effective enough to earn a pass. The cast includes Jamie Chung, Bryan Greenberg, and Richard Woo.

The Brainwashing of My Dad - Telling a very personal story, a filmmaker struggles to figure out how her father slowly changed from mild-mannered and apolitical to an angry, right-wing fanatic

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— she noted the change after he discovered talk radio on his commute to work. This documentary attempts to get the bottom of what caused the shift, as well as how media can influence its audience. Despite the interesting concept, reaction was mixed. Many described it as thought-provoking and occasionally insightful, but also commented that it didn't delve as deeply into its subject as it should have and could have presented much stronger arguments.

Clown - Clowns can only mean one thing: creepiness. This project from John Watts (director of *Cop Car*

and the upcoming

Spider-Man: Homecoming

) has been in release limbo for years. It is about a father who dons the red-nosed costume. However, he finds it won't come off and the get-up is forcing him to commit nefarious acts. Reviews were split on this horror picture, with a few more coming down on the negative side. Almost everyone felt it was icky and disturbing, but about half believed it loses its way and falls apart midway through. The movie stars Peter Stormare, Laura Allen, Elizabeth Whitmere, and Eli Roth.

The Duel - This Western involves a Texas Ranger investigating the disappearances of several locals in a small town. The trail leads him to the charismatic leader of a cult religious order. Despite a strong cast of talented and familiar faces, critics didn't respond well to this independent feature. While all complimented the photography and the performance of the villain, the story was roundly picked on for being muddled, confused and slow-moving. It features Woody Harrelson, Liam Hemsworth, Alice Braga, Emory Cohen, and William Sadler.

Lake Eerie - A young widow decides to make a new start and buys an old house on Lake Erie, only to find strange events occurring that begin to test the limits of her sanity. There currently aren't any reviews available for this indie, sci-fi suspense feature. Online however, those who have seen it suggest it's a bit slow-moving and will only appeal to forgiving fans of very low-budget horror flicks. At least it features a turn by genre vet Lance Henriksen. The cast also includes Marilyn Ghigliotti, Betsy Baker, and Meredith Majors.

Maggie's Plan - This independent comedy earned some great notices during its limited release earlier in the year. The story involves a young woman desperate to be a mother, who woos a married man away and ultimately breaks up his marriage. A few years later, she realizes the man she thought she loved is better suited to his original partner and sets out to rectify the situation. While a few write-ups mentioned they didn't care for the characters, overall reaction was excellent. It was called a unique, screwball spin on the romantic comedy, with exceptional performances that make up for any minor missteps. It stars Greta Gerwig, Ethan Hawke,

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Julianne Moore, Travis Fimmel, Bill Hader, and Maya Rudolph.

The Man Who Knew Infinity - Set in 1913, this biopic tells the story of self-taught mathematics genius Srinivasa Ramanujan and his studies at Cambridge, where he overcomes prejudice and becomes a student of G.H. Hardy. Critics gave the drama solid marks, although they stopped a little short of raving about it. Many found it likable and enjoyed the lead performances, but believed the storytelling was a tad pedestrian and the pacing a bit too sluggish for its own good. The movie features a great cast that includes Dev Patel, Jeremy Irons, Stephen Fry, Toby Jones, Jeremy Northam, and Kevin McNally.

Ratchet & Clank - Based on the video game of the same name, this animated tale is an origin story of sorts. It follows a feline mechanic who befriends a sentient robot. Together, they traipse through the galaxy and stop an evil alien overlord from destroying the galaxy. Notices were pretty poor for the feature; while the majority admitted that it may provide some appeal to fans of the game, they also said there wasn't much point to the bland story, and the animation wasn't up to snuff. James Arnold Taylor, David Kaye, Rosario Dawson, Paul Giamatti, John Goodman and Sylvester Stallone provide some of the character voices.

Weiner - This documentary garnered raves during its release in arthouse cinemas a few months back — if you're interested in politics, you'll likely want to check it out. The movie details the bizarre exploits of U.S. Rep. Anthony Weiner and his ill-fated run for mayor of New York in 2013. Obviously, the sex scandal that plagued him is explored as well as other troubles along the way. The movie received high marks for its fast pace and fascinating insight into the mind of a man whose campaign implodes before viewers' eyes. Some even described it as like witnessing a train-wreck that you just can't take your eyes off of.

