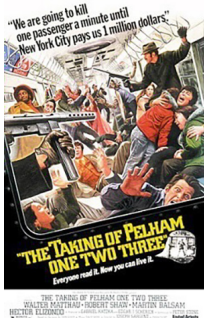


Blu-ray/DVD Roundup for December 23, 2022

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
Friday, 30 December 2022 06:34



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Welcome to another look at some of the highlights arriving on Blu-ray and DVD. Due to the upcoming holiday, this edition isn't quite as busy as others, but it does contain two major Oscar contenders and a few alternate releases. So, if you can't make it out to the movies this week, need to spend time indoors or require some recovery time from festivities, be sure to give one of these titles a try!

BIG NEW RELEASES!

THE BANSHEES OF INISHERIN: Set in Ireland on a remote island, two villagers and longtime friends reach an impasse when one of them decides to suddenly end their friendship. Shocked and saddened, one of the men tries to figure out what he did wrong. Tensions arise when he refuses to let their relationship end and extreme measures are taken by both figures.

Critics were very impressed by what they witnessed and almost all of them raved about this very dark comedy/drama. In fact, it is one of the highest-rated titles of the year. A small number of reviews didn't enjoy the feature and had problems deciphering it, calling it bizarre and unrelatable. Everyone else was blown away by the writing and performances. They stated that the film was eccentric and could be analyzed in various ways, making it all the more compelling.

It stars Colin Farrell, Brendan Gleeson, Kerry Condon and Barry Keoghan.

THE LONELIEST BOY IN THE WORLD: Described in publicity materials as a humorous mash-up of a fairy tale and horror film, this UK production follows an awkward teen struggling to make friends. Instead of trying to socialize, he decides to make some new acquaintances by digging them up out of the grave. He gets a shock the following morning when the bodies come to life as zombies and he must keep everyone out of trouble.

Reactions towards this feature were mixed-negative overall. About a third of write-ups complimented the cast as being likable and appreciated the cinematic references peppered throughout the story. But the majority thought the message was overly familiar and that the humor was too broad and flatly delivered to make an impression. The cast includes Max Harwood, Hero Fiennes Tiffin and Susan Wokoma.

PARADISE CITY: This action picture tells the story of a bounty hunter on the job in Maui. After being shot and vanishing, he is presumed dead by authorities. The man's son and an ex-partner arrive to find out what happened and seek vengeance on the responsible party. Before long, the trail leads them to a nasty power broker and his hoods.

This picture features a director with action experience in Chuck Russell (*The Mask*, *Eraser*, *The Scorpion King*) and a familiar cast, but it wasn't well liked by the press. One reviewer enjoyed watching the cast having fun and gave the movie a pass on that basis. Everyone else described the movie as unexciting and the screenplay predictable. They noted that the cast couldn't really overcome the substandard screenplay. Bruce Willis, John Travolta, Stephen Dorff, Blake Jenner and Amber Abara headline the film.

SECRET HEADQUARTERS: This kid-centric tale involves a youngster in suburbia struggling to get on with his divorced dad. After his pop leaves home for a work conference, the kid decides to throw a party to try and impress his schoolmates. During the celebration, they discover a secret lair beneath the home filled with gadgets and the lead learns that his father is a superhero. They use the various items at home to have some fun, but draw the attention of a nefarious villain in the process.

This PG-rated family feature received slightly more negative notices than positive ones. Those who liked it thought that while predictable, the various items used would impress and entertain children. Slightly more complained about the script, saying that the characters weren't well written, it tried to appeal to too many age groups and that the gags didn't make a lasting impression.

It features Owen Wilson, Walker Scobell, Jesse Williams, Keith L. Williams, Momona Tamada and Michael Pena.

TÁR: This character study follows the famous but difficult and demanding conductor of a major German orchestra. As she prepares for a book launch and a new performance, pressure begins to mount personally and professionally. Accusations are made about her past and a controversial speech inspires even closer examination of her ethics and morals.

Reaction was very positive towards this feature and there is plenty of Oscar buzz surrounding the lead performance. A small contingent found the movie icy and slow. They also disliked the lead character so intensely that they couldn't get engrossed in the story. However, the consensus was that the acting was phenomenal and that the movie served as an unpredictable and compelling tale about abuse of power that would have viewers discussing and debating the themes long after it finished.

It stars Cate Blanchett, Noémie Merlant, Nina Hoss and Mark Strong.

BLASTS FROM THE PAST!

There aren't as many older releases this week, but a few distributors are delivering something interesting in time for the holidays.

Kino is releasing the *Cinema's First Nasty Women* set on Blu-ray. It contains four discs of 99 genre-spanning American and European silent films made by women between 1898 and 1926.

Because these shorts were made in Pre-Code Hollywood and in international territories, the subject matter and material is surprisingly complex and adult. During this period there were no

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rules as to what could appear in films and many would frankly deal with violence, sexuality, and other subjects that were later considered taboo. These discs include the various movies with a score, along with film historian commentaries as well as some featurettes.

The Taking of Pelham One Two Three (1974) is one of the great action/thrillers of its era and Kino is upgrading their previous edition by presenting it in 4K Ultra HD and Blu-ray with an improved picture.

For those unfamiliar with the title, it deals with the hijacking of a New York City subway car. The criminals inside threaten to kill hostages if their ransom demands aren't met, leaving the transit chief to try to outwit the crooks. It stars Walter Matthau, Robert Shaw, Martin Balsam, Hector Elizondo, Tony Roberts and Jerry Stiller and is a remarkably tense picture that includes great atmosphere, performances and a memorable score. In addition to an upgraded picture and all previously released bonuses, it also comes with a new movie historian commentary track.

Sandpiper Pictures is making several Blu-rays available too. This week, their titles include the George Segal/Robert Vaughn World War II movie, *The Bridge at Remagen* (1969). You can also pick up *The Hawaiians* (1970), which features Charlton Heston as a sea captain who attempts to start a pineapple plantation.

Shout! Factory is giving a 4K Ultra HD and Blu-ray release to the thriller *WarGames* (1983), which was made just as computers were being introduced. It was a huge summer box office hit back in the day and impressed critics as well.

The story involves a teenager who hacks into the central computer for the U.S. military and accidentally starts playing a game with an AI that may result in World War III. Matthew Broderick plays the main character. The movie was nominated for three Academy Awards (Best Original Screenplay, Best Cinematography and Best Sound) and this edition includes an upgraded picture with a 4K scan of the original camera negative. It also comes with all previously released extras like a director's commentary and numerous featurettes.

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Finally, Universal is rereleasing a Blu-ray of *Jonah: A VeggieTales Movie* (2002) which sees the characters lost on the high seas. In addition to all the familiar bonuses, this disc also includes a sing-along song feature.

YOU KNOW, FOR KIDS!

Here are some titles that might appeal to kids (please note that *Secret Headquarters* is for older children).

Fruit Salad Big Show: The Wiggles – Live in Concert (Kino) DVD

Jonah: A VeggieTales Movie (2002) (Universal) Blu-ray

Secret Headquarters (Paramount) Blu-ray

ON THE TUBE!

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

American Hostage (PBS) DVD

Becoming Frederick Douglas (PBS) DVD

Harriet Tubman: Visions of Freedom (PBS) DVD

House of the Dragon Season 1 (Warner Bros.) 4K HD Ultra & Blu-ray or Blu-ray

Maigret Season 1 (1960-1961) (Kino) Blu-ray

NOVA: Saving Venice (PBS) DVD

Tales of the Walking Dead Season 1 (RLJ Entertainment) Blu-ray

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