

DVD/Blu-ray Roundup for Dec. 16, 2016

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
Friday, 16 December 2016 10:14



It's another busy week filled with a wide variety of releases arriving on DVD and Blu-ray. 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!

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Ben-Hur - This lavish and expensive remake of the of the 1959 Charlton Heston classic tanked at the box office and with critics. It uses a great deal of CGI to update the tale of a prince falsely accused of treason who returns to his homeland to seek revenge. Critics suggested that while the spectacle was still grand, the movie was otherwise unremarkable and dramatically flat. Now viewers can make up their own minds. It stars Jack Huston, Tony Kebbell, Rodrigo Santoro, Nazanin Boniadi and Morgan Freeman.

Bridget Jones's Baby - The third movie in the *Bridget Jones* series (after the much admired original from 2001 and terribly received first sequel in 2004) finds the title character separated from Mr. Darcy and attracting the attention of a wealthy new suitor. Events become complicated when she gets pregnant and isn't sure who the father is. Most reviews found it funnier than the previous film, but also admitted that it was slight and only mildly enjoyable in comparison to the original. Renee Zellweger, Colin Firth, Jim Broadbent and Gemma Jones return, alongside newcomers Patrick Dempsey and Emma Thompson.

Equity - An investment banker uncovers a tech company scandal and must clean up the mess while identifying the persons responsible in this independent drama. Of course, the problems are deep and multi-layered as Federal Agents get involved in the process and begin to threaten the protagonist's own career. Notices were very good, complimenting the performances for their detailed character work and appreciating the tale's unique perspective. It features Anna Gunn, James Purefoy, Sarah Megan Thomas, Alysia Reiner and Craig Bierko.

Florence Foster Jenkins - The world's worst opera singer is the subject of this comedic period biopic from director Stephen Frears (*Dangerous Liaisons*, *High Fidelity*,

The Queen

,
Philomena

). It follows a New York socialite who doesn't let a complete lack of talent prevent her from living her dream to perform in public. Overall, the press were very positive about the endeavor, calling it an entertaining and upbeat romp that manages to deliver a warm and emotional finale. It stars Meryl Streep, Hugh Grant, Simon Helberg and Rebecca Ferguson.

I Am Not a Serial Killer - This small, independent thriller certainly bears some similarity to the TV series *Dexter*. It involves a teenager with the homicidal tendencies of a serial killer who attempts to keep his deepest, darkest urges in check. Eventually, the lead must use his skills to help identify another killer in the neighborhood. Reviews were very strong, suggesting that it was an entertaining little film possessing a unique voice and that sets it apart

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from other titles of its ilk. The cast includes Max Records, Christopher Lloyd, Laura Fraser and Karl Geary.

Miss Peregrine's Home For Peculiar Children - A teen watches his grandfather get attacked by a strange creature and decides to investigate his elder's wild stories he's been told to see if they are true. Of course, they are real and the youth is introduced to bizarre peers with unique talents. The latest from director Tim Burton (

an *Batm*
eetlejuice , *B*

,
Edward Scissorhands

,
Frankenweenie

) earned more positive reviews than negative. A few felt that it was overstuffed and could've benefited from more time with the characters, but overall most called it a fun, lively and heartfelt adventure flick for the whole family. It stars Eva Green, Asa Butterfield, Chris O'Dowd, Allison Janney and Terrence Stamp.

Southside With You - Barack and Michelle Obama are the subjects of this tale, which is set in 1989 and focused on the first date between the future US President and First Lady. The story follows a day with them in Chicago. This small, independent drama received a lot of praise over the summer, although it hasn't really gotten much a push during this awards season. Critics believed that it was a sweet film with a big heart that resonates with deeper themes and meaning. It stars Tika Sumpter, Parker Sawyers, Vanessa Bell Calloway and Phillip Edward Van Lear.

Suicide Squad - In this DC Comics adaptation, a group of imprisoned super-villains are recruited by the government for an incredibly dangerous mission. It was a big hit at the box office this summer... but that's about where most of the positives end. This movie was ripped apart by the majority of critics and audience reaction wasn't much better. The story was blasted for being thin and full of holes and most felt that the excellent cast were stranded in sub-par material. It features Will Smith, Jared Leto, Margot Robbie, Joel Kinnaman, Viola Davis, Cara Delevingne, Jai Courtney, Adewale Akinnuoye-Agbaje and Jay Hernandez.

