

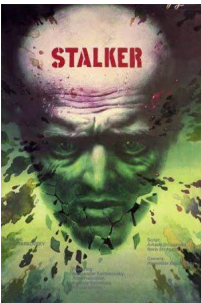
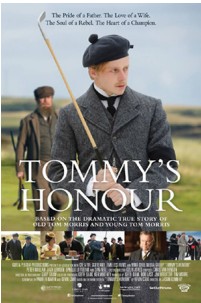
DVD/Blu-ray Roundup for July 21, 2017

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
Friday, 21 July 2017 03:11



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Welcome back to another look at new releases on Blu-ray and DVD. There is plenty to choose from, with some major studio films as well as a couple of interesting independent features. As always, click on any links you see to read more about them. 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!

Buster's Mal Heart - This unique independent thriller involves a strange, bearded man in a small mountain community who survives by breaking in and moving from vacation home to vacation home. He's also a regular caller on a talk radio station and ends up telling his life story about how his life fell apart while on the airwaves. The movie earned solid notices from reviewers. A few couldn't get on its wavelength, but the majority found it to be a fascinating and compellingly oddball effort. It features Rami Malek, DJ Qualls, Kate Lyn Sheil, Toby Huss and Lin Shaye.

Free Fire - An arms deal at an abandoned factory goes horribly wrong in this dark

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comedy/action-picture from director Ben Wheatley (*Kill List*, *High-Rise*). The various groups quickly turn on one another and open fire, leaving a bunch of confused thugs struggling to avoid the flying bullets. It seems this feature is something of an acquired taste. Some didn't like the characters and thought it was too violent. However, more found the performances great and the deviants entertaining and outrageously funny to witness. This is definitely a cult film in the making. It stars Brie Larson, Cillian Murphy, Armie Hammer, Sam Riley, Sharlto Copely and Jack Reynor.

Kong: Skull Island - King Kong gets an update in this monster movie that is set in the 70s and takes a group of scientists and soldiers to the ape's home in the South Pacific. Of course, they get a whole lot more than they bargained for as the monkey, as well as other monsters, begin a violent siege. Trapped and alone, the humans must find their way to safety and get off of the island. Notices were pretty good for this popcorn flick. Pretty much everyone enjoyed the action and the title character whenever he appeared. However, a minority felt that the lead characters were dull and uninteresting. The cast includes Tom Hiddleston, Samuel L. Jackson, Brie Larson, John C. Reilly and John Goodman.

Pray for Rain - A word of warning... this direct-to-disc drama is from a production company founded by an extremely right-wing tycoon who is the president of Lucas Oil. The story involves a New York reporter who returns to her hometown farming community after the death of her father. Apparently, an evil gang of environmentalists are responsible not only for his death, but also the community drought (according to this film's crazy story, climate change is a fallacy). Very few members of the press saw it, but those who did all called it ludicrous propaganda that makes ridiculous claims between some very hammy drama. It features Annabelle Stephens, Jane Seymour, Nicholas Gonzalez and Paul Rodriguez.

The Promise - This historical drama occurs during the final days of the Ottoman Empire. It follows a medical student in Turkey who becomes involved in a heated love triangle. Before their relationships are sorted out, the group face danger and death as the Armenian population are hunted down and slaughtered. The film received mixed notices. While just about everyone felt that the Armenian Genocide was important subject matter that deserved attention, about half of reviews stated that the romance and melodrama didn't play very well and took away from any feeling of authenticity. The movies stars Oscar Isaac, Charlotte Le Bon and Christian Bale.

Resident Evil: Vendetta - Most movie fans are familiar with the Milla Jovovich action/horror franchise based on the hugely popular video games, but there are also a series of animated feature films. This is the third feature in this line and involves game characters Chris Redfield, Rebecca Chambers and Leon S. Kennedy attempting to stop an villainous foe from releasing a

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devastating gas with the zombie virus in New York City. This one is arriving direct-to-disc, so fans will just have to take a chance on it. It was a Japanese production that has been rewritten in English, so I would expect some stilted dialogue. The voice talent includes Erin Cahill, Kevin Dorman and Matthew Mercer.

