

DVD/Blu-ray Roundup for Dec. 11, 2015

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Welcome back for another look at highlights arriving on DVD and Blu-ray. It's another busy edition with plenty of flick in a wide variety of genres. 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!

Ant-Man - The latest entry in the Marvel cinematic universe follows a thief turned superhero who uses a special suit that allows him to shrink to insect size. He's tasked with helping the inventor keep the discovery from a nasty businessman who wants to militarize the technology. Reviews were generally good for this action picture, saying that the finale was impressive and the lead was charismatic enough to help the film overcome a few lags. It stars Paul Rudd, Michael Douglas, Evangeline Lilly, Corey Stoll and Michael Pena.

Cinderella - Disney adapts one of their most famous animated films to live-action in this fairy tale from director Kenneth Branagh. Of course, it features the familiar title character enduring hardships from her wicked stepmother and nasty stepsisters, crashing a palatial ball and impressing a young prince. The press liked what they saw, writing that this update was endearingly straightforward and didn't alter the important elements that have withstood generations. The cast includes Lily James, Cate Blanchett, Richard Madden and Helena Bonham Carter.

A Faster Horse - If you enjoy cars, you might be interested in this documentary about the Ford Mustang. Released in part to celebrate the vehicle's 50th anniversary, the flick follows the process of how it was created, offers trivia and fun facts, and attempts to explain how the automobile has remained popular with consumers, even today. There aren't many notices for the film as of yet. While most suggest it's a well made picture, some have stated that it feels more like a commercial than a traditional non-narrative feature. Sounds like it may be best suited for car fans.

Jellyfish Eyes - A child learns that he can communicate with a fantastic creature in this Japanese live-action effort (that features some animated characters). The boy discovers that every kid in town has a creature for a friend. Together, they team up to stop a nasty villain who is collecting negative energy as part of an evil plot. This film played on the festival circuit over the past year and a half. Reviewers on this side of the world thought the movie had an interesting pop-art look, but disliked the overly simple story and underdeveloped characters. Still, it has its fans and the title is being released on the art-house Criterion label, which

suggests it may be worth a look.

Minions - The little yellow blobs from *Despicable Me* get their own spin-off film in this prequel. It finds the characters attending a super-villain convention in the hopes of scoring a job. They join an evil mastermind plotting to take over the world, but soon question whether they're with the right employer. Reviews were split - while many enjoyed the fast-pace and zany sight gags, just as many found it slight and unmemorable. It features the voices of Sandra Bullock, Jon Hamm, Michael Keaton, Allison Janney, Steve Coogan, Jennifer Saunders, Geoffrey Rush and Steve Carell.

Tomorrowland - Based on a specific area in the Disney-theme parks, this adventure follows a brilliant kid who learns about an otherworldly land of the future. She attempts to find it in the hopes of saving the world. It didn't make much of an impact at the box-office this summer, nor did it score strongly with critics. While all thought it was well-produced and impressive to look at (enough for about half to give it a recommendation), others found the narrative muddled with plot holes and also found the Disney merchandising tie-ins a bit overbearing. It stars George Clooney, Hugh Laurie and Brittany Robertson.

The Transporter Refueled - After three theatrical films, the makers of this action series proposed starting a new line of films with a new driver. This time out, he is hired to assist three female customers on a bank heist. Things quickly go wrong, and he must use his special skills to not only avoid the angry women and a Russian mobster, but also come to the aid of his visiting father. The press told readers not to expect another follow-up – they stated that while it had a couple of enjoyably silly chases, it was an otherwise flat, dull and dopey B-movie. The cast includes Ed Skrein, Gabriella Wright, Loan Chabanol and Ray Stevenson.

Walt Before Mickey - This indie effort tells the story of a young Walt Disney, covering his beginnings ten years before he created his empire. The drama got terrible notices upon its limited release. Almost every review listed called it dull and hammy, suggesting that the dialogue was very awkward. Additionally, several thought that it did little more than fawn over its subject matter. Now viewers can make up their own minds. Thomas Ian Nicholas, Jon Heder and Jodie Sweetin take on the lead roles.

Blasts From the Past!

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There's a whole heck of a lot of older titles arriving on Blu-ray. Frankly, it's almost ridiculous. If you haven't picked up any of the other movies yet, you can now pick up the Marvel Cinematic Universe: Phase 2 Collection, which contains *Iron Man 3*, *Thor: The Dark World*, *Captain America: The Winter Soldier*

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Guardians of the Galaxy

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Avengers: Age of Ultron
and
Ant-Man

. It's designed to look like an "infinity stone orb" (essentially, a space rock) and comes with a 2 1/2 hour disc of never-before-seen extras.

Shout! have a couple of bad movie cult films arriving on Blu-ray. *The Garbage Pail Kids Movie* (1987) brings together the gross trading card characters that served as a parody of the *Cabbage Patch Kids*

toy line - in this live-action misadventure, they help a young boy fight bullies and win over a love interest. Truthfully, the movie is an awful and at times surreal experience... hence the cult following. Extras include numerous interviews with cast members, an assistant director and the make-up effects crew.

Women's Prison Massacre (1983) is an Italy/France co-production about a reporter who attempts to expose a corrupt politician, only to be set up and thrown in a prison. She must endure a riot, brawls and other inhumane treatment. This is an incredibly trashy B-movie from Bruno Mattei (*Hell of the Living Dead*, *Rats: Night of Terror*, *Cruel Jaws*). If you're already familiar with his other titles, you may want to give it a try - others need not apply.

On the other end of the spectrum, Severin are bringing the European horror title *Count Dracula* (1970) to Blu-ray. Jess Franco directs Christopher Lee, Klaus Kinski and Herbert Lom in this retelling of the famous story. The movie is famous for a rumor that Kinski (playing Renfield) ate real flies on camera. Expect it to be a bit more explicit than other genre titles of its era. They've also got the a trashy double feature disc containing

Axe
(1974) and
Kidnapped Coed
(1976) aka
Date With a Kidnapper
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Chuck Norris fans can now pick up the sequel, *Delta Force 2: The Colombian Connection* (1990). It also features Billy Drago.

The Fourth War (1990) is a Cold War thriller from John Frankenheimer about two military border commanders with a personal vendetta who poke and prod each other until they snap and take violent action. Roy Scheider, Jurgen Prochnow and Tim Reid headline the feature.

F/X2

(1991) is a sequel that brings back actors Bryan Brown and Brian Dennehy. Brown must use his film F/X background once again to help stop a killer. It isn't nearly as much fun as the first one, but interested parties can now complete the series on Blu-ray.

Remo Williams: The Adventure Begins (1985) was based on series of popular pulp novels and served as an attempt to create a new kind of James Bond-ish hero. The title character is an American working class cop turned assassin. Despite hiring director Guy Hamilton (

Goldfinger

,
Diamonds are Forever

) and boasting a couple of nifty action scenes (one involving a fight on The Statue of Liberty), this flick didn't really gel and flopped at the box office. Now cheesy movie fans can give it another look. It stars Fred Ward and Joel Grey as his Korean trainer (in a really ill-advised role).

And there's still more. Sony are releasing the Frank Capra (*It's a Wonderful Life*) classic *You Can't Take It With You*

(1938). This Best Picture Oscar-winning effort stars Jimmy Stewart and Jean Arthur. It's a comedy about a man from a wealthy, snobbish family who falls for a woman with very different, and very eccentric relatives. The picture has been re-mastered and restored for Blu-ray.