

DVD/Blu-ray Roundup for Feb. 3, 2017

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Friday, 03 February 2017 06:46



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Hello! It's time once again to take look at what's arriving on DVD and Blu-ray. This edition includes some notable releases in a variety of genres that will interest many readers. 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!

Boo! A Madea Halloween - The latest in Tyler Perry's long-running series features the actor playing three roles, including that of the title character. This time out, Madea must endure the holiday chaos and set some misbehaving teenagers straight. Of course, she also encounters a few frights along the way. As expected, reviews weren't very strong, although they didn't seem quite as severe this time out. It has been described as tonally inconsistent and bizarre in turns, but generally a little lighter and more effective than other titles featuring Madea. It stars Perry, Cassi Davis, Patrice Lovely, Yousef Erakat, Bella Thorne and Tyga.

Danny Says - Music aficionados may get a kick out of this documentary. It chronicles the life of music manager and promoter Danny Fields. The film features recollections, reflections and stories on the business from the man himself. He shares how he discovered and worked with bands like The Doors, The Stooges, The Ramones and Lou Reed (among many others). This effort received good notices. Several did complain that it was a surface-level biography, but plenty felt that it overcame its technical issues with some fascinating tales about the biz.

Gimme Danger - If you like documentaries about music, this is your week. In this effort, director Jim Jarmusch (*Mystery Train*, *Coffee & Cigarettes*, *Only Lovers Left Alive* and most recently, *Paterson*) tells the rise, fall and reunion of the band Iggy and the Stooges. He uses interviews with the likes of lead singer Iggy Pop and others, as well as archival footage. It all shows the band's influence over the years, as well as the toll their lifestyle took on them. Critics raved about it. They called Pop a great subject, openly humorous and honest about his time with the band, and the documentary itself illuminating and entertaining.

Jack Reacher: Never Go Back - Based on the popular book series, this sequel to 2012's *Jack Reacher* finds the central character and fugitive returning to Washington, D.C. He arrives to clear his

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name as well as an old friend blamed for a crime she didn't commit. Along the way, the pair uncover a conspiracy and help a teen who may be Reacher's daughter. This follow-up garnered mixed-negative reviews. While a few appreciated it as old-school thriller, most grumbled that it was predictable and that the attempts at softening the character played in a corny fashion. It stars Tom Cruise, Cobie Smulders, Danika Yarosh and Patrick Heusinger.

Masterminds - Believe it or not, this bizarre comedy is loosely based on a true story. It's about an naive armored car company employee who is convinced by acquaintances to help them pull a bank heist. He's immediately set up as the fall guy and goes on the run to avoid capture. Most didn't appreciate the slapstick or dim-witted characters on display, calling it unfunny. However, a few did enjoy the caricatures, awkward humor and absurdities on display. The cast includes Zach Galifianakis, Owen Wilson, Kristin Wiig, Ken Marino, Jason Sukeikis, Kate McKinnon and Leslie Jones.

Queen of Katwe - This feel-good, true-life biopic from Disney and director Mira Nair (*Monsoon Wedding* ,

The Namesake

) is about a Ugandan girl from the slums who takes up chess. As it turns out, she's a natural at the game. Her coach attempts to empower the girl and others in his club by having them compete in some big tournaments. The press complimented the film on its efforts, calling it an uplifting underdog story that may inspire kids of all backgrounds to achieve the impossible (or at least take up chess). It features David Oyelowo, Lupita Nyong'o and Madina Nalwanga.

BLASTS FROM THE PAST!

It's another great week for classic releases, particularly if you appreciate genre pictures. We'll get to those in just a minute. First of all, Disney are releasing one of the most famous and beloved animated features of all time on Blu-ray. *Pinocchio* (1940) is arriving as part of the studio's Signature Collection line, which means that the tale of a wooden puppet who wants to be a real boy will arrive not just looking great, but also with plenty of bonuses. They're listed as featurettes, called When You Wish Upon a Star, Walt's Story Meetings: Pleasure Island and In Walt's World.

