The holidays are here, which means this edition of Blu-ray and DVD highlights isn't as packed as usual. Still, there is a big release and a couple of smaller features coming your way that may be of interest. 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

Adopt a Highway - This independent drama follows a man who is released from prison after 21 years behind bars. He manages to secure a job as a dishwasher at a fast-food restaurant and attempts to catch up on the world that he has missed. When the lead discovers an abandoned baby in a dumpster, he sees it as an opportunity for redemption and debates whether or not to keep it. Reviews were good overall for this effort.

A group of critics did complain that there wasn't much of a story and that it didn't develop its lead character well enough. However, more complimented the approach, calling the film a caring portrait of a man trying to do the right thing that benefits from a great lead performance. It stars Ethan Hawke, Elaine Hendrix and Christopher Heyerdahl.

After Party - After a Hollywood event, a group of social media celebrities and influencers are invited to the titular function at a mansion in the hills. Shortly after showing up, the attendees realize that they have been targeted by a masked killer and must escape before being eliminated. Seems like an unusual release date for a gnarly indie horror picture, so perhaps it is intended to serve as counter-programming to holiday fare. Unfortunately, there haven't been any official reviews posted by the press.

A few have appeared online and they have been anything but complimentary, stating that everything from the acting to the story was utterly terrible. The cast includes Vitaly Zdorovetskiy, Antonio Ramos, Simona Shyne and Timothy DeLaGhetto.

Drag Kids - Drag queens are at the center of this documentary. It follows four preteen drag entertainers from around the world preparing to put on a show for the very first time at the Montreal Pride celebrations. The kids must face off against opposition groups as they make their final preparations. They also meet and share their personal experiences with each other as the event progresses.

There aren't a lot of reviews out there, but the feature played at a few film festivals (like Hot Docs in Toronto) and received a great deal of positive response. According to several write-ups, the subjects are charming and upbeat as they set out to perform and follow their dreams.

The Gallows Act II - This sequel to the found-footage film about a group of theater students being terrorized by a mysterious and deadly figure (known as the Hangman) takes place some years after the original. An aspiring actress goes online, reads the cursed play from the first movie and takes up the Hangman's challenge of attempting to perform it. One assumes her rendition doesn't go well. Critics absolutely hated this follow-up and have yet to give it a recommendation.

They complained that the film borrowed its cues from other, better horror pictures and that the screenplay didn't offer anything close to thrills or excitement, hiding most of the supernatural elements until the final act. It features Ema Horvath, Chris Milligan and Brittany Falardeau.

The Ghost Who Walks - A convict desperately wants to return home to his family, which includes a child whom he has never met. To do this, he makes a deal with prosecutors to rat out his former boss. Naturally, his employer is none-too-pleased about the situation. With enemies closing in, the protagonist must locate his ex and daughter before the bad guys and get them out of town in order to try to start a new life.

As of this writing, there aren't many newspapers or online movie sites that have reviewed this picture, although it did win a few prizes at some small film festivals. Interested viewers will ultimately have to go in cold and hope for the best. Garland Scott, Frank Mosley and Alexia Rasmussen headline the feature.

Judy - Judy Garland is the subject of this biopic which focuses on her later years as an entertainer. As the story begins, she's financially strapped with a weakening voice and a

penchant for drinking and fighting with management, and with those surrounding her. In need of cash, the star takes on a five-week engagement in London. The press gave the drama favorable reviews.

There was a small contingent that didn't think that they learned enough about the performer or got a truly accurate picture of the woman. However, most admitted that while flawed, the movie benefited from an incredible lead performance, who they said looked and sounded exactly like the real person. It stars Renée Zellweger, Jessie Buckley, Finn Wittrock, Rufus Sewell and Michael Gambon.

The Kill Team - Based on the 2013 documentary of the same name, this biopic tells the story of a soldier stationed in Afghanistan. After his arrival, he witnesses his commanding officer and other recruits killing innocent civilians and ponders reporting their crimes to authorities. However, the unit begins to hear that someone within their ranks isn't pleased about their actions, and the lead character begins to fear that he may be eliminated, too. Reviewers generally liked this war drama.

Some did comment that while well-intentioned, the movie didn't end up making an emotional impact and couldn't top the original documentary. Still, more thought that it was a well-acted and quickly paced film that efficiently gets its message across to viewers. The cast includes Nat Wolff, Alexander Skarsgård and Rob Morrow.

Love Possibly - This independent romantic comedy from the UK is about a documentary crew chronicling the life of a quirky, hopeless romantic who is looking for true love. He meets a Moldovan mail-order bride online and finds her to be more than he bargained for, when she arrives at his front door. This movie has been playing the festival circuit for some time and is now making its debut on disc in North America. There aren't detailed any write-ups available for it, but it has earned plenty of praise at these film screenings, where it has won 33 prizes - so it definitely has its followers. It features Steve Hodgetts, Anna Danshina and Julie Nesher.

Blasts from the Past!

Alas, last week was so busy for high definition upgrades of older titles that there's nothing arriving for inclusion in this edition.

You Know, For Kids!

