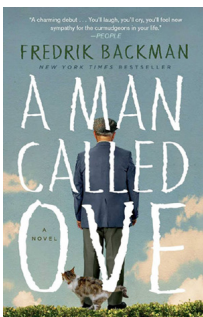


DVD/Blu-ray Roundup for Dec. 30, 2016

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
Friday, 30 December 2016 10:42



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It's a busy time, but the studios are still squeezing in some new releases on DVD and Blu-ray before the year's end. Surprisingly, some of them are quite good. As always, be sure to click on any links to read more. 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!

American Honey - In this indie coming-of-age drama, a poverty-stricken teenage girl decides to leave home and join a traveling troupe who sell magazines during the day and party hard at night. She finds a kindred spirit while on the road. Notices were very strong for the feature and it received positive reaction at film festivals. A few did complain that it was far too long and self-indulgent for its own good, but the majority complimented the film as a well-acted, unique and free-spirited character piece. It stars Sasha Lane and Shia Labeouf.

The Dressmaker - Here's an eccentric little Australian picture. It follows a garment maker who returns to her very small, very quirky hometown to get back at those who sent her away as a child. Her unusual fashion creations attract a following, reigniting relationships and ill-feelings from the past. This one split the press. Half were unable to accept the many twists and tonal shifts over the course of the running, while others enjoyed its unpredictability and bizarre vision. Personally, I thought it was completely unique and was entertained by its oddities. It may end up becoming a big cult movie. The cast includes Kate Winslett, Liam Hemsworth, Hugo Weaving and Judy Davis.

In a Valley of Violence - A drifter in the old west takes a shortcut and finds he and his dog passing through a derelict mining town. They find it populated by strange misfits and nitwits. These folk don't take kindly to visitors and tension between them quickly escalates. Critics liked this independent feature from horror director Ti West (*The House of the Devil* , *The Innkeepers* , *The Sacrament*). Some found it a tad too slow-moving and minimalist, but more called it a fun throwback to B-movies and Spaghetti Westerns. It features Ethan Hawke, John Travolta, Taissa Farmiga, James Ransome, Karen Gillan and Larry Fessenden.

A Man Called Ove - This Swedish, foreign-language comedy/drama was a huge hit in its homeland and won a good number of awards at film festivals around the world. It tells the story of Ove, a grouchy and suicidal senior who constantly bickers with his neighbors. When a new family force themselves into his life, he begins to open up about his experiences. While almost every review admitted that the movie was clichéd, they also couldn't help but find it endearing, warm-hearted and irresistible thanks to the charismatic performance of the lead curmudgeon. The cast includes Rolf Lassgard, Bahar Pars and Zozan Akgun.

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No Manches Frida - A bank robber is desperate to retrieve his loot after being released from prison. Unfortunately, he finds that a school has been built on the site and must pose as a substitute teacher to get his hands on the money. This Spanish-language, Mexican-set comedy did well at the box office earlier in the year, but didn't impress the press. They remarked that the humor was too juvenile, many of the gags missed the mark and the story became less and less interesting as it progressed. Now viewers can make up their own minds. It stars Omar Chaparro, Martha Higareda and Monica Dionne.

Snowden - The life of Edward Snowden is chronicled in this biopic from director Oliver Stone (*W.*

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Alexander

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Nixon

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JFK

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Platoon

). We follow his work with the NSA, where he learns of the government's illegal surveillance activities and decides to break the story to the media. Reviews were mixed, although more were positive than negative overall. Several found events exaggerated, didn't care for the lead performance and complained that it isn't nearly as edgy as it should be. Others stated that it was a decent biopic with an important, timely message. Joseph Gordon-Levitt, Shailene Woodley, Melissa Leo, Zachary Quinto, Tom Wilkinson, Rhys Ifans and Nicolas Cage headline.

Blasts From the Past!

There's just one title in this edition, but it is an interesting one. *The House That Screamed* (1970) is a Spanish horror flick set in France about a secluded school for wayward girls in the 19th century. Trouble arises when the students begin mysteriously disappearing. It's a well-regarded cult flick that many state has loads of style and atmosphere. Shout! Factory are bringing the title to Blu-ray with plenty of extras. It includes two versions of the film (the theatrical version as well as an extended cut with 10 minutes of reinserted footage), interviews with two of the cast members and publicity materials like trailers, television and radio spots.

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You Know, For Kids!

Sorry folks, every once in a while there's a lull in children's entertainment. This is one of those times, so you'll have to make due with what's already out there this week.

Visit: cinemastance.com

By Glenn Kay

For the Sun