

DVD/Blu-ray Roundup for Dec. 8, 2017

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Welcome back to another look at highlights arriving on Blu-ray and DVD. There's some really interesting stuff coming... everything from family pictures to horror and even documentary. 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!

American Assassin - Based on the series of books, this action/thriller involves a young man who turns into a muscular vigilante after a group of terrorists kill his girlfriend. The hero is hired by the US government to be trained as a secret operative. His first task involves stopping a villain out to start war in the Middle East. Reaction to the feature was muted. The film was complimented for some of its action scenes, yet the majority complained that the story was lacking and that it wasn't memorable enough to recommend. It stars Dylan O'Brien, Michael Keaton, Sanaa Lathan, Taylor Kitsch and Shiva Negar.

Better Watch Out - Horror fans who want to get into the holiday spirit may enjoy this effort. It's about a babysitter who decides to work at a neighborhood home during the Christmas season. When threatening intruders break in, she does all she can to protect the children of the house, but soon learns that all may not be what it initially seems. Reviews were better than average for this genre picture. There were a few who derided it for being vicious and nasty, but most described it as an effective, funny and disturbing variation on the home-invasion scare flick. The cast includes Olivia DeJonge, Levi Miller, Ed Oxenbould, Patrick Warburton and Virginia Madsen.

Crash Pad - In this comedy, a romantic thinks he's found the love of his life after falling for an older married woman. He soon discovers that she's only using him to get revenge on her spouse. When the lead comes clean to the husband, they begin a friendship and decide to move in together in order to annoy the lady who pitted them against each other. Critics were split on final results. Half found the leads and their situation likable enough to earn the movie a pass, while the remainder found the humor forced and the story by-the-numbers. It features Domhnall Gleeson, Thomas Haden Church, Christina Applegate and Nina Dobrev.

The Crucifixion - The filmmakers behind this possession flick claim that the events depicted are based on a true story. In it, a journalist out to prove that demons aren't real interviews a priest who has been locked away after his exorcism results in a death. While investigating the case, the writer discovers that the pastor's tale wasn't as exaggerated as he initially thought. Critics hated this effort. In fact, there hasn't been a single positive review as of yet. It has been criticized for being dull and uneventful exercise that will quickly tire out even the most patient of viewers. Sophie Cookson and Corneliu Ulici headline the feature.

Endless Poetry - The latest from arthouse and cult film director Alejandro Jodorowsky (*El Topo*,

The Holy Mountain

,
Santa Sangre

) is a biopic about the filmmaker's early days as a young poet in Chile. It depicts the conflict between himself and his authoritarian father as well as his days mingling in the art world with other young creative-types. Critics were quite positive about this foreign-language feature. A few found the movie to be an acquired taste, but almost all others complimented the unique and bizarre images in addition to the ideas presented. The cast includes Adan Jodorowsky (playing his father), Pamela Flores and Leandro Taub.

Guardians - Here's an odd one... this foreign-language, Russian superhero film is about a team of special guardians (including one who is a half-bear, half-man) who were created during the Cold War. Decades later, a scientist creates a serum that gives him incredible powers to control machines. Naturally, he wants to take control of the world. Now in hiding, the group is brought out of retirement to take on the foe. This comic book style effort hasn't been reviewed in this part of the world and is making its debut on DVD. It was a bit of flop in Russia and online reviews have suggested that it is quite silly, but that the action is well-done. Anton Pampushnyy, Sanjar Madi, Sebastien Sisak and Alina Lanina play the team members.

On Wings of Eagles - This biopic follows the life of Olympian Eric Liddell (who was also featured in the 1981 film, *Chariots of Fire*). The religious Scot won the United Kingdom a gold medal in the 400m and didn't compete in other events because he refused to run on Sundays. As one might have guessed, he spent a great deal of his life as a missionary. The story follows him as he returns to the country of his birth, China, and his efforts to help comrades as Japanese forces invade. This China/USA co-production only received a limited release here and didn't get many reviews; the ones that have appeared suggest the story was interesting but the execution lacking. It stars Joseph Fiennes, Shawn Dou and Augusta Xu-Holland.

The Osiris Child - An interplanetary ex-con and a space lieutenant team up and traverse across the universe in this Australian science-fiction picture. Their mission is to rescue the lieutenant's daughter, who has been kidnapped by nasty alien forces. Members of the press who reviewed it were fairly complimentary. There were comments that it couldn't compare to its big-budget counterparts, but several were pleasantly surprised by what the cast and crew were able to pull off on a limited budget. They suggested that it was a fun, pulpy B-movie. It features Kellan Lutz, Daniel MacPherson, Luke Ford, Isabel Lucas and Rachel Griffiths.

Santoalla - This foreign-language documentary/mystery involves the story of a Dutch couple who moved to a remote farming community in Spain to live off of the land and away from

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modern distractions. Unfortunately, they also ran afoul of the locals, leading to the disappearance of one of the new arrivals. The doc attempts to get to the bottom of what happened. Critics like the film a great deal. A few members of the press didn't find the mystery engaging, but the majority were captivated by the events and believed that the deeper themes may resonate with viewers.

Blasts from the Past!

Olive Signature, a line of releases from Olive Film that features upgraded transfers of classic films with numerous bonuses, has two new Blu-ray releases this week. The first is *Letter from an Unknown Woman* (1948). It's about a womanizing concert pianist who receives a note from a past love and learns that his actions in the past may result in a tragedy. Besides a new 4K restoration, it arrives with a film historian commentary track, as well as several featurettes on the making of the movie and a detailed analysis of some of the themes presented.

They also have the Elaine May comedy, *A New Leaf* (1971). In it, Walter Matthau plays a wealthy, snobby socialite who goes broke and tries to solve his financial woes by marrying rich and possibly murdering his new bride. He picks a smart but clumsy mark (played by writer/director May), who influences the snooty New Yorker in ways he would never have expected. This disc includes another film expert commentary as well as an interview with the movie's assistant editor about the lost, extended cut, a trailer, a talk with Amy Heckling (*Fast Times at Ridgemont High*

,
Clueless
) about female directors and other extras.

Arrow Video is releasing a Blu-ray of the *The Witch Who Came from the Sea* (1976), an unusual horror film about an abused child turned troubled woman and a series of murders that follow as she hits adulthood. It arrives with a 2K restoration, producer audio commentary and other extras.

Shout! Factory has a season release with the psycho Santa picture, *Silent Night, Deadly Night* (1984). There are two versions coming your way. A Deluxe Edition that comes with an action figure and a two disc "Collector's Edition." The camera negative has been rescanned at 4K (apparently, it looks fantastic) and the Blu-ray includes the theatrical and unrated cuts of the

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feature, multiple audio commentaries as well as interviews with the cast and crew.

Severin is putting out a Blu-ray set of *The Amicus Collection*. It includes the anthology horror film *Asylum* (1972), *And Now the Screaming Starts!* (1973) as well as *The Beast Must Die* (1974). It also comes with a documentary about the British studio called *The Vault of Amicus* (2015).

You Know, For Kids!

Here are some releases that kids might enjoy.

Despicable Me 3

Illumination 3-Movie Collection: Despicable Me, Despicable Me 2, Despicable Me 3

The Octonauts: Season 1

Piggy Tales: Holiday Heist

On the Tube!

And you'll find the week's TV-themed releases below.

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Dickensian (BBC)

Fargo: Season 3

One Day at a Time: The Complete Series

The Simpsons: Season 18

Twin Peaks: A Limited Series Event

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