

What to Watch: Oct. 27-Nov. 2, 2013

Submitted by [BrianTT](#) [1] on October 29, 2013 - 3:28pm

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CHICAGO – There are a few major comedies on New Releases shelves this week along with some interesting, smaller films and one of the most anticipated TV shows of 2013. What options are new in the world of Blu-ray, DVD, streaming and [digital TV providers](#) [29]? Some of the most interesting and most unbearable comedies of the year hit your home viewing radar. Here’s how to rank them from ha-ha to hateful.



The Heat
Photo credit: Fox

“The Heat”

Paul Feig's mega-comedy proved that star power can go a long way in overcoming the relative shortcomings of a pretty mediocre script. There's nothing really special about "The Heat" on paper but when you put the incredibly likable Sandra Bullock and Melissa McCarthy (two of the most popular actresses in the world right now when one considers that both this and their other 2013 films — "Gravity" and "Identity Thief" — broke \$100 million domestically) in front of the camera, they can elevate any comedy. They're the reasons that "The Heat" works. It may be a bit bloated and inconsistent but Bullock and McCarthy bring the funny in ways that their male counterparts aren't even approaching (look further down this comedy-driven What to Watch for a pair of comedy actors on the other end of the spectrum, creatively & commercially).

From my [theatrical review](#) [30]: *"An incredibly talented ensemble elevates a pretty pedestrian script in the just-funny-enough "The Heat," a movie that gets better as it goes along, largely because its two mega-talented stars carry it over some mediocre patches of writing. Melissa McCarthy and Sandra Bullock simply have unimpeachable comic timing. They know how to work a joke, hit a punchline, and inject just enough character to make it feel three-dimensional. They're reason enough to see "The Heat," even if one wishes the film around them was up to their talents."*

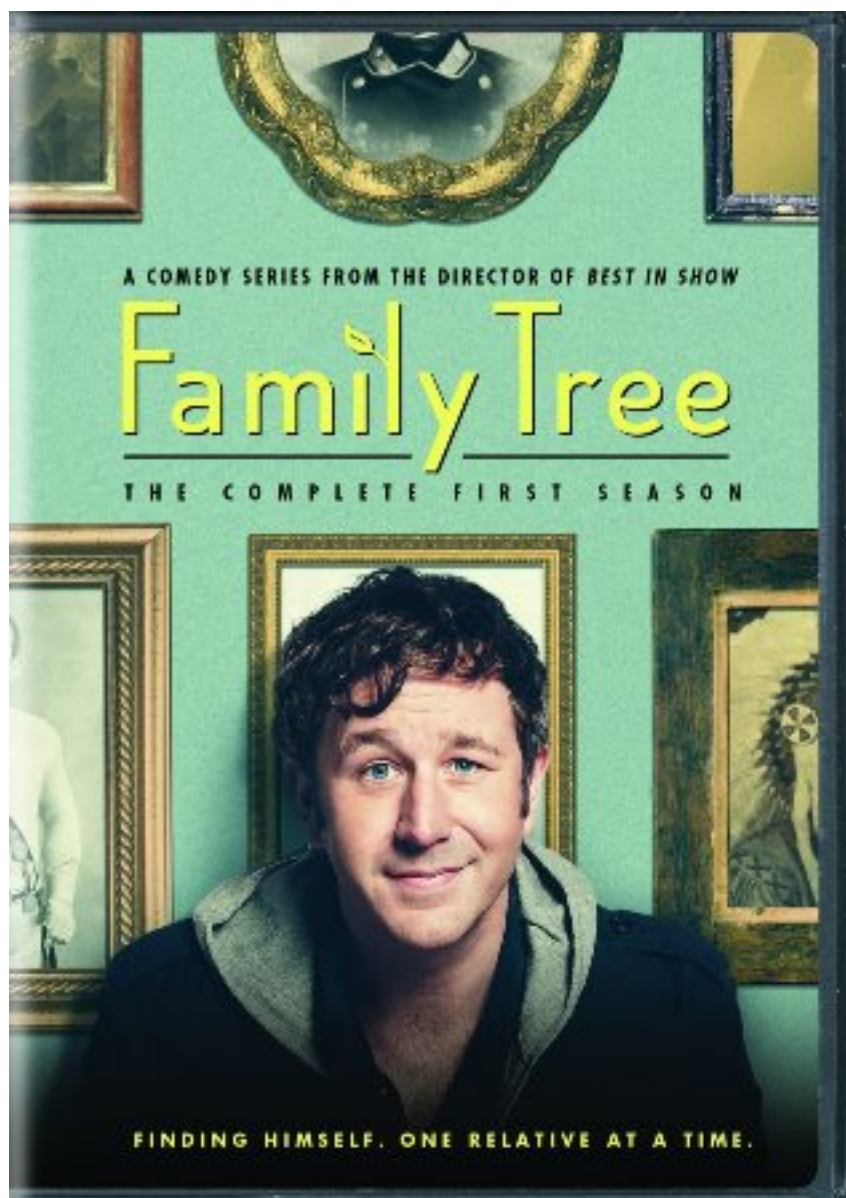
Synopsis:

