

**TOTAL**

MAY 2015  
ISSUE 231

**ULTIMATE PREVIEW**

# THE FUTURE 100

YOUR GUIDE TO **EVERYTHING**  
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REVIEWS

**EXCLUSIVE**

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FIRST LOOK

**AQUAMAN**

FIRST WORD

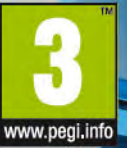
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## MARCH



MAR  
27

- |     |    |                                 |
|-----|----|---------------------------------|
| MAR | 10 | DMC: DEFINITIVE EDITION         |
| MAR | 20 | BATTLEFIELD HARDLINE            |
| MAR | 20 | FINAL FANTASY TYPE 0            |
| MAR | 20 | RESIDENT EVIL REVELATIONS 2     |
| MAR | 27 | BLOODBORNE                      |
| MAR | 27 | BORDERLANDS HANDSOME COLLECTION |

## APRIL



APR  
14

- |     |    |   |
|-----|----|---|
| APR | 2  | PROJECT CARS                            |
| APR | 2  | DARK SOULS II: SCHOLAR OF THE FIRST SIN |
| APR | 14 | MORTAL KOMBAT X                         |

## MAY



MAY  
19

- |     |    |                          |
|-----|----|--------------------------|
| MAY | 19 | THE WITCHER 3: WILD HUNT |
|-----|----|--------------------------|

## JUNE



JUN  
2

- |     |   |   |
|-----|---|---|
| JUN | 2 | BATMAN: ARKHAM KNIGHT                           |
| JUN | 9 | ELDER SCROLLS ONLINE: TAMRIEL UNLIMITED EDITION |

## LATER THIS YEAR

- |     |                                      |
|-----|--------------------------------------|
| TBA | TOM CLANCY'S THE DIVISION            |
| TBA | UNTIL DAWN                           |
| TBA | METAL GEAR SOLID V: THE PHANTOM PAIN |
| TBA | DEAD ISLAND 2                        |

- |     |                            |
|-----|----------------------------|
| TBA | EA SPORTS PGA TOUR         |
| TBA | TEARAWAY UNFOLDED          |
| TBA | UNCHARTED 4: A THIEF'S END |
| TBA | STAR WARS BATTLEFRONT      |

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TO FIND OUT MORE AND VIEW FUTURE RELEASES

# THIS IS FOR THE PLAYERS

#4ThePlayers



May 2015 Issue 231

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TF = ON THE COVER

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# dialogue

Mail, rants, theories etc...

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## The 100 Club

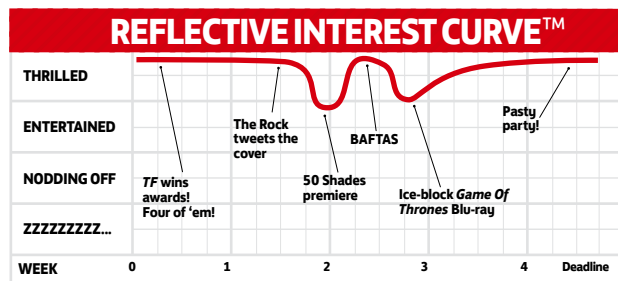
**W**elcome to our annual Future 100 issue where the entire features section is devoted to the 100 most important people, films and trends shaping cinema. I love this issue, firstly because we get to do smug faces for the rest of the year as our predictions come true, but also because it's a chance to celebrate up-and-comers (John Boyega, Damien Chazelle, Lea Seydoux), future game-changers (Emma Watson, The Russo Brothers, Simon Pegg) and the movies getting us most fired up for the future (*Fantastic Four*, *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*, *Lego Batman*). Then there's *Mad Max: Fury Road*, surely the boldest, ballsiest, frankly... *maddest* movie on the road – we took a roll in the dust with the cast and director. As if that wasn't enough, you can head to page 30 where five lucky readers will win that hottest of technology tickets: an Apple Watch! Enjoy the issue.

*Rosie*

ROSIE FLETCHER  
ACTING EDITOR

Drop us a line:  
[totalfilm@futurenet.com](mailto:totalfilm@futurenet.com)

### The ups and downs of making this issue...



TF goes Zoltan!  
Big things are happening...

CAMERA PRESS

## STAR LETTER

★ I wake up one day to the awesome news that Spider-Man is joining his Avengers buddies in the Marvel Cinematic Universe then just two days later I find out they're ditching Andrew Garfield and rebooting the character AGAIN! It seems these days unless your movie makes a billion in its opening weekend you might as well get yourself down the job centre. What happened to giving a franchise a chance? I thought Garfield was a good fit and I liked the style of the new movies.

**RICHARD STANTON**, LINCOLN

*Before long they'll need to change the song: "Spider-Man/Spider-Man/ the only person who hasn't played him/is your nan." Assuming they haven't cast/ re-cast by the time you read this, who would you like to see in the red-and-blue unitard? Or a unitard full stop? Richard and everyone with a letter printed here will receive a copy of The Hunger Games: Mockingjay – Part 1, out on DVD/Blu-ray/Steelbook on 16 March via Lionsgate Home Entertainment. Didn't send an address? Email it! May our spam filter be ever in your favour!*



## 12 years a snooze

➤ Am I the only movie lover alive who thinks that *Boyhood* was a load of garbage? Firstly the story wasn't compelling and it felt overly prolonged at times with the end result being rather disappointing. If it hadn't been filmed over 12 years I doubt it would have got the same praise.

**HAMISH WILSON**, EALING

*To be fair to Linklater, Biro-ing stubble on to six-year-old Ellar Coltrane or having him stand on increasingly bigger boxes probably wouldn't have had the same effect as the long-term shoot did. Refreshing words, though; true, *Boyhood* was our favourite film of last year, possibly the decade, but that doesn't mean we don't want to hear a dissenting voice.*



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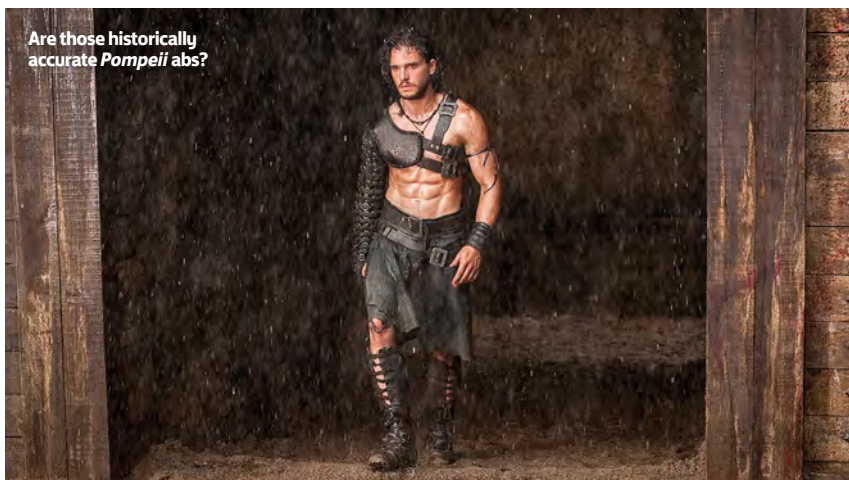
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## Truth is out there

Just an observation, but I don't know if anyone else has noticed the incredible number of true stories that have been brought to the screen lately. Over the past year or so I've counted: *The Fifth Estate*, *Fruitvale Station*, *Tracks*, *Diana*, *Mandela*, *The Grandmaster*, *Get On Up*, *The Monuments Men*, *Pompeii* (kind of), *American Sniper*, *The Imitation Game*, *The Theory Of Everything*, *Unbroken*, *Foxcatcher*, *Selma*, *Wild*, *Kill The Messenger*, *Exodus: Gods And Kings*, *The Water Diviner*, *Mr Turner* and many others. So if anyone wants to adapt my walk to the newsagents to get the morning paper with my granddad into a movie, just give me a call for the finer details!

**MARK FELLOWES, PERTH**

*You're not wrong, true stories seem to be as ubiquitous as Oscar Isaac, four-part trilogies and comic-book movie slates covering the next quarter-century. BTW, love your qualifying use of 'sort of' in reference to Pompeii; obviously we weren't there, but we're pretty certain that when Vesuvius blew her top, it wasn't as a backdrop to a school-play rewrite of Titanic with Keifer Sutherland devouring more scenery than the lava.*

## 'When Vesuvius blew her top, it wasn't as a backdrop to a school-play rewrite of Titanic'

### Dog gone

I don't want to be one of those guys but here it comes. Your feature 30 Greatest Movie Animals [TF230] suffers from the biggest oversight since your magazine began. To not feature Sam – the dog from *I Am Legend* – is the stuff of folly. He acts Will Smith off the screen and surely brought tears to all who watched the movie. I will now turn my back in a petulant manner.

**ANDREW NEILSON, AYR**

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So you include a CGI spider and CGI snake in your list along with a dog that only appeared in one movie, yet you can't find room for Skippy the wire terrier, aka Asta in *The Thin Man* (1934), Mr. Smith in *The Awful Truth* (1937) and George in *Bringing Up Baby* (1938)? And what about Pal the collie, who starred in all the major *Lassie* movies of the '40s and '50s? Movies did not begin with *Jaws*, you know.

**PETER DANIELS, VIA EMAIL**

## OFFICE SPACED

Chatter 'gems' overheard in the *Total Film* office this month...

► "I'm sounding the faff klaxon." ► "The printer's being a dick." ► "I just missed my mouth and soaked my flatplan. Crying face." ► "My eye is going hell for leather." ► "You know how Hulk says he's always angry? I'm always hungry."



# TOTALFILMONLINE

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## TOTALFILMONLINE ON OUR WEBSITE...



### Top 20 Date Movies

<http://www.gamesradar.com/top-20-date-movies/>

Our fail-safe rundown of flicks to snuggle up to with a significant other (or others, we're not

judging). Including, yes, *Zombieland*.



### The Complete Guide To Terminator: Genisys

<http://www.gamesradar.com/complete-guide-terminator-genisys/>

Everything you need to know about the origins – or origins, if you like – of Arnie's return to playing cinema's deadliest, deadpan-ist cyborg.



### 50 Movies You Won't Believe Didn't Win Oscars

<http://www.gamesradar.com/50-movies-you-won-t-believe-didnt-win-oscars/>

Still fuming over that *LEGO Movie* snub? Here's 50 more oversights to get in a rage about, from *Death* playing chess to *Depp* trimming bushes.

## @TOTALFILM



### SNACKS OF THE MONTH

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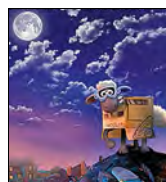
Marking the debut of Mads Mikkelsen short *The Call* at BoConcept.co.uk, a feast of Danish treats. Cheesy puffs dangerously addictive, liquorice Haribo dangerously tar-like.



### VISITOR OF THE MONTH

<https://twitter.com/totalfilm/status/567326326059978752>

You've never seen terror like it when Mr Babadook skulked by to promote his Blu-ray. But after a cuppa and a play with the rubber-band ball, he was OK.



### SHAUN THE SHEEP GAME WINNER

<https://twitter.com/totalfilm/status/563693773159673856>

Here's the poster Aardman did for the winning entry in our sheep-film-title-pun game. Congrats to Phil Welsby – hope the WOOL-E print gives your home a new fleece of life.

## TVREVIEWS GAMESRADAR.COM/TV



So where has all the British sci-fi TV gone? That's the question asked by our sister mag *SFX* at [gamesradar.com/uk/tv/sfx-hot-topic](http://gamesradar.com/uk/tv/sfx-hot-topic). Join the debate, and have a nosey at the expert coverage of the latest SF/fantasy shows – and *Better Call Saul* too!





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Given the breadth of the animal kingdom we didn't want to go too doggy (if you'll pardon the expression), so the likes of Pal and Skippy regrettably became Best In No-Show. As for Asta, we did come under intense pressure to include the little bowler-hat-fancying scamp, but we don't negotiate with terrier-ists. (Sorry.)

## Sexual dysfunction

Colour me unsurprised at some of the dismal reviews for *Fifty Shades Of Grey*. It was always going to be a difficult one to make. That said, I can't wait for the Wii game tie-in to come out...

**MARK RICHARDS,**  
 VIA EMAIL

Just make sure you have a safe word sorted before you start wagging that Wii-mote around, and fasten the strap around your wrist carefully to avoid damaging anything expensive. We're looking forward to the Bollywood version (*Fifty Shades Of Bombay*), British gangster remake (*Fifty Shades Of Kraig*) and eyebrow-raising *Spidey* reboot (*Fifty Shades Of May*).

## Serious complaint

I couldn't agree less with Noah Max's letter (Dialogue, TF230), saying how great January had been for movies. As a lover of 'leave your brain at the door' action movies, it's been a real struggle to find anything remotely interesting for the last two months. It's always a fairly quiet



period at the cinema between Halloween and New Year with the cinemas full of Oscar fodder and kiddies' Christmas movies, but this year seems to have been particularly awful, with wave after wave of dull, 'worthy', serious movies and entertainment in very short supply. I understand why studios release their Oscar-bait during winter, but surely if a movie is good enough Academy voters will remember it for more than four weeks? I'm sure lovers of these 'grown-up' movies feel the same resentment about the blockbusters that clog up the summer months. Variety is the spice of life so wouldn't it be great if cinemas were able to show a mixture of film genres all year round?

**TIM DICKSON, MILTON KEYNES**  
*The movie calendar has settled into a rough cycle—awards movies/not awards movies/summer movies/not summer movies/awards movies—but even in the depths of this year's serious period there was Taken 3, urging brains to be left at doors like Doctor Frankenstein putting out a note for the postman. Though variety-wise someone needs to have a word about titles: confusingly, April sees the release of two films called Dark Horse. We haven't been this vexed since they brought out two films called Leap Year in 2010. Which wasn't even a leap year!*

## Here we groan again

I recently bought *Deja Vu* on Blu-ray but when I got it home I realised I had already seen it. Here 'til Friday, try the fish!

**PHIL, BEXLEY**

*We've heard that one before.*

**TOTAL FILM**

What's your maddest movie moment?  
 Tell us yours at  
 @totalfilm #tfmad!

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**The next issue of TOTAL FILM on sale 10 April**



Welcome to the movies!

# 1 buzz





Back in black: Daniel Craig is poised for some traditional Bond mountain action.

## FIRST LOOK!

# Cool running

**SPECTRE** | Daniel Craig hits the slopes as Bond goes back to his winter-action roots.

➤ While following up *Skyfall* – the critically adored, billion-dollar-breaking 007 celebration – was never going to be easy, *SPECTRE* hasn't been without its setbacks.

Bond has been denied access to shoot in a famous Roman cemetery, two crew members have been injured in a car accident and Daniel Craig has reportedly 'done a Harrison Ford', injuring his knee filming a fight scene. And it's not like they've got time to spare, with the film due in cinemas in little over half a year's time. But it's not like Bond's ever been flustered going against the clock...

With filming well underway, the production team has revealed an early glimpse of Craig on set in the Alps, shooting what's expected to be one of the major action sequences. Associate producer Gregg Wilson calls the set-piece "a jewel in the crown" of the 24th official Bond adventure. Expect 4x4s racing

along the mountainside, cable cars, and gunfire, with Craig seen despatching bad guys with the expected 007-flair. *Guardians Of The Galaxy* star Dave Bautista – who plays henchman Mr Hinx – laughs that it's "very surreal... it's my first time ever on a mountain," while new girl Léa Seydoux admits to being "quite nervous... but really excited about starting."

The latest rumours have *SPECTRE* predicted to be the first of a two-part story, something Craig had previously denied saying post-*Skyfall* that "it's impossible to do a two-parter." But whatever happens with future films, for now the production team seems focused on topping previous installments (and audiences will have high expectations when it comes to Bond on the slopes). "The thing that Sam [Mendes, director] and I talked about was how we are going to top *Skyfall*," says production designer Dennis Gassner. "So far it's a great start... what could be more exciting than to be on top of the world?" **MM**

**ETA | 23 OCTOBER** *SPECTRE* opens this autumn.



EXCLUSIVE!

# Alien resurrected

**ALIEN 5** | As District 9 director Neill Blomkamp prepares to resuscitate Ripley, he tells us what the future holds for the Alien franchise...

“So I think [*this is*] officially my next film,” tweeted director Neill Blomkamp in February 2015, perhaps becoming the first director to land a job via Instagram. Having impressed 20th Century Fox a month earlier by Instagramming concept art for an Alien project he’d been working up, Blomkamp then officially signed on to direct *Alien 5*, the first official sequel since 1997’s *Alien: Resurrection*. Here’s everything you need to know...

## IT STARTS WITH AN IDEA

“I spent a good chunk of 2014 working on an idea that I really love,” Blomkamp tells *TF*. Though he won’t be drawn on specifics, he has confirmed that his film will in fact be a direct continuation from *Aliens*, ignoring the third and fourth films in the series. Ripley (Sigourney Weaver) looks set to reunite with a scar-faced Hicks (Michael Biehn). Meanwhile, shots of a corporate bunker hint we could finally see the inside of evil corporation Weyland-Yutani...

## THE MONSTER’S MOTHER

Though Weaver’s yet to sign on, she’s definitely interested, and even contributed ideas while chatting to Blomkamp on the set of *Chappie*. “I spoke to her about it a lot,” he reveals. “She told me how she felt about the character

and the history of Ripley. It was very interesting. I was like, ‘There’s a way to tie what she’s saying into my idea in a way that’s pretty awesome.’”

## A WHOLE NEW WORLD

“I have a very detailed treatment,” Blomkamp says of the plot. “I started writing the script, and then I was like, ‘I don’t know if I should step into that Ridley Scott/James Cameron world.’” Given that he’s taken the plunge, we imagine Blomkamp is now feverishly typing – though it remains to be seen if he’ll work alongside regular co-writer (and wife) Terri Tatchell (*District 9*, *Chappie*).

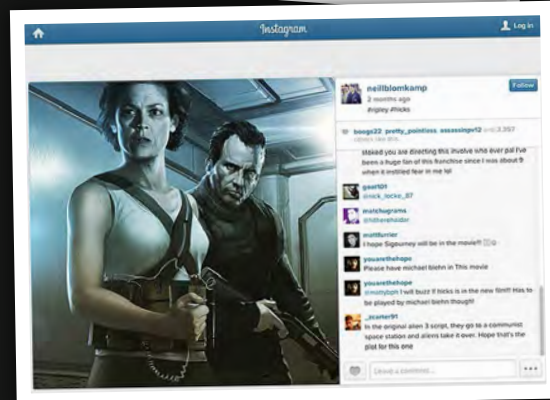
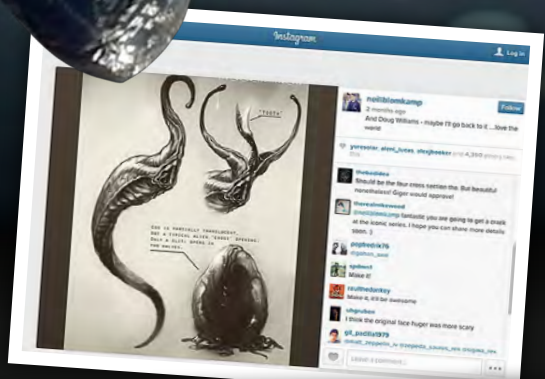
## CROSSOVER CRAZY

With 20th Century Fox also prepping its *Prometheus* sequel (“it’s written,” director Ridley Scott confirmed last year), and Scott producing Blomkamp’s film, we’re expecting some sort of crossover between the two, not least because Blomkamp’s art showcases the alien craft from *Alien* and *Prometheus*, plus what looks like a humanoid Architect.

## TALKING ABOUT EVOLUTION

“There are certain existing mythologies, like the world of Alien, that I’m bound with on a genetic level, that I just cannot get out of my system,” Blomkamp says. “I’d love to be part of that lineage.” With his concept art promising both nostalgic nods to the past and scary new developments (including a new breed of facehugger with a nasty-looking tooth), we’re sure he won’t disappoint. **JW**

She’s back: you can’t keep a good xenomorph down.



**ETA** | 2017 *Alien 5* is expected to open in two years’ time. *Prometheus 2* is expected to open in 2016.





## TAKE OUR ADVICE

Can you guess the recent movies from our 'alternative' consumer advice?

Contains a Trading Standards-baiting lack of dark headgear.

Contains Johnny Depp's last shred of dignity (only visible in the first few frames).

Contains the year's scariest sexually-transmitted ghost.

Contains so much pot smoke you'll leave the cinema with bloodshot eyes and a serious case of the munchies.

Contains more fake ears than one of Bilbo Baggins' birthday parties.

Contains significantly less subversive smut than was promised. **MM**

Answers: *Blackhat*, *Mortdecai*, *It Follows*, *Inherent Vice*, *Jupiter Ascending*, *Fifty Shades Of Grey*

Gripping stuff: Reese Witherspoon wants to have a word with Sofia Vergara.



FIRST LOOK!

# Gone girls

**HOT PURSUIT** | One does the duty; the other's got the booty.

➤ One's an Oscar-winner, the other's an outrageous, curvaceous sitcom star. Sound familiar?

OK, so this isn't *The Heat 2* but action-romp *Hot Pursuit* covers similar territory to the hit Sandra Bullock-Melissa McCarthy buddy comedy, with Reese Witherspoon as the hapless cop tasked with protecting Sofia Vergara, a key witness in a major drug trial. The Colombian cartel isn't going to let the statuesque siren take the stand without a fight, so the gals have to hotfoot it across the state using their brains, badge and feminine wiles whenever necessary.

*The Proposal*'s Anne Fletcher is in the director's chair and Witherspoon's producing through her Pacific Standard company, making *Hot Pursuit* (formerly known as *Don't Mess With Texas*) the third film with strong female roles from her fledgling outfit, after *Gone Girl* and *Wild*. It's also Vergara's first major film lead after five-and-a-half seasons on *Modern Family*, during which time she's become the highest-paid person

on US TV; she made \$37m in 2013-14, including endorsements. Given that Witherspoon memorably guested on *Friends* as Rachel's bitch sister, Jill, we're hoping that the zingers (from sitcom scribes David Feeney and John Quaintance) hit the mark more often than the cartel assassins. **EM**

**ETA** | 8 MAY *Hot Pursuit* opens this spring.







Randy's law: Maria (Helen Mirren) and lawyer Randy (Ryan Reynolds) fight to repatriate stolen art.

EXCLUSIVE!

# The art of war

**WOMAN IN GOLD** | Helen Mirren and Ryan Reynolds are an odd couple in a true-life WW2 tale.

➤ For Helen Mirren, playing Maria Altmann in *Woman In Gold* was a no-brainer.

"It's a story about justice, about perseverance and it's a great role for a woman of my age," she nods, "and there are not that many of those around." It was also right in the 69-year-old Oscar-winner's wheelhouse, given her form when it comes to real-life characters – albeit a very different challenge to her performance as Queen Elizabeth II in *The Queen*.

An American immigrant who escaped Vienna during WW2, the determined Altmann went on a remarkable voyage, fighting the Austrian authorities in the courts to reclaim valuable paintings by Gustav Klimt (notably 'Portrait of Adele Bloch-Bauer') that belonged to her family, but which were stolen by the Nazis and remained in her native country even after the war.

Inspired by a BBC *Imagine* documentary, director Simon Curtis (*My Week With Marilyn*) was immediately intrigued – though he was

initially uncertain if the swathes of legal process would make for an intriguing spectacle. "The more we worked on it, the more we uncovered the emotional underbelly to the story and when the script discovered that, it all came alive."

This came via the touching relationship between Altmann and her lawyer Randy (Ryan Reynolds), grandson to famous composer Arnold Schoenberg, who almost destroys his livelihood working Maria's difficult case on a 'no win, no fee' basis. "It's a love story across the generations," says Mirren. "Not sexually or anything like that. But they loved each other as human beings."

This mismatched 'couple' is where, crucially, the film finds itself some levity. "It was important to find friction between them and see them coming together," says Reynolds, "in almost the exact same way you would in a romantic relationship – except it just doesn't end with a big long make-out." He pauses. "I would be fine with that, with Helen Mirren! That is a sexy fox right there!" **JM**

**ETA | 3 APRIL** *Woman In Gold* is released this month.

## Q A RYAN REYNOLDS



**Did you know much about Maria Altmann's story?**

I was loosely aware of it through news media, but I didn't track it and follow it in depth. But I saw the Adele Bloch-Bauer painting in the Belvedere [gallery] when I was backpacking. I'd just got out of high school and I travelled all through Europe trying not to get stabbed. It was amazing.

**How would you describe your character, Randy Schoenberg?**

He's myopic in his focus. Usually guys like that, their personal lives are incredibly dysfunctional but Randy still has got a great wife, kids and happy household. I know this case was very stressful on his family. He almost lost everything.

**You're about to start filming *Deadpool*, finally. Relieved?**

Yeah, relieved – definitely. Terrified – all the adjectives you can imagine. It's been a long time. It's not like an *X-Men* movie that there's this gigantic budget or anything. It's quite a small film.

**Has it been a busy period for you?**

I have a newborn at home, so, yeah... I have to remind myself to blink!





**Pirates Of The Caribbean: Dead Men Tell No Tales** has officially started production in Queensland, Australia. Javier Bardem is the villainous Captain Salazar – how many old nemeses does Captain Jack have?

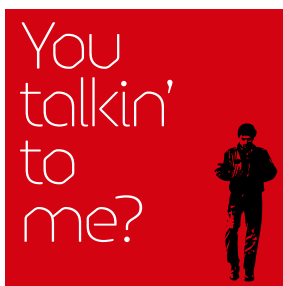
**Dragon Tattoo sequel The Girl Who Played With Fire** isn't going to happen, according to Rooney Mara. "I'm sad never to do it again, but it just doesn't seem like it's on the cards," she says.

Paul Reubens is returning in *Pee-wee's Big Holiday*, a new feature that'll debut on Netflix. Judd Apatow is producing, calling the opportunity to work with Reubens "a dream come true".

Despite scoring a major box-office hit, rumours are mounting that Sam Taylor-Johnson won't return to the director's chair for the *Fifty Shades Of Grey* sequel, as a result of reported creative differences.



Jessica Chastain is joining fantasy sequel *The Huntsman* alongside Chris Hemsworth, Charlize Theron and Emily Blunt. No word yet on who'll she's playing, and plot details are scarce. **MM**



Film quotes pose as questions. Film stars try to cope. In the crosshairs this month: **Rafe Spall**

#### You talkin' to me?

Yeah, I'm talking directly to you. And I feel a bit weird because I came back from Vancouver two days ago and I feel sort of... er... I don't know. I really miss London when I'm away. I'm back, but fuck, it feels depressing.

#### Do you feel lucky, punk?

Unbelievably lucky, yeah. Like most actors, I'm a punter. The film fan in your heart never leaves. [But] even doing *Prometheus* [on a huge soundstage] in a spacesuit with Ridley [Scott] directing you, you still go, 'Fuck – when's lunch? Oh man, I'm tired.' The collective noun for a group of actors is a 'whinge'.

#### You talk the talk. Do you walk the walk?

On this film [*X + Y*], I play a person suffering from multiple sclerosis, which is a very mysterious illness. I just wanted to do it justice and not have someone who suffers multiple sclerosis saying, 'That's wrong,' because that would be disrespectful to a serious thing.

#### Have you ever danced with the devil in the pale moonlight?

No, but I have worked with Hugo Blick who said that [*line*] as the young Joker in *Batman*. I know that the reason that came about is Hugo was an actor, but was writing in Pinewood. Jack Nicholson saw him in the corridor and said to Burton, 'This is the guy who should play me. He looks exactly like me.' So I have danced with the devil in the pale moonlight.



#### What's your favourite scary movie?

I'd say, all over, would be *The Shining*. But I would have been about 16 when *The Sixth Sense*

I guess I wake up pretty whelmed every morning. Genuinely I'm on a very even keel. In fact, my gravestone may well read: 'Rafe Spall – whelmed'.

**'I wake up pretty whelmed every morning. In fact, my gravestone may well read: 'Rafe Spall – whelmed'.'**

came out. That really, really, really frightened me, and then we got home and my sister said, 'You know mum sees dead people?' I was like, 'Fucking what?!' I still don't know. Scared me to death.

**I know you can be overwhelmed, and you can be underwhelmed, but can you ever just be whelmed?**

#### Everyone and their mums is packin' round here!

We actually had to abort that day because Paddy Considine wouldn't stop laughing. That was when I discovered the trick for any budding actors reading this – if you put your hand in your pocket and pinch your leg really hard that distracts you from laughing. Because laughing is always hilarious for the first few times. But when it's actually taking up time and it's costing money, it becomes really bad. The more serious it becomes, the harder it is to actually stop laughing. **MM**

**ETA | 13 MARCH *X + Y* is out now.**



Great mind: Rafe Spall stars with Asa Butterfield in *X+Y*.



**'You get a kick out of playing a really tough woman'**

## Between takes



**Salma Hayek is back in action...**

**How does it feel to be doing a very violent action film like *Everly*?**

It's very exciting. There's so much action that you don't know what to expect from one moment to the next. The film takes place in one apartment where my character, Everly, has to keep killing all the bad guys her ex has sent to assassinate her. Audiences are going to have a great time with all the strange and disgusting things that happen! [Laughs] There's a lot of blood and gore!

**Did it remind you of being in *From Dusk Till Dawn*?**

That film had a lot of monsters pretending to be real people. This film is more about criminals who are the monsters. This story is about my taking revenge on my

tormentors and getting to be in the thick of the action and being a very strong woman. It's about time! [Laughs]

**Do you have a good feeling about doing more films now after you had almost given up acting?**

I'm glad that I'm doing projects that are fun and interesting. I was very frustrated in my early forties because after *Frida* I was disappointed that I wasn't getting good roles; when I had my baby I thought that this was my new life and so why should I keep being unhappy in my career? Acting had become more like a hobby rather than something I was driven to do.

**Is it important that women get to play tougher kinds of characters?**

**Rapid fire: Everly is not a woman to mess with.**



Of course! Women are very tough even though we often don't show it. [This] kind of a story is inspiring for anyone who has felt frustrated or dominated and doesn't know how to escape an abusive situation.

