

DVD/Blu-ray Roundup for May 6, 2016

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
Friday, 06 May 2016 03:37



Welcome to another look at highlights coming your way on DVD and Blu-ray. There is plenty of fun stuff out there 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!

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The Choice - The latest Nicolas Sparks romance novel to get the cinematic treatment is a tale about an unlikely relationship that forms between a diligent medical student and an easygoing ladies' man. They fall for each other, but can these opposites really form a lasting bond? One thing's for certain, the press didn't care either way. They didn't think there was much onscreen chemistry and found the formulaic drama preposterous and corny. It stars Benjamin Walker, Teresa Palmer, Alexandria Daddario, Maggie Grace and Tom Wilkinson.

The Club - This Chilean foreign-language drama earned plenty of solid notices during its limited release. The plot follows a counselor who is sent to visit a home in a small village after a local arrives and causes a crisis. This may have something to do with the fact that the home is populated with disgraced Catholic priests and nuns who have been accused of various crimes. The movie was described as unique and interesting, and many felt that it effectively created an unsettling tone and mood. Alfredo Castro, Roberto Ferias and Antonia Zegers are featured.

Emelie - Here's a little low-budget thriller that impressed on the festival circuit. This one follows three children who are left with a babysitter after their parents go out for the evening. However, as the night progresses, the behavior of both the guardian and kids becomes stranger and stranger. It has been called a tense little minimalist thriller that offers a couple of twists and subtly develops a palpable sense of danger and unease between its characters. Sounds like it might be creepy. Sarah Bolger plays the title character.

The 5th Wave - In this teen lit adaptation, a series of disasters leaves the world in ruins. Suspecting an extraterrestrial attack, a teenager and her younger brother seek refuge, but are separated. The boy joins a new group of youngsters in a military camp while his sister attempts to locate him. Reviews were quite poor, stating that there was little the performers could do to make up for the ridiculous story, stilted dialogue and cheese-ball teenage romance. The cast include Chloe Grace Moretz, Alex Roe, Maria Bello, Ron Livingston and Liev Shreiber.

Janis: Little Girl Blue - Musician Janis Joplin is the subject of this documentary. Using a series of letters she wrote to her parents and friends over the years, the movie chronicles her career and inner thoughts. It also uses plenty of rare footage of the artist that should please fans. Reviews were excellent, calling it was a sympathetic portrait that painted a clearer picture of the woman and her inner demons. Seems like a good one for documentary and music fans. Cat Power provides the narration.

Joy - This biopic from David O. Russell (*Silver Linings Playbook*, *American Hustle*) stars

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Jennifer Lawrence and purportedly tells the true life story self-made millionaire Joy Mangano. With little money or support, she invents a kitchen product and attempts to sell it using the Home Shopping Network. Along the way, she comes into conflict with crooked suppliers and greedy family members. Word on the picture was positive but not exemplary. Many found it likable, but also rambling and unfocused - they definitely didn't believe it was as effective as the two other collaborations between the director and star. Robert De Niro, Bradley Cooper, Edgar Ramirez, Diane Ladd, Virginia Madsen and Isabella Rossellini also appear.

Mojin - The Lost Legend - This foreign-language fantasy/adventure from China is about a group of grave robbers who are hired to go to Mongolia and raid an ancient tomb while pretending to be archeologists. The lead has a deeper motivation for taking the assignment – to learn what happened to his old flame who vanished 20 years before. It split reviewers. Some called it a fun adventure with a few nifty set pieces, while others found the characters too one-note to become invested in. The cast includes Kun Chen, Angelababy, Bo Huang and Qi Shu.

Remember - This Canadian thriller from director Atom Egoyan (*The Sweet Hereafter*) involves a senior with dementia who sneaks out of a retirement home - to kill the Nazi general who murdered his family during WWII. However, with his memory failing, the job is a lot harder than it looks. The press were positive about this effort. A few found it too pulpy for its own good and questioned the logic, but most were impressed by the lead performance and tense situations presented. It stars Christopher Plummer, Martin Landau, Henry Czerny, Bruno Ganz and Dean Norris.