Wiener-Dog - Prepare yourselves for the darkest of dark comedies with this eccentric effort from filmmaker Todd Solondz (*Welcome to the Dollhouse*, *Happiness*). A small dog moves from owner to owner and introduces viewers to various characters who behave in severely misanthropic ways. Reaction to this one has been extreme, although more have responded positively to it. Some stated it tries too hard to shock and the characters are so awful that it's all impossible to watch; others have called it a biting and downbeat look at the ugly side of humanity. It stars Greta Gerwig, Kieran Culkin, Danny DeVito, Julie Delpy, Ellen Burstyn, and Zosia Mamet.

Blasts From the Past!

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Shout! Factory has a Blu-ray of a personal favorite this week. *Midnight Run* (1988) is a comedy from director Martin Brest (*Beverly Hills Cop*) that teams Robert De Niro and Charles Grodin. De Niro plays a bounty hunter tasked with catching a quirky accountant who has embezzled \$15 million dollars in mob money and returning him across the country. Things don't go according to plan. The movie was a modest success during its original release, but holds up incredibly well. In fact, it's one of the best buddy flicks out there. The interplay between the misfit pairing is exceptional, resulting in a real gem. The disc comes with new interviews with De Niro, Grodin, Joe Pantoliano, John Ashton, Yaphet Kotto, and writer George Gallo, as well as a vintage featurette and trailer. If you've never seen it, it comes highly recommended.

Kino also has some Blu-rays featuring titles from a variety of eras. *American Dreamer* (1984) was a romantic comedy with JoBeth Williams, Tom Conti, and Giancarlo Giannini. It's about a housewife on a Paris trip who bumps her head and wakes up believing she's the lead character from her favorite series of spy novels. Naturally, she gets herself as well as the book's author involved in an actual adventure.

Chandu the Magician (1932) is a fantasy about a scientist who is kidnapped by a nasty megalomaniac (played by Bela Lugosi) and must stop the villain's fiendish scheme for world domination. *Modesty Blaise* (1966) is a British spy spoof set in the Mediterranean with a female agent out to thwart the efforts of a diamond thief. It stars Monica Vitti and Terence Stamp. Finally, you can also pick up a Blu-ray of Fritz Lang's *The Spiders* (1919). The set includes two German productions in which an adventure-seeker takes on a couple of daring missions: one to Peru to find gold and another where he must stop an evil organization from stealing a priceless diamond.

Not to be outdone, Criterion has a couple of noteworthy Blu-rays of their own. *A Taste of Honey* (1961) is a British coming-of-age tale (based on a play) about a teenager in Blackpool who befriends a gay co-worker and fathers a child with a black sailor. This release includes an impressive 4K transfer, new interviews with stars Rita Tushingham and Murray Melvin, interviews with the director and screenwriter, a feature about the play's origins and themes, as well as other bonuses.

The distributor is also bringing *Woman in the Dunes* (1964) to Blu-ray. The Japanese drama

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involves an entomologist out collecting insects who finds himself trapped in a sandpit on the property of a local widow. He soon discovers he's been ensnared on purpose and expected to become the woman's permanent caretaker. It comes restored with a video essay on the feature, as well as four shorts from director Hiroshi Teshigahara, and a retrospective on the production.

Finally, Arrow has *The Bloodstained Butterfly* (1971), an Italian Giallo (which are pulpy murder mysteries) about a man convicted of a murder he didn't commit. His daughter tries to clear his name and becomes the primary target of the real killer, a madman who is driven to slaughter whenever he hears the musical compositions of Tchaikovsky. The Blu-ray/DVD combo has a new transfer, an audio commentary with horror film critics, shorts on the director of the film, as well as featurettes on the production and other bonuses. Sounds like it could be a fun one.

You Know, For Kids!

Here are some titles that may appeal to kids.

ABC Monsters: Party in Capital Castle! Starring Mnop: Volume 4

DC's Legends of Tomorrow: Season 1

Ratchet & Clank

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