**Did you train a lot?**

I don't like to work out but I tried to get into the best shape I've ever been in. When you're running around looking after your daughter you're also doing a lot of work so I was able to manage pretty well on the set. You also get a kick out of playing a really tough woman! **RJa**

**ETA | 1 MAY** *Everly* opens this summer.





This month, **Toy Story 4**. Buzz pitches four ideas for the upcoming Pixar sequel.

#### STOP-MOTION STORY

OK, so we've had three groundbreaking CGI-animations to tell the toys' story, so for the next installment we need to change it up: stop-motion is the answer. It's obvious – the moveable maquettes are the perfect medium for toys. Woody's practically there already, most of the gang are fully poseable and someone's nan can knit the new villains.

#### DEFYING GRAVITY

It's all about the expanded universe these days, so this could breathe life into *TS4* and the flagging *Gravity* franchise (over a year since Oscar success and still no sequel announced?). Clooney's chin was basically playing a thinly veiled homage of Buzz Lightyear anyway.



#### TRANSFORMERS STORY

*Toy Story* does seamless product placement with real toys well. And the *Transformers* films are still inexplicably popular, right? Pixar just needs to throw Michael Bay's 'bots into the mix, and that's \$2bn at the box office, guaranteed. Just picture Woody's incredulity at Optimus' assertion that he really is one of the biggest stars of modern cinema, even though he has the charisma of an accountant and barely legible face.

#### TOYHOOD

If there's one film that's trounced *Toy Story* in terms of sheer teary nostalgia and the overwhelming horror of growing up, it's *Boyhood*. Pixar has never shied away from an experiment, so let's have the next film play out over a full 12 years, watching Bonnie's obsession with her new toys turn to disinterest with painfully gradual steps. Passing years are only marked with the arrival of new playthings (get your tissues out when the iPhone shows up). **MM**

**ETA | 14 JULY 2017** *Toy Story 4* opens in two years.

EXCLUSIVE!

# Fear itself

**THE TOWN THAT DREADED SUNDOWN** | A new American Horror Story to make you Scream...

► "It's hard to put in a box," *American Horror Story* director Alfonso Gomez-Rejon admits of his twisted movie debut, *The Town That Dreaded Sundown*, a sorta-sequel-remake-homage that borrows its title (and bag-headed small-town killer The Phantom) from an obscure 1976 slasher. There will be blood...



#### HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF

If you thought *Scream* was meta, wait 'til you see *TTTDS*. It plays out in the border town of Texarkana, where the 1976 film was shot, inspiring a spate of new murders. "I thought this idea of a movie defining a town provided a really interesting setting for a slasher film," Gomez-Rejon tells *Buzz*.



#### THE FINAL GIRL

Our heroine is Jami Lerner (Addison Timlin, last seen in *Odd Thomas*), who's got her own tortured past – and soon becomes the Phantom's prime target. "She did so much with what many might consider a standard slasher girl role," the director says. "We did very long takes with her; we could just hold her face, it was so interesting."



#### BLOOD SIMPLE

Okay, there will be blood, but how much exactly? "Believe me, the first cut was a lot gorier," Gomez-Rejon laughs, adding: "Recent horror movies are very found footage, hand held. I like the stillness of the films from the '70s; it can be creepy. I wanted to do that in a really colourful, hyper-real way." **JW**

**ETA | 10 APRIL** *The Town That Dreaded Sundown* opens next month.



**EXCLUSIVE!**

# Poster boy

## DREW: THE MAN BEHIND THE POSTER

From Star Wars to Shawshank, Blade Runner to Back To The Future, Drew Struzan has crafted some of the most iconic posters ever. To mark the release of a new doc, he talks Buzz through some of his grandest designs...



### ▲ INDIANA JONES AND THE TEMPLE OF DOOM (1984)

"When you look at the bad guy standing up [Mola Ram], you'll see his teeth are sharp. He didn't have sharp teeth in the movie. George Lucas called and said, 'Why did you paint him with sharp teeth?' I just told him I thought it looked better and he goes, 'You're right.' So that was in! I took a little bit of artistic licence, and he appreciated it..."



### ▲ STAR WARS RE-ISSUE (1978)

"An old schoolfriend, Charles White II, had already been commissioned; he was a fantastic airbrush artist but didn't do portraits so asked me if I'd like to share the poster! He didn't leave enough room for the credits which is why we changed the design to what ended up being called 'the circus poster'. It was George Lucas' favourite for decades – until I did the *Special Edition* triptych, and then that became his favourite."



### ◀ POLICE ACADEMY (1984)

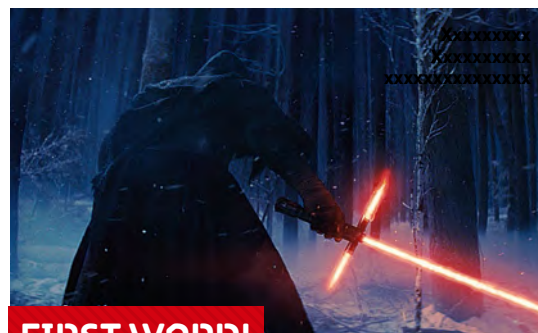
"Doing that one was fun because it was a comedy. You know, to speak honestly, I've never seen a *Police Academy* movie. But I saw some pictures and they told me what it was about and I understood it. Jokes and slapstick. I didn't tell the story [of the movie]. I told people what they were going to get, which is part of my job."





#### ◀ BACK TO THE FUTURE (1985)

"On that one, they didn't give concepts or ideas. They just asked me to come up with stuff! So I focused on the characters because that's what we connect with. So it was making Marty and Doc look cool or [depicting] their relationship. The first one wound up with just Marty and the cool car; with the second one they wanted Doc because everyone loved him so much. On the third one I kept trying to put Mary Steenburgen in and they said 'No, no, no.' It was going to press when they finally said, 'You know what? You were right.' So they stopped the presses and I painted Mary in."



#### FIRST WORD!

## Return of the Artist?

Will he? Won't he? Struzan talks The Force Awakens...

#### Has there been any discussion about doing the poster?

Well, how do I put it? At this time, I have not committed to anything and Disney have not committed to anything. I'm trying to say this in such a way that you can read into it if you wish... Or not. I'm not in a position to talk about it yet.

#### Are you excited about a new trilogy?

It'd be nice to know I had three years of work ahead of me! [laughs] Always nice in this economy. It'll be fun because it's new stories and I'd get to work with Kathy Kennedy, who I've known since she was Spielberg's secretary. I'd like to get to know J.J. because of the wonderful work he does. So it'd be fun. [pause] If it happens. Literally nobody's made up their minds yet.

#### ► BLADE RUNNER DVD (2007)

"I've drawn Harrison Ford more than anyone else in the world, but we'd never met until I did the documentary. He was in town on a press junket so we went over and got an interview with him. I was standing there, thinking 'What do I say to you? I'm not a conversationalist!' [laughs] So it was 'Hi, nice to meet you,' and he was 'Nice to meet you too. I want to thank you for making me look so good.' And that was about the size of it!"



## Self-portrait

Struzan on famous friends and dying arts...

**You've done many Star Wars posters and illustrations over the years, but how big a fan are you of the series?**

I've never become a fanatic as such, someone who could tell you what colour the lightsabers should be, that kind of thing. When I did the [1978 re-release] poster I knew the film, which was unusual because lots of times I don't.

**When deciding on projects, are there any specific criteria you tend to adhere to?**

There's no iron rule, I guess. For years it was 'Oh, please give me a job. I need to pay the bills, feed the family.' I established myself as someone who wants to do good, positive things. Playboy used to ask me to work for them but I didn't want to be that kind of artist, so I turned them down.

**Did the friendships you have with people like Lucas and Spielberg take a while to nurture?**

I worked with George for decades before we ever met. It wasn't until the wrap party on Spielberg's Hook – it was so loud that all we literally said to each other was 'Hi!', but later I overheard people saying George was excitedly telling everyone how he'd just met Drew Struzan!

**The doc talks Photoshop... is the art of the hand-drawn poster lost?**

Absolutely. Attitudes have changed. Those who aren't creative just make decisions and get people to do it on a computer, instead of trusting an artist to do what they know how. It's kind of a sad story. But it wasn't until these last eight years, when I wasn't being hired, that directors who grew up on my work – Frank Darabont,



Guillermo del Toro – called me personally and said 'Hey, do a poster for me!' So it's cool: a guy from the ghetto and now I'm friends with all these wonderful creative people. **ML**

**ETA | OUT NOW** *Drew Struzan: The Man Behind The Poster* is out now on DVD and VOD.



Who's who: Thomas (Daniel Brühl) and Simone (Kate Beckinsale) are characters inspired by real-life figures.



Cara Delevingne plays an innocent abroad.



EXCLUSIVE!

# Face value

**THE FACE OF AN ANGEL** | Michael Winterbottom offers a unique perspective on a shocking crime.

➤ Nothing's quite what it seems in *The Face Of An Angel*. In addressing the true-life murder of British student Meredith Kercher who was killed while studying in Italy, prolific British director Michael Winterbottom views events from the perspective of the press covering a fictionalised version of the case.

"The idea was the film keeps shifting," Winterbottom tells *Buzz* at the Toronto Film Festival back in September 2014. "You start with the investigation, the murder case about the trial. It gradually moves away from that and unravels." It's these layers that keep the specifics of the trial in the background; names are changed, and there's a location shift from Perugia to Siena.

Adding a layer of authenticity to the film is *Newsweek* journo Barbie Latza Nadeau, whose

book *TFOAA* is inspired by. Kate Beckinsale's character Simone is loosely based on the writer. "We filmed in her home," remembers Beckinsale. "She was very committed to facilitating this. The effect of the real immersion of this case and how long it went on had a real effect on [*the career journalists covering it*]."

Also adding another complicated layer is Daniel Brühl's character, a film director in Siena trying to find an angle for adapting the case. Is he playing Winterbottom? "I talked to Barbie, and she said there is something of Michael in it..." smiles the Spanish-German actor.

Not that Winterbottom was trying to make film about himself. His ultimate aim, he says, was to pay respect to a life lost. "My hope in the film was at the beginning you see the case, and the case seems interesting," he concludes. "And by the end, [*the details*] just seem less important because in the end, she was killed. She's lost her life. That is more important in the end." **RJa**

**ETA | 27 MARCH** *The Face Of An Angel* opens this month.

## **CARA DELEVINGNE**



**Did you audition for the role?**

I kind of just went in. I read the script and I loved it. I just kept wanting to ask so many questions. I think [*me and Michael Winterbottom*] were there for a couple of hours talking about it. [*The case is*] such a mystery, the manner it went back and forth. That kind of thing, the 'soap opera'.

**What was jumping in front of the camera with Michael like?**

I was absolutely terrified. You have no idea how much I learned from this film. I learned so much because Michael really makes you question what your character is doing. You're really finding that right thought path.

**When did you know acting was what you wanted to do?**

When I was five. The first time I was on stage: it was the Christmas Nativity. I just loved causing a reaction of some sort – smiling, laughing, crying. It made me feel alive. From that day, it was just like: I want to entertain people.

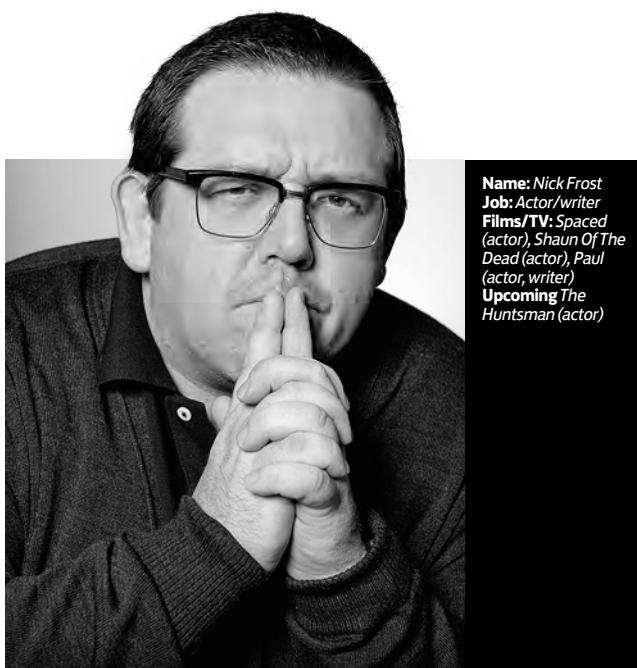
**What are your career plans?**

Just to carry on. I don't really know. I try not to think about it until I'm there.



Funny  
people

Comedy heroes on what makes them laugh. This month: **Nick Frost.**



**Name:** Nick Frost  
**Job:** Actor/writer  
**Films/TV:** *Spaced* (actor), *Shaun Of The Dead* (actor), *Paul* (actor, writer)  
**Upcoming** *The Huntsman* (actor)



MY COMEDY PRESENT In **UNFINISHED BUSINESS** my character ends up at one of Germany's biggest S&M festivals, which meant I had a lot of great handmade leather clothes to wear – surprisingly warm in November! At one point, it was mooted that I'd be wearing just chaps and no underpants. What a frightening thing!



MY FAVOURITE FUNNY MOVIE Edgar [Wright] got me into **WAITING FOR GUFFMAN**. For years, I didn't believe *Spinal Tap* wasn't a documentary about a British rock band! And then when Edgar showed me *Guffman*, I was like, 'Hang on these are the same guys as *Spinal Tap*!' Anything those guys do, I love.



THE MOVIE THAT MAKES ME CRY WITH LAUGHTER That's so difficult! It depends on how drunk I am – or not. It's never whole movies. It's always bits of movies that make me laugh. Bits of **GHOSTBUSTERS** really made me laugh. Anytime you can see actors who genuinely like each other just doing what they do is a really beautiful thing to watch.



MY COMEDY HERO I was like a normal person until I was 23, and didn't really have that many comedy heroes. But I guess starting out, it was **THE YOUNG ONES**. That was the first time I became aware of what hilariously laughing felt like. So Rik Mayall, Adrian Edmondson, Nigel Planer and...the other one! Christopher Ryan!



MY COMEDY PAST I did a show called **DANGER! 50,000 VOLTS!** – a bit like *Jackass*. I ended up fighting an alligator and getting really badly injured and I leapt out of a moving car at Silverstone. I was hospitalised twice – all in the name of a weak 'only forty-thousand people will ever watch it' Channel 5 comedy.



FUNNIEST CO-STAR **PADDY CONSIDINE**. He is constantly naughty on set in the best possible way! On *The World's End*, me, Eddie [Marsan], Simon [Pegg], Edgar and Martin Freeman...we'd just sit and just watch him – and he just does it. He just goes off! He's amazing! **JM**  
**ETA 6 MARCH** *Unfinished Business* is out now.

## THE SHORT LIST

5 Berlin Film Festival titles to watch



**1 MR. HOLMES**  
Gods And Monsters director and star Bill Condon and Ian McKellen reunite for this sly Sherlock tale that sees the Conan Doyle creation in his dotage. No pipe and deerstalker or Cumberbatch-like fireworks, but this one has a sky-high IQ.

Charlotte Rampling both excel in Andrew Haigh's Norfolk-set drama about a long-married couple upset by a tragic discovery. Quietly impressive.



**4 NED RIFLE**  
Hal Hartley's follow-up to the sublime *Henry Fool* and the less-impressive *Fay Grim* is a welcome return to form. Reuniting his usual cast, there's also a role for Aubrey Plaza – a Hartley actress if ever there was one. Witty and erudite.



**2 KNIGHT OF CUPS**  
Terrence Malick's seventh feature sees him ride into Hollywood, as Christian Bale's writer mopes around soulless showbiz parties and reflects on his love-life (Cate Blanchett, Natalie Portman). Profound? Pretentious? Yes and yes. But Malick's visual flare hasn't deserted him.



**5 LIFE**  
Photographer (now director) Anton Corbijn delivers his most personal film yet – the tale of *Life* magazine snapper Dennis Stock and his relationship with the young James Dean. Robert Pattinson as Stock and Dane DeHaan as Dean are picture-perfect. **JM**



**3 45 YEARS**  
Winning Berlin's Silver Bear each for Best Actor and Actress, Tom Courtenay and

HINDSIGHT  
CORNER!

Stars eat their words...



## SYLVESTER STALLONE

Rocky Balboa (2006) / Creed (2015)

**December 2006** "I think we bring the character [*Rocky*] to a final and noble conclusion."

**December 2014** "This idea was presented to me where Creed has a son... I thought wow. This just might work. It's not *Rocky VII*. It's *Creed I*."



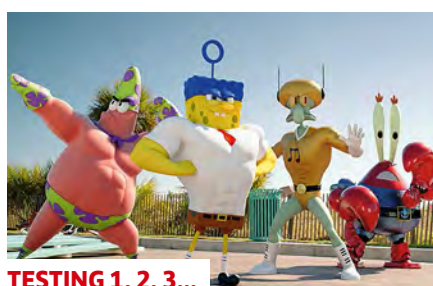
**EXCLUSIVE!**

# Beyond the sea

**THE SPONGEBOB MOVIE: SPONGE OUT OF WATER** | Buzz makes a splash with the cast and crew of the new nautical adventure.

➤ Eleven years after the first *SpongeBob Squarepants* movie, fans young and old are finally getting a second big-screen adventure. This time the porous hero leaves Bikini Bottom behind to frolic with his pals on our three-dimensional plane and take down a feisty pirate who looks and sounds a lot like Antonio Banderas...





### TESTING 1, 2, 3...

**Paul Tibbitt (director):** We were most worried how [characters] would look in CG and would the fans accept it. The company Iloura, who did the CG from Australia, did the teddy bear animation in *Ted*. Pretty much the first animation tests they sent us, they took a scene from the cartoon and animated it with CG. We were really blown away. It was a huge weight off our shoulders because we knew if the superheroes in CG didn't work then the whole movie wouldn't work.



### EQUAL PARTS

**PT:** We broke the movie into two pieces: the live-action and the animated. We treated them as two separate things. I was really pleased with how it all came together. Actually the biggest challenge was the story, especially when you are used to doing 11-minute segments that are just joke, joke, joke. Trying to sustain, and be true, to that spirit for 85 minutes is a big challenge.



### GOING BAD

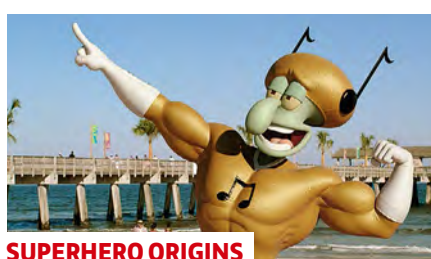
**Antonio Banderas (Burger Beard):** I was not very much into *SpongeBob*. They called me one day and I knew he was a phenomenon of American pop culture but not much about the character. What I did was take the script and see that my character is like the Holy Trinity: a raider, a pirate and a cook. In kids' movies, I've never played a villain and was always a heroic character in *Spy Kids* and *Puss In Boots*. They thought I could pull it off so I went in there with that intention and I worked hard.



### BECOMING 3D

**Tom Kenny (voice of SpongeBob):** At first it was slightly jarring in that it was a way I hadn't seen SpongeBob before except in the 4D theme park rides. But you get used to it really fast and it's funny. Plus it makes sense he would look different when he crosses over as Sandy does when she becomes an actual squirrel.

**Bill Fagerbakke (voice of Patrick Starr):** There was some anxiety on everyone's part about what would happen with CGI characters and how that would feel. In the TV show, it's so funny because when they leave the water they're stick figures on popsicle sticks.



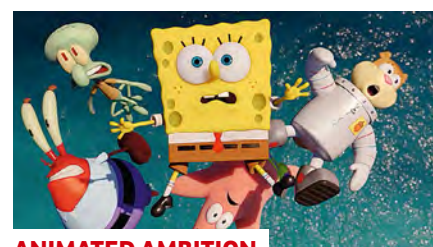
### SUPERHERO ORIGINS

**PT:** We talked about it in the beginning because there was an episode years ago when Mermaid Man and Barnacle Boy gave them suits and they took on the powers of those who owned the suits before. So we wanted to make sure the powers related to each character. Even though they're writing their own story and can do anything they want, Patrick still wants to have ice cream and SpongeBob still wants to blow bubbles. We thought about how to supercharge the traits that exist already so that's how they came about.



### ARRGH!

**AB:** Burger Beard is obsessed with the crabby patty formula because he wants to be the best cook in the world, but there's a sponge in the middle. I have to eliminate him. It's that simple. He bothers me.



### ANIMATED AMBITION

**TK:** I like that Paul Tibbitt and [creator] Stephen Hillenburg went to great lengths to use a varied visual palette of styles than you wouldn't usually see in a kids' movie based on a television show that's been on the air for 15 years. There's 2-D, 3-D, CGI, live-action and hand puppets. Even the end credits use a Little Golden Books style. If you're an animation geek, the names in the credits is a who's who of anybody who has done anything cool visually in animation for the last 30 years. They worked harder than they had to and hopefully they get points for trying to be outside the box.



### BURGER BEARD BANDERAS

**PT:** We saw Antonio in *Spy Kids* and we love that movie. For this, we needed someone who could be funny, physical, and also scary and menacing if need be. We didn't want to do Long John Silver or Johnny Depp's [*Jack Sparrow*] which is the same kind of pirate that everybody had seen already. [Antonio] did a great job. He was so funny with what he was doing with his body. He got the joke and that was important. **TB**

**ETA | 27 MARCH** *The SpongeBob Movie: Sponge Out Of Water* opens this month.



EXCLUSIVE!

# Family misfortunes

**BLOODLINE** | Sun, sea, sweat and secrets await discovery in your next Netflix binge...

➤ Question 1: You're in charge of Netflix and you're looking for your next big show a la *Orange Is The New Black* and *House Of Cards*. What to commission? Question 2: You're a TV junkie and you're looking for your next hit. What to watch?

The answer to both of the above might well be *Bloodline*. Created by the *Damages* trio of KZK – brothers Todd A. Kessler and Glenn Kessler, along with their partner Daniel Zelman – it's a thriller-cum-family drama that favours

skeletons over sentiment. "It's what happens if someone turns against their family and they know all of the secrets," explains Todd A. Kessler, who also served as a writer and producer on *The Sopranos*. Phoning from LA, his excitement races down the line. "The parents of the Rayburn family, played by Sissy Spacek and Sam Shepard, have an inn, and three of the siblings [Kyle Chandler, Norbert Leo Butz, Linda Cardellini] still live in the area. Then the black-sheep brother, Danny [Ben Mendelsohn], decides on the 45th anniversary of the opening of the inn that he wants to come home..."

Set in the sun-kissed, sweat-drenched environ of the Florida Keys, *Bloodline* is inspired

by the sticky atmosphere of Lawrence Kasdan's neo-noir *Body Heat* (1981). Other touchstones, according to Kessler, include *The Talented Mr. Ripley*, *Fatal Attraction* and Dostoevsky's *Crime And Punishment*. But it plays fresh as a sea breeze, while the universality of the fucked-up family concept (whose isn't at least a little dysfunctional?) sparked a network bidding war before a word was written.

"We met with seven or eight cable networks, and every place wanted to buy it," states Kessler. "We were told that this was the first time it had ever happened. Netflix ended up beating out HBO and offered a 13-episode first series. We pitched out six seasons in total."

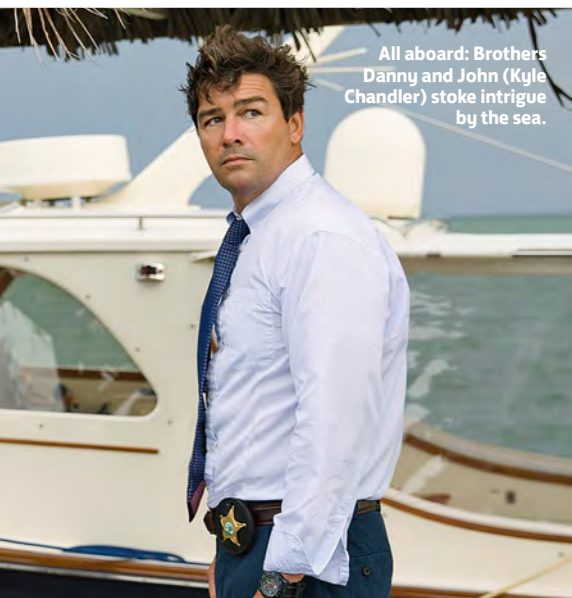




Family ties: Sally Rayburn (Sissy Spacek) comforts son Danny (Ben Mendelsohn).



All aboard: Brothers Danny and John (Kyle Chandler) stoke intrigue by the sea.



**'It's great when Sissy Spacek is your mum and Sam Shepard is your dad'**

BEN MENDELSON

The cast, too, signed on the dotted without a script. "I was aware of their form guide," shrugs Mendelsohn, in London with co-star Chandler to spread the word. Right now he's leaning perilously out of a hotel-room window to suck on a cigarette. "They had good fucking pedigree, and they were good guys. And it's fucking great when you're going to work and Sissy is your mum and Sam is your dad!" He pauses to stub out his cigarette. "I was attracted by how they described Danny Rayburn," he continues. "It may be that [*bad guys*] are my best instrument in the band, or maybe it's the post-*Animal Kingdom* effect. Still, I try to blend the drinks differently."

Chandler, who feels that *Bloodline* has the same energy that infused the set of high-school football drama *Friday Night Lights*, for which he won an Emmy as Coach Taylor, also had no hesitation. "John Rayburn's a father, a sheriff, the fixer of the family," he says with an easy grin, admitting his friends and family have no idea why he's so often cast as authority figures. "But it's where he will go three or four years down the line. He's a complex character and you get to watch him grow and change."

With its free-flowing writing (KZK re-write pages on set, mould characters to align with their actors' strengths, keep plot twists from the cast, and edit the action to fracture the chronology), *Bloodline*, says Kessler, is perfect for Netflix. "It's very different if you have to wait a week between episodes because the nuance and specificity can get lost," he explains. "What Netflix has done is to allow us to tell a more adult story because the next episode is right there. It's phenomenally exciting."

And have the cast now, at least, seen what they've got themselves into? "We screened the first two episodes a week before we finished filming, so we'd all been working together for 10 months!" laughs Kessler. "They were very proud of the work." JG

**ETA 20 MARCH** *Bloodline* premieres on Netflix this month.

## KYLE CHANDLER

On Coach Taylor, Leo DiCaprio, and Todd Haynes' upcoming *Carol*...



**Coach Taylor in *Friday Night Lights* is an iconic role. How did you land it?**

There was a gymnasium, and all the football players were inside. These guys were all bigger than me. Pete [Berg, *showrunner*] walked up and he goes, 'I want you to go down there and tell everyone to shut up and line against the wall'. I'm like, 'What the hell are you talking about?' So I walked down and told everyone to line up and they looked at me like, 'Who the fuck are you?' It sort of pissed me off. 'What did I just say? Get up against the wall!' They didn't know who I was but they paid attention pretty quickly. He gave me Coach right there.

**You got roles in *Super 8*, *Zero Dark Thirty*, *Argo* and *The Wolf Of Wall Street* without auditioning...**

Those people came to me, I didn't go to them. Certainly Coach Taylor helps out a little bit, the Emmy helps out... I like to think the acting helps out a little bit!

**You seem so relaxed in your scenes with DiCaprio in *TWOWS*. Did you decide to underplay it?**

I got to live with the FBI man who brought down Jordan Belfort, so putting that relationship on Leo, it was very easy for me to be, 'I've got you. I've got you. Do as you will.' And once you start working the scene, playing... it just got loose, there was laughter.

**Next up you have *Carol* for Todd Haynes. What can you tell us?**

That also came out of the blue. It was such a bizarre experience because it's a period piece and it's a man whose wife [Cate Blanchett] is leaving him, slowly but surely, for another woman. She's in love. It's an interesting character for me to step into because I don't have much to grab on to.



# It Shouldn't Happen To A Film Journalist



Editor-at-Large Jamie Graham lifts the lid on movie journalism.  
This month: **Injuries at work**

➤ Last week I was at a press screening for *Blackhat*. Pausing from taking notes, I closed my notepad and cradled it in my lap. BOOM. A car blew up. Being a Michael Mann movie, it blew up LOUDLY. I jumped, hands flying up and pad smashing into my mouth. There's something oddly exhilarating about watching a Mann movie with the tang of blood in your mouth.

People think that movie journalism is a soft, sedentary profession. They're right. But that pad/teeth interface got me thinking of the times I've incurred physical injury on the job. Falling out of a top bunk in Cannes. Severe sunburn whilst heroically putting in the hours as an extra on the Hawaii set of *Godzilla*. Performing a leap so strenuous I missed all 15ft of the inflatable slide at an Abel Ferrara party and bounced off the horizontal come-to-rest bit to awaken in a flowerbed, two minutes later, to a ring of concerned faces. Truly the wounds of a warrior. So, just for the hell of it, here are my Top 5 injuries at work...

#### 5. THE BREAK (1996)

First ever press screening. Got drunk on free (!) booze. Desperate for loo. No choice but to get up from seat and clamber past tutting professional critics. Tripped down unseen step and face-planted at Barry Norman's feet. Broke glasses.



Jamie prepares to get his teeth loosened in the line of duty in *The Hooligan Factory*.

## 'People think movie journalism is a soft, sedentary profession. They're right'

#### 4. THE STRAIN (2011)

Performing impression of Keira Knightley in *A Dangerous Method* for TF office. Jutted out chin and gurned so savagely that a muscle twanged in neck. Couldn't turn head for two weeks.

#### 3. THE SPRAIN (2006)

Invited to talk about *Rocky Balboa* on TV, was asked to strap on boxing gloves and run up stone steps before performing victory hop at top and reviewing film while shadow boxing. Tripped halfway up, sprained wrist.

#### 2. THE WEEPING FLESH (2007)

Trotted off to Sundance without coat, scarf, hat or gloves. Trudged through knee-high snow in trainers and queued in -10 temperatures. Day 3: chilblains, everywhere, including, shall we say, inner thighs.

