











Welcome to another edition featuring highlights of what is new of DVD and Blu-ray. There should be something below to pique your interest. Remember, should you see any films that catch your eye and feature links, click on them to read more. So if you can't make out to the movies this week, be sure and give one of these titles a try!

***Big New Releases!***

*American Sniper* - One of the biggest box office behemoths of the past year was this biopic directed by Clint Eastwood. It tells the story of Navy SEAL sharpshooter Chris Kyle and his difficulty adjusting to life away from the frontlines. The drama earned some Oscar nominations (including Best Picture), and received solid (though not exemplary) reviews. It seems everyone felt differently about the intent. Some found it to be an impressive, even-handed take on the material featuring a great performance, while others believed that its political view was too simple were too pronounced. It stars Bradley Cooper and Sienna Miller.

*Cymbeline* - This modern day retelling of the Shakespeare play of the same name uses the same text, but places it in the modern world with plenty of technological bells and whistles. The plot involves a bitter war between cops and a drug kingpin. Overall, critics were not taken by the approach. They suggested that the present day setting and its cell phones felt anachronistic and forced into the already slow-moving narrative. The impressive cast includes Ethan Hawke, Ed Harris, Milla Jovovich, Dakota Johnson and Anton Yelchin.

*Girlhood* - A girl with no prospects in life quits school and joins a gang in this French drama. While things don't necessary improve within her new world, the young woman attempts to find some sense of identity and self moving forward. The film did very well on the festival circuit, earning some Ceasar and Lumiere nominations back in its homeland. Many felt it effectively portrayed the trials of being a teenager with naturalistic performances from its mostly inexperienced cast. Karidja Toure plays the main character.

*Hot Tub Time Machine 2* - A surprise hit comedy receives the sequel treatment once again, although this time without the original's main character. This time out, the remainder of the gang attempt to stop the murder of one of their own. However, they accidentally travel into the future. The press blasted this installment, calling it a lazily hashed together effort in poor taste. They also stated that it that lacked the likable spirit of the first movie. Rob Corddry, Craig Robinson, Clark Duke and Chevy Chase return, receiving help from new co-stars Adam Scott, Gillian Jacobs and Kumail Nanjiani.

***Blasts From the Past!***

It's a busy week for older films on Blu-ray and DVD, with plenty of great ones to choose from.

Olive Films have four releases this week. If you like science-fiction and horror, you'll be pleased to learn that *It! The Terror from Beyond Space* (1958) is coming your way. It's a classic B-monster movie about a space crew who discover a murderous alien on board. The nasty stowaway attempts to kill them off one by one. There has always been talk about this movie inspiring the Ridley Scott film *Alien* (1979), and there are notable similarities in the plot structure. Sci-fi enthusiasts should definitely get a kick out of it.

Speaking of monster movies, a more recent title is *Peter Benchley's Creature* (1998) aka *Creature*. Based on the author's bestseller, it was a miniseries about a mutant shark terrorizing the residents of a local seaside town. Presented on the disc is the complete three-hour version that stars Craig T. Nelson and Kim Cattrall - gripping, cheesy, or a bit of both, this looks like it could be an awful lot of fun.

*Extremities* (1986) is a searing drama based on a stage play that features Farrah Fawcett as a woman seeking revenge on a man who assaults her. Finally, on a lighter note, *Flawless* (1999) tells the tale of a conservative police officer (Robert De Niro) who suffers a stroke and is nursed back to health by a transvestite neighbor (Philip Seymour Hoffman). All of the films are being made available on Blu-ray and DVD.

Not to be outdone, Shout! Factory have a pair of 90s titles as well. *Harley Davidson and the Marlboro Man* (1991) is a goofy, old-fashioned action flick about a biker and cowboy out to stop a black trenchcoat-clad gang of drug-dealers from shutting down their favorite bar. If memory serves it's pretty silly stuff, but does feature some offbeat casting in the form of Don Johnson and Mickey Rourke as the two heroes.

*Stigmata* (1999) is a horror effort starring Patricia Arquette as an atheist who begins to bleed out from her wrists for no reason. Worried about her stigmata wounds, she approaches a priest and they attempt to discover what is happening and why. This one isn't a personal favorite, but the Blu-ray features loads of extras, including a director commentary, deleted scenes, alternate ending and making-of documentaries. That's a whole lot here that should excite the movie's fans - overall, it appears to be a great package.

Criterion are distributing *Limelight* (1952). This is Charles Chaplin's last American movie, and features the actor as a fading comedian who tries to find meaning in his life with the help of a ballet dancer. It's also notable for featuring Buster Keaton as the main character's rival. The Blu-ray features a new restoration of the movie, outtakes, interviews and documentaries on the movie, as well as a couple of bonus Chaplin shorts.

*The Rose* (1979) is an epic, fictional biopic about a musician struggling with fame and drug addiction - Janis Joplin seems to be the obvious inspiration. Bette Midler stars and won accolades for her work - the film itself ended up receiving several Oscar nominations. The Blu-ray includes a director's commentary as well as new interviews with cast and crew members.

Courtesy of Anchor Bay, there's a new Blu-ray of *The Osterman Weekend* (1983) arriving. This strange but very engaging little thriller (based on the Robert Ludlum bestseller) marked the final feature of director Sam Peckinpah (
*The Getaway*
,
*The Wild Bunch*
,
*Straw Dogs*
). In it, a man holding a party at his cabin in the woods is informed by government officials that some of his friends are KGB agents - it isn't long before the paranoid guests start turning on one another. The impressive cast includes Rutger Hauer, John Hurt, Craig T. Nelson, Dennis Hopper, Meg Foster, Helen Shaver and Burt Lancaster.

With the release of the *Poltergeist* remake on movie screens, MGM have wisely used the opportunity to distribute a Double Feature Blu-ray of *Poltergeist II: The Other Side* (1986) and *Poltergeist III* (1988). Neither are particularly good follow-ups, but I will give props to the villain of the first sequel, who is one of the creepiest preachers ever committed to celluloid. It may be worth picking up just for his ten minutes or so of screen time - the remainder, including a trip to "the other side" and a character being attacked by his own braces, are less than thrilling. The skyscraper-set follow-up is even sillier. Still, this release will provide horror fans like me with plenty of campy entertainment value for their dollar. If you're only interested in one of the titles, don't worry, they're each available separately as well.

Additionally, Kino Lorber are putting out a Blu-ray of the Mario Bava horror flick *The Evil Eye* (1963) aka *The Girl Who Knew Too Much*, about a tourist who witnesses a murder and becomes the target of the killer. Full Moon have *Trancers II: The Return of Jack Deth* (1991) a low-budget action/sci-fi movie that boasts Helen Hunt and Jeffrey Combs in its cast.

Finally, VCI Entertainment have a Blu-ray of the Laurel & Hardy comedy *The Flying Deuces* (1939) which features the pair joining the Foreign Legion and piloting planes in order to impress a romantic interest.

***You Know, For Kids!***

Here's what's coming for kids.

*Babar: Ultimate Collection*

*The Berenstain Bears: Summertime Fun Pack*

*Maya the Bee Movie*

*Mickey Mouse Clubhouse: Minnie's Pet Salon*

*Wordworld: Outdoor Fun* (PBS Kids)

***To see more of Glenn Kay's movie reviews, visit: www.cinemastance.com***