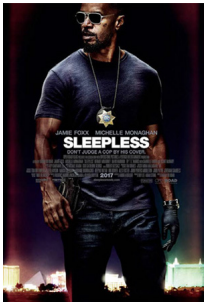


DVD/Blu-ray Roundup for April 21, 2017

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
Friday, 21 April 2017 03:49



It's time for another look at the highlights arriving on DVD and Blu-ray. This is a busy edition with new releases that include hit films and curious independent fare. There are also great older features coming your way. 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!

Before the Flood - This documentary from actor/director Fisher Stevens was produced by Leonardo DiCaprio and follows the Oscar winner as he talks to experts about climate change. The feature shows how increasing temperatures are affecting the environment around us and ruining ecosystems. It also gives examples of what we can do to help stop it from happening and prevent some of the negative repercussions. On the whole, critics liked the film. There were a few who stated that it could have done with more concrete solutions, but the majority found it to be a well-intentioned effort that presented some strong ideas at combating the problem.

Bigger Fatter Liar - Anyone out there remember the 2002 comedy Frankie Muniz comedy *Big Fat Liar*

? This direct-to-DVD sequel features a character with the same last name as the hero from the first film (so there must be some familial relation). In this story, the lead is a teenage tech genius who has his video game idea stolen by a greedy businessman. He travels to Seattle to take his revenge via a series of pranks. No one has seen the film as of yet, so interested parties will just have to throw caution to the wind and give it a try without any info. It stars Ricky Garcia, Jodelle Ferland and Barry Bostwick.

A Cowgirl's Story - In this family drama, a teenage girl moves to live with her grandfather on a ranch after her parents are called across the Ocean for military service. New to town, she tries to make friends, eventually forming an equestrian team. After hearing bad news from abroad, the group decides to put on a public show to benefit soldiers. This independent production appears to made for the straight-to-DVD market, so there are no reviews or advance word on the film as of yet. The cast includes Bailee Madison, Chloe Lukasiak and Pat Boone.

The Duelist - This period, foreign-language feature is set in the 19th century and involves a mysterious hired gun who settles aristocratic disputes by fighting duels for them. As it turns out, the man isn't just doing it for the cash; he has a long-standing personal grudge against

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someone in town and is drawing closer to taking revenge. This Russian film was shot in IMAX, which makes it unfortunate that it is only debuting on disc in North America. Notices were mixed, with some referring to it as silly, violent and melodramatic, and others suggesting it was incredibly stylish and amusingly exaggerated. It features Pyotr Fyodorov, Vladimir Mashkov, Yuliya Khlynina and Yuri Kolokolnikov.

The Founder - Businessman Ray Kroc is the subject of this biopic. For those who don't know, he was the driving force behind the success and growth of McDonald's fast-food restaurant chain. The picture depicts his struggles, success and attempts to take the company over from his co-founders. There were some who believed that the movie should have gotten darker and explored the subject's nastier traits, but the press generally liked the film overall. In particular, they complimented the compelling lead performance. It stars Michael Keaton, Nick Offerman, John Carroll Lynch, Linda Cardellini, B.J. Novak, Laura Dern and Patrick Wilson.

Punching Henry - This independent comedy involves a comedian who decides to try his luck in Los Angeles after a TV producer promises to cast him as the star of a reality program. Unfortunately, the intent of the show seems to be to paint him as a "loser" and the lead must decide if the embarrassing nature of the gig is worth the fame. Write-ups were positive, calling it an understated, but amusing and well-observed look at the dark side of reality-TV. They also were impressed with the incredible cast, which includes Henry Phillips, Tig Notaro, J.K. Simmons, Sarah Silverman, Mike Judge, Jim Jefferies, Clifton Collins Jr. and Derek Waters.

Sleepless - A Las Vegas cop with a crooked partner is talked into helping his buddy pull a heist. Big mistake! The officer soon discovers that the goods have been taken from a mafia outfit aligned with a casino. His son is kidnapped and the protagonist must return the goods that night if he ever wants to see his boy alive again. Reviews were quite poor for this action/thriller remake of the 2011 French film, *Sleepless Night*. Apparently, the original blows it out of the water in every conceivable way. This one was described as having a very flawed script full of gaping plot holes and pedestrian action scenes. It stars Jamie Foxx, Michele Monaghan, Demot Mulroney, David Harbour, T.I., Gabrielle Union and Scoot McNairy.

Split - The latest suspense/thriller from director M. Night Shyamalan (*The Sixth Sense*, *Unbreakable*, *Si*
gns
,
The Village
,
The Visit

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) follows a teenager invited out by schoolgirls in her class. When the group are kidnapped and taken hostage by an unstable individual with multiple personality disorder, she must desperately attempt to free herself from his clutches. This one was a hit at the box office and impressed more members of the press than it left cold. There were some who found the story distasteful, but most found the lead performance exceptional and believed the film maintained an effective level of dread throughout. It features James McAvoy, Anya Taylor-Joy, Betty Buckley and Haley Lu Richardson.

BLASTS FROM THE PAST!

