

DVD/Blu-ray Roundup for Sept. 7, 2018

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
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Welcome to another look at highlights arriving on Blu-ray and DVD. 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!

Adrift - Based on a true story, this film follows a couple who decides to sail from Tahiti to San Diego. Along the way, they encounter one of the most devastating hurricanes in history, damaging their craft and throwing their lives into jeopardy. Reviews for this drama were generally positive. A small group did complain that the story had been formatted to hit all of the expected beats minimizing its impact, but more liked the performers and found the storm and its aftermath compelling to watch. The cast includes Shailene Woodley, Sam Claflin and Jeffrey Thomas.

Beast - This UK production involves a woman living under the thumb of her family in an isolated community. When she meets an outsider, the new arrival begins to influence the lead, who begins to dream of escaping her controlling clan. However, it is soon discovered that her new friend is a suspect in a series of murders. Notices were extremely strong for this independent feature. In fact, almost all write-ups complimented this slow-burn art-house entry for its striking imagery as well as for maintaining a tension-filled tone with plenty of solid performances. It features Geraldine James, Jessie Buckley and Johnny Flynn.

Damascus Cover - A Israeli Mossad government agent is assigned to go into Syria and retrieve a chemical-weapons specialist from enemy forces. Unfortunately, the job doesn't go according to plan, leaving the agent trapped behind enemy lines and on the run. He seeks out a deep-cover agent to help him escape the country. Critics roundly panned this UK production. A few appreciated what was accomplished on its limited budget, but most suggested that the script was sorely lacking. It stars Jonathan Rhys Meyers, Olivia Thirlby, John Hurt, Jurgen Prochnow and Navid Negahban.

Dark River - Here's another independent art-house entry from Britain. In this drama, a woman returns to her family's farm after the death of her father. She makes a claim for the land, despite the fact that it has been left to her own brother. Tensions arise and the situation between the siblings veers toward violence. Overall, reaction to the feature was positive. About one-fifth of reviewers found it so grim and downbeat they couldn't connect with it, but most said they

couldn't shake the dark, moody tone and called the end result memorably bleak. The cast includes Ruth Wilson, Mark Stanley and Sean Bean.

Ghost Stories – It's been a while since we've gotten an anthology horror picture, but this independent effort from the UK attempts to revitalize the genre by presenting three tales of terror involving spirits. The wraparound involves a professor/TV-show host who debunks spiritualists. However, when three cases arrive that tie in to his personal life, the lead is forced to examine and perhaps change his views. A few didn't care for its mix of humor and horror, but the vast majority called it assured, creepy, funny and surprisingly entertaining. It stars Andy Nyman, Martin Freeman, Paul Whitehouse, Alex Lawther and Jill Halfpenny.

Godard Mon Amour - Set during the civil unrest in France during 1968, this biopic tells the story of filmmaker Jean-Luc Godard, his relationship with young actress Anne Wiazemsky and his work on the film, *La Chinoise*. As the director becomes more and more involved in the cultural revolution, difficulties arise in the couple's relationship. This comedy/drama from Michael Hazanavicius (*The Artist*) appears to have garnered split reactions. About half complained it felt like an ineffective attempt to emulate a Woody Allen picture, while the rest complimented its unusual mix of comedy and drama, stating that the approach suited the scenario. Louis Garrel and Stacy Martin play the leads.

Hereditary - This creeper received a lot of attention earlier in the year. The story follows a troubled family who must deal with a series of tragedies. When a worried mother begins to experience strange, supernatural phenomena, it sets her off on an investigation that causes further strife and reveals big hidden secrets about the clan. Reaction to this horror picture was very positive. There were a small handful who didn't find it particularly scary, but just about everyone else said it was well-acted, well-shot and genuinely tense. The cast includes Toni Collette, Milly Shapiro, Gabriel Byrne and Alex Wolff. To read this site's review of the film, [click here](#).