Oscar Winner Sandra Bullock and Oscar Nominee Melissa McCarthy are a "dynamite duo" (George Pennacchio, KABC-TV) in this outrageously funny comedy from the director of Bridesmaids, Paul Feig. Uptight FBI Special Agent Sarah Ashburn (Bullock) and foul-mouthed Boston cop Shannon Mullins (McCarthy) couldn't be more incompatible. But when they join forces to bring down a ruthless drug lord, they become the last thing anyone expected...buddies.

Special Features:

- o Mullins Family Fun
- o Von Bloopers
- o Deleted, Alternate & Extended Scenes
- o Acting Master Class
- o 5 Commentaries Including Paul Feig And Mystery Science Theater 3000

Where to Watch: Blu-ray, DVD, Vudu, Amazon Instant Streaming, iTunes



Family Tree: The Complete First Season

Photo credit: HBO

"Family Tree: The Complete First Season"

It may not have delivered in the ways that fans of "Waiting For Guffman" and "Best in Show" were hoping but Christopher Guest's HBO sitcom has moments of true brilliance. It's odd to me that a 2013 program broadcast in HD on the most important TV network in history isn't available on Blu-ray but DVD collectors can still appreciate Chris O'Dowd's charismatic lead performance and an undeniably talented supporting cast. A bit slight on special features, but considering the lack of an HD option, one shouldn't be surprised that HBO is kind of releasing it bare-bones.

From my [TV review](#) [31]: *"There are major "laugh set-pieces" in the first few episodes of "Family Tree," such as an amazing first date gone wrong and a race with people dressed like horses and other animals, but the jokes come at a more casual pace than we're accustomed to*

with television comedy and Guest seems more laid back than in his more manic films. The result of the slower pace makes for a show that I'm guessing many will wish was more laugh-inducing funny but few shows this season have produced a more consistent smile than HBO's new offering."

Synopsis:

From Christopher Guest (Best In Show, A Mighty Wind) and Jim Piddock comes a comedy series about the journey of 30-year-old Tom Chadwick (Chris O'Dowd) as he sets about finding himself, one relative at a time. After inheriting a mysterious box of belongings from a great-aunt he never met, Tom starts investigating his family lineage and uncovers a whole world of unusual stories and characters and a growing sense of who he is and who his real family are. The series also features Carrie Aizley, Bob Balaban, Ed Begley, Jr., Tom Bennett, Nina Conti, Christopher Guest, Michael McKean, Jim Piddock, Kevin Pollak, Don Lake, and Fred Willard.

Special Features:

- o Exclusive Bonus Scenes
- o Music From The Show
- o Keith's Favorite 1970s Sitcoms

Where to Watch: DVD, Vudu, Amazon Instant Streaming, iTunes, HBO Go



The Beauty of the Devil

Photo credit: Cohen Media Group

“The Beauty of the Devil”

The most obscure title in this week's What to Watch is a 1950 French drama that has been buried for over six decades, unearthed and remastered by the geniuses at Cohen Media Group, a collective who have been releasing hard-to-find foreign films and American classics for the better part of 2013. Their latest is a long-lost take on the Faust classic about a man who makes a deal with the devil for fame and fortune. It's harder to find than anything else in this week's What to Watch (no streaming, you'll have to buy or find a place to physically rent) but sometimes those make the most rewarding entertainment options.

Synopsis:

Michel Simon and Gerard Philipe star in this imaginative retelling of the Faust legend. Approaching the end of his life, a prominent professor of alchemy (Simon) makes a bargain with the Devil (Philipe) that will gain him youth, fame and riches in exchange for his soul. Master filmmaker Rene Clair creates an allegorical fantasy that is at time both whimsical and tragicomic.

Special Features:

- o 2010 Documentary Featurette
- o Original French Trailer
- o Theatrical Re-Release Trailer

Where to Watch: Blu-ray, DVD



Byzantium

Photo credit: IFC Films

“Byzantium”

Neil Jordan was once a must-see, one of our most interesting filmmakers on an international scale. He’s still intriguing but choices like “Ondine” and now this inert vampire drama leave one scratching their head. There’s a visual confidence from Jordan that remains strong enough to keep this flick from complete boredom but the source material and script simply don’t crackle like they need to in order to elevate the overall product above the crowded genre. See it for the pretty pictures (and gorgeous leads) but don’t be surprised if you forget about it quickly thereafter.