#### 1. THE WOBBLY TOOTH (2013)

Given a speaking role in low-budget Brit flick *The Hooligan Factory*, the line of dialogue afforded to me ("He broke my fucking glasses!") signalled the moment when two rival firms stop with the verbal and wade in. Director instructed mad-dog extras

to "play nice" but shit kicked off and a wild haymaker sent me crashing to concrete, bleeding. "Oh no, not the fucking journalist," cried the director when the pack finally parted, and in came the medic to frown at my wobbly front tooth. But film journos are *not* soft. They are warriors. Or so I wanted those 150 burly, snarly extras to believe. So I went back in for five more takes, each time dreaming of the comfort of a padded cinema seat.

Jamie will return next issue...  
For more misadventures follow:  
**@jamie\_graham9** on Twitter.



# FLASHBACK

This month:  
Issue 105,  
August 2005

Let's do the time warp as we look back at classic issues of Total Film...



## COVER STORY

Strong! Stretchy! Scorching! See-through! It was the *Fantastic Four* on the front of the issue, with four covers to choose from. This was a colourful take on the Four, more in tune with Joel Schumacher's *Batman* movies than the new era Chris Nolan was ushering in with *Begins*. Chris Evans bemoaned

the spandex suit (the *Captain America* star is clearly a glutton for punishment), and Jessica Alba was enjoying being cast against type. "I'm definitely in that category of 'very odd choice'," she told *TF*. "I'm not all-American. In this, I get to play the girl next door. In reality, I'm very similar to Sue."



## THE INSIDE SCOOP

There was even more *Fantastic Four* inside as we reunited the cast of 1994's 'lost' movie. "I knew it wasn't going to be a special effects movie," explained original director Oley Sassone. "We didn't have nearly enough money for that!" (Our verdict on this *FF*? "Likeable, silly trash.") Elsewhere, our *Covert Clones* feature

explored under-the-radar remakes, we caught up with Lindsay Lohan the morning after the night before ("I threw a small party..."), and visiting the set of Tim Burton's *Charlie And The Chocolate Factory* gave us an almighty sugar rush. "I wanted to make films my kids could see," explained Depp. "It's a new experience."

## QUOTE ME ON THAT

**Vince Vaughn and Owen Wilson will be around for a long time. They could be a team like Bob Hope and Bing Crosby.**  
Christopher Walken

## TF INTERVIEW WILL FERRELL

Just a year after *Anchorman*, we caught up with the new King of Comedy

### ON WORKING WITH ROBERT DUVALL

"He had a good time, because he's never done a movie like [*Kicking & Screaming*]. But although it was comedy, he was serious. I'd make a suggestion... he'd be stern: 'Why would I say that?'"

### ON ELF

"We always thought that the premise could make it really funny. It was definitely a surprise in terms of how well it was received. It's the classic fish-out-of-water tale. We had a lot of fun with him discovering New York."

### ON WOODY ALLEN

"When I did *Melinda And Melinda*, the character was intended as a young Woody Allen. I naturally tried to fight against it a little, but then he would direct me back into being more like him."

## OLD NEWS

Christopher Nolan refutes rumours of a harder cut of *Batman Begins*: "I always knew I wanted the movie to appeal to a wide range of ages – as a kid I would have loved to see a film like this. We never shot anything that would be alienating in that regard."

In not-so-explosive action movie news, a *24* movie was being mooted back then, as was a sequel to *The Italian Job* remake (*The Brazilian Job* – sounds a bit rude), and Justin Lin was just revving up to take on the flagging *Fast & Furious* franchise with *Tokyo Drift*.

We'll be forever cursing the fact that *Time Share* never worked out. Set to star Will Smith and Nicolas Cage, it would have been a comedy about two stressed dads whose families are booked into the same holiday home.

"I have no idea where the 'George Clooney is Optimus Prime' rumour came from but we'd definitely consider him!" laughed Michael Bay, during prep for his *Transformers* movie. "Of course it'll be a franchise," he boasted. "It's very ambitious."



REX



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COMPETITION

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This month's trending topics...

# agenda

## The One To Watch

### Jason Momoa is making Aquaman badass...

**L**et's be honest: Aquaman was never the coolest superhero. Blame his suit, his golden ringlets, or the savaging he got from *Robot Chicken*, but he's never had renown as a badass. But with Warner Bros and DC expanding their movie universe, that's set to change... Who's going to tell Jason Momoa his comic-book character's a sissy?

Surly and imposing during his one-season stint as Dothraki leader Khal Drogo in *Game Of Thrones*, Momoa hasn't yet found a big-screen project worthy of his herculean presence (*Conan The Barbarian* didn't quite turn him into the new Arnie). Recently, his movie efforts have been direct-to-DVD (*Debug*, *Wolves*), but he's confident that Aquaman – thought to be debuting in *Batman V Superman: Dawn Of Justice*, ahead of his solo outing – will make a splash.

"Aquaman will be a badass," scoffs the 35-year-old Hawaiian, "otherwise, they wouldn't cast me for the role." The plan is for Aquaman to appear in three outings (*BVS:DOJ* and the two-part *Justice League*) before going solo ("It will probably be his whole origin story, I would think...")

No stranger to water, having begun his TV career in *Baywatch*, he's looking forward to bringing some diversity to the superhero stable. "Being Hawaiian, our Gods are Kanaloa and Maui, and the Earth is 71 per cent water, so I get to represent that," he says. "I get to represent all the islanders, not some blond-haired superhero." **MM**

**ETA 25 MARCH 2016** *Batman V Superman: Dawn Of Justice* opens in 2016. *Aquaman* opens in 2018.





# agenda

## The need-to-know...

### INDIANA JONES

When there were first whispers about Chris Pratt donning the fedora to play the adventuring archeologist, it seemed like the stuff of movie geek dreams (and nothing more). But now there have been rumblings that Steven Spielberg himself is keen to return to the franchise, to oversee a new installment with Pratt in the lead role. According to a new report, the 'Berg is waiting on a finished script before deciding whether to take the helm. He's currently shooting *The BFG*, while Pratt will next be seen in another restart of a Spielberg franchise, *Jurassic World*.



### WILL SMITH

As part of his comeback – fresh off con caper *Focus* and about to head into Warner Bros' *Suicide Squad* – Smith has earmarked a high-concept actioner for his slate, with Paramount picking up spec script *Bounty* as another starring vehicle for the one-time biggest star in the world. Written by Sascha Penn, the thriller casts Smith as a man wrongly accused of murder, who has a, yup, bounty put on his head by his supposed victim's widow. That's not the only thing on Big Willie's plate at the moment: he's also starring in a Ridley Scott-produced drama about concussion in the NFL, aptly titled *Concussion*. Think *Moneyball* with serious head injuries.

### SNOWDEN

Oliver Stone's film about the NSA whistleblower continues to add to its impressive cast. Shailene Woodley, Nicolas Cage and Timothy Olyphant join Joseph Gordon-Levitt, who's in the title role.



### INTERSTELLAR LIVE

The only way Hans Zimmer's score could sound more impressive is played by a live orchestra at the Royal Albert Hall, so go and have a listen for yourself on 30 March. Details at [www.interstellarlive.com](http://www.interstellarlive.com)



### EVAN PETERS

The best thing in *X-Men: Days Of Future Past* is possibly going to be the best thing in *X-Men: Apocalypse*, with the *American Horror Story* actor returning as speed-freak Quicksilver. "I think so, yes," was his slightly non-committal confirmation. "I haven't seen a script."

## The scale

### ON FIRE



#### Space movies

A trend is (re)born. After *Interstellar* and *Jupiter Ascending*, we've got a whole raft of *Star Wars* and its spin-offs, plus *Passengers*, more *Alien* and *Prometheus*, and *The Martian*.



#### Adam DeVine

DeVine (*Pitch Perfect*'s Bumper) is joining Zac Efron for bromcom *Mike And Dave Need Wedding Dates*. After *PP2*, he's got *The Intern* and *The Final Girls*, as well as sitcom hit *Workaholics*.



#### Neil Patrick Harris

His stint presenting the Oscars drew mixed reactions, with a number of one-liners failing to quite hit the mark. Yep, it's still the most thankless job in Hollywood.



#### Superhero movies

In awards terms at least. James Gunn defended the genre after it got a kicking during Oscars speeches. "Popular fare has always been snubbed by the self-appointed elite," he says.



#### Hayden Christensen

Having just starred with a slumming-it Nic Cage in historical bomb *Outcast*, Christensen will battle zombie Nazis in *Untot*. Poor, poor Anakin...

### COOLING OFF

### SHAFT



Who's the black private dick who's getting another reboot? You're damn right... Work is in progress on a new version

of the character, some 15 years after Samuel L. Jackson played an iteration in John Singleton's 2000 effort. Despite being a modest box-office success, it never spawned sequels. Expect this new version to be eyeing a franchise.



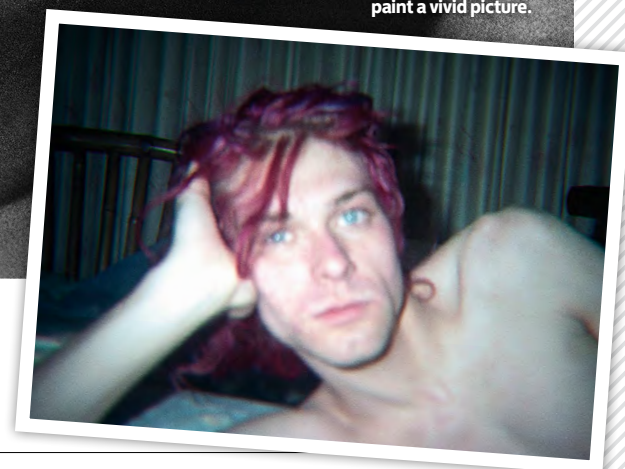


**The  
Spotlight**

# Grunge spirit

**COBAIN: MONTAGE OF HECK** | A dazzling new spotlight on one of music's biggest – and most troubled – stars turns the rock doc up to 11...

Close up: *Montage Of Heck* uses intimate footage to paint a vivid picture.



**I**t may have been 20 years since Kurt Cobain's untimely death, but his influence is still keenly felt – and none more so than by Brett Morgen, director of an anarchic new portrait of the iconic Nirvana frontman. “It’s been a rollercoaster...” sighs Morgen (*The Kid Stays In The Picture*, *Crossfire Hurricane*), speaking to Agenda the day after his film’s emotionally charged premiere at the 2015 Sundance Film Festival. “For the last two years, I went to work with Kurt. I spent 16 hours a day with him. I was all in, man.”

Using reels and reels of unreleased footage – from home movies to backstage B-rolls – alongside intimate interviews and painstakingly crafted animated sequences (incorporating Cobain’s own surrealist sketches), *Montage Of Heck* is messy, loud and unlike anything you’ve

seen before. Though Morgen admits making a film about a man that has been “disseminated and mythologised for the last 30 years”, was never going to be an easy task... “We didn’t want to deify him, but we didn’t want to tear him down either,” he says. But with the blessing of Cobain’s wife, Courtney Love, and his daughter Frances

***‘For the last two years, I went to work with Kurt. I was all in, man.’***

Bean (also an exec producer), Morgen was granted access to a treasure trove of fascinating archive material to work with. Not that their involvement cost him his directorial integrity...

“Courtney didn’t see the film until it was done,” Morgen reveals. “She was so brave to do what she did. No living celebrity, particularly one

with a quote-unquote ‘skeleton in the closet’, would ever let someone go into a storage room that they’ve never been in, do anything they want with the material and let them have final cut. I made a pretty direct comment at the premiere to all the people that were suspect of any agenda, that they can all fuck off. Nobody had an agenda. This is my movie. Frances approved it. There are things that [other family members] pushed me to cut out. I understood why. Some of those images are just horrific.”

*Montage Of Heck* doesn’t just follow Cobain’s lows, though. “If you asked me, ‘What are the two things that surprised you most about Kurt?’ I would say how romantic he is and how funny he is,” Morgen says. “My aim for the film was to allow people to have a better understanding of that image that they’re wearing on their t-shirt. My hope is that when it’s done, they’ll want to wear it even more often.” **RJ**

**ETA | 10 APRIL** *Cobain: Montage Of Heck* opens next month.



**The  
Spotlight**



Saddled up: Viggo Mortensen goes hunting on horseback in *Jauja*.

## A serious man

**JAUJA** | Viggo Mortensen heads to South America and leaves the beaten track...

**D**ecember 2003, and Viggo Mortensen has the world at his feet. *The Lord Of The Rings: The Return Of The King* is snaffling its way to \$1.2bn worldwide, making for a combined total of \$3bn for the *LOTR* trilogy, and Mortensen's rugged, soulful take on the trilogy-closer's title character, Aragorn, is quickening pulses the planet over. So what next? Batman, maybe? A role in the next Harry Potter movie? Or how about a reteam with Jackson – *Skull Island* is on the horizon, harbouring a CG-Kong.

Nope. Try narrative-lite adventure-western *Hidalgo*, three challenging David Cronenberg films (*A History Of Violence*, *Eastern Promises*, *A Dangerous Method*) and John Hillcoat's uber-bleak adaptation of Cormac McCarthy's Pulitzer prize-winning post-apocalyptic novel, *The Road*.

"I've not turned my back on anything consciously," says Mortensen, in London to promote Argentinian western *Jauja*, a bold,

spare work of breath-snatching beauty.

"The perceived wisdom is do one for yourself, then one for your career. But I just like to tell stories that I would like to go and see, and that I'll learn something from."

*Jauja* (pronounced 'How-ha') sees Mortensen play a Danish captain stationed at a remote military camp in the South American desert. Rational and methodical, his world crumbles

***'It's completely original but not pretentious. It's sincere and unaffected'***

when his teenage daughter flees with a young soldier. The ensuing hunt plays out like a dreamlike, experimental riff on *The Searchers*, with each shot of the timeless landscapes held until it could be a portrait on a gallery wall.

Mortensen is intensely proud of the film, saying, "This is like Tarkovsky or Sukorov, or it



makes me think of the dream theories of Borges or Jung. Lisandro [Alonso, director] is not classifiable as a storyteller. His images may be reminiscent of other things – paintings, cinema, philosophy, photography – but he doesn't reference other artists. It's completely original but not pretentious. It's sincere and unaffected and humble. It affects your waking hours and your sleeping hours."

*Jauja* is certainly haunting. What it's not is *The Hobbit*. Talking of which, what does the actor make of Jackson's prequel trilogy? "I've gone to see [each one] on opening day, front and centre," he says. "For my taste, they're way digital and off the beaten track as far as what the actual *Hobbit* was. But if you're going to make three two-and-a-half hour movies of a slim book for adolescents, you're going to have to invent a lot of stuff. But it's still in keeping with the style of *Lord Of The Rings*. There's a lot of resonance. I still enjoy them." **JG**

**ETA | 10 APRIL** *Jauja* opens next month.





## Billionaire boys club

Singapore firm Wealth-X has named **GEORGE LUCAS** as the world's wealthiest filmmaker. It's no surprise to see the Star Wars mogul topping the list (given his recent multi-billion sale of Lucasfilm to Disney), with an estimated net worth of \$5.4bn. He was ahead of old pal/blockbuster rival Steven Spielberg, whose own fortune is \$3.3bn. James Cameron (director of the two biggest films of all time) was tenth on the list with \$670m. There were no female movie moguls in the top 10. **MM**

## Plain talking

Learn the movie lingo

This month:



Made famous by Alfred Hitchcock, the MacGuffin is a plot device that acts as a catalyst for driving the story forward, even if the object in question isn't that interesting in itself. You don't always have to know what it is for it to do its job – does it matter that you never find out what's inside Pulp Fiction's mystery suitcase?

ILLUSTRATION: GLEN BROGAN; PICTURE CREDIT: PA



## Career injection

**NICOLAS CAGE** | The Oscar-winning actor has always been a man of extremes, but lately he's had more misses than hits.

**T**he question with Nic Cage is not how to solve the problem of his rickety rollercoaster career. The issue is: do we want to, given how entangled his highs and lows are with his reckless methods, befuddled charm and two-sizes-too-large charisma?

Iron out Cage's kinks and you risk stifling bonkers career gambits like his vibration-based "nouveau shamanic" acting theory. But who wouldn't take another performance like his tree dude in David Gordon Green's *Joe* over the talent waste recently displayed in religious shocker (in a bad way) *Left Behind*?

To say his career is in decline is to ignore that it is choppy by definition. At its start he sandwiched *Vampire's Kiss* between pitch-perfect oddball turns in *Raising Arizona* and *Wild At Heart*, trashing out between meals and earning himself a thousand online "Nic Cage losing his shit" memes.

Subsequent decades confirmed his wayward thinking. In the '90s, he banked an Oscar for *Leaving Las Vegas* then upset critical (and sartorial) sensibilities with *Con Air*. But Simon West's actioner benefited from Cage's bigger-than-life lunges, as did *Face/Off*: its ridiculousness worked because Cage pitched himself at the right level of ridiculous.

As for *Superman Lives*: it might have sucked, but who wouldn't want to see it?

Again though, stumbles too far followed. *Captain Corelli's Mandolin* was something Cage should never be: boring. He showed soul and range in Scorsese's *Bringing Out The Dead* and Spike Jonze's *Adaptation*, but Neil LaBute's *The Wicker Man* may be the daftest remake ever.

Commendably, even his bad choices involve an element of risk. Failure is his occupational hazard: perhaps we wouldn't have his deranged blow-outs in *Bad Lieutenant* without the possibility that he might lose his shit less pointedly elsewhere. Likewise, you could claim that the same need for adrenaline that drove him to handle deadly snakes in *Joe* runs parallel to the need to piss fire from his own trouser-snake in *Ghost Rider*.

But you could also argue that any career whose flops include *Next*, *Knowing*, *Trespass*, two *National Treasures* and two *Ghost Riders* might be more of a shame than shamanic. Cage can choose well: he rejected *Dumb And Dumber* for an Oscar-winning lead in *Leaving Las Vegas*. More of those good vibrations and we might be riding the rollercoaster with him. **KH**

## FIVE POINT FIX...

**1** Team up with Matthew McConaughey for seat-of-pants derangement. Could the pairing galvanise a Cage-aissance?

**2** Find a sympathetically out-sized auteur. David O Russell? Or reunite with Herzog or the Coens.

**3** Diversify. We love Cage un-Caged but throw quiet roles like Joe in among the noise-rock rampages.

**4** Show a little soul. Those big eyes spoke volumes in *Bringing Out The Dead* and *Adaptation*.

**5** Support smartly. *Kick-Ass*'s Big Daddy was a small-doses deadpan delight, like Adam West with a side order of psychosis.



**The  
Spotlight**

## Death starlet

Supernova: Alex Essoe suffers for her art as ingenue Sarah.

**STARRY EYES** | A young actress chases a role to die for in a Hollywood satire harsher than *Maps To The Stars*...

**I**t was about wanting to do a story about transformation, but not a vampire story or a werewolf story," says Dennis Widmyer, one half of the writer/director team behind the most disturbing young-actress-arriving-in-Hollywood tale since *Mulholland Drive*. "Maybe we could make a creature feature out of fame..." His partner,

Kevin Kolsch, jumps in: "You make a body horror movie about a young actress, and their body is everything, their look is everything," he says.

"Put that character in a movie like this and it's her worst nightmare."

It'll be yours too. Beginning life as a Kickstarter project before attracting the attention of Dark Sky Films (*Stake Land*, *The Innkeepers*), *Starry Eyes* zooms in on Sarah (Alex Essoe), living with a group of fellow wannabe actors who consider landing a commercial a major breakthrough. Then Sarah gets an audition for a low-budget horror movie, and wins herself a meet with the producer. But something's not right. The question is, how far will Sarah go for that 'gateway part'? Essoe, herself a jobbing actress who here slaps

down a serious calling card, was certainly willing to do whatever it took. For a scene where the script required her to vomit maggots, she offered to do it for real. "It was her idea!" stresses Widmyer. "Everyone felt sick watching her. And we couldn't get the shot, so we had to do it again and again! She had to take 20 minutes

***'We wanted to capture the blood and violence that permeates LA'***

after that shot to go and calm down."

But lest you read the above and think *Starry Eyes* is just another gross-out horror movie, it's actually a sharp Tinseltown satire, freakishly funny in places, which crawls under your skin with its insidious mood before hatching unexpected horrors in its final act. Widmyer and Kolsch always knew the ending had to "bring it".

"The whole point was to tell an LA story," Kolsch explains. "A big part of Hollywood is these vicious stories you hear – the Manson Family killings, the Wonderland killings, the Black Dahlia. When you see the Hollywood sign you're



also reminded of [actress] Peg Entwistle, who jumped off and killed herself [in 1932, aged 24]. We wanted to capture the blood and violence that permeates this town."

Job most certainly done. Wowing audiences at SXSW and building strong word of mouth ever since, the film has earned itself some starry comparisons. Kolsch, it seems, is still in shock. "When we made the movie we thought nobody was going to see it, or would call us wannabe-Cronenberg, or -Polanski, or -Lynch. So when people legitimately talk about it like you're an entry in there *with* the films that influenced you... That's really flattering." **JG**

**ETA | 16 MARCH** *Starry Eyes* is out on DVD this month.



*The  
Spotlight*

Horror vein: *Spring* mines a completely fresh seam of weird.

# Before midnight movie

**SPRING** | Imagine if Richard Linklater made a supernatural horror movie...

When a low-budget horror movie doing the festival circuit is getting as much buzz as *Spring*, you'd do well to listen. When it's being described as "Linklater meets Lovecraft", you have to see it.

The sophomore feature of writer/directors Justin Benson and Aaron Moorhead, whose genre-b(l)ending debut *Resolution* plays like a smaller, decidedly more peculiar *The Cabin In The Woods*, *Spring* is original, unpredictable and truly WTF. It's the story of Evan (*Thumbsucker*'s Lou Taylor Pucci), an American who ventures to Europe and obeys the siren call of beautiful stranger Louise (newcomer Nadia Hilker). But far from being *Hostel*: Part XIII, its tone, themes and outcome are hearteningly fresh. So fresh, in fact, it had trouble attracting the attention of financiers.

"No one was banging down our door!" chuckles Moorhead. "We bought cheap suits, went to Cannes, stayed 30 minutes out of town

and hired bicycles." It worked, the guys lining up meetings that resulted in finding a scout for the Italian locations, and an Italian producer. Benson well remembers how tough the meetings were, though. "The degree to which our films are character driven isn't so much a problem," he says. "But there's a reluctance because it's not a zombie movie, or a vampire movie, or a brand, like *Evil Dead*. The stuff we do

**'We bought cheap suits, went to Cannes, and hired bicycles'**

has a fantastic element but it's an innovation of ours." Moorhead agrees. "People need a slam-dunk, so if the movie turns out badly, they still have something to hang their hat on. If *Spring* turns out badly, there's nothing to sell it on."

Thankfully it turned out very well indeed, striking a beguilingly naturalistic tone as Evan

and Louise walk and talk and fall in love. The gender politics are fascinating ("Some things in the real world are guy problems, some are girl problems, and some are human problems; we wanted to make sure that all three are represented," says Benson) and the territory that *Spring* eventually wanders into is... surprising. To say too much would be to spoil the fun, though Benson hints, "We went to nature for references, rather than to movies or myths. She's not a werewolf, she's not a vampire, she's..." We'll leave it there, though 'Evolution' is the key word.

But for filmmakers who "actively avoid influences", how do they find critics' "Linklater-meets-Lovecraft" comparisons? Moorhead jumps in. "It's flattering though a tiny bit worrisome. Making a romance and being compared to the *Before* movies is like making a gangster movie and someone saying 'It's kind of like *The Godfather*'. You're talking about great art." He laughs. "We're just two dudes who made a movie." **JG**

**ETA | 22 MAY** *Spring* opens in two months.



# agenda

The Hero

## Kenneth Branagh

The British legend still has no shortage of ambition.

He's played Henry V and Hamlet, worked for Woody Allen and Robert Altman and directed Marvel's *Thor*. No one could accuse (Sir) Kenneth Branagh of ever shirking a challenge. His latest sees him take on a new live-action Disney *Cinderella*, starring Lily James as the princess-in-waiting and Cate Blanchett as her evil step-mum. Once more unto the breach, dear Ken...

### What are the challenges of making a new *Cinderella*?

When it comes to a Disney fairytale, the great ones that they've made are deemed classics. But in film terms, that sometimes means untouchable. Whereas coming from the theatre, I feel when something's a classic it invites re-discovery, re-examination.

Here, you also have the translation into the live-action world, so I was excited about that.

### You've now made a series of big-budget movies. Was *Thor* the turning point?

It was at a point in Marvel's history when they were not as secure as they seem now, when it was still very risky. It was, 'Part three of the first phase is to put the big blonde guy with the red cape on the screen riding his horse over the rainbow bridge in space... let's see if we can make that one work!' You felt that was a big risk for everybody.

### Would you work for Marvel again?

Absolutely, if the conditions were right. No conversation is going on

**Ken's Canon:** Lily James and Cate Blanchett in *Cinderella*; as Victor in *Frankenstein*; and in Woody Allen's *Celebrity*.



*'I feel when something is a classic it invites re-examination'*

about it, but I happened to have a good relationship with Kevin [Feige] and the other people who run Marvel.

### You made a blockbuster 21 years ago with *Frankenstein*. How do you look back on that?

In a way, it was the making of me as a big film director, even though I didn't necessarily do big films after that. I was able to understand a little bit about the mechanics of the studio film. And I really, really enjoyed working with Robert De Niro. That was very unusual. I was very chuffed when they showed me the poster with both our names on it! [Then there was the] intensity and vitriol of the critical reaction towards it... it was a film that didn't work for a lot of people. Nobody died. But it was personally very wounding.

### How was your time on *Celebrity* with Woody Allen?

My introduction to Woody Allen was a letter from him saying, 'Dear Kenneth Branagh, please consider the part of Lee Simon. When I wrote this part, I knew there was only one actor in the world who could play it - Alec Baldwin. And he's unavailable. So I considered for a while Mel Gibson but decided in the end you would be more appropriate. Lee Simon is a loser but he is attractive to women. Therefore, no facial hair.'

### What about Altman on *The Gingerbread Man*?

Altman and I got on like a dream. He was wonderful to watch - screaming at producers, learning to bake bread because he decided that was the way to cope with the stress... I thought it was a terrific movie. Seven people saw it. But he took a John Grisham original screenplay and made it wildly atmospheric.

### Will you return to acting again?

I just finished the last three *Wallander* films for the BBC - we did two in Sweden and one in South Africa. What I find is if you've just spent six months watching Cate Blanchett on *Cinderella* you learn a great deal. You really do. I think one of the big joys of directing is to watch other people at work... I hasten to add *Wallander* will not seem like Cate Blanchett in the final series! **JM**

**ETA | 27 MARCH** *Cinderella* opens this month.



# Sound bites

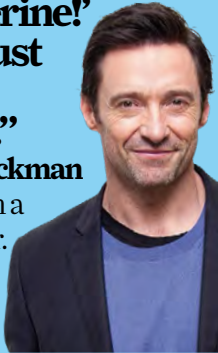
Quotable dialogue from this month's movies – and their stars...



**"I got whiplash once from him throwing me on the bed."**  
**Dakota Johnson** on the occupational hazards of *Fifty Shades Of Grey*.

**"I optimistically love the idea of, 'What the hell, Batman versus Iron Man versus Wolverine?' Let's just chuck 'em in."**

**Hugh Jackman** is keen on a crossover.

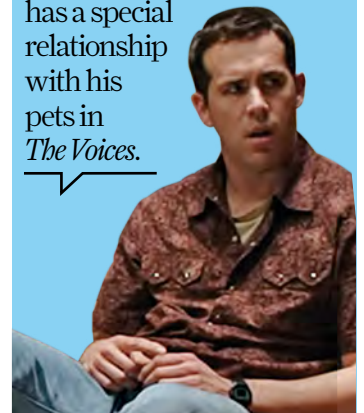


**"I thought it would be interesting if it were less precise, and just a little bit more spitty"**

Apple's **Sir Jony Ive** gave J.J. Abrams some lightsaber design cues.

**"The real question is are cats good with me because they pretty much own us."**

**Jerry Hickfangr (Ryan Reynolds)** has a special relationship with his pets in *The Voices*.



**"The opportunity to take on this nearly Shakespearean character - that's what graphic novels and comic books are becoming, right? What a big challenge."**

**Jared Leto** on becoming the Joker in *Suicide Squad*.



**"The more Old Etonians the better, I think! The two or three who are playing at the moment are geniuses, aren't they? The more geniuses you get, the better."**

**Michael Gambon** on today's crop of actors.



**"I'm thinking I'm back!"**

**John Wick (Keanu Reeves)** makes a comeback.



**"Wild Wild West was less painful than After Earth because my son was involved in After Earth and I led him into it. That was excruciating."**

**Will Smith** on career failures.

**"Bananaman – purely based on the fact that it hasn't been done yet."**

**Jamie Dornan** on the superhero he'd play.



**"Don't laugh, I'm being cool."**

**Chappie Shiner (Sharlto Copley)** wants street cred.





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# Every new movie reviewed & rated Screen

★★★★★ OUTSTANDING ★★★★★ VERY GOOD ★★★★★ GOOD ★★ DISAPPOINTING ★ RUBBISH

**'John Wick gives Keanu Reeves his best role in years'**

**FILM OF THE MONTH**



## NEW RELEASES 13.03.15 - 09.04.15

### OUT NOW

BAFTA Shorts 2015	★★★	p51
Chappie	★★★	p48
Fairytale: Story Of The Seven Dwarves	★★	p55
Fifty Shades Of Grey	★★	p58
Focus	★★★	p56
Kill The Messenger	★★★	p45
Project Almanac	★★★	p57
The Second Best Exotic Marigold Hotel	★★	p59

### 13 MARCH

Far From The Madding Crowd	★★★	p55
My Name Is Salt	★★★★	p55

### 20 MARCH

Canopy	★★★★	p57
Dark Summer	★★	p59
The Gunman	★★	p47
Mommy	★★★★	p51
A Second Chance	★★	p57
The Tale Of The Princess Kaguya	★★★★	p44
The Voices	★★★	p46
Wild Card	★★★	p51

### 23 MARCH

Maxine Peake As Hamlet	★★★	p59
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### 25 MARCH

Sixteen	★★★★	p57
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### 27 MARCH

Blind	★★★★	p57
Cinderella	★★★	p50
Dior And I	★★★★	p59
The Face Of An Angel	★★★★	p53
Rigor Mortis	★★	p53
Robot Overlords	★★★★	p45
Seventh Son	★★	p47
The Signal	★★★★	p52
The SpongeBob Movie: Sponge Out Of Water	★★★	p55
Wild Tales	★★★★	p53

### 2 APRIL

While We're Young	★★★★	p49
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### 3 APRIL

Altman	★★★★	p45
Blade Runner: The Final Cut	★★★★★	p51
The Dark Horse	★★★★	p59

Kidnapping Freddy Heinke	★★	p51
Something Must Break	★★★	p53
The Water Diviner	★★★★	p54

### 10 APRIL

John Wick	★★★★	p42
Woman In Gold	★★★	p56

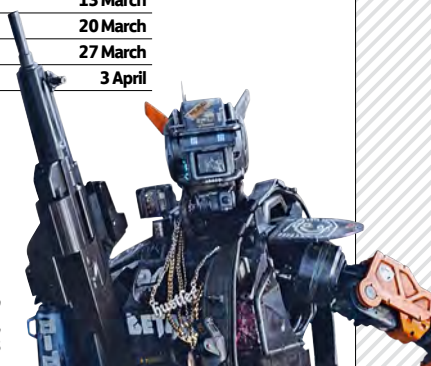
### ALSO RELEASED

We couldn't see them in time for this issue, so head to [gamesradar.com/totalfilm](http://gamesradar.com/totalfilm) for reviews of the following:

TITLE	RELEASE DATE
Run All Night	13 March
The Divergent Series: Insurgent	20 March
Fast & Furious 7	27 March
Get Hard	3 April

For more reviews visit [totalfilm.com/reviews](http://totalfilm.com/reviews)

Chappie checks in, p48







# John Wick



Out 10 April Keanu blows a fuse.