Ideal Home - A bickering gay couple (one of whom is a celebrity chef) living a wild and flashy lifestyle get a big surprise when a young boy knocks on the door and claims to be the grandson of one of them... and moves in. The adults certainly don't feel ready to begin a family and struggle humorously with the sudden, unexpected transition. Reaction to this independent feature was generally positive. Some felt the material itself needed a softer and more subtle touch, but most were highly amused by the light and snappy script and appreciated the lead performances. It features Paul Rudd, Steve Coogan, Kate Walsh and Alison Pill.

Won't You Be My Neighbor? - This documentary tells the life story of Fred Rogers, host and creator of the popular children's television show, *Mr. Roger's Neighborhood*

The movie details how the program came to be, Rogers' attempts to promote understanding and forward social issues with the series, and the struggles he faced as his onscreen career eventually came to a close. The press gave extremely high marks to the movie. They praised it as an affectionate and informative tribute to a kind-hearted figure the likes of whom the world could use more of.

Blasts from the Past!

Kino has a trio of titles arriving in high definition for the first time. A couple of these are real guilty pleasures of mine.

Amazingly, two of these movies opened on the same weekend, and I'll also admit to having seen them (for review purposes, of course) both back to back. The first is *Blame it on the Bellboy* (1992). Set in Venice, the plot involves three men with similar sounding names arriving at a hotel. When they have their identities confused and their messages mixed up by an inattentive bellboy, they find themselves in bizarre situations. As events progress, the mixed up characters cross paths as they try to sort things out. Admittedly, this is no classic, but it does move at a quick pace and provides some amusing moments thanks to its great cast, which includes Dudley Moore, Bryan Brown, Richard Griffiths, Patsy Kensit, Alison Steadman, Penelope Wilton and Bronson Pinchot. Most hated this movie during its initial release, but writer/director Mark Herman ended up doing just fine, following it up with the more well-regarded flicks like *Brassed Off* (1996) and *Little Voice* (1998).

Once Upon a Crime... (1992) picks a similarly swanky locale for its story. This one follow a group of U.S. tourists visiting Monte Carlo who get mixed up in a dog-snatching plot as well as a local murder. It stars John Candy, Jim Belushi, Cybill Shepherd, Sean Young, Richard Lewis, Giancarlo Giannini, Ornella Muti and George Hamilton. On that fateful evening in 1992, I saw this title first and found that it didn't do a whole lot for me, providing only a chuckle or two despite the chaos on display. Perhaps it'll play better today and I'm tempted to check it out

again just to see for myself.

Kino's third release is *Oscar* (1991), Sylvester Stallone's first foray into comedy (which would continue and then abruptly end with 1992's terrible *Stop! Or My Mom Will Shoot*

). This one is about a mobster attempting to go straight, but finding a domestic drama involving his daughter causing strife at his home over the course of the day. Again, farces take their time to build momentum and the first act of this feature is somewhat slow, setting up the various characters and issues. However, from the moment we see a cutaway of a bunny with a shocked expression, the jokes start landing. The supporting cast of Marisa Tomei, Tim Curry, Chazz Palminteri, Peter Riegert, Harry Shearer, Don Ameche, Kirk Douglas (and many others) is great and the movie ends up delivering plenty of laughs.

Finally, Criterion has a Blu-ray of Ingmar Bergman's *Scenes from a Marriage* (1973). This is a long dramatization of the trials and tribulations of a marital union. The release includes a Swedish miniseries version of the work as well as a three-hour theatrical cut for film audiences.

You Know, For Kids!

Here is a list of releases aimed at youngsters.

Aliens Ate My Homework

Curious George: Halloween Double Feature

My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic: Pony Trick or Treat

On the Tube!

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And these are the week's TV-themed titles arriving on disc.

Adventure Time: The Final Seasons (Cartoon Network)

Bull: Season 2

The Goldbergs: Season 5

The Good Karma Hospital: Series 2

My Little Pony: Friendship is Magic: Pony Trick or Treat

Peter Gunn: The Complete Series

Rowan and Martin's Laugh-In: Season 6

Silicon Valley: Season 5

Supernatural: Season 13

Timeless: Season 2

When Calls the Heart: Weather the Storm (Lifetime)

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When Sharks Attack: Season 4 (National Geographic)

Wolfblood: Season 4

Young Sheldon: Season 1

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