

Monsters & mayhem: 'Kong: Skull Island' is a blast

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For Digital First Media

Head to an uncharted island in the Pacific for the latest spin on the King Kong legend and discover a tale brimming with wit, sophistication and eye-popping special effects.

Tom Hiddleston, Brie Larson, Samuel L. Jackson and John Goodman star in "Kong: Skull Island" (2017, Warner, PG-13, \$28) as the members of a team of explorers, scientists and soldiers who are on a map-making mission when they discover they've entered the domain of monsters, including the mythic Kong.

Kudos to director Jordan Vogt-Roberts for staging nearly all of the action in the daylight, instantly avoiding the dreariness of so many modern thrillers. Extras: commentaries, deleted scenes and featurettes.

Also New To DVD

Their Finest (2017, Lionsgate, R, \$20): Set in World War II-era London, this buoyant comedy from Lone Scherfig ("An Education") is about an aspiring screenwriter (Gemma Arterton) who's hired by the British



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government to help bring a female perspective to propaganda films. She promptly clashes with her fellow scripter (Sam Claflin) in a way which signals they're bound to be together. One of the film's biggest weaknesses is the lack of heat between Arterton and Claflin. That said, "Their Finest" has much to recommend it, particularly the camaraderie that develops among the crew and the rich supporting turns by Bill Nighy as a has-been actor and Helen McCrory as his tough-minded agent. Extras: featurette and Scherfig commentary.

Buster's Mal Heart (2017, WellGo, unrated, \$25): If you're a fan of mind-teasers like "Donnie Darko"

and "Lost Highway," check out this twisty tale about a weary hotel concierge ("Mr. Robot's" Rami Malek) who begins to lose his grip on reality after encountering a chatty conspiracy theorist (DJ Qualls.) Does Malek re-invent himself as a mysterious mountain man? Or is he just imaging a road not taken? Even though the movie begins to lose steam with a truly perplexing third act, writer/director Sarah Adina Smith dares to ask big questions about faith and identity. Extras: deleted scenes.

Night People (1954, Kino, unrated, \$30): Suspense is kept at a constant slow-boil in this crackerjack espionage thriller about the kidnapping of an American GI in post-World War II Berlin. Gregory Peck stars as a cranky CIA agent who is tasked with brokering a deal involving a prisoner exchange. Something of a forerunner to Steven Spielberg's "Bridge of Spies," the new-to-Blu "Night People" is light on action and heavy on displays of intellectual prowess as Peck tries to outwit the bad guys without running afoul of the kidnapped soldier's tycoon father (Broderick Crawford). Extras: fea-

turette.

Stormy Monday (1988, Arrow, R, \$40): One of the most underrated – and understated – movies of the 1980s arrives on Blu-ray, looking and sounding better than ever. The directorial debut of Mike Figgis ("Leaving Las Vegas") pulses to a bluesy beat as a British club owner (Sting) tries to protect his establishment from being gobbled up by an American developer (Tommy Lee Jones). Caught in the middle are a couple (Melanie Griffith, Sean Bean) who fall in love against the backdrop of jazz clubs, neon-lit diners and foggy Newcastle streets. A lovely blend of dazzle and noir, "Stormy Monday" is the rare movie in which every gorgeously composed shot matters. Extras: featurettes.

The Crimson Kimono (1959, Twilight Time, unrated, \$30): Now on Blu-ray, Samuel Fuller's gripping crime thriller begins with the shocking murder of a stripper on a busy Los Angeles street. Arriving to investigate are two police detectives (Glenn Corbett and James Shigeta) who, over the course of the movie, both fall in love with the same

witness (Victoria Shaw). The plot is a coat hanger on which Fuller hangs fascinating meditations on race, violence and the nature of friendship. It's the rare who-dun-it with a social conscience. Extras: featurettes.

Flamingo Road (1947, Warner Archive, unrated, \$20): Two years after winning an Oscar for "Mildred Pierce," Joan Crawford reteamed with director Michael Curtiz and leading man Zachary Scott for another potboiler bubbling over with betrayal, corruption and murder. This time around, Crawford plays a carnival dancer who decides to go respectable with help from a weak-willed lawman (Scott). But her presence in town raises the hackles of a sleazy sheriff (Sydney Greenstreet.) There's never a dull moment as Crawford and Greenstreet face-off in a battle of wits and wills. The big surprise is how beautifully Curtiz photographs the action, draping the drama in smoke and shadows. Extras: none.

Slither - Collector's Edition (2006, Shout Factory, R, \$35): Before directing the "Guardians

of the Galaxy" movies, James Gunn oversaw this B-movie classic which, in the spirit of "Tremors" and "Alligator," has a fine old time delivering its scares. Prepare to be squirming in your seat as deadly slime things take over a small, Southern town. Be forewarned: there's a bathtub sequence that does for bathing what "Psycho" did for showers. Nathan Fillion and Elizabeth Banks team up to stamp out the creepy crawlies but its Michael Rooker who steals the show with a portrayal of the town bully possessed by the alien organism. Extras: gag reel, featurettes, deleted scenes and commentaries.

Pretty Little Liars - The Complete Seventh and Final Season (2017, Warner, unrated, \$50): Desperate to end the game before it ends them, the Liars must band together to unearth answers to the questions which have bedeviled them for the last seven years, particularly the identity of A.D. Included are all 20 episodes of the binge-worthy series which has remained rich in suspense and romantic entanglements. Extras: featurettes and deleted scenes.