

Blu-ray/DVD Roundup for July 21, 2023

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
Friday, 28 July 2023 04:19



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Welcome to another look at some of the new highlights arriving on Blu-ray and DVD. There's an interesting variety of titles in a number of genres. So, if you can't make it out to the movies this week or need to stay indoors, be sure to give one of these titles a try!

BIG NEW RELEASES!

CHOP & STEELE: Wisconsin-born Joe Pickett and Nick Prueher are a pair of merry pranksters that are examined in this documentary. For two decades, they have hosted the Found Footage Festival (which presents VHS finds with odd programming and commercials purchased at garage sales) and have also taken part in elaborate practical jokes on news programs.

This title captures the pair doing a crazy strongman routine on television news stations and embarrassing many hosts. When one of the stations teams with a big media conglomerate to sue the comics, cameras detail the court case and the stress it places upon their lives.

Every critic who has seen this picture has given it a positive review. All wrote the two men featured and their act was hilarious, but that the movie also did a solid job of interesting and enlightening personal information on what drives them.

David Cross, Bobcat Goldthwait, Reggie Watts and Howie Mandel also appear in the film.

THE COW WHO SANG A SONG INTO THE FUTURE: A woman is forced to return to her family farm after her elderly father suffers a heart attack. While visiting him in the hospital, her dad makes a strange claim that the ghost of her deceased mother has returned. After spending time at home tending to sick animals, she does cross paths with her mom, who offers advice on how to help heal the animals.

This foreign-language feature from Chile was very well-received by members of the press. A small number complained that the film's message was bluntly delivered and that it was too slowly-paced. But the vast majority thought the movie had a unique voice, did an exceptional job of creating a sense of atmosphere and offered a hopeful vision.

For the time being, this is a DVD-only release. It stars Mila Maestro, Enzo Ferrada Rosati, Benjamin Soto and Leonor Varela.

FOOL'S PARADISE: In this comedy, an anxious publicist dealing with a problematic movie star crosses paths with a patient at a mental health clinic who looks exactly like his client. He decides to substitute his newfound acquaintance in place of the famous individual in a feature film. The movie ends up being a hit, but the stress of fame and fortune ends up causing complications for both the publicist and the lookalike.

Unfortunately, write-ups weren't particularly strong for this effort. There was a limited contingent who did find the performers funny and thought that enough of the satirical elements worked to earn it a recommendation. But the general consensus was that the film took easy, surface-level shots at Hollywood and didn't offer surprises or much bite.

The cast is impressive though, and it includes Charlie Day, Ken Jeong, Kate Beckinsale, Adrien Brody, Jason Sudekis, Edie Falco, Jason Bateman, Common, Ray Liotta and John Malkovich.

HOW TO BLOW UP A PIPELINE: A young environmental activist in Long Beach, California becomes angry at the polluted state of her home city and is enraged after her mother passes away during a sudden heatwave. She meets with her best friend who is suffering from a terminal illness, and the two hatch a plan to get revenge on those they believe are responsible. With a few cohorts, they set out to detonate an oil refinery pipeline in Texas.

Inspired by the 2021 Andreas Malm book of the same name, the movie earned a positive reception. A small number disliked the way that the story was laid out and a few took issue with the message the movie was sending. However, all others found it compelling and tense throughout. They wrote that it was an effective protest movie that wasn't afraid to challenge viewers.

This is currently a DVD-only release. The movie stars Ariela Barer, Kristine Froseth, Lucas Gage, Forrest Goodluck, Sasha Lane and Jayme Lawson.

KANDAHAR: An undercover CIA operative is tasked with pretending to be a contractor and implanting malware into the operating systems of an Iranian nuclear research facility. He's successful and is immediately sent on a follow-up mission in Afghanistan, not realizing that his

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identity has been revealed to his enemies. The protagonist and his Afghan-American translator struggle to reach safety with several parties in pursuit.

This effort split the press. Almost half wrote that the action scenes were exciting and that the movie reminded them of similarly-themed thrillers from the 1980s (particularly Jack Ryan stories like *Patriot Games* and *Clear and Present Danger*). The same number and few more didn't find the final results memorable, stating that the political intrigue in the story wasn't well-handled and that everything going on felt predictable.

The cast includes Gerard Butler, Navid Negahban, Ali Fazal, Travis Fimmel and Elnaaz Norouzi.

A LIFE ON THE FARM: This documentary from England is told from the point-of-view of the filmmaker. After hearing of his grandfather's passing, he goes to his relative's farm in Somerset where he discovers a videotape. On that tape is a surreal movie made by an eccentric neighbor. The director is shocked by what he sees and sets out to learn more about the man and his unusual and sometimes macabre interests.

This title received plenty of acclaim from the press and earned some awards at documentary film festivals. One reviewer didn't like the attitude of those discussing the homemade movie and thought they were making fun of the subject. All others said that while some early sections were mishandled, the movie eventually got on the right track and became a warmhearted and insightful tribute to a very unusual individual.

LITTLE RICHARD: I AM EVERYTHING: Famous and very theatrical musician Little Richard (aka Richard Penniman) is the subject of this documentary. Using archival interviews, discussions with family members and other artists, as well as black and queer scholars, the movie shows the figure's remarkable rise to fame and fortune. It also goes into depth about his

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personal life and his contradictory ideas, ultimately attempting to present a deeper picture of the individual.

Notices were very good for this effort. A tiny number of write-ups suggested it had trouble painting a clear and definitive portrait of the real Little Richard. Yet the consensus was that the movie did a solid job of examining the charismatic artist's life, providing interesting interviews and great music that would have viewers seeking out more of the man's work.

LOVE AGAIN: A woman (who happens to be a huge Céline Dion fan) is heartbroken after the tragic death of her fiancé. Years later, she is still reeling from the loss and sends romantic texts to his old number, only to discover that the digits have been reassigned to someone new. The man who responds to the messages drops by, the two begin spending time together and a bond grows between them. She must then decide whether she's ready to move forward with the relationship.

This romantic comedy didn't wow reviewers. About a quarter of them thought it was sweet, simple and self-consciously silly in a way that ultimately charmed them. Still, most stated that the feature was full of clichés that couldn't be overlooked and was akin to watching a Hallmark made-for-cable movie with an inflated budget.

Priyanka Chopra Jonas, Sam Heughan, Céline Dion (as herself), Sofia Barclay and Nick Jonas headline the feature.

YOU KNOW, FOR KIDS!

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These titles might appeal to little kids.

Barbie 4-Movie Special Collection (Ncircle) DVD

Super Sentai: Tokusou Sentai Dekaranger The Complete Series (Shout!) DVD

ON THE TUBE!

And all of the week's TV-themed releases are listed below.

Deliver Us Season 1 (MHz Networks) Blu-ray

Ice Sculpture Christmas (Hallmark) DVD

The Last of Us Season 1 (Warner Bros.) 4K Ultra HD or Blu-ray

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