Blasts From the Past!

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Wow! There's a ton of interesting titles this week. Arrow Video always load their horror and cult movie titles with bonuses and their newest Blu-rays are no exception. *Creepshow 2* (1987) is the follow-up to the 1982 anthology horror hit that features new tales of the macabre. The disc comes with plenty of cast and crew interviews as well as other notable extras.

Also scheduled this week from Arrow is *Hellraiser: The Scarlet Box Limited Edition Trilogy*. It contains new, high definition transfers of the first three films in the

Hellraiser

series. Frankly, you really don't need to watch any more after the third. This includes

Hellraiser

(1987),

Hellbound: Hellraiser II

(1988) and

Hellraiser III: Hell on Earth

(1992). That's a whole lot of different kinds of Hell. All have audio commentaries and there are so many other extras (including an unrated version of III and lengthy documentaries and interviews about the production on all three films) that there's just too much to list here. There's even a bonus disc with bonuses about series creator Clive Barker. If you want to learn more, just check out this link.

And we're just getting started. Scream Factory! are keeping things festive with a Collector's Edition Blu-ray of *Black Christmas* (1974). This one helped introduce North America to the slasher genre; it involves a group of college students being stalked by a mysterious killer. Their inept boyfriends and a less-than-effective police force leave the women fending for themselves. It's actually quite effective and scary, thanks to the efficient work of director Bob Clark (

Deathdream

,

Porky's

,

A Christmas Story

). This 2 disc set is loaded with features like multiple audio commentaries, footage from a 40th anniversary screening, interviews with cast and crew members, archival interviews and advertising and loads more.

Additionally, they have a Collector's Edition Blu-ray of the cult, sci-fi/adventure/horror flick, *Dreamscape*

(1984). It's about a man with psychic, dream-sharing capabilities who travels into the nightmares of others. The hero attempts to help the US President, who is being tormented by an evil presence in his sleep. While the effects may seem a bit dated by today's standards, this is a solid picture with plenty of thrills and chills. The impressive cast includes Dennis Quaid,

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Max Von Sydow, Christopher Plummer, Kate Capshaw, Eddie Albert and David Patrick Kelly. Besides an impressive transfer, the disc includes an audio commentary and numerous new bonus interviews with Quaid and the rest of the cast and crew, reflecting on the production. And there are some other bonuses too.

The Man Called Noon (1973) is a western with Richard Crenna about a gunfighter with amnesia who attempts to find out how he lost his memory and why. When I was a kid, I was a big fan of the goofy comedy *Moving Violations* (1985), which followed a bunch of eccentrics forced to attend remedial traffic school after various comic mishaps on the road. It starred Bill Murray's younger brother John Murray, along with Jennifer Tilly, James Keach and Fred Willard. I'm looking forward to revisiting it, although I imagine the movie doesn't hold up particularly well. Still, those looking for some 80s nostalgia may get a kick out of it.

Finally, Kino are bringing the little-known movie *The Park is Mine* (1985) to Blu-ray. It stars Tommy Lee Jones and Helen Shaver and is about a Vietnam vet who decides to seize control of Central Park to bring attention to those who served in the war. If Tommy Lee Jones wants the park, then you can be damn sure he's gonna have it. I've never seen this one, but it sounds intriguing.

Criterion also have some Blu-rays of classic titles filled with extras. They include the classic film-noir, *The Asphalt Jungle* (1950), starring Sterling Hayden and directed by the great John Huston (*The Maltese Falcon*, *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre*, *The African Queen*).
Roma (1972) is from filmmaker Federico Fellini and is an Italian-language feature about the various goings on in the Italian city. Expect loads of bonuses with both of these titles.

Whew boy! Shriek Show have a real stinker coming your way, if you're a fan of the worst in cinema... and let's face it, a lot of us are. You'll now be able to purchase and enjoy *Dracula Vs. Frankenstein* (1971) in high definition. It's an absolutely terrible, low-budget, drive-in oddity which features a much lamer-than-it-sounds showdown between the two legendary horror characters. The only way to describe it is... painful.

You Know, For Kids!

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Here are some picks for the youngsters.

Jungle Emperor Leo

Pound Puppies: Puppy Party

Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles: Earth's Last Stand

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