From my [film review](#) [32]: “*There are elements of “Byzantium” that threaten to work but then they’re flattened into a boring narrative with characters that don’t connect and a stylistic approach by Jordan that doesn’t give the piece the personality it needs to be considered as more than an arthouse “Twilight.” It’s a vampire movie without a pulse.*”

Synopsis:

Clara (Gemma Arterton, Hansel and Gretel: Witch Hunters) and her daughter Eleanor (Saoirse Ronan, Hanna) have been sating their need for blood for 200 years. Sensitive Eleanor relies on the elderly to survive, but Clara is far less compassionate, working as a prostitute and bringing a violent end to those who would take advantage of women. When the trail of bloodless corpses left in their wake forces them to flee to a coastal town, Clara sees an opportunity to set up a brothel in an old resort and provide for her daughter. But Eleanor, unwilling to continue living on the run, yearns to tell her story of life in the past, not anticipating the grave consequences doing so may have. Sexy, thrilling and mysterious, director Neil Jordan’s (Interview with the Vampire) BYZANTIUM deftly draws upon 19th century vampire mythology to create a wholly contemporary gothic tale.

Special Features:

- o Interviews
- o Trailer

Where to Watch: Blu-ray, DVD, Amazon Instant Streaming, iTunes



R.I.P.D.

Photo credit: Universal

“R.I.P.D.”

We mentioned Faust earlier in this week’s What to Watch and one has to wonder if Ryan Reynolds didn’t sign some deal with the devil in which he’d be a household name, incredibly nice guy, very handsome, and yet appear in nothing but flops. The star of such turds as “The Change-Up” and “The Green Lantern” adds another unwise decision to his resume in this grating, abrasive take on “Men in Black” with the supernatural instead of the extra-terrestrial. Don’t waste your time. Unless you’ve signed a deal with the devil yourself that requires you to watch bad movies.

From Patrick McDonald’s [film review](#) [33]: “*Did everyone see “Men in Black”? Or the film’s two sequels? They you saw “R.I.P.D.,” which unfortunately for the production team has “rip” in the title, because the film is a lazy rewrite and rip-off of “MiB.”*”

Synopsis:

Jeff Bridges and Ryan Reynolds headline this supernatural action-adventure as two cops dispatched by the Rest In Peace Department (R.I.P.D.) to protect and serve the living from increasingly destructive spirits hiding among the unsuspecting on Earth. When they uncover a plot that could end life as we know it, the new partners have to turn grudging respect into top-notch teamwork to restore the cosmic balance... or watch the tunnel to the afterlife begin sending angry souls the very wrong way.

Special Features:

- o 2 Alternate Openings
- o Nick’s New Avatars
- o R.I.P.D. Motion Comics: Bringing The Avatars To Life
- o Walking Among Us: Deados & Avatars
- o Filming The Other Side
- o Anatomy Of A Shootout
- o Deleted And Alternate Scenes
- o Gag Reel
- o Transferring R.I.P.D.- The Making Of

+

Where to Watch: Blu-ray, DVD, Vudu, Amazon Instant Streaming, iTunes



The Internship

Photo credit: Fox

“The Internship”

Speaking of stars who end up in annoying projects more often than entertaining ones, Vince Vaughn and Owen Wilson prove that they have given up entirely on finding what once made them famous with arguably the worst film of either of their careers. This Google infomercial misses on every level from the over-playing of Vaughn’s schtick to the dull romance between Wilson & Rose Byrne to the underdog story that plays like an ’80s “Revenge of the Nerds” rip-off. Avoid at all costs.

From Patrick McDonald’s [film review](#) [34]: “*There are some funny lines, a couple entertaining cameos and the Vaughn/Wilson team still has a bit in their tank. But there is something very awkward about taking a real corporation and making it the be all and end all. It’s enough to drive anyone to use Bing.*”

Synopsis:

Vince Vaughn and Owen Wilson team up to crash the digital world in this laugh-out-loud buddy comedy you’ve been searching for! Trying to reboot their obsolete careers, old-school salesmen Billy (Vaughn) and Nick (Wilson) talk their way into an internship program at the state-of-the-art Google campus, vying for a handful of spots among tech-savvy college students who are half their age and twice as smart. The competition is fiercely funny as Billy and Nick break all the rules in a hilarious quest to land their dream jobs!

Special Features:

- o Audio Commentary With Director Shawn Levy
- o Deleted Scenes
- o Any Given Monday

Where to Watch: Blu-ray, DVD, Vudu, Amazon Instant Streaming, iTunes



[35]

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- [32] <http://www.hollywoodchicago.com/reviews/22589/neil-jordan-s-byzantium-feels-drained-of-passion#ixzz2j91l9Tj1>
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