**A**FTER THE LIKES OF *47 Ronin*, which was approximately 47 times less good than *Ronin*, and *Generation Um*, a film that bored its own title, Keanu Reeves is about due a comeback. But what exactly does he have to come back to? An actor of undeniable charisma but limited range, he's always worked best as the innocent abroad amid high-concept action (*Point Break*, *Speed*, *The Matrix*). But at 50 that's as unlikely to fly as a *Bill & Ted* threequel.

Directed by Chad Stahelski and David Leitch, stunt experts who, between them, have worked on – and in – *The Bourne Legacy*, *Fight Club* and *The Matrix* (Stahelski

was Reeves' double, and even replaced the late Brandon Lee on *The Crow*), from Derek Kolstad's much-feted script, *John Wick* is a brutally simple revenge flick that provides a brutally simple solution. By casting Keanu as a taciturn man *well* into the second act of his life, a kick-ass Carlito drawn back to the flame, it gives the actor his best role in years.

Whether mourning his recently deceased wife Helen (Bridget Moynahan), or skidding his Mustang 69 around an airfield, Wick is the kind of moody SOB for whom a brown leather jacket seems positively Hawaiian. Helen sends him a post-mortem present to help him move on: a puppy cute enough for a Best Supporting Canine Oscar. With his immaculate bachelor pad and Alvaro Siza coffee table books, you'd be forgiven for

thinking Wick was an architect, rather than an ARCHITECT OF DOOM. Unfortunately for Russian gangster Iosef (Alfie Allen), who breaks into to Wick's house and ruins his recovery, it's the latter. When Iosef reports back to daddy Viggo (the excellent Michael Nyqvist), his response is a priceless: "Oh." Wick used to be an assassin called "The Boogeyman", Viggo explains, who once killed three men *with a pencil*. "John will come for you and you will do nothing because there is nothing you can do," he says channelling *Taken*. Meanwhile, Wick prepares to go back to work...

## Club hit

Wick is the next-gen version of '80s killing machines such as Arnie, Sly and Seagal – as





SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED...

**THE CROW (1994)**  
A goth revenger's tragedy that ended in tragedy itself.

**THE RAID (2011)**  
Gareth Evans' breathtaking beat-'em-up is all action, minimal plot.

**THE ROVER (2014)**  
Guy Pearce's Mute Max gets even in post-apocalypse era Oz.

For full reviews of these films visit [totalfilm.com/cinema\\_reviews](http://totalfilm.com/cinema_reviews)

Safety regulations be damned: cars are not gun-fu proof.

'Stahelski and Leitch direct the hell out of what little story there is – particularly the car sequences'

Small talk

But it's not all death and deluges. Wick rocks a brand of mordant monosyllabism that makes his every grunt seem positively Wildean. "Viggo will kill me!" begs a penitent cowering from his wrath; "Uh-huh," is the perfect give-a-shit answer. Meanwhile Willem Dafoe's old-hand Marcus uses a juicer to stay healthy (the actor's own idea), and Wick's sprees are frequently interrupted by cops – or other assassins – who remember him fondly and pay little attention. Kolstad's best invention is the Continental Hotel, a high-class safehouse run by Conrad (Ian McShane), where the likes of Wick and rival killer Ms Perkins (Adrianne Palicki) can do business without fear of getting gun-fu'ed. When our bloodied hero hobbles into the lobby and asks about the quality of the laundry service, the unflappable concierge (Lance Reddick) offers, "No one's *that* good."

Truth is, we could use a little more Reddick, not to mention McShane, Dafoe and John Leguizamo, who has just one proper scene as tough-as-nails chopshop owner Aurelio. Despite far too many helicopter shots of Manhattan (seemingly left over from the end credits), Stahelski and Leitch direct the hell out of what little story there is – particularly the extraordinary car sequences – but this is one film that could actually use a sequel/sidequel for Kolstad's characters to really let rip. Reeves acquits himself ably, too, only coming unstuck in an embarrassingly po-faced and kind of awesome puppy-based monologue. Perhaps that's where *John Wick* fits best. It's deathly serious, but with a sense of its own ridiculousness. Keanu, you feel, is back where he belongs. **Matt Glasby**

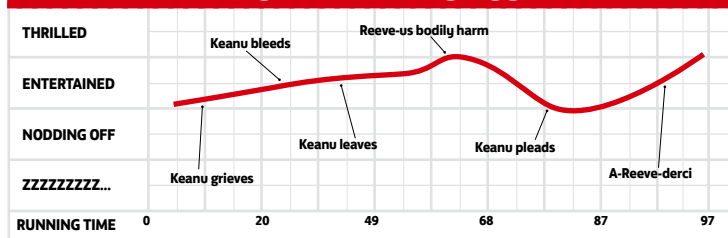
**THE VERDICT** An extremely well-oiled action machine that glides past like Wick's Mustang 69: beautifully put together, but you never forget there's a stuntman at the wheel.

► **Certificate 15** **Director** Chad Stahelski and David Leitch **Starring** Keanu Reeves, Michael Nyqvist, Alfie Allen, Willem Dafoe, Adrianne Palicki **Screenplay** Derek Kolstad **Distributor** Warner Bros **Running time** 97 mins

well as someone who's clearly had a consultation with Daniel Craig's tailor. He gets the job done with the minimum of fuss (and dialogue), even cleaning up after himself. The film's – and possible the year's – action highlight has him shooting, stabbing and slamming his way through an entire club. Stahelski and Leitch call Wick's technique "gun-fu" (not to be confused with gun-kata from *Equilibrium*, or gymkata from, er, *Gymkata*), but mostly it involves sidling up to people and nonchalantly blowing their brains out. Less gun-fu, more screw you.

Although the fight scenes are as cool and crunchy as compacted snow, it's the world around Wick that appeals most.

PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE™



All chrome, concrete and neon, it looks like something drawn straight from a brilliant graphic novel. Helen's funeral is a sea of black umbrellas clustered together in the endless grey, as if the rain has leached away all the joy. The sound design is just as crucial; the lonely beep of Wick's alarm clock bleeding into the electronic heartbeat of Helen's life-support machine, for example.



SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED...

**PATHER PANCHALI 1955**  
This cornerstone of world cinema views the life of a boy in an Indian village.

**MULAN 1998**  
Disney's young heroine must adapt to a tough new environment... and stay strong.

**MY NEIGHBOURS THE YAMADAS 1999**  
Takahata finds warmth, humour and pathos in the life of a Japanese family.

For full reviews of these films visit [totalfilm.com/reviews](http://totalfilm.com/reviews)

Isao Takahata's career has blossomed.

# The Tale Of The Princess Kaguya

★★★★☆ Out 20 March The long (but gorgeous) goodbye...

**I**T'S A CRUEL DOUBLE BLOW that Studio Ghibli's iconic co-founders, Hayao Miyazaki and Isao Takahata, should offer their respective swansongs within 10 months of each other. The good news? Takahata's Oscar-nominated *The Tale Of The Princess Kaguya*, like Miyazaki's *The Wind Rises*, is some film to go out on – personal, beautiful, and proving one last time, should we need reminding, that Takahata (*Grave Of The Fireflies*, *Pom Poko*) is a master filmmaker of the highest order.

Based on 10th century Japanese legend 'Taketori monogatari', *TTOTPK* begins with a humble woodcutter (Takeo Chii) finding a doll-sized child in a bamboo shoot. Taking her home to his wife, the tot grows before their startled eyes, and the woodcutter names her Princess (Aki Asakura) when his

subsequent discovery of gold and fine fabrics leads him to believe that the gods wish her to enjoy the life of a noblewoman. And so the family inhabit a mansion in the city, where Kaguya ('Shining'), as she's now called, is beset by rich and powerful men intent on winning her hand. This life of servants, prestige and visiting dignitaries delights her status-seeking father, but Kaguya craves only the simple life she once enjoyed in the country.

Given *TTOTPK* took eight years to make, Takahata can perhaps be forgiven for turning in a film that is unquestionably too long – at 137 minutes, it surpasses *Princess Mononoke* as Ghibli's lengthiest. Otherwise it is masterful, its gentle brushstrokes and

translucent water pastels complementing a story that celebrates the transient beauty of the natural world over the materialism and artificiality of city life. Breathing beauty from every frame, it might prove too placid for those who cheered the combustible

action of *Big Hero 6*, but when the set-pieces do arrive – Kaguya making an expressionistic dash past charcoal trees under a bloated, baleful moon, or an imaginatively staged finale that's both bonkers and transcendent – they stay in the mind forever.

It's good to see a heroine with moxie, too.

Told that a princess has no business to dance, frolic, laugh, cry or even sweat, she mocks such strictures and craftily pokes fun at the possessive "love" that she is expected to accept.

A sojourn back to the

beloved hillsides and forests of her youth, meanwhile, recalls the sight of Pocahontas pirouetting freely at the end of Terrence Malick's *The New World* – at once joyful and exquisitely sad for the freedom is fleeting.

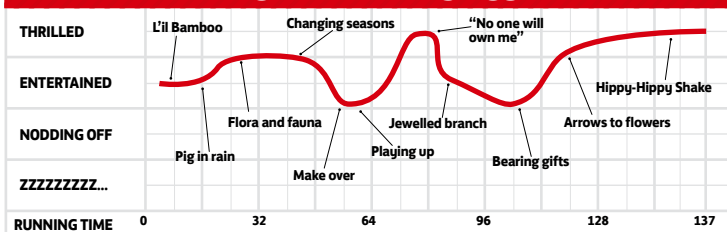
**Jamie Graham**

**THE VERDICT** Over-long, but a work of great artistry and emotion. As the woodcutter says upon finding our heroine: "A gift from heaven".

► **Certificate** TBC **Director** Isao Takahata **Starring** Aki Asakura, Takeo Chii, Nobuko Miyamoto, Atsuko Takahata **Screenplay** Isao Takahata, Riko Sakaguchi **Distributor** StudioCanal **Running time** 137 mins (tbc)

A story that celebrates the beauty of the natural world

## PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE™







# Robot Overlords

This is why mummy doesn't want you to play outside...

★★★★★ Out 27 March These are the droids you're looking for.

**G** RABBERS DIRECTOR JON Wright returns with another trim sci-fi on a slim budget, a pound shop *Transformers* pitched squarely at the young 'uns that agreeably recalls the enterprising work of the Children's Film Foundation when it's not aping the *Terminator* series. Kids should be royally entertained, provided they're not inspired to recreate the film's running gag of having its fresh-faced heroes electrocute themselves with a portable car battery.

Giant robots have invaded Earth, confining its inhabitants inside their homes and zapping them into oblivion if they sneak out without permission. (Belfast-born Wright may have left Northern Ireland at the age of one but he still appears to have a beef with occupying armies.) Additional intimidation is supplied by human collaborators, chief among them Mr Smythe (Ben Kingsley) – a former geography teacher whose curfew-enforcing duties don't prohibit some clumsy stalking of ex-colleague and single mom Kate (Gillian Anderson, lending star power but otherwise underused).

But enough of the grown-ups. *Robot's* true protagonist is actually Sean (Callan McAuliffe), Kate's teenage son and the one who discovers that a brief shock from the

aforementioned car battery temporarily short-circuits the Big Brother tracker in the recipient's neck. Determined to find his dad (Steven Mackintosh), an RAF pilot who went AWOL three years earlier, Sean takes to the streets with three friends to find them crawling with rebellious hold-outs. He also acquires a helpful psychic connection with his ED-209-style adversaries (shades of *Edge Of Tomorrow* here) that could prove vital if they are ever to be vanquished.

Shot in Northern Ireland and the Isle of Man, *Overlords* has its share of clunky moments yet nonetheless proves, like *Monsters* before it, what can be achieved when you're short of cash but rich in imagination. It's also brimming with charm, with a game supporting cast – Geraldine James, Tamer Hassan, the indomitable Roy Hudd – who clearly regard the whole thing as a great big panto. **Neil Smith**

**THE VERDICT** Though unlikely to give Michael Bay any sleepless nights, this family-friendly adventure has enough in its arsenal to overcome its budgetary limitations.

► **Certificate 12A** Director Jon Wright Starring Gillian Anderson, Ben Kingsley, Callan McAuliffe, Steven Mackintosh, Roy Hudd Screenplay Jon Wright, Mark Stay Distributor Signature Running time 90 mins

## SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED...

### THE WAR OF THE WORLDS 1953

Classic Wells adap. Well, less uneven than the Spielberg one.

### GRABBERS 2012

The only way to beat the aliens in Wright's invasion flick? Getting wasted!

### EDGE OF TOMORROW 2014

Tom Cruise is dying to defeat the visitors from another world.

For full reviews of these films visit [totalfilm.com/reviews](http://totalfilm.com/reviews)



## ALTMAN

★★★★★ Out 3 April

NARRATED BY HIS WIDOW KATHRYN, and illustrated with a wealth of archive/ interview material, Ron Mann's loving tribute to one of Hollywood's most uncompromising directors briskly spirits us across Robert Altman's 55-year career. Some will balk that this family-endorsed project plays it safe, instead of muck-raking through his personal life. But covering classics (*Nashville*, *McCabe & Mrs. Miller*), obscurities (*Images*, *Health*) and comebacks (*The Player*, *Short Cuts*), Mann still unearths revelations, not least Altman's later health problems. Add in poignant tidbits – notably *Popeye's* Robin Williams, in his last recorded interview – and there's enough here for fans and newbies alike. **James Mottram**

► **Certificate 15** Running time 95 mins



## KILL THE MESSENGER

★★★★★ Out now

JEREMY RENNER IS SOLID IN THIS twisty biopic based on the true story of Gary Webb, an investigative newspaper reporter who chances upon the story of a lifetime, writing a hotly contested expose of the CIA's involvement in the crack epidemic that crippled major US cities in the '80s. His post-story life spirals downward as he is systematically discredited by his peers. Director Michael Cuesta (*Dexter*, *Six Feet Under*) keeps things moving at a decent clip, and Renner's nuanced performance fleshes out the alternately heroic and paranoid Webb. We're left with the unsettling notion that the truth, at least in the media, is a highly subjective matter of opinion.

**Ken McIntyre**

► **Certificate 15** Running time 112 mins



A lovely jacket, absolutely ruined.



## SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED...

**BABE 1995**  
Malevolent moggies, free-range slaughter. Chris Noonan's porcine kids' pic goes easier on the blood, mind.

**TED 2012**  
Cute furry things spout filth and Ryan Reynolds guests in the bear-com that isn't *Paddington*.

**NIGHTCRAWLER 2014**  
Or, how to make a hunk horrid. Jake Gyllenhaal looks vampiric as a psycho crime-chaser.

For full reviews of these films visit [totalfilm.com/reviews](http://totalfilm.com/reviews)

# The Voices

★★★☆☆ Out 20 March Ryan's slaughter.

**S**ECOND CHANCES ARE RARE for falling stars in Hollywood, but Ryan Reynolds may just be carving one out. He's hiking the route to Hollywood peak again: before mouthy merc *Deadpool*, you can see him in off-piste indies like *Mississippi Grind* and this surreal psycho-satire about potty-mouthed cats and killing.

The serial-killer market being busy, comic-book artist/*Persepolis* director Marjane Satrapi does well to hack out fresh turf here – until the trying-too-hard stretch marks show. But there are no quirk stains on Reynolds, who pins down his best role since 2010 as Jerry, a dork-ish bathroom-factory employee who's just that bit too perky for comfort. Jerry has issues. Worse still, he has a swearsy Scottish moggy-most-horrid named Mr Whiskers (voiced by Reynolds, seemingly mimicking Peter

Mullan), who argues intently that murder is in Jerry's nature after he sort-of-accidentally kills (then chops up) boisterous factory temp Fiona (Gemma Arterton). With Fiona's head (still babbling away) relocated to Jerry's fridge, Mr Whiskers encourages Jerry's hobby. And puss is so persuasive that even Jerry's amiable bull mastiff Bosco (Reynolds again, aping Gary Bussey) can't dissuade him from finding Fiona's head a fridge-mate.

With every beat pitched subtly 'off' without collapsing into geek-freak caricature, Reynolds finds that sweet spot where excessive sincerity can spook, whether complimenting a (balding) co-worker on his hair or straining to blend in. His co-stars are equally on-key. Arterton spikes her good-time gal's brassy cheer with bite, and Anna Kendrick brings sweeter depths to her co-worker Lisa, whose meekness throws Jerry's madness into perspective: while his neediness harbours demons, hers is a by-product of innate niceness. *Animal Kingdom's*

Jacki Weaver nails every note too, in a small but pivotal role as a therapist.

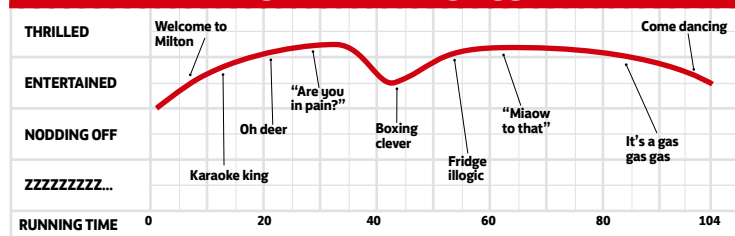
The problem is that the right directorial key eludes Satrapi. Working from a tricky script by Michael R Perry (*Paranormal Activity 2*), she evokes Jerry's off-his-meds mindset with a heightened sense of reality, where pink overalls dazzle and butterflies

hover around Fiona, *Amelie*-style. But Satrapi struggles to find other tones. The cod-psychology flashbacks to Jerry's upbringing and trad-thriller end-stretch make you wonder if you're watching

a splatter-gun small-town satire, *Psycho* in art-trash drag or just the whole, blackly comic lot mashed up without a map. But at least Reynolds looks like a man finding his way to take risks once more. **Kevin Harley**

'Reynolds finds that sweet spot where sincerity can spook'

## PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE™



**THE VERDICT** Reynolds moves on from *Green Lantern* in Satrapi's psycho-romp, pitched awkwardly between funny-haha and funny-peculiar, but blessed with enough style and smarts to merit a look.

► **Certificate 15** Director Marjane Satrapi Starring Ryan Reynolds, Gemma Arterton, Anna Kendrick, Jacki Weaver, Adi Shankar Screenplay Michael R Perry Distributor Arrow Films Running time 104 mins



# The Gunman

★★★☆☆ Out 20 March Dead man walking...

**D**IRECTOR PIERRE MOREL successfully turned one ageing actor into an action star with the original *Taken*. But lightning hasn't struck twice with *The Gunman*, a leaden-footed conspiracy thriller starring Sean Penn. The 54-year-old double Oscar winner may well have sculpted a decent six-pack to play ex-special forces government contractor Jim Terrier, but on this evidence, he won't be troubling Jason Statham anytime soon.

We open in the Congo. Terrier is a hired gun, paid to kill a local politician. Years later he's trying to atone for his past, working for an NGO in Africa, when there's an attempt on his life. Who and why? The trail leads to London – where he hooks up with his old mucka Stanley (Ray Winstone) – and then to Barcelona, where further ghosts reside in the shape of Javier Bardem's businessman Felix and his wife Annie (Jasmine Trinca).

Bardem's OTT performances in *Skyfall* and *The Counsellor* worked a treat, but here, he's an embarrassment – but probably no worse than Mark Rylance, who plays Cox,

another shady former colleague of Terrier's. Arguably the greatest theatre actor of his generation, his amateurish turn lacks both conviction and character.

Only Trinca and Idris Elba, in a tiny role as an Interpol agent, emerge with credibility. Co-written by Penn, the film is never sure if it's a political drama or an action movie; in the end it's neither. Lacking authenticity or atmosphere, the by-the-numbers fight scenes are a real shame. Penn handles himself well enough, but there's nothing here to raise the pulse. As for the bullfight finale, the less said the better. **James Mottram**

**THE VERDICT** A genuine disappointment, given the talent involved, and a rare misstep for Penn, who can't save this moribund vanity project from flatlining.

► **Certificate 15** Director Pierre Morel Starring Sean Penn, Javier Bardem, Mark Rylance, Ray Winstone, Idris Elba, Jasmine Trinca **Screenplay** Pete Travis, Don McPherson, Sean Penn **Distributor** StudioCanal **Running Time** 115 mins

Sean Penn's gun. Scourge of hotel rooms.



There's always one person that takes Dungeons & Dragons too seriously.

# Seventh Son

★★★☆☆ Out 27 March Dragon fart...

**I**TS RELEASE REPEATEDLY pushed back, *Seventh Son* sadly warrants the bad buzz. It's a YA fantasy based on Thomas Seigel's *The Spook's Apprentice*, part of a 14-book series. Somewhere in there they probably explain all this crazy bullshit, but we can only go by what we're seeing on the screen. Julianne Moore is Mother Malkin, a witch who turns into a dragon sometimes. Jeff Bridges is Master Gregory, a crusty old long-bearded wizard who gets a new apprentice, Tom (Ben Barnes) to help him fight the witch-dragon and attain some sort of mystical jewel she covets. Tom is in love with the enchanting Alice (Alicia Vikander), Malkin's niece, who is also a witch, although we are unsure whether she is of the evil dragon variety or the helpful, pixie-witch kind.

The bulk of the movie finds the titular Tom and his growly boss tromping through a standard fairyland, fighting demons and ogres and, you imagine, a healthy dose of embarrassment. To be fair, director Sergei Bodrov (*Mongol*) delivers a sumptuous

digital kingdom. His CGI-enhanced landscapes are filled with all manner of magic, from foreboding gray-walled castles whose spires stretch into the clouds to intricate monsters and ghouls so life-like you can almost smell their fetid breath. And that's really the problem. If this was the '80s, *Seventh Son* would be camp gem *Beastmaster*, and the dragons would be made of paper-mache and rubber cement. Here, though, instead of a few cheap kicks, you end up lamenting all the money (a reported \$95m budget) and effort invested in a film that plays like the most disposable Saturday-matinee fodder imaginable. **Ken McIntyre**

**THE VERDICT** A swollen budget, a mini-*Big Lewbowski* reunion, and top-notch digital effects fail to enliven proceedings in yet another ho-hum dragon chaser based on a YA novel.

► **Certificate 12A** Director Sergei Bodrov Starring Jeff Bridges, Ben Barnes, Julianne Moore, Alicia Vikander, Antje Traue **Screenplay** Charles Leavitt, Steven Knight **Distributor** Universal **Running time** 102 mins



Bling truly makes the 'bot.



## Chappie

★★★★☆ Out now This tin man has heart. Brains, however...

**S**PECIAL EFFECTS wunderkind Neill Blomkamp dazzled with debut *District 9*, but follow-up *Elysium* disappointed, failing to deliver the socially conscious themes and spectacular CGI action with the same keen sting. *Chappie* falls somewhere between the two – structurally very similar to *District 9* (it's even bookended by faux-documentary news footage and also based on one of Blomkamp's previous shorts), it conjures an intriguing world, even if all its complicated parts never quite work in harmony.

*Chappie* wears its sci-fi influences on its sleeve, with *The Terminator* and *RoboCop* readily evoked. In a near-future Johannesburg (familiar Blomkamp territory), the police curtail rising crime with police-bots created by Tetra Vaal (the company name riffing on the original

short). Designer Deon (Dev Patel) gives an automaton consciousness in an off-the-record experiment, resulting in Chappie (voiced and mo-capped by Sharlto Copley).

Copley's infantile AI is a captivating creation. He's believably youthful, and a surprising depth of feeling is mined from a couple of pivoting bars, bunny-like ears and an LED display. Brilliantly animated, he blends almost seamlessly with the real-world environment. Chappie's goofy charm feels kid-friendly, and a softer certificate might have played to its strengths: the heavy-handed Pinocchio story never meshes with the darker subplots and third-act bloodletting.

The humans, meanwhile, are a mixed bunch. It's fun to see Hugh Jackman suppressing his innate likeability as Deon's dickish work rival, resentful because his own law-enforcement robot isn't getting any attention (possibly because it looks just like ED-209 and no one wants another boardroom bloodbath).

It's a shame that Blomkamp elects to have Chappie spend most of his formative years with (and get his awkwardly penile name from) a couple of irritating gangster punks played by South African hip-hop duo Die Antwoord, pushing more interesting characters – like Sigourney Weaver's ball-busting CEO – into the background. By the

'An intriguing world, even if all its parts never quite work in harmony'

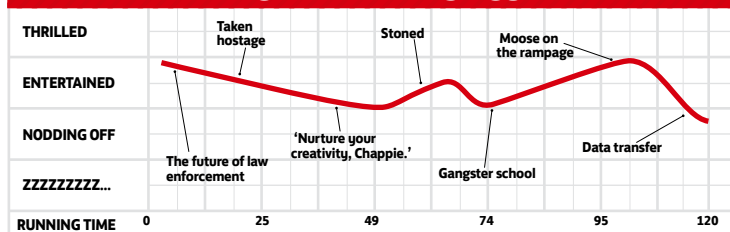
time the action kicks off in the third act, Blomkamp is playing to his strengths again, enriching explosive set-pieces with tension. But during the guns-blazing finale, the film's awkwardly split personality raises its

head for a couple of incongruous plot turns that don't sit well with the gritty aesthetic. Like its title character, *Chappie* is stunning to behold and easy to like, but it's still some way from fully developed. **Matt Maytum**

**THE VERDICT** While it doesn't reach the explosive highs of *District 9*, sci-fi fans will find plenty to enjoy in *Chappie*. Copley excels, the VFX are exceptional, but the story needs fine-tuning.

► **Certificate 15** Director Neill Blomkamp **Starring** Sharlto Copley, Hugh Jackman, Dev Patel, Sigourney Weaver **Screenplay** Neill Blomkamp, Terri Tatchell **Distributor** Sony **Running time** 120 mins

### PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE™





The blanket poncho wasn't catching on.



SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED...

**MANHATTAN**  
1979

Woody Allen dates teenager Mariel Hemingway – then meets an older woman...

**THE SQUID AND THE WHALE**  
2005

Baumbach's breakout acutely charts the fallout from the divorce of a highbrow Brooklyn couple.

**GREENBERG**  
2010

Stiller's previous outing for Baumbach, as an embittered New Yorker stuck in LA – and hating it.

For full reviews of these films visit [totalfilm.com/reviews](http://totalfilm.com/reviews)

# While We're Young

★★★★☆ Out 3 April This is fortysomething...

**F**OR THE FIRST TIME IN MY life," says middle-aged documentary-maker Josh Srebnik (Ben Stiller), "I've stopped thinking of myself as a child imitating an adult." The latest mordant satire from writer/director Noah Baumbach (*The Squid And The Whale*, *Frances Ha*) explores what it means to grow up – and even more, what it means not to want to grow up. Josh and his wife Cornelia (Naomi Watts) feel everything has stalled; he's been stuck for years on a verbose and ever-baggier movie project, their friends are nagging them to start a family and they never, as Cornelia complains, go anywhere or do anything.

Into their lives come twentysomething couple Jamie (Adam Driver) and Darby (Amanda Seyfried) – bubbling with enthusiasm, painfully hipster, their loft

apartment packed with retro artefacts: LPs, VHS tapes, even a manual typewriter. Adam also aspires to make docs, and expresses huge admiration for Josh's early work. Josh is enchanted – "They're so in the moment," he bumbles – and soon the older couple are being enticed to 'street beach parties', hip-hop dance classes and guru-led ayahuasca sessions where they gulp sludgy Peruvian hallucinogens and puke into brass pots. Josh even volunteers to help his new friend with his movie. But Jamie, it transpires, has his own agenda....

This is Stiller's second gig for Baumbach. He took the title role in 2010's *Greenberg*, which even includes a scene that anticipates *While We're Young*: to his discomfort, the 40-ish *Greenberg* finds himself by some way the oldest guest at a drug-addled LA house party. The present movie takes that scene and plays ingenious variations on it, deriving edgy comedy from Josh's attempts to fathom the younger generation's mindset.