Wow, it's another busy week with plenty of classic titles getting a high definition upgrade. Arrow Video have three titles hitting Blu-ray this week. The first is a 4-disc special edition of the incredible cult feature, *Donnie Darko* (2001). This release includes new 4K restorations of the theatrical and director's cuts of the movie. You'll also get multiple audio commentaries, an all new documentary on the film, a short from director Richard Kelly, deleted and alternate scene, archive materials, music videos, B-roll footage and much, much more. It essentially contains every conceivable extra you could possibly imagine or hope for. Oh, and the movie is pretty fantastic as well. It stars Jake Gyllenhaal as a teen who begins experiencing strange phenomena after a jet engine falls out of the sky - in particular the appearance of a strange and threatening figure in a bunny suit. The set contains both Blu-rays and DVDs of the contents, so you can watch the film on either format.

They also have the horror picture *The Night Evelyn Came Out of the Grave* (1971) is an Italian feature in the "giallo" mold. It's about a wealthy English lord who loses his wife. When he decides to remarry, family members visit and begin turning up dead. But is he killing them? Or his new bride...? Or is it something of a more supernatural nature? This Blu-ray includes a 2K restoration, critic interviews and commentary, interviews with some of the cast and publicity materials. Finally Arrow have

The Red Queen Kills Seven Times

(1972). This one involves an ancient curse that begins to take its toll on the members of another clan. Or, could the deaths be the result of a real person who wants to do the family harm? Besides the new 2K transfer, this one has bonuses that include a critic audio commentary and interview, as well as features with cast and crew members, archival interviews and featurettes, an alternate opening and trailers.

Art film offshoot Arrow Academy are also releasing *The Assassin* (1961) as a two-disc Blu-ray/DVD combo. This is a highly acclaimed Italian film with Marcello Mastroianni as a man whose life comes under scrutiny by a police force after the death of his older lover. It's a critique

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of social and political morals of the era and arrives with a 2K restoration, an introduction about the film and documentary on its screenwriter.

Shout! Factory have some interesting titles coming to Blu-ray too. *Contamination .7* aka *The Crawlers*

(1993) is an Italy/Canada/US co-production that lands firmly in the realm of B-movie horror. The story follows characters who dump nuclear waste into a forest. The tree roots become carnivorous, attacking campers and townspeople. Apparently, it's really bad but might provide cheeseball laughs for some viewers. The movie arrives with a new, sharp transfer.

On a different note, *The Handmaid's Tale* (1990) is an adaptation of the Margaret Atwood book, set in a religious rightwing future where the environment is polluted and where human fertility has become rare. A woman who believes can conceive is placed within a family to reproduce. However, when she discovers that she is also sterile, her life is threatened. This one comes as a Blu-ray/DVD combo. Finally, you can pick up a Collector's Edition of *Tales From the Hood*

(1995). This horror anthology with a socio-political slant that features four creepy tales. They include zombies taking out racist cops, monsters striking out against child abusers and voodoo dolls possessing the souls of murdered slaves. As low-budget anthologies go, this one is pretty solid, with a couple of excellent segments.

Criterion have extras-packed Blu-rays of two titles. There's the Wim Wenders music documentary *Buena Vista Social Club* (1999), in which several Cuban musicians are brought out of retirement to collaborate on new music. They also have *Woman of the Year*

(1942), a romantic comedy with Katharine Hepburn and Spencer Tracy about bickering new reporters who get married. This disc contains an 86 minute documentary on Tracy from 1986 and new interviews with those who knew the stars.

Believe it or not, it has been quite a while since the comedy *A League of Their Own* (1992) arrived in cinemas. Sony are releasing a 25th Anniversary Blu-ray to commemorate it. The story follows the formation of a female baseball league during WWII and features Tom Hanks, Geena Davis, Lori Petty, Madonna, Rosie O'Donnell, Jon Lovitz, Bill Pullman and many other. In addition to previous bonuses on the last version that arrived 5 years ago, there's a new feature about the legacy of the movie featuring a new interview with Davis.

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Warner Archives are putting out a couple of Blu-rays for a pair of westerns. They include the lighthearted title *The Rounders* (1965) with Glenn Ford and Henry Fonda, and *Spencer's Mountain* (1963) with Fonda and Maureen O'Hara. On DVD, you can now order these out-of-print films; the Kevin Costner cycling drama *American Flyers* (1985), *Amongst Friends* (1993), the comedies *Book Of Love* (1990), *Dog Park* (1999) and *Forget Paris* (1995), as well as the ensemble *Storytelling* (2001). The last disc mentioned contains both the R-rated and Unrated versions of the film.

Finally, Kino are putting out Blu-rays of the Jimmy Stewart western, *Broken Arrow* (1950) and the Rock Hudson adaptation of the Ernest Hemingway novel, *A Farewell to Arms* (1957). They've also got the film-noir *The Scar* (1948) aka *Hollow Triumph* and *Sunset in the West* (1950) with Roy Rogers and his best horse-pal, Trigger.

YOU KNOW, FOR KIDS!

Here are some titles that kids might enjoy.

BabyFirst: Let's Play!

Mia and Me: Season 1, Vol. 1

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Pound Puppies: Lucky Time

Teen Titans: The Judas Contract

ON THE TUBE!

And you'll find some of the TV-related releases coming your way below.

800 Words: Season 2, Part 1

American Experience: Ruby Ridge (PBS)

Chrisley Knows Best: Season 1

Hawaii Five-O: The Complete Series (original 1968-1980 show)

John Lewis - Get in the Way (PBS)

Killjoys: Season 2

Masterpiece: Home Fires: Season 2

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Mia and Me: Season 1, Vol. 1

When Calls the Heart: Heart of Truth (Hallmark)

Years of Living Dangerously: Season 2 (National Geographic)

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