Tommy's Honour - Scotland's golfing royalty are the subject of this biopic set in St. Andrews. It takes place in 1860 and the plot details the relationship between the very first golf champion, Old Tom Morris. Apparently, the youngster possessed so much natural talent that he quickly rose to the top of the profession and bested his dad's accomplishments. Unfortunately, their relationship was strained, particularly as Tommy sought to do away with social conventions and marry a woman who was considered beneath his class. This flick earned decent reviews from the press. Some on this side of the pond did find it a bit stuffy and dry, but more called it a pretty and well-acted sports picture. It stars Jack Lowden, Peter Mullan, Ophelia Lovibond and Sam Neill.

BLASTS FROM THE PAST!

Arrow Video have a new and impressive Blu-ray set. A few months back, they released *Kinji Fukasaku's Battles Without Honor and Humanity*, a series of films detailing the yakuza underworld. They were so successful that the director was assigned a new trilogy of films based around the same subject matter. The results were *New Battles Without Honor and Humanity* and they are arriving in a Blu-ray/DVD limited edition set. This trilogy features the titles *New Battles Without Honor and Humanity* (1974), *Head of the Boss* aka *The Boss's Head* (1975) and *Last Days of the Boss* (1976). If you liked the others, there's no reason why you won't enjoy these. The release includes sharp high definition transfers with new subtitles, interviews with the screenwriter and a video appreciation of the films from a critic.

Criterion are delivering a pristine new Blu-ray of the poetic Russian sci-fi existentialist drama, *Stalker* (1979

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). It comes from director Andrei Tarkovsky (*Solaris*

) and involves a man leading travelers through an unusual, otherworldly zone in order to find a room that will grant them their every wish. Apparently, it looks great with a new 2K transfer and is a very well regarded feature. The disc itself includes plenty of extras as well. There's an interview with a film historian, the cinematographer, the set designer and the composer.

Of course, if you'd prefer something a little... well... cheesier, Shout! Factory has your Blu-ray choices covered. *The Bat People* (1974) is a corny monster movie about a man who is bitten by a bat and begins to morph into one himself. It's pretty silly but may provide some B-movie thrills to the right person. They also have a double feature of *The*

Night of the Sorcerers

(1974) and

The Loreley's Grasp

(1974). The first is about a group of explorers in Africa who find a tribe of vampire women, and the second involves German authorities out to find the title monster after a bunch of locals turn up dead and with their hearts ripped out.

Finally, Warner Archive have a Blu-ray of the John Wayne/Lauren Bacall, Hong Kong set thriller, *Blood Alley* (1955).

Kino are delivering some action flicks on Blu-ray for your perusal. *Freeway* (1988) stars Billy Drago as a killer gunning down drivers in Los Angeles. Brian Dennehy, Joe Pantoliano, Jeff Fahey and Bill Paxton star in

The Last of the Finest

(1990) a cop movie about vice detectives who go above the law and use any means necessary to take down a drug kingpin. They've also got

No Man's Land

(1987) with D.B. Sweeney and Charlie Sheen. That one's about an undercover cop who attempt to stop a car-theft ring.

YOU KNOW, FOR KIDS!

Here are some selections that might appeal to youngsters.

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Adventure Time: Season 7

Arthur: Brothers and Sisters

Lego Nexo Knights: Season 3

ON THE TUBE!

And these our the week's TV-themed releases. And yes, for the first time ever, all of the episodes of William Shatner's fantastically over-the-top cop show *T.J. Hooker* (1982 -86) are being made available - previously only two seasons had been released. You can officially go grab a Circus Burger and watch every episode of its five-year run on this DVD set. So, now you all know what to get me for my birthday...

The 100: Season 4 (Warner Archive)

Adventure Time: Season 7

America's Test Kitchen: Season 17

Coronet Blue: The Complete Series

The Expanse: Season 2

Father Knows Best: Season 6

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Frontline: Poverty, Politics and Profit (PBS)

Frontline: Second Chance Kids (PBS)

Grantchester: Season 3 (PBS)

Great Yellowstone Thaw: How Nature Survives (PBS)

Lego Nexo Knights: Season 3

Nature's Great Race (PBS)

Signed, Sealed, Delivered: From the Heart (Hallmark)
Teen Wolf: Season 6

T.J. Hooker: The Complete Series

Unlikely Animal Friends: Season 4 (National Geographic)

The Untouchables: The Scarface Mob

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