In one of the most acerbic episodes Josh, seeking backing for his flailing project, tries to expound his concept to a smugly philistine young suit credited only as 'Hedge Fund Dave'. Baumbach touches on a bunch of other topics (Is parenthood a form of selfishness? Can documentaries ever be 'objective'?) but never clutters his

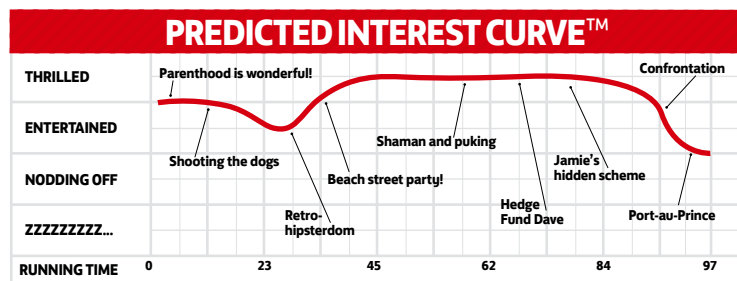
'Stiller conveys the panic of someone ambushed by middle age'

story. Stiller's character conveys the panic of someone finding himself ambushed by middle age, while Driver channels a younger, sneakier Keanu Reeves. Telling support, too, from Charles Grodin as

Josh's father-in-law, a feted doc-maker of the old school. Watts and Seyfried, by comparison, are marginalised, and there's an over-pat coda. But this is sharp filmmaking, treating serious themes with a beguiling lightness. **Philip Kemp**

**THE VERDICT** A too-tidy conclusion apart, Baumbach's smart urban satire on aspiration and generational interplay hits all its marks.

► **Certificate 15** Director Noah Baumbach **Starring** Ben Stiller, Naomi Watts, Adam Driver, Amanda Seyfried, Charles Grodin **Screenplay** Noah Baumbach **Distributor** Icon **Running time** 97 mins





SEE THIS IF  
YOU LIKED...

**CINDERELLA**  
1950

The classic Disney cartoon – pumpkins, mice, glass slippers all present and correct.

**ENCHANTED**  
2007

Amy Adams as a fairytale princess in modern-day Manhattan, falling for a lawyer: now that's magic.

**MALEFICENT**  
2014

Disney's last live-action fairytale spin, with Angelina Jolie as the horny old witch.

For full reviews of these films visit [totalfilm.com/reviews](http://totalfilm.com/reviews)



# Cinderella

Descending the stairs went into its 22nd minute.

★★★☆☆ Out 27 March How I met your stepmother...

**R**OM HAMLET TO JACK RYAN, Kenneth Branagh has never been afraid to re-interpret iconic characters as a director. He takes on another biggie with this live-action version of the classic Charles Perrault fairytale *Cinderella* – albeit in a very play-it-safe fashion. Don't expect another *Maleficent*; we're not about to see events from the point-of-view of the wicked stepmother. No, this spin on the rags-to-riches story is about as adventurous as a cheese sandwich.

Still, Branagh does take a big risk in the opening. Once upon a time, we would've joined Ella (played by *Downton Abbey*'s Lily James) with just her father (Ben Chaplin). But here, after a brief interlude of happiness when both parents are alive, Ella's mother (Hayley Atwell) passes away – sob! Then comes father's new wife, Lady Tremaine

(Cate Blanchett) and her two (not-so-ugly) daughters, Anastasia (Holliday Grainger) and Drizella (Sophie McShera), and before you know it, father's died too. That's a lot to take in if you're five.

Gradually ostracised and turned into a skivvy, Ella becomes 'Cinderella', a cruel nickname due to her sooty appearance, while bitterness swells inside Lady Tremaine – twice-widowed and now desperate for her own daughters to marry well. From hereon, you'll know the story – the Prince (*Game Of Thrones*' Richard Madden), the Royal ball and so on.

Even so, screenwriter Chris Weitz (yes, he of *American Pie*) channels a warped literalism into events. Take the scene where Helena Bonham Carter's delightfully dippy fairy godmother turns the pumpkin into a golden carriage and mice into horses (one still has rodent ears, when the transformation doesn't quite work). At midnight, as Cinders races to get home, Weitz takes the idea

to its logical conclusion: what would it be like to be inside a moving carriage changing back into a pumpkin? The result is brilliantly conceived and executed.

With triple Oscar-winners Sandy Powell and Dante Ferretti providing, respectively, costumes and production design, Branagh's vision is pure luxury – as if Harrods had swapped retail for film production. In particular, the ballroom sequence is staggering, with Cinderella's blue gown eye-popping as if it were shot in 3D.

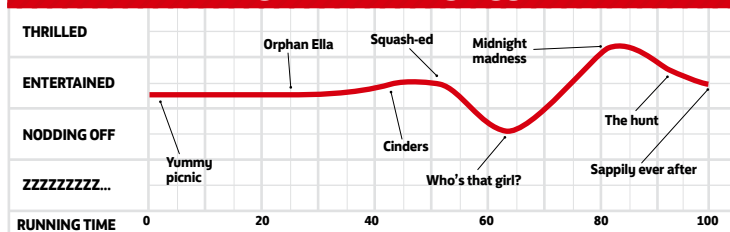
Credit must go to Lily James, who never lets her visuals sink her performance just as she stands tall against an imperious Blanchett. There are times, particularly when the bland Madden is on screen, that the wholesomeness gets a bit much. But kids will likely have a ball. **James Mottram**

'Branagh's vision is pure luxury – as if Harrods swapped retail for film'

**THE VERDICT** Loving and lavish, Kenneth Branagh's take will please traditionalists more than revisionists, but there's enough here to enchant both young and old.

► **Certificate** TBC **Director** Kenneth Branagh **Starring** Lily James, Richard Madden, Cate Blanchett, Helena Bonham Carter, Ben Chaplin **Screenplay** Chris Weitz **Distributor** Disney **Running time** 105 mins (tbc)

## PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE™







Would the traffic light  
ever go green?

# Mommy

★★★★★ Out 20 March We need to talk about Steve...

**B**AZZLING IN PLACES, infuriating in others, the fifth feature by French-Canadian writer/director Xavier Dolan (*Tom At The Farm*) is not exclusively a love-it-or-hate-it proposition – even its admirers will have moments when they can't stand to watch. By turns noisy, nasty, sweet and upsetting, *Mommy* tracks the volcanic relationship between 15-year-old Steve (Antoine-Olivier Pilon) who has severe behavioural problems, his tough, end-of-her-tether single mother Die (Anne Dorval), and their well-meaning neighbour Kyla (Suzanne Clément), his tutor and her confidante.

A psychotic toddler in a teenager's body, Steve is violent, rude and sexually inappropriate. Dolan makes no excuses for him, unleashing him upon us (and Die) without explanation. It's a risky ploy – it's very difficult to empathise with a character who spits the n-word at a cab driver and alternately attacks/fondles his own mother – but it forces us, like Die, to take Steve as he is, even as we fear what he'll do next, and gradually we begin to see how things look from his side. In counterpoint, Kyla has a crippling stutter; she can't get her words out, while he can't keep them in. The scene

in which Steve pushes her too far, and she pushes back, is one of many powerhouse moments, and beautifully acted by Clément.

Scattered among the screaming matches are languid sections showing the characters bonding – or bicycling – to an AOR soundtrack. These exist only to break up the intensity of Steve and Die's home life, an intensity increased by the unusually slim 1:1 aspect ratio that pens the characters into a selfie-without-end. Along with some awkward subtitling, this stylistic decision makes proceedings even *harder* to watch, and it's only when Steve's skateboarding that the film – literally – opens up, the frame expanding with his horizons. These moments may feel like clichés in a film that otherwise refutes them, but they're also a blessed relief. **Matt Glasby**

**THE VERDICT** Exhilarating and exhausting in equal measure – a decent approximation of how the characters feel – *Mommy* puts us through every setting on the emotional wringer.

► **Certificate 15** Director Xavier Dolan Starring Anne Dorval, Suzanne Clément, Antoine-Olivier Pilon, Patrick Huard, Alexandre Goyette **Screenplay** Xavier Dolan **Distributor** Metrodome **Running time** 139 mins



## THE DARK HORSE

★★★★★ Out 3 April

NOT TO BE CONFUSED WITH WELSH horse racing doc *Dark Horse* out later in April, James Napier Robertson's heavyweight New Zealand drama channels memories of Kiwi classic *Once Were Warriors*. Cliff Curtis stuns as Genesis Potini, a Maori bipolar sufferer/chess fanatic. There's a *Dead Poets Society* quality here, as Genesis inspires local kids to take up his sport. But shot without sentiment, it's really a warts-and-all portrait of Maori society, as Genesis struggles to protect his nephew (James Rolleston) from gang life. Full-blown, full-blooded and full-on. **James Mottram**

► **Certificate** TBC **Running time** 124 mins



## BLADE RUNNER: THE FINAL CUT

★★★★★ Out 3 April

RIDLEY SCOTT'S ELEGIAC EPIC (presented here in its 2007 'Final Cut') shows no signs of "accelerated decrepitude". Scott's 2019 LA glistens and the core query of Philip K. Dick's source novel remains resonant: what is it to be human? Fully realised in scale, detail (the eyes...) and subtext, it draws charge from the comparison/contrast between Harrison Ford's noir-ish cop Deckard and Rutger Hauer's laser-eyed Batty, the uber-replicant who wants more life. Batty has four years: Scott's classic still burns very, very brightly. **Kevin Harley**

► **Certificate** 15 **Running time** 117 mins



## BAFTA SHORTS 2015

★★★★★ Out now

AS FOOLISH AS IT MAY SEEM TO SEEK connecting tissue between this year's BAFTA-nominated shorts, you can't help notice that three of the eight deal with absent or departing parents and that two feature chickens. There are also three actors from *Broadchurch*, among them Olivia Colman who, in *The Karman Line*, is afflicted with an illness that makes her immune to gravity. Elsewhere a boxer turns cross-dresser in the *Billy Elliot*-reminiscent *Slap* and wall paintings come to life in BAFTA-grabbing animation *The Bigger Picture* – which also has an Oscar nomination under its belt. **Neil Smith**

► **Certificate** 15 **Running time** 123 mins



## WILD CARD

★★★★★ Out 20 March

WILLIAM GOLDMAN RE-ADAPTS HIS own novel (the first time was '86 actioner *Heat*), with Jason Statham as PI Nick Wild. Rapists, mobsters, bill collectors – Wild takes 'em all on in a mad dash to avenge a friend (Dominic Garcia-Llorido) and score enough loot to retire. Directed by Simon West (*Con Air*, *The Mechanic*) with his usual swagger, *Wild Card* offers solid street fights, some even using silverware as deadly weapons. Sadly it also marinates in hazy neo-noir BS, complete with wince-worthy tough-guy dialogue. Still, Stath fans won't be disappointed – he kills a guy with a spoon. **Ken McIntyre**

► **Certificate** 15 **Running time** 92 mins



**PRIMER 2004**

A classic mind-boggler – starting with the fact that it only cost \$7K.

**MONSTERS 2010**

A couple explore a dark continent full of colossal CG beasts.

**BANSHEE CHAPTER 2013**

Government mind experiments go trouser-ruiningly awry.

For full reviews of these films visit [totalfilm.com/reviews](http://totalfilm.com/reviews)

Bessie the Nuclear Cow had to be kept in controlled conditions.

# The Signal

★★★★☆ Out 27 March Tune in, wig out...

**N**OT TO BE CONFUSED WITH the – excellent – 2007 apocalyptic portmanteau of the same name, cinematographer-turned-writer/director William Eubank's second feature does share certain similarities. Like its namesake, it feels like three different films squished together, as if Gareth Edwards, Shane Carruth and Josh Trank had joined forces. Unlike the '07 *Signal*, it's only one story.

Though it begins as an impressionistic road movie, segues into paranoid sci-fi, then morphs into something completely unhinged, *The Signal* has been made with much great care. The first, seemingly throwaway, scene shows Nic (Brenton Thwaites) limping past a kid playing one of those claw machines. Despite his crutches, Nic's holding three coffees (so we know he's determined), he draws a how-to diagram on

the glass (so we know he's smart), then gives the kid a dollar to keep playing (so we know he's nice). Three minutes in, and already we'd follow this guy anywhere.

Nic and his nerdy friend Jonah (Beau Knapp) are driving cross-country to drop Nic's girlfriend Haley (Olivia Cooke) at college in California. His degenerative disease is getting worse, so he's pushing her away; she thinks they're splitting up and can't bear it. This story strand alone would be compelling enough to sustain most movies, but then the trio is lured off course by a mysterious hacker called Nomad to a spooky shack in the desert.

Act two finds our heroes quarantined, with mysterious physical ailments and

Holocaust-style numbers tattooed on their bodies. They're contaminated, their interrogator (Laurence Fishburne) tells them, and being monitored by unseen forces from behind two-way glass, a symbol echoed throughout the film in fish tanks, windscreens, even

that original claw machine. It's not the only allusion that doesn't become clear until the loopy third act. Occasionally we cut back to Nic's pre-illness days as a runner, watching him at a river bank, unsure about whether to wade in or go back – a lovely image of the crossroads he's at in his life.

There'll be no spoilers here, so suffice

to say the three leads give smart, sensitive turns throughout the weirdness that follows, aided by Nima Fakhra's gorgeous score, David Lanzenberg's cinematography, and some extraordinary effects.

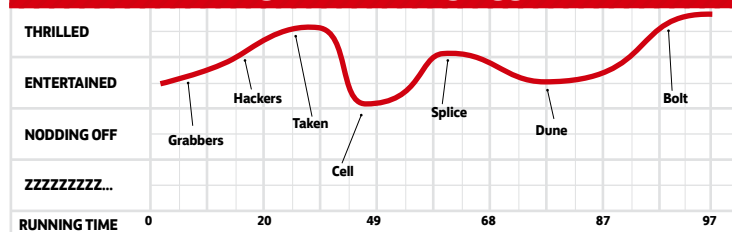
But this is Eubank and his fellow script-writers' calling card, and it slips so elegantly between genres that you never know where they'll take you next. Wherever it is, you're in safe hands. **Matt Glasby**

'The leads give smart, sensitive turns throughout the weirdness'

**THE VERDICT** The best sci-fi trilogy you've never seen amalgamated into one organic whole. Surprising, exciting and, at times, strangely beautiful.

► **Certificate 15** Director William Eubank **Starring** Brenton Thwaites, Olivia Cooke, Beau Knapp, Jeffrey Grover, Laurence Fishburne **Screenplay** Carlyle Eubank, William Eubank, David Frigerio **Distributor** EOne **Running time** 97 mins

## PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE™







Parking wasn't his strong suit.

# Wild Tales

★★★★☆ Out 27 March A roaring rampage of revenge.

**M**AKING ITS DEBUT IN THE main competition at Cannes 2014, this portmanteau movie from Argentina's Damián Sziffrón proved an odd selection; not because it lacked the quality to make such a prestigious bow – it was, in fact, one of the best on show – but because it's stuffed to the gasping gills with macabre violence, black laughs and balls-to-the-wall vengeance. Not, then, a movie that chin-stroking critics expected between Nuri Bilge Ceylan's *Winter Sleep* and the Dardenne brothers' *Two Days, One Night*, but its crowd-pleasing thrills are irresistible – *Wild Tales* rode those whoops all the way to an Oscar nom for Best Foreign Language Film.

Of the six tales on offer, four are excellent and one decent – a high strike rate for a compilation. Indeed, a fifth star is only missing on this review because the fifth adventure, 'The Bill', concerning a plutocrat's efforts to protect his son after a hit-and-run accident, feels oddly out of place, its sombre tone and blunt socio-politics grinding everything to a temporary halt. The other five tales, all gleefully subversive and doused in absurdity, involve a calamitous plane journey, a blood-soaked encounter in an all-night diner, explosive

road rage, a demolition engineer using his particular set of skills to fight the system, and a Jewish wedding reception that plunges into outrageous splatstick when the bride discovers her beau is a cheating git.

Produced by Pedro Almodóvar and displaying the energy he demonstrated as Europe's premier enfant terrible, *Wild Tales* plugs into the simmering rage of a country gone kaput. Mad as hell, these protagonists are not going to take it anymore, punching, shooting, burning, bombing and meat-cleaving their way to revenge on the corrupt and the complacent. In many ways, *Wild Tales*' nearest antecedent is George Romero and Stephen King's delirious EC Comics adaptation, *Creepshow*, only way more scabrous. Now how can you resist that? **Jamie Graham**

**THE VERDICT** Imagine all of D-Fens' fury in *Falling Down* squeezed into one short, then times it by six. A gloriously crazed compendium that fizzies with OMG and OTT moments.

► **Certificate 15** Director Damián Sziffrón Starring María Marull, Ricardo Darín, Leonardo Sbaraglia, Oscar Martínez, Erica Rivas Screenplay Damián Sziffrón Distributor Curzon Film World Running time 122 mins



## RIGOR MORTIS

★★★★☆ Out 27 March

JUNO MAK'S (*DREAM HOME*) bizarre horror begins with a failed actor (Chin Siu-ho) moving into a grim Hong Kong apartment block. Missing his family, he hangs himself, but is kung-fu-ed down by a retired vampire hunter (Anthony Chan). The residents are, it transpires, being menaced by a jiangshi (or Chinese "hopping" vampire), one of many references western audiences will struggle with. Mak's direction doesn't help. Exposition sequences are slow and confusing, while the CG-blood-spattered action is positively cartoony. *Rigor Mortis*? An ironic title for a film that refuses to sit still. **Matt Glasby**

► **Certificate 18** Running time 97 mins



## SOMETHING MUST BREAK

★★★★☆ Out 3 April

SWEDISH DIRECTOR ESTER MARTIN Bergsmark paints a gritty picture of Stockholm in this arthouse tale of transgender man Sebastian (Saga Becker), who identifies as woman Ellie, and his/her turbulent love affair with the James Dean-esque Andreas (Iggy Malmberg), a straight man struggling with his attraction. Bergsmark explores identity, desire and love in melancholy – and sometimes meandering – fashion; the pace is boosted by the occasional directorial flourish, yet Ellie and Andreas never quite engage enough to warrant Bergsmark's lavish reverence. **Stephen Kelly**

► **Certificate TBC** Running time 85 mins



## THE FACE OF AN ANGEL

★★★★☆ Out 27 March

MICHAEL WINTERBOTTOM'S 'inspired by the Meredith Kercher murder trial' drama is not the salacious gawp that epithet suggests. Keeping the ongoing investigation at arm's length, it focuses instead on the media reaction, with filmmaker Thomas' (Daniel Brühl) struggling to find an angle for the (fictionalised) murder trial in Siena, Italy. The giallo trappings are cranked up, but Brühl and supermodel-du-jour Cara Delevingne keep the human drama grounded. No answers are offered, but conversations will be started by this take on a fascinating true story. **Matt Maytum**

► **Certificate 15** Running time 101 mins



## WHEN ANIMALS DREAM

★★★★☆ Out TBC May

"I'M ABOUT TO TURN INTO A monster, but first I need a lot of sex," pleads Marie (Sonia Suhl), a Danish teen in a remote fishing village whose sexual awakening arrives with a side order of lycanthropy. "Are you able to help me?" Basically *Let The Right One In* with werewolves, Jonas Alexander Arnby's effective Scandi-horror may be a little skimpy on the gore side but makes up for it with a smart feminist subtext (Marie's dad and the rest of his community would rather sedate their womenfolk than accept they have libidos) and lashings of atmosphere. **Neil Smith**

► **Certificate TBC** Running time 84 mins



**GALLIPOLI 1981**  
Peter Weir's take on the 1915 battle, with Mel Gibson as the runner turned squaddie.

**UNBROKEN 2014**  
Jai Courtney provides back-up in another moving war story.

**TESTAMENT OF YOUTH 2015**  
The waste and tragedy of WW1 seen through one woman's eyes.

For full reviews of these films visit [totalfilm.com/reviews](http://totalfilm.com/reviews)

Long drop: Connor (Russell Crowe) drowns for water and his family.

# The Water Diviner

★★★★☆ Out 3 April Russell Crowe's a man on a post-war mission...

**W**ITH SHREWD TIMING, Russell Crowe's feature-directing debut is released for the 100th anniversary of the Battle of Gallipoli, the ill-advised WW1 attempt by Britain and its allies to invade Turkey via the Dardanelles that ended with over 110,000 dead on all sides and a humiliating Allied retreat. Although way more British troops than ANZACs fought and died there (and way more Turks than either), Gallipoli has always held special significance down under – see Peter Weir's 1981 film of that title. There's a lasting belief that antipodean troops were sacrificed to the incompetence of British leadership, and ANZAC Day is still celebrated in Australia and NZ on 25 April (the anniversary of the first landing).

All this remembered passion feeds into Crowe's film, more concerned as it is with

the aftermath than with the battle – though we do get some impressively staged battle sequences by way of flashbacks. Four years after the conflict, a father whose three sons fell in the fighting fulfils a promise to his dead wife that he'll travel to Turkey and find them. Crowe as Connor, the father (and dowsing of the title), exudes a potent mix of doggedness and grief, though acting honours are taken by Yilmaz Erdogan (*Once Upon A Time In Anatolia*) as the Turkish officer who, burying past enmities, helps Connor in his quest.

Andrew Lesnie's widescreen photography gives a sweeping sense of the alien landscape and culture Connor finds himself plunged into (even if the majority of the "Turkish" scenes were shot in Australia) and for a first-time director, Crowe acquits himself admirably. The film's only let down by its too-frequent recourse to narrative cliché. Connor's relationship with the lovely widowed owner of his Istanbul hotel (Ukrainian-born Olga Kurylenko

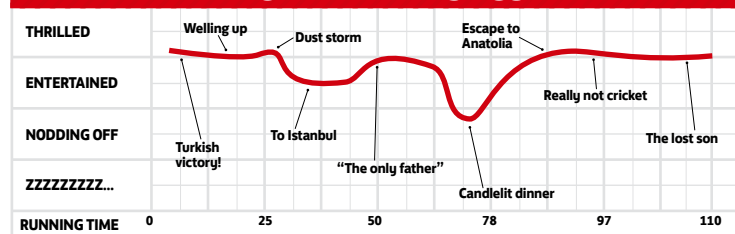
making a valiant stab at Turkishness) and her cute son is pure Mills & Boon, and the latter half of the film lurches into sub-Indiana Jones territory. Nationalities are colour-coded: Aussies are brash and straightforward, Turks fierce but honourable, Brits pompous, Greeks brutal.

Against this, though, Crowe keeps his story churning vigorously. Early scenes in outback Victoria, as Connor hunts out hidden water, convey a gritty exhilaration, and the conflict flashbacks give us the Turkish as well as the Allied angle – indeed, the

first battle scene we're shown presents events purely from the Turks' standpoint. If this isn't quite the Aussie national epic it aims for, it's a bonzer shot at it. **Philip Kemp**

'For a first-time director, Crowe acquits himself admirably'

## PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE™



**THE VERDICT** Making his first shot at feature direction, Russell Crowe homes in on a key trauma in Aussie history and brings it vividly to life. Shame about the clichés.

► **Certificate 15** **Director** Russell Crowe **Starring** Russell Crowe, Olga Kurylenko, Yilmaz Erdogan, Jai Courtney, Ryan Corr **Screenplay** Andrew Knight, Andrew Anastasios **Distributor** Entertainment One **Running time** 110 mins





SpongeBob has been packing on the Krabby Patty protein.

# The SpongeBob Movie: Sponge Out Of Water

★★★★☆ Out 27 March Pants on fire.

**L**IKE ED NORTON'S FIGHT CLUB fridge, SpongeBob's first movie since 2004 has little of nutritional value – which is just the point. What it delivers is what it promises: a battery of deliciously daft, fast-firing, self-mocking, flavour-rich gags, flung with such zest you don't mind if they're disposable.

The opener sees High-seas rogue Burger Beard (Antonio Banderas, having fun) lifting an antique book from its skeleton guard. The tome relates a Bikini Bottom battle between malign restaurant-owner Plankton (Bill Fagerbakke) and cheery burger-flipper SpongeBob (Tom Kenny) over the perfect patty formula, a battle whose fallout includes the apocalypse, temporal paradox, planetary collisions and a word to chill Plankton's core: teamwork.

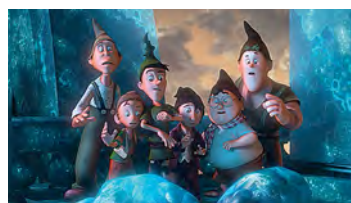
If there's a message there, *Kung Fu Panda* writers Glenn Berger and Jonathan Aibel are too canny to cave to it. Instead they wring every drop of goofy, trippy humour

from the set-up until the near-anarchic mischief practically overflows.

Even if the visuals aren't Ghibli/Pixar class, Paul Tibbitt's resourceful direction marshals 2D surrealism and live-action larks energetically. The CG super-Sponge climax looks dry after the free-flowing 2D stretches, but peaks with a trip inside SpongeBob's brain, some near-flying 'gulls and the letters of the word "Refunds" landing in your lap. If parents need fun for the kids this Easter, they won't be asking for any of those. **Kevin Harley**

**THE VERDICT** Next to message-laden, CG-soaked kids' animations, *SpongeBob* stands alone. His return is a skittish but winning splash of nonsense: dip in.

► **Certificate** U **Director** Paul Tibbitt, Mike Mitchell **Starring (voices)** Antonio Banderas, Tom Kenny, Bill Fagerbakke, Clancy Brown, Mr. Lawrence **Screenplay** Glenn Berger, Jonathan Aibel **Distributor** Paramount **Running time** 92 minutes



## FAIRYTALE: STORY OF THE SEVEN DWARVES

★★★★☆ Out now

HARALD SIEPERMANN'S GERMAN-made mash-up of *Snow White* and *Sleeping Beauty* shows the inherent foolishness of trying to refresh the classics. There is little here that *Shrek*, never mind Disney, didn't achieve first with more wit or style. Characters are so interchangeable they are literally upstaged by a piece of wood (an enchanted signpost, since you ask). Amid awkward pacing, indifferent animation and lacklustre songs, the most glaring mark of the film's diminished ambition is the outdated 'bullet time' homage. **Simon Kinnear**

► **Certificate** PG **Running time** 85 mins



## FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD

★★★★☆ Out 13 March

WITH THOMAS VINTERBERG'S TAKE on the Thomas Hardy classic imminent, here's a re-release of the 1967 vintage. Director John Schlesinger's regular muse Julie Christie plays Bathsheba, wooed by rival suitors Alan Bates, Peter Finch and malevolent stand-out Terence Stamp. Schlesinger is fussily faithful to Hardy; the downside is a somewhat stolid pace that emphasises melodrama over emotional tragedy. Still, the length gives room for Nicholas Roeg's outstanding cinematography, which delivers an authentically rustic English epic. **Simon Kinnear**

► **Certificate** U **Running time** 162 mins



## MY NAME IS SALT

★★★★☆ Out 13 March

BEAUTIFULLY SHOT IN AN unforgiving desert in Gujarat, Farida Pacha's narrative-less doc unspools at a meditative pace, following a family of salt harvesters rhythmically raking and trampling the razor-sharp crystals on the baking earth for an eight-month stint (and very little pay), before the monsoons wash the salt fields away and transform the Little Rann of Kutch into sea once more. In this desolate landscape, they may as well be farming on the moon. This is an immersive and determinedly non-preachy portrait of generation-spanning ritual and steadfast dedication. **Ali Catterall**

► **Certificate** U **Running time** 92 mins



## THE LITTLE DEATH

★★★★☆ Out 3 April

THE DIRECTING DEBUT OF AUSSIE actor Josh Lawson, comedy *The Little Death* (a French idiom for 'orgasm') presents itself as *Sex Actually*, with its interweaving couples defined by an overall theme: fetishism. Jarringly varied in quality and tone, the stories are, on the whole, fairly limp. But it hits a nadir with Paul (Lawson himself) and partner Maeve (Bojana Novakovic), whose fantasy is to be raped: bad enough that *The Little Death* sniggers at this like an obnoxious 12-year-old, but it's also the set-up for a scene in a car that is, quite simply, mind-scorchingly crass. **Stephen Kelly**

► **Certificate** TBC **Running time** 95 mins (tbc)





Will Smith's yawn-hug  
grift finally paid off.

## Focus

★★★★☆ Out now Con girl.

**I**N NEED OF A HIT AND SOME restored lustre, Will Smith here doubles down with the kind of old-school-vibe con movie that lives or dies on its star's charisma. Only he's not the star that saves it...

Smith plays Nicky, a veteran con artist who takes upstart Jess (Margot Robbie) under his wing, only for things to get... complicated. Years pass, the plot belatedly kicking in when Nicky sets to work on a scam in the F1 world – a world in which Jess is also entangled.

What initially intrigues about *Focus* is that it seems a mite grubbier than con flicks of yore, from *The Sting* to *Catch Me If You Can*. The first half sees Nicky introduce Jess to the glamorous gentleman thief practice of... pickpocketing drunk tourists in New Orleans. We could have had a tougher film where these antics are interrogated – the writing/directing team wrote *Bad Santa* – but it feels having a megastar on board shaved these edges off. So how does Smith do? Mixed fortunes: he regularly breaks out the charm that

made him one of the '90s/'00s biggest box-office draws – but he also reverts to the tetchy persona we saw much too much of in the likes of *After Earth*; a bit of a problem when you need your hero to be likeable enough to excuse his crimes and misdemeanours. Good job, then, that Robbie gets virtually the same screen time – and uses it to more than justify her breakout star status. With the story fit to burst with an *Ocean's* trilogy worth of hustles, tricks and grifts (some of them smart, others groan-inducing), at least Robbie is the genuine article – sharing playful chemistry with Smith, but ultimately stealing the movie from right under his nose. **Andrew Lowry**

**THE VERDICT** Don't expect this con-artist flick to break the mould. Do expect lots of splashy glamour, a few neat twists and a radiant Robbie.

► **Certificate** 15 **Directors** John Requa, Glenn Ficarra  
**Starring** Will Smith, Margot Robbie, Rodrigo Santoro, Gerald McRaney **Screenplay** John Requa, Glenn Ficarra  
**Distributor** Warner **Running time** 104 mins

## Woman In Gold

★★★★☆ Out 10 April Painting by numbers.

**E**VEN IF YOU'RE UNFAMILIAR with the real-life story behind Simon Curtis' film – it's already been the subject of a brace of documentaries – of an octogenarian Vienna-born Jewish woman who sued the Austrian government for restitution of paintings stolen from her family by the Nazis, you'll see pretty well every twist of the plot coming. This is screenwriting by numbers, so formulaic you could set your watch by it.

