

DVD/Blu-ray Roundup for August 14, 2015

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
Friday, 14 August 2015 04:46



Welcome once again to another look at the highlights coming to DVD and Blu-ray this week. 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!

I Am Big Bird: The Carroll Spinney Story - This documentary charts the life of the puppeteer who has played "Big Bird" on *Sesame Street* for over 45 years (he has yet to retire and even at 81 still goes to work and dons the yellow suit). Besides interviews, the feature also includes early clips of the performer working with Jim Henson. Reviews were very strong, stating that while it can be overly sentimental, the doc still gives viewers a fascinating behind-the-scenes look at the man who helped create an iconic children's character. Interviewees include Frank Oz and Roscoe "Gordon" Orman.

Northmen - A Viking Saga - When a violent storm strands a group of Vikings in the dangerous wilds of Scotland, they must fight their way to safety in this Swiss/German/South African flick. It received a limited release, but didn't end up impressing reviewers. They stated that there was nothing unique about this action adventure, using terms like generic and hackneyed to describe it. Now viewers can decide for themselves. It star Ed Skrein, Ryan Kwanten and James Norton as lost Norsemen.

Police Story: Lockdown - Released in the far east in 2013 as *Police Story - 2013*, Jackie Chan returns to his most famous franchise (in Hong Kong, at least) for yet another kung-fu cop tale. However, this time out the tone is grittier and darker. Chan plays a cop who must save his estranged daughter and her husband-to-be when they are all taken hostage in a Hong Kong mobster's dance club. Critics didn't have much good to say about this, the sixth entry in the series. They wrote that it was poorly paced and featured far too much back-story, not to mention little of the high energy martial arts viewers will expect. Perhaps fans would be better served watching the original foreign-language classic.

Preggoland - A single woman whose friends have all become mothers is thrown out of a baby shower for her wild behavior. In order to salvage all the relationships, she decides to fake a pregnancy and get herself welcomed back into the group - naturally, the rouse leads to complications. Reception was mixed for this independent comedy. Some found the lead performance funny enough to recommend the film. Others considered it uneven and felt that the movie had an awkward time juggling laughs with dramatic and rom-com conventions. It stars Sonja Bennett, James Caan, Danny Trejo and Laura Harris.

Unfriended - The internet can be scary, folks! In this horror hit, a group of friends are attacked by a supernatural presence in each of their homes while communicating using Facebook and other social media. The entire film is told through all of their computer screens. The movie garnered a successful theatrical release earlier in the year and managed to impress more than half of the press. Many believed its approach to be original and found the film effective and creepy. However, a few couldn't buy into the approach and found the technique lacking. It features Heather Sossaman in the lead role. To read a full-length review, [click here](#).

Blasts From the Past!

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There are quite a few interesting titles this week. Shout! Factory have *The People Under the Stairs* (1991), a

financially successful horror movie from director Wes Craven (*A Nightmare on Elm Street*

, *Scream*

). It's about a poor young boy who is roped into assisting some burglars rob the mansion of his landlord. Upon entering, they discover that the owners are also serial killers who have trapped numerous victims inside - the insane couple begin hunting the group down one by one. If memory serves, it's a fun scare flick that will certainly please genre fans with all sorts of bizarre moments. It also features a great cast that includes some entertainingly over-the-top performances from

Twin Peaks

vets Everett McGill and Wendy Robie. The Blu-ray comes loaded with extras. There are two audio commentaries (one with director Wes Craven and another featuring cast members), interviews, behind-the-scenes footage and promo materials.

Once again, Kino have plenty of Blu-rays from a variety of eras and genres. These include the newspaper reporter comedy *The Front Page* (1931), the Kevin Kline comic murder/mystery thriller *The January Man* (1989), and the giant

killer mollusk sci-fi B-movie,

The Monster That Challenged the World

(1957). They've also got a release of the low-budget Ray Sharkey and Michael Chiklis thriller, *The Rain Killer*

(1990) (note: this particular film is DVD only). If you're looking for more in the suspense genre, *Still of the Night*

(1982) features Roy Scheider as a psychiatrist investigating the death of one of his patients - he gets involved with the victim's mistress and prime suspect, played by Meryl Streep. Finally, *War-Gods of the Deep*

(1965) aka

City in the Sea

is a Vincent Price genre feature about a group of scientists who find... well... a city in the sea.

Criterion Collection have an impressive Blu-ray of *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (1981), a melodrama starring Meryl Streep and Jeremy Irons. It was an Oscar-nominated film that contrasts two complicated romantic relationships that occur 100 years apart. This release features a new 2K digital restoration, fresh interviews with cast and crew members, and a full episode of a British TV news program made at the time of its release that features the director, screenwriter and novelist talking about the film.

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The cult horror flick *Eaten Alive* (1977) is also being released in a Blu-ray/DVD package from Arrow. Tobe Hooper (director of *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre*), brings a similarly gritty tone in this follow up to the aforementioned classic. It's a disturbing effort about a messed up motel owner terrorizing helpless victims with his pet crocodile. While the movie isn't quite as good as *Chainsaw*

, it's still quite effective and chock full of icky, nasty and unsettling moments. The disc includes an impressive transfer of the flick from the original camera negative, new interviews and an introduction to the film from Hooper himself. Buyers will also get a cast and make-up effects artist audio commentary, archival interviews and advertising materials, a featurettes looking at the career of Robert Englund and one detailing the real life story of which the movie is based.

And finally, Universal are putting out a Blu-ray of the John Wayne firefighter drama *Hellfighters* (1968) as well as a re-release of the campy horror movie sequel, *Halloween III: Season of the Witch* (1982).

You Know, For Kids!

There are a lot of options for the young ones - you'll find them all listed below.

Batman: Gotham Knight

Blaze & the Monster Machines: High-Speed Adventures

DCU Batman: Year One

Denver The Last Dinosaur Vol. 1

Denver The Last Dinosaur Vol. 2

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Garfield Holiday Collection

Justice League: Crisis On Two Earths

LEGO Friends: Friends Together Again

Max Steel: Go Turbo

Power Rangers Super Megaforce: Legendary Battle

Power Rangers Lightspeed Rescue: The Complete Series

Strawberry Shortcake: Berry Tales

Superman: Doomsday

Super Why: Cinderella & Other Fairy Tale Adventures (PBS)

Wonder Woman