On the cult movie side, Shout! Factory are bringing Blu-rays of the two sequels to the 1982 haunted house hit, *Poltergeist*. The first is *Poltergeist II: The Other Side* (1986) which features the Freeling family recovering from their first terrifying ordeal. Unfortunately, as soon as they

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arrive in a new location, they attract the attention of the ghostly Reverend Kane (Julian Beck), who begins to stalk youngest child, Carol Anne (Heather O'Rourke). The movie also features the characters traveling through a dimensional portal to the afterlife. Honestly, it's not a very good movie, but Beck is a fantastic foe that offers horror fans some creepy delights. This Collector's Edition comes with a new scan of the film and other exclusives that include two audio commentaries, multiple featurettes on the production as well as advertising materials.

You can complete your set with *Poltergeist III* (1988). This one only features Carol Anne, joining her aunt (Nancy Allen) and uncle (Tom Skerritt) in a luxury high-rise in Chicago. The Kane character returns, attempting a new supernatural attack on the youngster. This is a really silly one and is by far the weakest in the series. However, it should provide some amusement for scare enthusiasts. This Collector's Edition arrives with new high definition of the feature and two new audio commentaries. It also includes interviews and featurettes with filmmakers and cast members, as well as an alternate ending and publicity materials.

LionsGate have a couple of new Blu-ray releases as part of their Vestron Collector's Edition line. Both were released though the Vestron label on VHS in the 80s and both are very eccentric. *The Lair of the White Worm* (1988) comes from Ken Russell (*The Devils*, *Tommy*, *Altered States*) and is a kinky adaptation of the Bram Stoker novel. It follows an archeologist who unearths an ancient skull and must fight off a cult of worm worshippers led by an aristocratic priestess. It features a great cast that includes Amanda Donohoe, Peter Capaldi and Hugh Grant. Wild stuff.

They also have the satirical comic creeper, *Parents* (1989). This one is set in the 50s and is about a young boy living in an all-American suburb. The alienated kid can't help but harbor suspicions that his otherwise square guardians (played by Randy Quaid and Mary Beth Hurt) are actually cannibals.

Warner Archive are delivering a made-to-order Blu-ray as well, for the Judy Holliday/ Dean Martin musical, *Bells are Ringing* (1960). On the DVD front, you can go to their website and order the romances *Desirable* (1934) and *Easy to Love* (1934) as well as the drama, *Journal of a Crime* (1934). They have a Lyle Talbot crime film with a great title in the form of *Red Hot Tires* (1935) as well as the Errol Flynn western/romance, *Silver River* (1948).

Moving back to genre pictures, One 7 Movies are releasing a Blu-ray of the Italian horror flick, *The Wax Mask*

(1997). The movie was directed by special effects artist Sergio Stivaletti (known for his gruesome work on *Demons*

,
Opera

,
The Church

and
Cemetery Man

) from a Dario Argento story and a screenplay by Lucio Fulci. Naturally, it's about a mysterious killer stalking his prey in a Parisian wax museum. Despite the pedigree, I don't really remember being impressed with the results when I saw it back in the day. Wouldn't mind catching up with it again to see how it holds up though, and I'm certain many Italian horror movie fans will feel the same way.

This one sounds like an awful lot of fun. *The Black Dragon's Revenge* (1975) is coming to Blu-ray as a Special Edition courtesy of The Film Detective. It's a blaxploitation flick starring Ron Van Clief as a martial artist out to find a hidden "finger fighting" manual written by the late Bruce Lee. To obtain the secrets, he travels and faces off against various gangs and thugs, not to mention some nasty film producers(!).

Finally, Synapse have a 3-film Blu-ray set called the *Coffin Joe Trilogy Collection*. These independent Brazilian efforts involves a sinister gravedigger known as Coffin Joe. The titles include

Midnight I'll Take Your Soul

(1964),

This Night I Will Possess Your Corpse

(1967) as well as the finale,

Embodiment of Evil

(2008), shot nearly 40 years after the previous installment. The box comes with too many extras to list here.

YOU KNOW, FOR KIDS!

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Classic Disney is the sole highlight for kids this time out.

Pinocchio: Signature Collection (Disney)

ON THE TUBE!

And here are the TV-themed releases - looks like most distributors are standing aside for *Game of Thrones* this week. Enjoy, along with some great trailers further down.

Ballers: Season 2

Dr. Who: The Power of the Daleks

Game of Thrones: Season 5

Masterpiece: Victoria (PBS)

Mystery Science Theater 3000: Vol. 4

Silk: Season 3

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