Also it stars Helen Mirren, who really isn't anyone's idea of a loser. Even when, as here, she's playing a woman 10 years older than herself, her sheer unconquerable vitality leaps off the screen. As Maria Altmann, the claimant in question, she gives a spirited turn, leaving the rest of the cast – including Ryan Reynolds as Randy Schoenberg, the young tyro lawyer who takes on her case – gasping in her wake.

Not that her co-stars are negligible: Daniel Brühl, as the Austrian journalist who offers his help, and Tatiana Maslany as the young Maria, do sterling work.

But what makes *WIG* consistently and often grippingly watchable, for all the clunking plot-work, are the flashbacks to 1938 Vienna, year of the Anschluss, when Nazi troops marched into Austria. We're reminded, as is often forgotten, that Austria's treatment of its Jewish population ceded nothing in cruelty and degradation to Germany's. These vividly-staged flashbacks serve to leaven the drier modern-day courtroom scenes and provide the moral bedrock underlying Maria's campaign. And when towards the end we see the young Maria about to make a precarious bid for freedom with her husband, you may well be moved to tears. **Philip Kemp**

**THE VERDICT** A plodding, predictable script hampers this tale of a real-life legal battle. But it's redeemed by a vital central performance – and some vivid flashbacks.

► **Certificate** TBC **Director** Simon Curtis **Starring** Helen Mirren, Ryan Reynolds, Daniel Brühl, Tatiana Maslany, Katie Holmes **Screenplay** Alexi Kaye Campbell  
**Distributor** Entertainment **Running Time** TBC



Gold standard: Randy  
(Ryan Reynolds) supports  
wife Pam (Katie Holmes).





She's imagining a slightly more comfortable chair.

# Blind

★★★★☆ Out 27 March Inner spaced...

**A**FTER ESKIL VOGT'S SCRIPT for drug drama *Oslo, August 31st* (2012), you might be forgiven for expecting his film about a woman turned blind in a cold city to be tough and worthy. Forgiven, but wrong. Playful, unpredictable and occasionally pervy, Vogt's directorial debut is a perception-teasing provocation, made slippery with mischief but also accessible by its warm wit and winning lead.

It starts with fair warning: adjusting to recent sight loss, author Ingrid (Ellen Dorrit Petersen) declares that it doesn't matter if she gets details right when she visualises something in her head, just so long as she remembers *something*. That stress on impressions plays out as we meet three people in her life: sad-sack porn-guzzler Einar (Marius Kolbenstvedt), lonely single mum Elin (Vera Vitali) and cheating husband Morten (Henrik Rafaelsen).

Who, it emerges, aren't entirely people in her life. Einar and Elin are fantasy figures; Morten is a version of her husband remixed in her imagination. And it's a vivid imagination. If Ingrid isn't dreaming up horrors where every bump in her apartment turns creepy, she's conjuring scenarios where Morten engages in filthy infidelities.

Ingrid's free-flowing imagination dominates, but Vogt maintains his grip even when 'reality' becomes so malleable that a café becomes a bus. His main anchor is Petersen, whose forthright performance highlights the humanity in Ingrid's whims and wicked wit. Yet despite being the only 'real' character, she gets surprisingly sympathetic support from Kolbenstvedt, who could have been merely sleazy.

The direction's alluring tug reflects Ingrid's exploratory curiosity in her new sightless world. It's a tug heightened by immersive sound-mixing and *Dogtooth* DoP Thimios Bakatakis's tactile images. Once he has us hooked, Vogt is free to move us without manipulation and, cunningly, to tap into fertile themes about fiction's uses. Never quite what you expect, *Blind* is a light-footed treat: it creeps up on you. **Kevin Harley**

**THE VERDICT** Vogt's droll, daring meta-drama flows in subtle, surprising fashion. Petersen provides a magnetic focus for a mischievous, moving debut.

► **Certificate** TBC **Director** Eskil Vogt **Starring** Ellen Dorrit Petersen, Marius Kolbenstvedt, Vera Vitali, Henrik Rafaelsen **Screenplay** Eskil Vogt **Distributor** Axiom Films **Running time** 96 mins



## A SECOND CHANCE

★★★★☆ Out 20 March

DANISH POLICEMAN ANDREAS (Nikolaj Coster-Waldau) lives contentedly with his wife and newborn son, in stark contrast to the appalling parental neglect discovered on his latest case. Yet tragedy sparks an entanglement of the two families. Susanne Bier's sadcore drama aims for emotional heft, but fumbles badly. Only Coster-Waldau acts his way out of Anders Thomas Jensen's sensationalist screenplay, which prizes open Andreas' ethical dilemma with blunt force feel-bad twists. Intentionally challenging, but the tastelessness is surely inadvertent. **Simon Kinnear**

► **Certificate** 15 **Running time** 102 mins



## PROJECT ALMANAC

★★★★☆ Out now

WHEN A HIGH-SCHOOL GANG FINDS a time machine, they play with it without considering the consequences. Similarly, Dean Israelite's fast, fizzy found-footage debut struggles with emotion but engages fully with its ideas. Some come from *Primer* and *Chronicle*, but the sparky script, pace and cast compensate. Hiccups include main man David's (Jonny Weston) fudged grief issues and Sofia Black-D'Elia's leered-at bum (producer: Michael Bay), but the tone darkens smartly for the climax: as a twist keeps time travel's tangles in focus, Israelite's promise holds up well. **Kevin Harley**

► **Certificate** 12A **Running time** 106 mins



## SIXTEEN

★★★★☆ Out 25 March

SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD JUMAH IS AN adopted former child soldier from the Congo, struggling to control his demons on a London council estate. As a school pal remarks, he's seen some things – and done some things. However, can he keep his cool after he's harassed by the perpetrators of a local stabbing? Rob Brown's haunting feature debut benefits from committed performances (by lead Roger Jean Nsengiyumva, and screen mum Rachael Stirling in particular), and a script favouring character over gunplay. Perhaps the story's a little rote, but there's integrity here. **Ali Catterall**

► **Certificate** 15 **Running time** 79 mins



## CANOPY

★★★★☆ Out 20 March

IT'S SURVIVAL OF THE SILENT IN debut writer/director Aaron Wilson's take on the Battle of Singapore, which strips World War II down to the small-scale tension of two soldiers, Australian pilot Jim (Khan Chittenden) and injured Singapore-Chinese resistance fighter Seng (Mo Tzu-yi), trying to evade capture under dense forest. Practically dialogue-free thanks to language barrier and stealth, it's a film where sound equals death, an omnipresent peril that allows Wilson to twist the tropes of war cinema into something surreal and beautiful. **Stephen Kelly**

► **Certificate** 18 **Running time** 108 mins



Grey by name,  
grey by suit colour.



SEE THIS IF  
YOU LIKED...

**9½ WEEKS 1986**  
Mickey Rourke and Kim Basinger engage in frisky games in a mainstream erotic hit.

**TWILIGHT 2008**  
Edward Cullen treads a fine line between romantic hero and creepy stalker.

**THE FALL 2013-**  
Jamie Dornan exudes dark charisma as a family man/serial killer in the BBC crime series.

For full reviews of these films visit [totalfilm.com/reviews](http://totalfilm.com/reviews)

# Fifty Shades Of Grey

★★★★★ Out now

Lukewarm bodies.

**F**IFTY SHADES THE MOVIE seems destined to inspire more eye-rolling than lip-biting, even if there's no denying its protagonist is better served than the book. Sam Taylor-Johnson's adap of E.L. James' 'bonk-buster' does a coolly effective job - faithful enough to satiate fans, it's also much leaner. Yet however well-polished it is, it's still a bit of a turd.

You'll know the plot even if you've never read the spawned-from-*Twilight*-fan-fiction novels. Moody, Disney-prince-handsome billionaire Christian Grey (Jamie Dornan) tries to coerce awestruck graduate Anastasia Steele (Dakota Johnson) into signing a contract for a BDSM relationship that'll make her the submissive to his dominant. The most obvious (and welcome) trim from the book is Anastasia's inner

(goddess) monologue. It transforms Ana from an insufferable drip on the page into a likeable romantic lead. It's a star-making turn from Johnson, turning potential career poison into a major calling card.

Dornan fares less well. Christian was always going to struggle to be more than a stalker-y cipher, leaving Dornan little more to do than glower and show off his (upper) body in a role that's as thankless as Edward Cullen. The absence of Dornan's tackle is not really made up for by unsubtle phallic imagery, from Christian's imposing office block to his Grey-branded pencils. While frequent, the sex scenes are similarly reserved. The books' primary (only?) selling point, here the encounters are tamer; the

hotel-like home. What makes *Fifty Shades* so anticlimactic is that it starts promisingly: the first half is pretty funny, feeling like a good movie-within-a-movie, a smart parody of the source material. It wills you to laugh at dialogue the book wants you to take seriously: "I don't make love - I fuck. Hard," was surely designed for ironic

whoops not genuine cooing.

The tone can't be sustained though, and by the time you need to invest in the drama, it's too late to take it seriously. And for newbies unfamiliar with the book, there's a chance

'Johnson turns potential career poison into a major calling card'

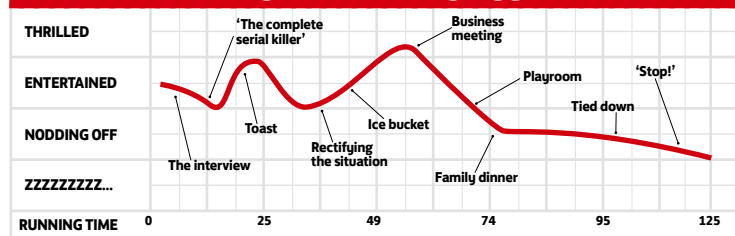
the abrupt ending will leave you short-changed, like the film's kicked you out of bed before you've quite finished.

**Matt Maytum**

**THE VERDICT** Dakota Johnson is a revelation in an adaptation that's better than it should have been. But with the sex scenes and the drama lacking the required heat, it's ultimately unsatisfying.

► **Certificate 18** Director Sam Taylor-Johnson Starring Dakota Johnson, Jamie Dornan, Jennifer Ehle, Eloise Mumford, Victor Rasuk Screenplay Kelly Marcel Distributor Universal Running time 125 mins

## PREDICTED INTEREST CURVE™







The pink headgear delighted the crowd.

# The Second Best Exotic Marigold Hotel

★★★★☆ **Out now** Bed and bored.

**A** BIT OF A HOSTAGE TO fortune, that title. After charmed audiences propelled 2012's *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel* to a \$137m gross, it must have seemed pretty bomb-proof, though. But there's a distinct whiff of reheated second helpings about this admittedly jolly return to Jaipur's jauntiest Brit-packed retirement home, where manager Sonny (a manically wisecracking Dev Patel) is wrestling with hotel-chain expansion plans and wedding worries, while director John Madden ensures that Judi Dench's love-wary widow and Maggie Smith's world-weary manager get lashings of screen time. Smith's world-class way with an acid remark ("America? It made death look tempting") cuts fearlessly through screenwriter Ol Parker's sentimentality-inclined script.

Having used up all of the culture-clash plots and curry gags last time around, the film settles for a gentle will-they-won't-they romance between Dench and fellow resident Bill Nighy. Beautifully played and often touching, it's not a pulse-racer, however. So the film is over-reliant on Sonny's frantic and

farfical attempts to win over mystery visitor Richard Gere, whom he suspects is an undercover inspector from a US hotel chain, potential partners for a second hotel. Gere, chiefly cougar-candy for Celia Imrie's rapacious retiree and Sonny's haughty mother, feels shoehorned into an already bulging crew of vintage Brit thespians.

Like its predecessor, the film takes a travelogue view of India, throwing lavish *Monsoon Wedding*-style nuptials and *Slumdog Millionaire*-inspired dance routines into the mix to keep everything determinedly lively. Fewer sugary celebrations and some chewier late-life themes would have made this a much tastier sequel. **Kate Stables**

**THE VERDICT** This genial, over-stuffed return boasts more national treasures than the British Museum. But tinny plots and predictable scripting mean it lives up to its title.

► **Certificate** PG **Director** John Madden **Starring** Maggie Smith, Judi Dench, Richard Gere, Bill Nighy, Celia Imrie **Screenplay** Ol Parker **Distributor** 20th Century Fox **Running time** 122 mins



## MAXINE PEAKE AS HAMLET

★★★★☆ **Out 23 March**

A FILMED RECORD OF THE ROYAL Exchange Manchester's modern-dress interpretation of Shakespeare's greatest tragedy, with the seemingly ubiquitous Maxine Peake bringing ferocious commitment to the title role. Her crop-haired, gruff-voiced Dane merges sullen resentment, "unmanly" grief and nimble fencing in a way Benedict Cumberbatch will do well to match when he plays the part this summer. Valuable as it is to have such a performance on film, the result is a slog to sit through, thanks largely to director Sarah Frankcom's murky half-light production style. **Neil Smith**

► **Certificate** 12A **Running time** 208 mins



## DARK SUMMER

★★★★☆ **Out 20 March**

DANIEL (KEIR GILCHRIST) IS A teenage stalker busted for cyber-peeping on his crush, Mona (Grace Phipps) and sentenced to house arrest for the summer. He is forbidden from using the internet, but naturally does. He hacks his way into a video chat with the put-upon girl who commits suicide onscreen, and then haunts him through Wi-Fi. This is a claustrophobic little thriller that would have been more effective without hokey supernaturalism muddying up the plot. Surely stalking and cyber-hacking are creepy enough without adding bloody-eyed ghosts into the mix? **Ken McIntyre**

► **Certificate** 15 **Running time** 81 mins



## DIOR AND I

★★★★☆ **Out 27 March**

RAF SIMONS HAS JUST EIGHT WEEKS to present his first Haute Couture collection for Christian Dior. Will he triumph? Or will it all unravel? The Belgian minimalist wasn't the obvious choice, after all. That's the upshot of Frédéric Tcheng's fascinating fly-on-the-wall documentary, shadowing the fashion house's new artistic director and detailing the expectation on his shoulders. *The Apprentice* it's not. The spirit of the late fashion icon is present, via recitations from his writings, but the seamstresses and tailors – the real backbone of the operation – leave the lasting impression. **Ali Catterall**

► **Certificate** 12A **Running time** 90 mins



## KIDNAPPING FREDDY HEINEKEN

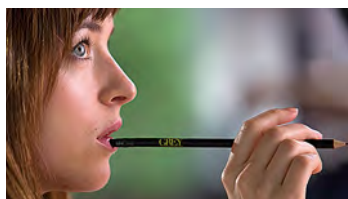
★★★★☆ **Out 3 April**

IN 1983, AN AMATEUR GANG'S ransom of the eponymous beer magnate transfixed Europe. No such luck with Daniel Alfredson's mix of routine procedural and overwrought performances. Sticking rigidly to facts, he never refreshes the parts similar movies have already reached. Dramatic intrigue is stymied by the bland perps (Jim Sturgess and Sam Worthington, miscast as Dutch wide boys). It's so undemanding that Anthony Hopkins, as Freddy, settles back (in a nicer cell than Hannibal's) for possibly his easiest career gig. **Simon Kinnear**

► **Certificate** TBC **Running time** TBC



## Box office charts 26.01.15 – 25.02.15



### FIFTY SHADES OF GREY

Now the UK's highest-earning 18-cert movie, overtaking *The Wolf of Wall Street*. Look, don't expect any cheap innuendo from us – we're just here to talk business. Oh, bollocks.



### KINGSMAN: THE SECRET SERVICE

Matthew Vaughn's comic-book hit got in more hot water over its sex references than a certain BDSM-touting box office rival. Next month: *Avengers* 'dirtier than *Nymphomaniac*'.



### THE SPONGEBOB MOVIE: SPONGE OUT OF WATER

After 10 years, good to see the screen return of Mr. Krabs and Sandy Cheeks, who aren't to be confused with characters from *Fifty Shades*.

### UK TOP 10

POSITION	FILM	THIS MONTH	SINCE RELEASE	WEEKS OUT THERE
1	<b>Fifty Shades Of Grey ★★</b>	£25.2m	£25.2m	2
2	<b>Big Hero 6 ★★★★★</b>	£16.2m	£16.2m	4
3	<b>Kingsman: The Secret Service ★★★★★</b>	£13.4m	£13.4m	4
4	<b>Shaun The Sheep Movie ★★★★★</b>	£10.4m	£10.4m	3
5	<b>American Sniper ★★★★★</b>	£6.4m	£13m	6
6	<b>The Theory Of Everything ★★★★★</b>	£5.2m	£19.9m	8
7	<b>Jupiter Ascending ★★★★★</b>	£3.9m	£3.9m	3
8	<b>Peppa Pig: The Golden Boots N/A</b>	£2m	£2m	2
9	<b>Taken 3 ★★</b>	£2m	£17.2m	7
10	<b>Selma ★★★★★</b>	£1.8m	£1.8m	3

### US TOP 10

POSITION	FILM	THIS MONTH	SINCE RELEASE	WEEKS OUT THERE
1	<b>Fifty Shades Of Grey ★★</b>	\$129.2m	\$129.2m	2
2	<b>The SpongeBob Movie: Sponge Out Of Water ★★★★★</b>	\$126.2m	\$126.2m	3
3	<b>American Sniper ★★★★★</b>	\$120.4m	\$320m	9
4	<b>Kingsman: The Secret Service ★★★★★</b>	\$67.9m	\$67.9m	2
5	<b>Jupiter Ascending ★★★★★</b>	\$39.7m	\$39.7m	3
6	<b>Selma ★★★★★</b>	\$39.1m	\$49.6m	9
7	<b>Paddington ★★★★★</b>	\$27.9m	\$67.8m	6
8	<b>The Imitation Game ★★★★★</b>	\$23.4m	\$83.9m	13
9	<b>The Wedding Ringer ★★</b>	\$22.5m	\$61.9m	6
10	<b>Project Almanac ★★</b>	\$21.5m	\$21.5m	4



### JUPITER ASCENDING

A poor debut in the States (less than \$20m) but – thanks to *Seventh Son* – it wasn't the most underperforming, long-delayed, big-name-starring fantasy out that week.



### PEPPA PIG: THE GOLDEN BOOTS

A collection of 'Peppasodes', so not really a film (mind you, *Mortdecai* isn't much different). If any younger readers fancy submitting a review, feel free. No 'playground language'...

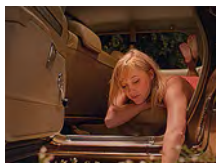


### SHAUN THE SHEEP MOVIE

Aardman's latest is not only a licence to print money but a licence to print endless sheep puns, it seems. Look, we've got a sense of ewe-mour like anyone, but we're pastoral that now.

## Still out, still good...

### Our pick of the movies out now



### IT FOLLOWS ★★★★★

"One of the fearfully original chillers of recent times... A horror film that will haunt your waking hours for weeks. Based on his own recurring nightmares, every frame of writer/director David Robert Mitchell's film is stamped with dread."



### STILL ALICE ★★★★★

"Julianne Moore gives a controlled portrait of emotional implosion, bringing quietly heartbreaking nuance to a calm, considered treatment of a life-shattering situation. Without attention-seeking tics, Moore magnetises."



### X+Y ★★★★★

"Debut director Morgan Matthews' film about an autistic mathematics prodigy boasts A+ acting, a solid script and sensitive handling. Its modest ambitions ably fulfilled, there's enough here to move even the hardest of souls."



## Coming soon...

### The big hitters on the cards for next issue...

It's the biggest film of '15 (that doesn't involve The Force rubbing its eyes and shoving the cat away). Watch as the weeks start to feel like months in the agonising final countdown to *Avengers: Age Of Ultron* (24 Apr), a release so epic, other titles almost seem to be cashing in, from *Home From*

*Home: Chronicles Of A Vision* (17 Apr) to *The Age Of Adaline* (8 May). In other sequel news, there's *Hot Tub Time Machine 2* (10 Apr) and *Paul Blart: Mall Cop 2* (17 Apr), while the less soul-destroying *Monsters: Dark Continent* is finally set to bow on 1 May, so long as its release stops bouncing around like

Tigger on a trampoline. *I Am Big Bird* (1 May) isn't The Falcon's best chat-up line but a doc about the guy who's been inside the Sesame Street icon since 1969. Someone find the zip, for God's sake! Plus a new *Far From The Madding Crowd* (1 May), which sounds like someone avoiding cinemas on AOU's opening day.



PRESENT

# ENDER'S GAME



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# CHASE OPERA

Summer 2015 is set to get a high-octane fuel injection from a franchise recharge that's bringing heart-stopping stunts and gritty thrills back to the big screen. **Mad Max: Fury Road** kicks off **The Future 100...**

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WORDS MATT MAYTUM





01

# MAD MAX: FURY ROAD







s breaks in franchises go, 30 years is a pretty lengthy hiatus. The sun last went down on Mad Max three decades ago at the end of 1985's *Beyond Thunderdome*.

The road back to the big screen has been anything but smooth, which is the least you'd expect from the post-apocalyptic antihero, whose iconic reputation comes pre-loaded with heaps of expectation. Not that he was ever envisaged as the face of a franchise.

"After I finished the first *Mad Max*, I never thought I'd make a second. After I finished the second, I never thought I'd make a third," laughs director George Miller, the driving force behind the series since its inception. "And here I am, doomed to make *Mad Max* movies..." Cursed might be a more appropriate term here, given *Fury Road*'s arduous production history. Not that you'd know it to look at the teaser footage unveiled on an unsuspecting audience at Comic-Con in July 2014. Six minutes of breathless vehicular destruction, with armoured buggies streaking across the desert and ghoulishly dressed futuristic tribesfolk thrashing the hell out of their cars and each other. One thing was immediately clear: *Mad*

*Max: Fury Road* isn't going to be quite like anything else on the blockbuster release schedule.

Given how battered, shaken and dust-blasted viewers were left feeling after the SDCC showreel, *Fury Road*'s bumpy production history seems bruisingly apt. The concept of a 'Mad Max 4' has been knocking around for so long (up to a quarter of a century, according to some reports) that Mel Gibson was still attached to begin with. During its time on the shelf, *Fury Road* almost became a 3D animated film (the script's first incarnation was a storyboard concept 'comic book'), before this live-action version was announced in late 2009, with Tom Hardy confirmed as the new leading man. Filming wouldn't begin for almost two years, with production delayed further by freak weather. "There was often that feeling it was never going to get made," remembers Miller. "We were rained out of our locations in the outback of Australia. The red desert turned to a flower garden. The salt lakes had pelicans on the water."

Searching for a suitably parched alternative, the franchise's native Australia was left behind for Namibia, where the lack of rainfall means there's zero plant life. In Miller's spare, simple

morality tales, details are fluid – as far as he's concerned, the shooting location just needs to double for a continent "like Australia"; *Fury Road* isn't going to be slowed down by specifics. The *Mad Max* universe has always operated under its own logic, in which the changing of the lead actor needn't raise an eyebrow. Aussie character actor Bruce Spence played different roles in *The Road Warrior* and *Beyond Thunderdome*; Hugh Keays-Byrne – Toecutter in the original – is *Fury Road*'s tyrannical villain Immortan Joe. Looking

for a new Max, Miller was reminded of what he saw in Gibson all those years ago when he was casting for the stoic, vengeful wanderer. "It's probably a cliché, but [*it's*] the notion of an animal charisma," he says of Hardy. "In the presence of an animal is a wonderful majestic unpredictability that I think all the great charismatic actors have. That's the quality I first saw in Mel Gibson when he played Mad Max at 21." (As coincidence would have it, Miller points out that he's just discovered Hardy was born in the very week the first *Mad Max* began shooting, back in September 1977).

"Tom brings his own unique quality," asserts Miller. "It's always the case. We had many James Bonds; we've had two Mad Maxes. There are a lot of overlapping similarities in James Bond, but each [actor] brings their own unique quality. That's exactly the same with Tom versus Mel."



Hardy calls the role "an amazing opportunity of a lifetime for an actor", and his co-stars agree it's a fitting match of star and role.

"He's an intense guy and he's an intense actor, and that's what the part called for," says Charlize Theron, when *TF* meets her in a suite at The London hotel in Beverly Hills. Dressed in a sheer black blouse and killer heels, with blond hair down to her shoulders, Theron has left all visible traces of her character in Namibia. As Imperator Furiosa – the new installment's 'war rig'-helming preeminent badass – she sports a closely cropped buzzcut, a grease-smeared face, and a bionic arm that looks like it's been cobbled together from used car parts. Not to mention a vest so grubby it'd have John McClane running to the dry cleaners.

"I got to show up 20 minutes before we went on set and I would walk out of my trailer in my wardrobe and roll in the sand, literally just roll,"







Scrapes: Max (Tom Hardy) keeps the action levels high.

grins Theron. As for her hair? She'd just have it clipped every three days. According to Miller, the hairdo was her idea. "She called one day and said, 'I'm thinking of getting a buzz cut.' The moment she said that, I just thought, 'brilliant'." Stripped of her femininity in a future where survival is the sole priority, Furiosa's another transformational role for Theron (unrecognisable to the tune of an Oscar in *Monster*). "When survival has to kick in, sex goes out of the window," says the South African born actress. "I mean, it's like there's no conscious thought process of, 'I guess I'm a woman so I can do this...' It's like, 'No, I gotta fuckin' survive – that's it!'" According to Miller, "only time will tell, but I don't think anyone's ever seen anything quite like [*Furiosa*] in cinema before."

Nicholas Hoult also underwent quite a transformation to play 'War Boy' Nux. "Whenever you have make-up like that,

it always makes it easier to act because your appearance changes so everyone's approach to you changes, so suddenly you feel like a different person, and you look like it, so then it makes it easier to tap into different parts of your personality," says the 25-year-old Brit, dressed down in grey sweatshirt and blue jeans. He'd spend a full two hours in make-up each day to give him pale, crusty skin and a scarred mouth. He also had his hair shaved to stubble, and used a skipping rope on set to drop weight. Theron, meanwhile, was bulking up to ensure she could cut it in the action environment. "I wanted to look like I had tremendous upper body strength because there was so much physicality in the movie – especially with someone like Tom Hardy. I just hate that idea of scrawny little girls fighting men off and then winning. I looked like a football player in this movie!"

## MAD MAX: FURY ROAD

### THE STORY SO FAR...

#### MAD MAX 1979

##### ORIGIN STORY



George Miller's first feature (he'd previously trained as a doctor), the film that started it all was made for a budget of around \$350,000 and went on to pick up nearly \$100m worldwide, making it the most profitable film of all time until *The Blair Witch Project*. Mel Gibson had just come out of drama school, and was cast, according to Miller, because, "on the one hand you wanted to get to really know him, he's very lovable; on the other hand, there was an element of danger and unpredictability." Set in a near-future, not-quite dystopia, biker gangs rule the roads. By today's standards it's remarkably slow-burn: Mel only becomes the vengeful antihero we know in the final act.

#### MAD MAX 2 1981

##### TWO TRIBES GO TO WAR



Released in the US as simply *The Road Warrior*, the sequel is set an unspecified amount of time in the future, with Max now wandering a properly desolate landscape on the lookout for a petrol top-up. "I just wanted to go further into that world," says Miller. "It wasn't like doing the same story again." *Fury Road* is set to be closest to *Mad Max 2*, with the hero inadvertently drawn into a standoff between oil-possessing settlers and a furious gang led by The Humungus. The crunching stuntwork still holds up, and it's this film that truly made Max an icon, a sorta futuristic Man With No Name. And once again, he's the custodian of an ill-fated dog.

#### MAD MAX BEYOND THUNDERDOME 1985

##### WE DON'T NEED ANOTHER HERO...



An example of franchise economy, the script for *Thunderdome* didn't begin life as a *Mad Max* sequel, but it was co-opted into the franchise, and again became a pop-culture force. Not that Miller would've guessed it. "No one could ever predict that they'd become iconic," he says. "You just make the film that's in front of you. You put all of your skills and knowledge and wisdom into the world... Something resonant comes out of it."





## BIG BREAK

It's been 30 years since the last **Mad Max** film. Here are the other follow-ups that took their sweet time.

### 7 YEARS

#### TERMINATOR

**The Terminator** (1984)

**Terminator 2: Judgment Day** (1991)

### 10 YEARS

#### MEN IN BLACK

**Men In Black II** (2002)

**Men In Black 3** (2012)



### 10 YEARS

#### THE X-FILES

**The X-Files: Fight The Future** (1998)

**The X-Files: I Want To Believe** (2008)

### 16 YEARS

#### THE GODFATHER

**The Godfather Part II** (1974)

**The Godfather Part III** (1990)

### 16 YEARS

#### ROCKY

**Rocky V** (1990)

**Rocky Balboa** (2006)



### 16 YEARS

#### STAR WARS

**Star Wars: Return Of The Jedi** (1983)

**Star Wars: Episode I – The Phantom Menace** (1999)

### 19 YEARS

#### INDIANA JONES

**Indiana Jones**

**And The Last Crusade** (1989)

**Indiana Jones And The Kingdom Of The Crystal Skull** (2008)

### 20 YEARS

#### DEAD SERIES

**Day Of The Dead** (1985)

**Land Of The Dead** (2005)

### 28 YEARS

#### TRON

**Tron** (1982)

**Tron: Legacy** (2010)



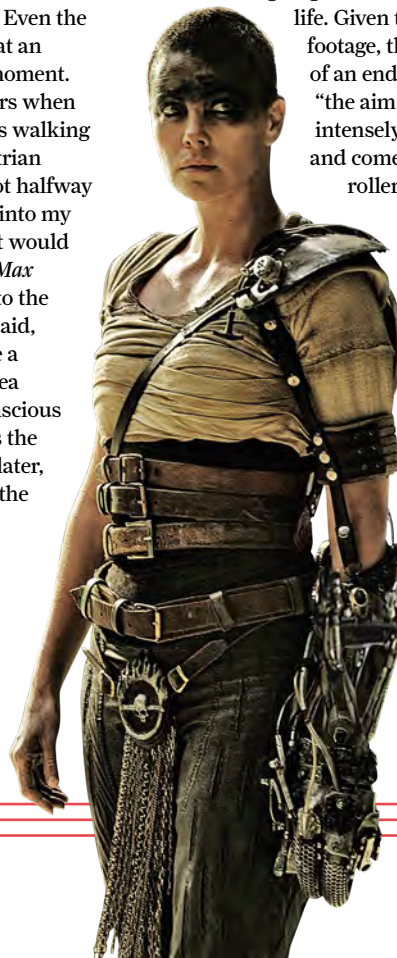
Coming back to the franchise with which he made his name, Miller is also returning to the action genre, having more recently worked on the animated hit *Happy Feet* and its sequel (can you think of a filmmaker who's had success with two such diametrically opposed film series?). With his softly spoken Australian accent, and thoughtful, considered disposition, he's not quite what you'd expect from the face of cinematic carnage. Even the idea for *Fury Road* came at an unpredictably low-key moment. He specifically remembers when inspiration struck. "I was walking across a road on a pedestrian crossing. By the time I got halfway across, this idea popped into my head. It occurred to me it would make a really good *Mad Max* movie. By the time I got to the other side of the road, I said, 'No, I don't want to make a *Mad Max* movie.'" The idea was buried in his subconscious until a night flight across the Pacific a couple of years later, when the whole film (or the first two acts, at least), played out in his mind.