Sharkansas Women's Prison Massacre - On the straight-to-DVD front, this ultra low-budget horror flick tells the tale of a group of inmates at a women's prison who must fight off prehistoric sharks when they are released from the Earth's crust. There aren't a lot of reviews, but one shouldn't expect too much from this B-movie. The cast includes Dominique Swain, Traci Lords, Christine Nguyen and a bunch of computer-generated sharks.

Sniper: Special Ops - The second title of the week on the straight-to-DVD release schedule is the 6th movie in the *Sniper* series (which originally starred Tom Berenger and Billy Zane). The sequel really has nothing to do with the original film, though. This time out, Steven Seagal and Rob Van Dam star as special ops on a mission in Afghanistan. Again, this low-budget action picture doesn't inspire much confidence.

Submerged - Finally, this thriller involves a limo ride gone wrong. When a group of rich kids rent

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one and are run off of the road by kidnappers, they become trapped in the vehicle beneath the surface of a lake. Their only hope is their wits (uh-oh) and an ex-military bodyguard. Reviews were poor. While many wrote that the concept had potential, almost all suggested that the final product never really creates much tension or claustrophobia. It features Cody Christian, Jonathan Bennett, Rosa Salazar, Tim Daly and Mario Van Peebles.

Blasts From the Past!

Kino have some interesting older titles arriving on Blu-ray. Like Charles Bronson. Well, *Assassination*

(1987) isn't one of his best, but should provide a few B-movie laughs for 80s action film fans. He plays a secret service agents tasked with protecting the First Lady. Naturally, they bicker constantly as he foils numerous attempts made on her life. There's also the well-regarded thriller

A Kiss Before Dying

(1956), about a college man who really wants to marry an heiress. He's willing to attempt anything to get to her, including murder. It stars Robert Wagner. The movie was remade in 1991 with less successful results.

My pick of the week is Kino's new Blu-ray of *Steele Justice* (1987). Make no mistake, it's not a good movie. Instead, it's one of those terrible, cheesy flicks that are a whole lot of fun to watch with friends. Believe or not, it has never been released on DVD or any other format besides VHS, so I'll be happy to upgrade to a high definition copy.

It stars Martin Kove (the villain from *The Karate Kid*) as a Viet Nam vet struggling to adjust to life after service. When his best war buddy is killed by a merciless drug lord (who also happens to be the nasty general the two were fighting overseas), our hero goes to ridiculous lengths to take the villain down. It has a slow opening, but becomes pretty hilarious after about 10 minutes. This is the type of film where characters randomly do somersaults whist in the middle of foot-chases, and where violent, machine-gun blasting confrontations spill over into very public, cornball 80s music video shoots. It's truly ridiculous stuff and a good title for "bad movie night" fans.

Criterion are bringing *Easy Rider* (1969) to Blu-ray. The counterculture classic about freewheeling bikers on the road was an unexpected box office smash and helped pave the way for one of the best and most interesting decades in film. Here's what you get on the new Blu-ray

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- a restored high definition transfer, alternate 2.0 and 5.1 soundtracks, two commentaries (one with Dennis Hopper, the other with Hopper and Fonda), multiple documentaries about the making of the film, television footage from Cannes in 1969, trailers and more.

And Warner Bros. have Blu-rays for a couple of lesser known Clint Eastwood titles. *City Heat* (1984) was a period action/comedy that teamed the star with none other than Burt Reynolds. They played bitter rivals, a cop and private eye who are forced to work together to solve a strange murder. Speaking of homicides,

True Crime

(1999) was a more recent effort about a journalist assigned to cover the execution of a death row inmate. He soon comes to realize that the man behind bars may not have been responsible for the killing.

Paramount are putting out a Blu-ray celebrating the 30th Anniversary of *Top Gun* (1986). And finally, Universal have

the Ted vs. Flash Gordon - The Ultimate Collection

Blu-ray, which packages both of the recent Ted films with

Flash Gordon

(1980), which plays a big part in those comedies.

You Know, For Kids!

Here are the highlights of kid-themed releases coming your way.

Bob the Builder: Construction Heroes!

Let's Learn - S.T.E.M.: Vol. 2

Miraculous: Tales of Ladybug & Cat Noir

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Moomins and the Comet Chase

Sing It, Elmo!

Wild Kratts: Wild Animal Babies (PBS)

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