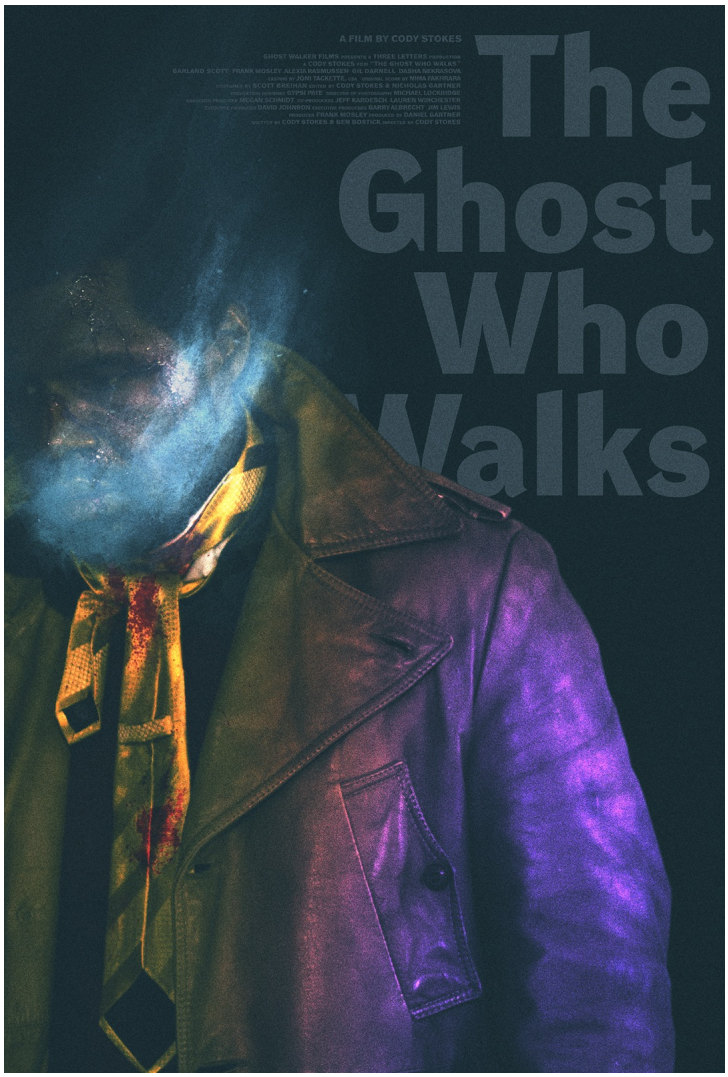
If you enjoy watching animated Batman adventures, then this is your week.

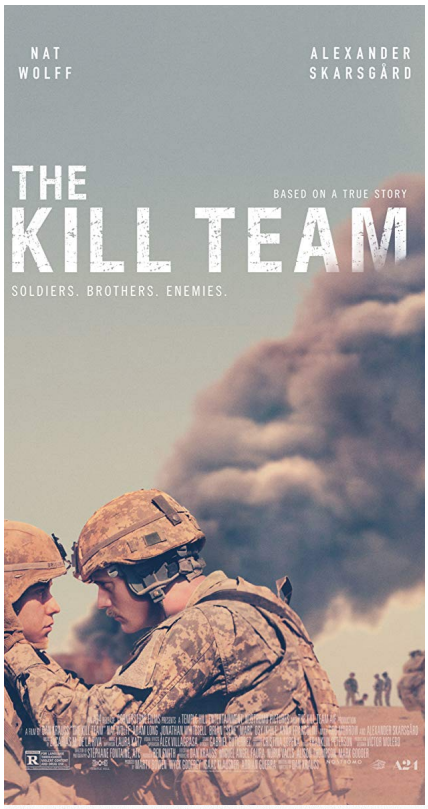
Batman Beyond (1999 - 2001)

On the Tube!

The same goes for older TV enthusiasts.

Batman Beyond (1999 - 2001)


A FILM BY CODY STOKES
The Ghost Who Walks

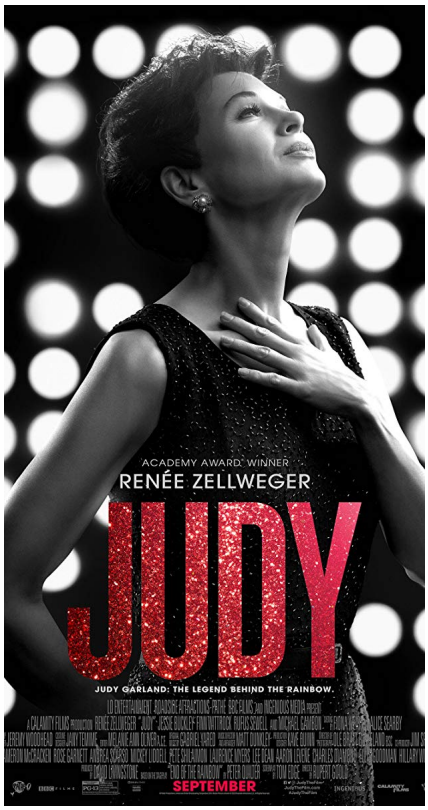

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THE KILL TEAM
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SOLDIERS. BROTHERS. ENEMIES.


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EVIL CHOOSES YOU
THE GALLOWS
ACT II
LIONSGATE


A Film by
Che Grant and Michael Boccalini
LOVE
Possibly
If love isn't a game, why does he keep losing?


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KIDS


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