The "essential architecture" was there from the beginning, even if it was inevitably refined as more collaborators came on board. The idea, in

Miller's words, was to make "a continuous action piece": to tell a story almost entirely visually. "Originally the script was just a comic book," remembers Hoult. "It was 300 pages with no dialogue, essentially. You would just flip through looking at images of your character and kind of work out what was going on." The objective was clear: the audience won't be *told* a story; they're going to have to try to cling on to one for dear life. Given the intensity of the Comic-Con footage, the full film could be something of an endurance test. Miller explains that "the aim is to immerse the audience as intensely as possible: they go in one end and come out the other end like a rollercoaster ride, and see what

experiences they pick up on the way." The 3D – which is currently being finely tuned – should add to that.

While summer 2015 is likely to see no shortage of spectacular set-pieces (with *Avengers: Age Of Ultron*, *Jurassic World* and *Terminator: Genisys* duking it out for box-office dominance), *Fury Road* is promising to be one BIG set-piece. "With a lot of movies, there's the stunt sequences," says Miller. "In this movie, every sequence had some element of risk or stunt. Even if it was a dialogue sequence, it was in a fast-travelling vehicle.







Buzzkill: Charlie Theron toughs it out as rig-riding badass Furiosa.

Often people were hanging off the vehicle, on top of the vehicle, or underneath the vehicle. That was the thing that basically created the most anxiety in me: how are we going to avoid maiming or killing someone today?"

With such a lean set-up, plot specifics are necessarily sparse, although Miller does share some details. Furiosa frees the so-called 'Five Wives' (young, child-bearing women, with Rosie Huntington-Whiteley, Riley Keough, and Zoë Kravitz among the quintet) from the custody of the big bad, the Immortan Joe, and goes on the run with them. Max gets caught up reluctantly in their troubles, as does Hoult's Nux, who's looking for a glorious death in battle, in the hopes of a sweet afterlife. As one of the Immortan's best pursuit riders, he's sent to chase the fugitives down.

While anyone familiar with the *Mad Max* universe will recognise the desolate, arid landscapes, and the armoured super-cars, it's designed to be an entry point for newbies, with Miller confident that audiences are familiar enough with apocalyptic scenarios to not need every detail spelled out for them. With visuals taking precedence over dialogue (Miller paraphrases the Hitchcock maxim of a "movie where they don't have to read the subtitles in Japan"), *Fury Road* has more in common with an opera than your standard blockbuster template (and the booming requiem music in the trailer only adds to that vibe). "People only speak when it's necessary, and as much as possible, the story is told by visuals –

in that sense it's very operatic," agrees the director.

But make no mistake, this won't be anything like an evening with *Madame Butterfly*, with Miller's commitment to immersion and the spirit of the *Mad Max* movies calling for real stunts, on the biggest imaginable scale. "*Mad Max* has a raw, elemental quality," says Miller. "It's not a fantasy CGI movie. So why CGI a car wreck when you can do it for real?" That meant building, marshalling, and crashing dozens of stunt cars in Namibia. For the cast – who were heavily involved with the stunts – the experience was staggering. Wide-eyed, Hoult recalls the first time he drove out in the big war party. "I was sat in my car, and there were like 50 other cars and bikes and trucks and everything just flying around the desert. And I remember looking around before the take and it did give me chills, actually."

"I remember thinking, 'God, people are going to think this is CGI...' sighs Theron. "It was one of those moments where you're like, 'We are in a world. WE'RE AT WAR! YES!' Shooting in the often brutal location of Namibia ("We were there for almost eight months," remembers Theron, "We all went through everything") added to that tangible quality Miller was after. It just wouldn't have been a *Mad Max* movie if it was filmed on a backlot. "It's not a greenscreen movie shot inside a studio. It's out there in the real world," says Miller.



"The film looks different – it feels different – than a CG movie. It feels like you're really there."

It's that world-building component and attention to detail that could mean *Fury Road* is unique among this summer's blockbusters, but it won't necessarily be a one-off. Miller does draw some comparisons with Max's movie stablemates ("In his own very earthy way, he has the same struggles as a superhero"), but like its title character, it stands alone. And while *Fury Road* is based on a franchise from the past, it's wasting no time laying out its own expanded universe, with comic-book backstories (co-written by Miller) for Max, Furiosa, Nux and Immortan Joe set to be published shortly after the film's release. And in terms of future films? The engine's already being revved. "Because of the delay, we've written two others," admits Miller. "If this does well enough to warrant another one, we have the scripts already..." **TF**

**Mad Max: Fury Road opens 15 May.**





Secret identity: no word yet on who'll play Spidey in his MCU debut...

02

# THE MARVEL CINEMATIC UNIVERSE

With Phase 3 on the horizon, the gang's getting bigger – and bolder...

WORDS JOSH WINNING



Y

YOU GOT A FAMILY?" TONY STARK asked the man who helped him assemble his first super-suit in 2008's *Iron Man*. "Yes," comes the reply, "I will see them when I leave here. And you, Stark?" The emergent hero's response? A desultory "No." Seven years on, Ol' Shellhead's reply is undeniably outdated, the quippy superhero having emerged as – among other things – both king of the Marvel Cinematic Universe and the swaggering patriarch of The Avengers.

As we head into Marvel's Phase 3, though, that looks set to change. With rumours that Iron Man could undergo a Bond-esque recast ("There's a couple other things we've gotta do [first]," Robert Downey Jr teased last year) after potentially becoming the main antagonist in *Captain America: Civil War*, the focus is shifting away from the antics of Stark in favour of exploring other branches of the Marvel family tree. Cap and Thor will both return in solo Phase 3 threequels, but they're the only Avengers doing so. Instead, the way is being paved for Doctor Strange, Captain Marvel and Black Panther, three of Marvel's lesser-known heroes.

It's a bold move given the phenomenal success of everything Avengers-related (*Avengers Assemble* remains Marvel's most profitable title with a worldwide haul of \$1.5bn), but in the seven years since Stark's debut, Marvel has proven itself a studio willing and able to take risks – and come up trumps. Of course, in the wake of the batty but lovable *Guardians Of The Galaxy*, even its riskier upcoming titles – hello, Doctor Strange – seem primed for cultdom. Like Pixar before it, Marvel appears to be the studio that can do little wrong.

So far, chief Kevin Feige's impressive, long-term game plan has birthed some of the biggest blockbusters of the past decade, and with no fewer than 10 movies scheduled to take the studio well into 2019 (though Feige's



Cap could meet Spidey in *Civil War*.

blueprint surely goes way beyond that), the studio will be sticking around for a while. Feige's not concerned about the superhero market reaching saturation point, either, revealing that "we focus on what we can control, which is the quality of the pictures". He's playing a canny game, though, encouraging the MCU to constantly evolve.

That's never more apparent than in Phase 3, which includes continued exploration of the Marvel Cosmic Universe, aka its space-oriented titles, which launched with *Guardians Of The Galaxy* and will continue with *Inhumans*, the studio's 20th film. "With our 20th movie, we wanted to continue to refine what that universe is about," Feige says, hinting at one of the reasons Marvel has enjoyed so much success – it's unafraid to take calculated risks and is constantly pushing itself in new directions. "There's no lack of awesome characters we can do awesome things with," he adds.

And just when you thought the MCU couldn't get any bigger, along swung Spider-Man. In a historic deal, Sony (which holds the movie rights to Spidey) announced it would be "bringing Marvel into the amazing world of Spider-Man", which actually means that Spidey will be on loan to Marvel. "I'm excited for the opportunity to have Spider-Man appear in the MCU," says Feige. "It's something we've been looking forward to for years."

It's a deal that benefits both parties, though arguably none more than Sony, which has struggled to replicate Marvel's magic formula with its critically underwhelming *Amazing Spider-Man* double bill. Spidey himself could be making his revamped debut in *Captain America: Civil War* (he was an integral part of the comic storyline), with a rebooted solo movie on the way. And while Black Widow and Hulk remain supporting players for now, Marvel's increasing commitment to diversity and risk-taking is making Phase 3 a very exciting prospect. It's time to make room at the table for a few new family members...

## FUTURE MARVELS

Upcoming highlights of Phase 2 and 3...

03

### ANT-MAN

He's both mop-up act for *Avengers: Age Of Ultron* and curtain call for Marvel's Phase 2, but Ant-Man's no afterthought – heading up a comedy-infused heist movie that promises belly laughs and ballistic action aplenty. Paul Rudd is the titular anti-hero, a criminal who's encouraged to mend his ways by Michael Douglas' scientist.



04

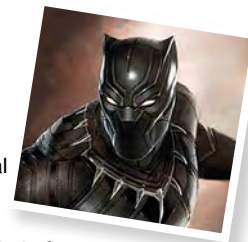
### CAPTAIN AMERICA: CIVIL WAR

It's the storyline everybody's been waiting for as Marvel bring Mark Millar's iconic *Civil War* graphic novel to the big screen. That means a sizeable role for Iron Man (not getting a solo Phase 3 outing) and – fingers crossed – Spider-Man, as the threequel deals with the horror of a superhero registration system.

05

### BLACK PANTHER

Black Panther – superhuman hunter and king of the fictional African nation of Wakanda – will finally get his own movie in 2018 after swinging by *Captain America: Civil War*. He'll be played by Chadwick Boseman.



06

### DOCTOR STRANGE

This Phase 3 entry delves into horror-esque terrain for the first time. *Sinister*'s Scott Derrickson is directing, and Marvel will look to Benedict Cumberbatch as the titular hero – a skilled magician who defends the Earth from mystical threats – to keep things grounded. Even if he does wear a silly cape...



07

### CAPTAIN MARVEL

Half-alien superhero Captain Marvel is the character Marvel chief Kevin Feige is most asked about, and she'll be the first female hero to get a solo movie. As for the rumours that Kathryn Winnick (*Vikings*) is up for the role... "I would love to," she enthuses. "I'm such a fan of comic books."





# QUICKSILVER

Meet Marvel's speedy new 'miracle'... WORDS JOSH WINNING

08

IT'S A SAFE BET THAT THE Avengers are pretty confident nobody can run rings around them. After successfully saving not only New York, but Planet Earth itself, at the end of *Avengers Assemble*, you'd forgive them for feeling a little bit self-satisfied. Which means they're in for one heck of a shock when they come across Quicksilver in *Avengers: Age Of Ultron*.

That thing about running rings? Yeah, this guy's faster than a speeding bullet...

A troubled superhero-in-the-making, Quicksilver aka Pietro Maximoff (Aaron Taylor-Johnson) comes as part of a team of two, pitching up in *Ultron* alongside his sister Scarlet Witch, aka Wanda Maximoff (his *Godzilla* co-star Elizabeth Olsen). "They're gypsies in a way," Taylor-Johnson says of the pair's Eastern European backstory.

"They're Romani. They're sort of like travellers... He's quick tempered. He gets agitated. He's impatient. But he's super protective. They're very yin-and-yang in that twin sense."

They're also gunning for The Avengers. "Scarlet Witch and Quicksilver hate them with a fiery hate," director Joss Whedon says of the pair. "They're on Team Ultron, which makes things really hard for the Avengers, because all of sudden they're dealing with powers that they're not used to." Though the specifics of the pair's beef with The Avengers remains to be seen, Quicksilver's ability to outrun just about all of them (yes, even that reactor-powered super-cheat Iron Man) hints there could be some interesting scraps ahead. "This is epic," Taylor-Johnson confirms. "It's a bigger cast, it's got a lot more energy... It's good fun, it's gonna be great."



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## THE RUSSO BROTHERS

Marvel Studios' new golden boys.

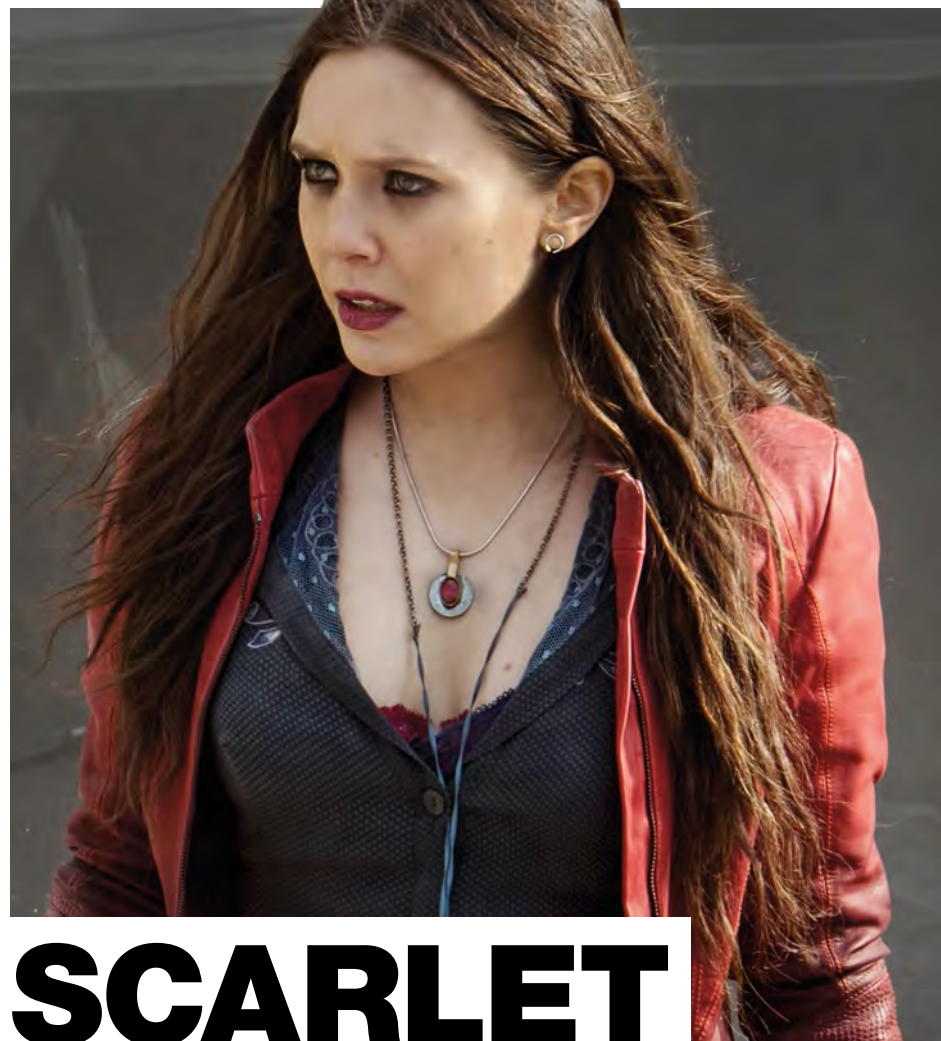
IN 2014, *CAPTAIN AMERICA: THE Winter Soldier* picked the MCU up and gave it a damn good shake. Its ballsy plot developments – namely the destruction of S.H.I.E.L.D. – had huge repercussions for the rest of the MCU, transforming TV series *Agents Of S.H.I.E.L.D.* into a brilliantly paranoid thriller – and we'll see how it impacts *Avengers: Age Of Ultron* later this month. The engine behind all of that? Co-director siblings Anthony and Joe Russo.

A relatively unknown element when they signed on to *Captain America: The Winter Soldier* (their middling comedies *Welcome To Collinwood* and *You, Me And Dupree* attracted few fans, though they'd garnered kudos for their work on acclaimed TV meta-sitcom *Community*), the brothers exploded expectations with their conspiracy-themed sequel – and it wasn't just audiences who were impressed. As they prepare to return for Marvel's most buzzed-about Phase 3 project, *Captain America: Civil War*, they're also rumoured to be directing *Avengers: Infinity War* Parts 1 and 2 when Joss Whedon's three-year contract with the studio expires in 2015.

And with Joe also directing an episode of TV show *Agent Carter*, it's not difficult to see why the Russo Brothers are being touted as Marvel's new golden boys. Whatever they have coming up, they're keeping their lips sealed. "We would be more than happy to work on more Marvel properties," Joe diplomatically put recently, adding: "I love the notion of crossovers." Regardless of what they're being lined up for after *Captain America: Civil War*, it's clear the brothers are keen to stay in the Marvel stable – and whatever they do next, rest assured it'll be big.



The Russo brothers, Anthony (left) and Joe.



# SCARLET WITCH

...and his spellbinding super sister.

09

WHEN SCARLET WITCH was briefly introduced during *Captain America: The Winter Soldier*'s post-credits scene, it's

likely she gave you a bad case of the heebie-jeebies. With her creepy serial killer stare and shocking treatment of floating wooden blocks, she seemed, for lack of a better word, somewhat unhinged. "This is the age of miracles... and there's nothing more horrifying than a miracle," said HYDRA agent Baron Wolfgang von Strucker (Thomas Kretschmann), hinting that this singularly unnerving super could spell trouble for the Avengers.

While her sibling's speediness puts Mo Farah to shame, Scarlet Witch (Elizabeth Olsen) poses the bigger threat. Her formidable powers include the ability to control objects with her mind, and she can even use telepathy to get inside a person's head. "She has such a

vast amount of knowledge [*but*] no one taught her how to control it properly," says Olsen. "It's not that she's mentally insane, it's just that she's overly stimulated."

Whether she's legitimately crazy or just needs to switch to decaf, Scarlet Witch also complicates things for the A-team in *Avengers: Age Of Ultron* by representing a new kind of superhuman. While Thor's a god and Cap's a super soldier, Scarlet Witch is something else entirely. Says Whedon: "All of sudden, it's a darker, weirder, tougher world that they're living in." And considering the comics see Scarlet Witch eventually hooking up with Vision (played in *Ultron* by Paul Bettany) before becoming a full-blown Avenger, could romance also be on the cards for the witchy weirdo? Stranger things have happened...

*Avengers: Age Of Ultron* opens on 24 April.





# KRYSTEN RITTER

From *Breaking Bad* to fighting for good... WORDS JOSH WINNING

11

NO MATTER HOW EXCITED YOU ARE about Marvel's new Netflix series *A.K.A. Jessica Jones*, there's no way you're as excited as Krysten Ritter.

"It's so fucking cool," the actress enthuses of the 13-episode series, which she'll headline when it debuts in full on Netflix later this year. "I can't wait to watch it."

It's easy to understand her excitement. Best known for her impeccable comic timing (honed over a decade of TV and movie roles, but demonstrated in full on cult sitcom *Don't Trust The B---- In Apartment 23*), she's an unusual choice for a character described by showrunner Melissa Rosenberg as "incredibly damaged, dark and complex". For the actress' dramatic chutzpah, though, look to the second season of *Breaking Bad*, in which she played Jessie's doomed druggie squeeze, a role that no doubt won her the lead in *Jessica Jones*.

"She brings both the hard edge and the vulnerability the role demands," says Rosenberg, whose show is inspired by comic series *Alias*, in which one-time superhero Jessica Jones hangs up the cape and becomes a private investigator in Hell's Kitchen, New York. Thanks to her past, her services are frequently sought out by other superheroes, with the comics including cameos for Carol Danvers (aka Captain Marvel) and Ant-Man.

Given that this is both Ritter's first lead role and her comic-book debut, the 33-year-old has been taking it seriously, devouring comics in the name of research. And she couldn't be happier the show's being overseen by Rosenberg. "I'm a big champion for just fucking rad, strong women," Ritter enthuses. "I'm happy to be in the trenches with them."

*A.K.A. Jessica Jones* will air on Netflix later this year.





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**DAREDEVIL**

"Daredevil has no qualms about beating the hell out of somebody! He's not going to tie them up with his webs!" If you were worried the new, 13-episode *Daredevil* TV series – which premieres on Netflix in April – wouldn't embrace the darkness of the comics, take solace in showrunner Steve DeKnight's promise that the 'Man Without Fear' will be suitably fearsome. Played by Charlie Cox (*Stardust*), the show reboots the adventures of Matt Murdock, a blind lawyer who fights crime as Daredevil by cover of night. "We wanted it to be grounded [and] gritty," DeKnight adds. Hello, darkness...



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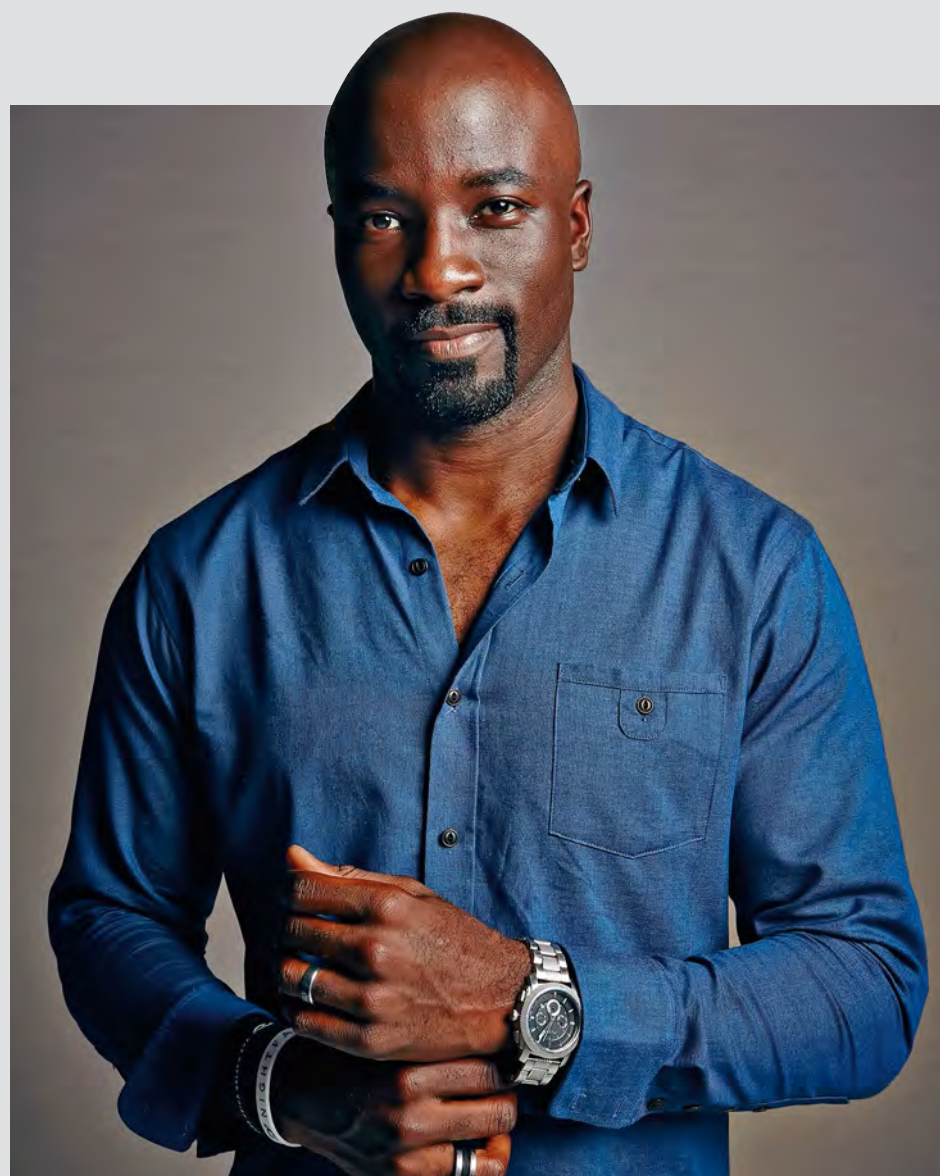
**AGENTS OF S.H.I.E.L.D.**

The mid-season finale of AOS second series presented a humdinger of a revelation: Agent Skye (Chloe Bennett) – real name Daisy – was transformed by Terrigen Mist (via some Kree DNA) into the seismic superhero known to comic fans as Quake. Daisy's altered backstory means she's now an Inhuman hybrid, putting *Agents Of S.H.I.E.L.D.* on a collision course with the upcoming *Inhumans* movie. "It's not just her origin story," says co-showrunner Jed Whedon. "It's the origin story of a bigger, other world." Fellow writer/producer Maurissa Tancharoen agrees: "We're diving deeper into the Marvel Universe..."

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**INHUMANS**

With the Inhumans (super-beings granted various powers via genetic tinkering) finally revealed in *Agents Of S.H.I.E.L.D.*, Marvel's 20th feature should paint on a much bigger cosmic canvas. Lining up against the Avengers and the Guardians, the brand new super-team is led by the as-yet-uncast Black Bolt – an alien able to level entire cities with his voice. "It seemed time to open the floodgates a little wider," says MCU architect Kevin Feige.

**MIKE COLTER**

Marvel's new Shakespearian ass-kicker... WORDS JAMES MOTTRAM

12

A STUDENT OF SHAKESPEARE at drama school, "I never thought I'd do much action stuff," laughs Mike Colter. But then Hollywood has a

way of surprising you. Winning the lead role of Jameson Locke in the Ridley Scott-produced mini-series *Halo: Nightfall*, based on the popular Xbox video game, the 38 year-old has just been cast as superhero Luke Cage, part of a quintet of Netflix-produced television shows featuring interweaving Marvel characters. Psyched? "It's as close to being a black Superman as you can be!" he grins.

Due to appear as Cage in the currently-shooting *A.K.A. Jessica Jones* before he gets his own stand-alone show, Colter will then reprise the character for an Avengers-style team-up, *The Defenders*. "This whole journey now with what's

going on with Luke Cage, it's very unique," he nods. "It's completely different to the *Halo* project or other things I've done, and it's very character-driven and very dark and edgy, so I'm excited about it to see where that's going."

The South Carolina-born Colter's first movie role came back in 2004 as boxer Big Willie Little in Clint Eastwood's *Million Dollar Baby*. Since then, he's worked with Kathryn Bigelow on Bin Laden drama *Zero Dark Thirty* – excellent prep for his elite soldier on *Halo: Nightfall*. He'll now reprise Locke via motion capture in upcoming game *Halo 5: Guardians*, though he's had to cut back on his 'research', as his wife Iva is far from a video game fan. "The more I played them," he chuckles, "the more annoyed she'd become!"

***Halo: Nightfall* is available on DVD and Blu-ray from 16 March. *Luke Cage* will air on Netflix later this year.**





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Jaws truly: Ben Affleck dons the Batsuit for the first time.

# EXPANDED UNIVERSES

It's not just Marvel that are pushing forward with a carefully crafted franchise masterplan... Total Film investigates cinema's other major world-builders. WORDS EMMA DIBDIN

**T**HERE WAS A TIME, NOT SO very long ago, when the term "expanded universe" had little meaning outside of physics and astronomy. But in 2015 it's become more or less the only phrase that matters in big studio filmmaking. We all know that movie stars don't open movies any more, established properties do – hence the proliferation of sequels, prequels, spinoffs, solo movies and reboots – and nobody has capitalised on that hunger more shrewdly than Marvel Studios.

We have Marvel to thank – or blame, depending on your perspective – for the fact that every studio is now chomping at the bit to replicate its expanded universe model, wherein characters lead their own solo movies, show up in one another's stories and intermittently team up to save the world in a big event movie.

Ever since 2008, when Nick Fury cropped up in the closing moments of *Iron Man*, we've come to expect our big-screen heroes to overlap, intersect and cross over. In 2015 and beyond, Hollywood is ushering in a whole new generation of sprawling multi-movie narratives that play more like serialised television than traditional standalone cinema.

*Star Wars*, with its vast array of offshoot cartoons, comics, RPGs and novelisations, had an expanded universe long before they were cool; this was a world in which every droid, lightsaber and stormtrooper could,

and did, have their own backstory. Much to the consternation of some fans, that universe has now been effectively wiped out in favour of Disney and Lucasfilm's new vision, which will see a live-action *Star Wars* spinoff released each year in between Episodes VII, VIII and IX. These movies will encompass a wider range of genres than the traditional Episodes, and are expected to focus more on individual characters and their origins.

J.J. Abrams' *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* will be followed up in 2016 by Gareth Edwards' yet-to-be-titled spinoff, penned by *After Earth* scribe Gary Whitta. Rumour has it that it's a heist movie, centred on a team of bounty hunters conspiring to steal the plans for the Death Star, and that its protagonist will be introduced (in classic expanded universe fashion) in *The Force Awakens*. And while there's been no official word on this, the other two standalones may well be dedicated to Han Solo and Boba Fett, with the latter potentially being penned by series veteran Lawrence Kasdan. It's

## 'Star Wars had an expanded universe before they were cool'



Rainy day blues: Henry Cavill returns as Superman.



What to wear: Gal Gadot is a newly fashioned Wonder Woman.



early days, but we'd say this particular expanded universe far, far away has got legs.

Equally exciting – if less immediately convincing – is Warner Bros and DC's universe, which was unveiled in full just prior to Marvel's six-year slate announcement last autumn. No sooner than Zack Snyder had induced a collective nerdgasm at Comic-Con 2013 by announcing *Batman V Superman: Dawn Of Justice*, speculation was already brewing about what this could mean for more neglected DC heroes.

And sure enough, we are finally getting a *Wonder Woman* movie, starring Gal Gadot as Amazonian warrior princess Diana Prince, not to mention a standalone push for Jason Momoa's *Aquaman* and a rebooted *Green Lantern*. All this is leading up to what will inevitably be described as DC's answer to *The Avengers*, when Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman, Aquaman et al finally join forces in *The Justice League: Part One*... and then re-join forces in *Part Two*, two years later.

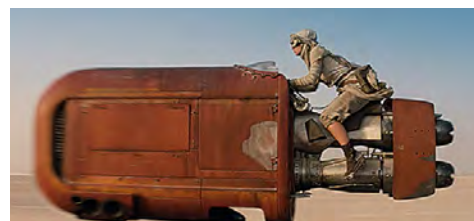
Before that, though, we'll already have had DC's first true team-up movie in the David Ayer-directed *Suicide Squad*. If *Justice League* is DC's *Avengers*, this might be its *Guardians Of The Galaxy*, centred on a decidedly anti-heroic gang of imprisoned supervillains who are recruited by the government to carry out black ops missions. There's plenty of reason to get excited by the cast alone, with Margot Robbie and Jared Leto onboard as Harley Quinn and The Joker, Will Smith taking the role of Deadshot, and Jesse Eisenberg rumoured for a Lex Luthor appearance.

As for Sony, its much-touted plans for a Spider-Man-centric expanded universe –



featuring Dane DeHaan's Green Goblin, villain team the Sinister Six and, most bafflingly, a young Aunt May – are dead in the water following the new Spidey deal with Marvel. But that deal, which allows Peter Parker to rejoin his fellow Marvel heroes on the big screen after years of tortured separation, opens the door for even more universe-expanding possibilities.

Like it or not, there's just no room for a modestly-sized franchise universe on the big screen nowadays – even *Harry Potter* is getting



A galaxy far, far away: *The Force Awakens* reignites the *Star Wars* saga.



the prequel treatment with the wizarding world-widening *Fantastic Beasts And Where To Find Them* (more on that over the page), with *The Hunger Games* rumoured to be following suit. Yep, it seems expanded universes are here to stay – so we might as well sit back and savour every morsel of our pre-planned blockbuster diets from now until 2020.

***Star Wars: The Force Awakens* opens on 18 December 2015. *Batman V Superman: Dawn Of Justice* opens on 25 March 2016.**





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# FANTASTIC BEASTS AND WHERE TO FIND THEM

Harry Potter's homework comes to life... WORDS SARAH DOBBS



ONLY J.K. ROWLING COULD GET people excited about the film adaptation of a textbook. *Fantastic Beasts And Where To Find Them* is an all-new Potterverse adventure – sprung from Hogwarts' preferred magical creatures study aid – set long before Harry was born and following the exploits of 'magizoologist' Newt Scamander. Can it recapture the magic of the much-loved franchise? Four-time *Potter* director David Yates is back behind the camera, which seems like a good omen. Here are the 10 beasts we're hoping to see more of...

Mind your eyes: don't look at a hippogriff the wrong way.

## MERPEOPLE

**AS SEEN IN:** *Goblet Of Fire*

Discounting the obvious Disney one, there haven't been many movies about these fishy folk, and they've generally been cast as loveable goofs no more threatening than a goldfish. But from what we've seen of Rowling's merpeople so far in the underwater challenge in the Triwizard Tournament, they're more likely to drown you than sing you a song.

## HIPPOGRIFFS

**AS SEEN IN:** *Prisoner Of Azkaban*

The 42-page version of *Fantastic Beasts* written by Rowling and published for Comic Relief mentions that Scamander's mother was a renowned hippogriff breeder, so an appearance by the half-eagle, half-horse creatures seems pretty likely. Since hippogriffs are notoriously quick to take offence, there's plenty of comedy potential there.

## WEREWOLVES

**AS SEEN IN:** *Prisoner Of Azkaban*

One of the classic cinematic monsters, werewolves in the *Potter* universe are mindless killing machines every full moon and normal-looking people for the rest of the month. Which should make studying them fun, in a life-threatening sort of way.





## DRAGONS

**AS SEEN IN:** *Goblet Of Fire*

Several different types of fire-breather, from the Norwegian Ridgeback to the Hungarian Horntail, have already popped up in the *Potter* films, but there's always room for more dragon action. And since Scamander's text is meant to be an authority on dragon species, let's see him do his research.

## BOGGARTS

**AS SEEN IN:** *Prisoner Of Azkaban*

No one knows what a boggart looks like, because they take the form of the scariest thing their victim can imagine. But surely no competent magizoologist would be put off by that, and revealing his deepest fears could tell us a lot about Scamander as a character.

## CENTAURS

**AS SEEN IN:** *Order Of The Phoenix*

Another half-human creature, centaurs live in the woods and use the stars to predict the future. *Potter* lore has it that they're more intelligent than people, but in spite of that (or perhaps because of it) they tend to go out of their way to avoid wizards.

## BASILISKS

**AS SEEN IN:** *Chamber Of Secrets*

One of the most terrifying creatures in both the *Harry Potter* films and mythology in general, the basilisk is a giant snake that can kill you by looking at you. They're strongly associated with dark magic, so any basilisk story is likely to involve evil wizards.

## PHOENIXES

**AS SEEN IN:** *Chamber Of Secrets*

Useful to magical folk thanks to the healing powers of their tears and spell-casting abilities of their

feathers, phoenixes are tough to catch, let alone domesticate. Their bright red and gold plumage makes them easy to spot, but they live on mountain tops. Cue rock-climbing montage!



## THESTRALS

**AS SEEN IN:** *Order Of The Phoenix*

An object lesson in not judging an animal by its terrifying skeletal appearance, thestrals are actually gentle beasts, but they're only visible to people who've witnessed death. If that's not an excuse to mine some serious emotional ground, we don't know what is.



## UNICORNS

**AS SEEN IN:** *Philosopher's Stone*

Unicorns don't show up often in the *Potter* films; the one Professor Quirrell killed in the first barely counts. Not too dangerous but legendarily elusive, it could be fun to see Scamander track one down.

*Fantastic Beasts And Where To Find Them* opens on 18 November 2016.



# MUTANT AND PROUD

The hot young things of Bryan Singer's *X-Men: Apocalypse*...

18

## BEN HARDY

"There's a complete blackout right now in West Kensington!" tweeted *EastEnders* star Hardy on 22 January. "Feeling like I'm driving round at the beginning of the apocalypse." Prescient words: only a few weeks later we discovered the Bournemouth-born 24-year-old would be swapping Albert Square's Peter Beale for a "key" role in the new *X-Men* opus.



19

## TYE SHERIDAN

Word is Hardy tested for Scott Summers, aka Cyclops, only to lose out to 18-year-old Texan Sheridan, star of *Mud*, *Joe* and the upcoming *Scouts Vs. Zombies*. And a good thing too according to James Marsden, who calls Tye "a perfect fit" for the young incarnation of the character he played in the original *X-Men* trilogy.

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## ALEXANDRA SHIPP

Seen last year as Aaliyah in tacky biopic *The Princess Of R&B*, 23-year-old Shipp will be aiming higher in her latest role – Ororo Monroe, aka Storm. The Phoenix native has put in the hours, Instagramming footage of herself lying on a bed surrounded by *X-Men* comics.



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## KODI SMIT-MCPHEE

The 18-year-old star of *The Road* and *Let Me In* says he is "humbled and honoured" to be part of the "incredible project" playing the "well respected young mutant Nightcrawler". *Apocalypse* will reunite the Aussie teenager with Michael Fassbender, his co-star in *Slow West*.

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## SOPHIE TURNER

The 19-year-old Brit thinks playing Sansa Stark in *Game Of Thrones* might have helped her land the role of the young Jean Grey (played by Famke Janssen in the original trilogy), suggesting the "dark side" of Sansa clicked with her *X-Men* character's future incarnation as the Dark Phoenix.





# CLASS ACT

Franchise star, UN Ambassador, fashion icon, feminist and soon to be singing sensation – Emma Watson is one of the smartest, most interesting actors working today, and she's about to take on her first major leading role. Total Film meets Hogwarts' star pupil.

WORDS ROSIE FLETCHER





CARTER BOWMAN

EMMA WATSON

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# EMMA WATSON

**E** MMA WATSON'S VOICE IS lovely. Her perfect, delicate, cut-glass tones are already familiar to most of us having watched Watson grow up on screen playing whip-smart witch Hermione Granger over 10 years of *Harry Potter* films. But now the 24-year-old's voice is being heard far outside the grounds of Hogwarts. As UN Women Goodwill ambassador Watson delivered a speech last September to international representatives at the UN headquarters on modern feminism, launching the HeForShe campaign encouraging men to engage with gender inequality issues. It was personal, passionate, intelligent and moving and she received a standing ovation. Somehow Ron Weasley's main squeeze has become the voice of a gender and of a generation.

"I think people were surprised that, even at a young age, I understood the immense power and the immense privilege of getting to play Hermione," says Watson, "and that there was also a responsibility that came with getting to be in those huge films." Talking to Watson it's noticeable how thoughtful and considered she is, thinking before she speaks and choosing her words carefully. It's not really surprising. Making her screen debut aged just 11 years old she's spent more than half of her young life in front of the media fielding questions from journalists, reading rumours about herself online (the latest: Is Emma Watson dating Prince Harry? Watson's response – two deftly handled tweets to her 16.6 million followers: first "WORLD Remember that little talk we had about not believing everything written in the media?!" and later "also... marrying a Prince not a prerequisite for being a Princess" with a link to a clip from Alfonso's Cuarón's adap of *A Little Princess* where the young heroine declares that all girls are princesses regardless of background,





wealth, appearance or social status). Fame is almost all she's known but far from allowing it to turn her head or wreck her life, Watson is taking control.

"I've just always been aware that it was a bit of a double-edged sword," she explains. "I think I never really thought necessarily I'd become an actress or become famous. It's something I felt very passive in. It was something that happened to me. They came to my school. They saw me and they took photographs of me. I was taken up to London to audition. I just happened to be picked up and put in one of the biggest film franchises of all time. I wanted to feel active in what happened to me in my life. I wanted to be able to move myself into a place where I felt like I was driving my career and my life, rather than just responding to things that happened to me. I wanted to try to make it my own."

"Working for the UN and doing all that really helps me feel like the attention I received was being put to good use and put in a good place. Just having that makes sense. So I feel really nice. I think it's being really careful about my choices and thinking about what work I should do and what work I should not do. My career has as much been defined by the things I've said no to as the things I've said yes to."

**A** S HUNDREDS OF CHILD STARS have learned, the choices you make stepping out of a massive franchise are crucial. At first Watson concentrated on her education getting a degree in English Literature from Brown University in the US and Oxford in the UK. Then she dipped into supporting and ensemble roles in credible indies such as *My Week With Marilyn*, *The Perks Of Being A Wallflower*, Sofia Coppola's *The Bling Ring* and apocalyptic comedy *This Is The End*. With her earnings from *Potter* she admits she'll never have to work purely for the money again which puts her in a fascinating and unique position. Independently wealthy, clever and well educated, talented, excessively beautiful, with no career missteps at all thus far, the world is her oyster.

"It feels like I was building a portfolio over the last five, six years," she says. "Now I feel like I'm ready to really be carrying films. I'm really just ready now to focus on my career full time and go full steam ahead. It's exciting at the moment." For her first leading role she's hardly taken the easy road. In '70s-set true-life drama *Colonia*, Watson plays a woman driven to



Compassion: Watson stars opposite Ethan Hawke in *Regression*.

infiltrate Chilean cult settlement 'Colonia Dignidad' to rescue her kidnapped boyfriend (played by Daniel Brühl).

"I got sent the script and my agent sent me the Wikipedia page on Colonia Dignidad. I immediately went, 'Oh my God, I'm not sure!' It was really, really, really heavy and really awful subject matter," she recalls, "but the script was such a page-turner and so well written and I'm really a big fan of Daniel Brühl. I really liked the director [*Florian Gallenberger*]. It all just kind of felt right: a really intelligent female leading role character. It felt like the right thing to do. It really challenged me. It really pushed me to the brink, this role." Some of the toughest scenes involve her terrifying relationship with *The Girl With The Dragon Tattoo*'s Michael Nyqvist as the cult leader, though the two became close friends off camera which helped on an otherwise challenging shoot.

"I was essentially playing a girl living in a concentration camp. It's tough emotionally, putting yourself in that place every day. So it was gruelling. But I really wanted to try. I really hope I've done it justice for people who actually really lived it and really experienced it."

This isn't the only dark film you'll see her starring in this year. *Regression*, directed by *The Others* helmer Alejandro Amenábar, sees a detective (Ethan Hawke) investigating an abuse case surrounding Watson's character, who begins to come across hints of a satanic cult spreading across America. Watson's tight lipped on the project, keen not to spoil the plot.

"It's difficult to talk about without giving it away," she smiles. "It's sort of looking at how communities deal with superstition and myth and religion and fear. And how you find truth within a kind of hysteria, which can sometimes arrive out of horrific or scary events. People try to explain them or make sense of them in lots of different ways..." Though she's keen to point out



Combat: Michael Nyqvist controls Watson in *Colonia*.



this isn't a straight genre film. "It's a thinking man's thriller-horror. I think when people come out of it, you'll want half-an-hour to debrief."

Though it's not all dark and stormy. Today Watson's dressed in jodhpurs and full of beans, ready to go horse riding as soon as we're finished chatting. It's part of the prep for a role that is bound to appeal to Watson's inner princess – she's playing Belle in a live-action musical adaptation of *Beauty And The Beast*, headed up by *Fifth Estate* director Bill Condon.

"I sing, so that's really unexpected," she laughs. "I've never had to do that for a film role before, and I think people will be interested to see me do something very different like that. It gives me a different challenge, really. That's terrifying in and of itself!" She's due to start shooting in May though at the time of press no 'Beast' had been confirmed, with whispers of Ryan Gosling no more than a rumour. And why shouldn't she be waltzing with the A-list? After all she went head to head with Russell Crowe, Anthony Hopkins and the Old Testament God himself in *Noah*.

Like Gosling, Watson has aspirations behind the camera too. Eventually hoping to direct something of her own, for now she's working with *Harry Potter* producer David Heyman as exec-producer on a multi-part adaptation of fantasy series *Queen Of The Tearling* in which she'll also star.

"I really like it. For me, to want to sign up to a series again, I wanted to have a certain amount of autonomy and control within that," she asserts. "Working with David's been great. I'd love to direct something one day. I'd love to produce as well, so it's quite a nice way to start learning about that. Yeah, just dipping my toes into that world."

**I**F SHE WANTS TO DIRECT, WE feel sure she will – and perhaps it's only right that she should.

"I started questioning gender-based assumptions when at eight I was confused at being called 'bossy,' because I wanted to direct the plays we would put on for our parents—but the boys were not," she said, during her UN speech, simply and succinctly describing a problem that flows from the children's playground all the way to the heights of Hollywood.

"It's about giving yourself permission, isn't it? To take up that space. About allowing yourself to be the fullest, best, brightest version of yourself," she explains, measured but suddenly more assertive. "As women, we often shy away from that. We worry that people wouldn't like us if we are fulfilled, if we take up some space and we have a loud voice. It's not necessarily having a loud voice – that's not quite the right way to explain it – but if we're using our voices. Yeah, I have to try to remind myself to give myself permission all the time," she smiles.

Constantly seeking new challenges (she says she'd love to do a really good comedy next) acutely aware of the implications of her choices (she's turned down big franchises including at least one superhero movie) whatever she chooses for her future is likely to be highly impressive and entirely deliberate. Whether she's influencing international opinion formers, becoming a credible positive role model for a new generation of young women, directing the cast of her own film or singing 'Something There' to a beast in the latest Disney adap, Emma Watson's voice demands to be heard.

**Regression opens on 28 August. Colonia opens later this year. Beauty And The Beast is slated for 2016.**

24

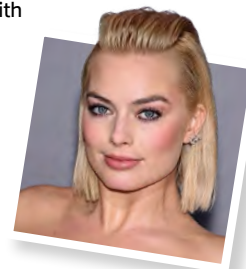
**SPY-FI**

The name's Bond. Or Hunt. Or Napoleon Solo... Yes, the months ahead come full of fearless super-spies operating on the cutting edge of technology. *M:I 5* is first out the gate, followed by Guy Ritchie's *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.* and a little number called *SPECTRE*. Steven Spielberg's *St James Place*, meanwhile, sees Tom Hanks caught up in old-school Cold War intrigue.

25

**MARGOT ROBBIE**

*Neighbours* must be a distant memory for the Aussie beauty, who's following up her career-making performance in Scorsese's *The Wolf Of Wall Street* with a feisty Jane in *Tarzan*, plus a reunion with *Focus* co-star Will Smith on DC's supervillain caper *Suicide Squad*. Robbie's down to play The Joker's accomplice Harley Quinn, "a character I don't think would ever get boring..."



26

**THE IMAGINARIUM**

Things are getting pretty busy down at "the UK's premier Performance Capture studio", hard at work of late providing avatar actors for *Age Of Ultron* and *The Force Awakens* while its driving force Andy Serkis preps 2017's *Jungle Book: Origins*. It's also giving Sky a helping hand with its adaptation of Raymond Briggs' much-loved (if malodorous) *Fungus The Bogeyman*.

27

**DAMIAN CHAZELLE**

*Whiplash*'s music and madness will both feature in *LaLa Land*, its writer/director's musical follow-up about wannabes in the City of Angels. (Miles Teller plays a jazz pianist, opposite Emma Watson's aspiring actress.) Chazelle's also developing *First Man*, a Neil Armstrong bio he says will be another "portrait of someone driven to the brink."



28

**CREED**

Sylvester Stallone, Michael B Jordan and, er, Everton Football Club headline Ryan Coogler's continuation of the *Rocky* franchise, one of whose scenes was shot at Goodison Park during a chilly half-time in January. The Fruitvale Station director also had a hand in the screenplay, which sees Mr Balboa finally hang up his gloves to mentor the grandson of his old adversary, Apollo Creed.

PA





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# Z FOR ZACHARIAH

The end of the world, not as you know it... WORDS JOSH WINNING



YOU CAN'T SWING A KATNISS at the cinema these days without hitting a post-apocalyptic sci-fi.

But where the likes of *The Hunger Games* and *Dawn Of The Planet Of The Apes* are joyfully explosive genre fare, *Z For Zachariah* offers a uniquely intimate spin on the end of the world. Stripping out the sci-fi scraps, the firepower and the Machiavellian baddies, it's a beautifully crafted pot-boiler that also delivers devastating emotion.

"There was a scene with a zombie horde that we felt was maybe a little too *Walking Dead*, so we cut it," jokes director Craig Zobel. Chatting to *Total Film* at the Sundance Film Festival in January 2015, where the film premiered to

considerable buzz, Zobel's aware that he's paddling in a genre pool that's been monopolised by big-budget genre movies in recent years. But that meant he knew exactly what he *didn't* want to do. "I was kind of done with looking at all these post-apocalyptic movies that are always very contrast-y, visually," he muses. "I wanted something green and lush. I didn't think we could make *The Maze Runner*..."

Set in a near future ravaged by nuclear war, *Z For Zachariah* follows lone survivor Ann (Margot Robbie) as she struggles to get by in an idyllic valley somehow protected from the toxin that wiped out much of humanity. When intense stranger Loomis (Chiwetel Ejiofor) stumbles into her life, he changes everything, and as the two

grow close, it seems they could find a way to make a future together in a world that previously promised only death. Things are complicated, though, by the arrival of Caleb (Chris Pine), whose rugged presence threatens Ann and Loomis' fragile bond. Zobel laughs: "If you were to ask Chiwetel, he'd be like, 'The one guy you don't want to show up when you're trying to hang out with the last woman on Earth is Chris Pine!'"

Inspired by but not beholden to Robert C. O'Brien's 1974 novel, the script by Nissar Modi made it onto the black list of Hollywood's best undeveloped screenplays in 2009 (it was #26) when Zobel picked it up. Having made waves in 2013 with controversial drama *Compliance*, about a real-life assault in a fast-food restaurant,





Zobel was attracted to Modi's tale of an incongruously beautiful future that put human drama front and centre. Shooting near Christchurch, New Zealand in January 2014, Zobel enlisted veteran cinematographer Tim Orr (aka David Gordon Green's go-to guy) to help capture his vision, though the famously gorgeous setting didn't make it easy. "We were having to play it down at times!" Zobel laughs. "There was stuff where it was like, 'That looks like Mordor!' Or, 'We can't shoot that, it looks like Narnia!'"

With a cast of just three people, Zobel recruited Robbie and Ejiofor before he'd even seen them in, respectively, *The Wolf Of Wall Street* and *12 Years A Slave*. "We had a blast hanging out," the director recalls. And, after catching *TWOWS*, he knew he'd made the right decision with Australian up-and-comer

Robbie, who has her role as Harley Quinn in dark comic-book adap *Suicide Squad* right around the corner. "I was like, 'Holy shit, that is *so* not the same person I had coffee with!'" Zobel marvels. "There was no doubt that she was a great talent."

With its formidably talented leads, incongruous setting, and a director flexing his filmmaking wings, *Z For Zachariah* is also unafraid of tackling big themes. "I think in some ways, the film's about communication," the director concludes. "In a situation like the end of the world, communication would be so heightened. There's no way to *not* have subtext when you're talking to what might be the only other human being!" In other words, the end of the world is just the beginning...

*Z For Zachariah* opens later this year.

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## MICHELLE MACLAREN

A veteran TV director/producer who's been behind some of the best episodes of *Breaking Bad*, *Game Of Thrones* and *The Walking Dead*, Emmy award-winner MacLaren has been hand-picked by Warner Bros to direct the Gal Gadot-starring *Wonder Woman*. With the responsibility of moving the DC universe forward post-*Batman V Superman*, it's a hell of a big-screen debut...

31

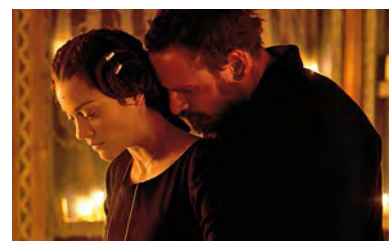
## DOPE

One of this year's most crowd-friendly Sundance hits, Rick Famuyiwa's funny, funky teen caper – following three hipster students caught up in a high-stakes drug deal – looks set to be a sure-fire festival breakout. The fact it's produced by Sean 'Puff Daddy' Combs and features new songs by Pharrell Williams should help...

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## OSCAR ISAAC

A year ago he was that guy from *Inside Llewyn Davis* – now he's one of the busiest men in Hollywood with roles in *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* as X-wing pilot Poe Dameron and *X-Men: Apocalypse* as mutant of mass destruction Apocalypse himself, as well as the lead in new miniseries *Show Me A Hero*, directed by Paul Haggis.



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## MACBETH

Starring two of the sexiest people in cinema (Marion Cotillard, Michael Fassbender), damned by their own ambition and guilt, this new take on the Bard's bloodiest play should be violent and raw. More so, since it's helmed by Aussie auteur Justin Kurzel, who made the most harrowing film of 2011 with *Snowtown*. Time to get excited about Shakespeare.

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## PRACTICAL EFFECTS

With *Jurassic World*'s Colin Trevorrow hiring prosthetics studio Legacy Effects to craft intricate, animatronic dinos and J.J. Abrams offering sneak peeks at the models and puppets he's commissioned for *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*, the halcyon days of tangible, real-world FX are making a welcome comeback.





# THE A-LIST

Twenty-five years ago a Brit armchair cinephile turned his love for cataloguing the films he watched into a database – now it's one of the most valuable tools in the film industry. Total Film meets unassuming IMDb creator turned Hollywood royalty **Col Needham**. **WORDS:** SIMON KINNEAR

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## IMDb

THE NAME IS SO FAMOUS IT'S PRACTICALLY A verb. What is Jennifer Lawrence making next? IMDb it. Who's that actor who keeps appearing alongside Tom Cruise? IMDb it. Is that guy in *Ben-Hur* really wearing a wristwatch? IMDb it.

And now IMDb, one of the most influential innovations in modern movies, is 25 years old. The story of IMDb – a global sensation before Facebook or YouTube were even invented – is a parable of success in the internet age, an amateur pastime that became a multi-million dollar business without sacrificing its founding principles. Not bad for a venture founded by a British film geek who simply wanted to share his passion with the world.

"Twenty-five years of great fun and building something people seem to love very much," admits Col Needham, the 48-year-old founder and CEO of IMDb. "It's been quite an adventure." When he speaks to *Total Film* to discuss IMDb's past, present and future, Needham has just returned to the UK from the Sundance Film Festival, where he served on the World Cinema Dramatic Jury. In total, he racked up 33 screenings. "It sounds great," Needham explains, "except I got beaten by Edgar Wright. He and I



EWART  
COCKS



SONY

JONATHAN PLASTER/REX

## ALL ABOUT THAT 'BASE

The future of IMDb at a glance.

### PLATFORM EXPANSION

IMDb is no longer just a website; half of all visits now come via its mobile and tablet apps, while the Amazon Fire TV set-top box uses IMDb data as standard.

### X-RAY

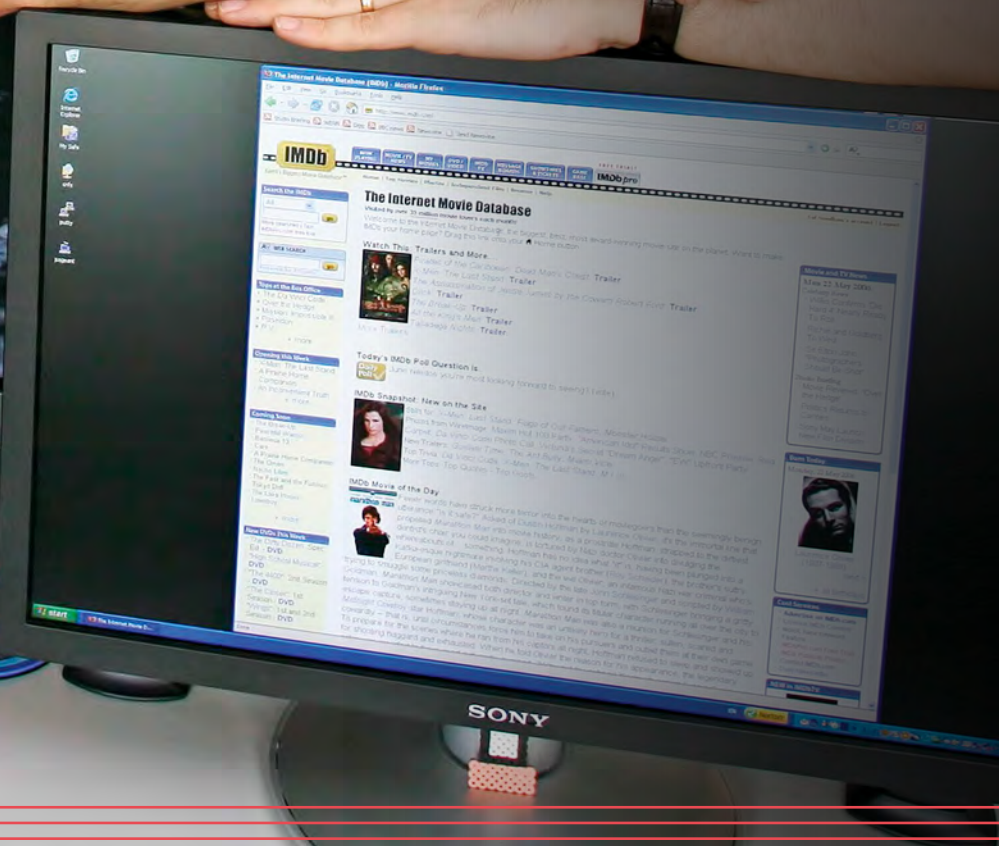
Every song, goof and actor's entrance has been time-coded to allow viewers with compatible devices to access the relevant information while the scene is playing. Crucially, the feature is second-screen friendly, so you can browse the data on a tablet without interrupting the movie.

### PRO CASTING

Launched in 2014, this tailored application of the IMDbPro service is designed specifically to assist casting directors and actors alike, via advanced search functions, demo reel uploads and other tools.

### VIDEO CONTENT

We're not just talking about trailers; IMDb is now a regular producer of original content such as recommendation show *What To Watch*. Needham is especially proud of "the nice kind of symmetry in the fact that of course *What to Watch* has an IMDb title page in IMDb!"







were having an informal competition as to who was going to see the most movies at Sundance and he beat me by one!”

If you're wondering how Needham finds the time, it's because, by his own admission, “I've been obsessed by film for my entire life.” His conversation is littered with ‘wows’ and punctuated by giggles, still at heart the movie junkie who, aged 14, watched *Alien* 14 times in 14 days. Needham began to list his viewing habits in the early '80s and still keeps a running tally. Today, “I'm heading to that 9,000 mark, very soon.”

Crucially, Needham didn't simply note the titles but rewound his VHS tapes to log the credits of key cast and crew. “It was just for my own use to track what I was watching and who was making these things,” Needham explains – except his hobby coincided with a computing boom that would help it go viral. An unabashed technology nerd, Needham was 12 years old when he built his first computer and has had an email address since 1985. By the late '80s, Needham found like-minded cinephiles online in the Usenet film discussion group, rec.arts.movies.

As more credit crunchers shared their lists, they needed a tool to manage the increasingly complex data. “One thing led to another,” Needham explains – a humble description of IMDb's genesis. On 17 October 1990, Needham published the inaugural IMDb software, which users downloaded and (in the days before the world wide web) installed on their own computers.

It wasn't immediately obvious, but the fledgling Internet Movie Database chimed with the times. The vast data storage echoed the wider shift in cinema towards digitisation. Just as Needham was popularising the benefits of knowing who starred in what film, Quentin Tarantino was putting the same trivia up on the screen. Meanwhile, laserdisc and DVD extras confirmed the commercial value of film facts. Fuelled by Needham's small army of “super-

passionate” volunteers, growth was rapid. The first IMDb website, one of the earliest 100 ever to launch, arrived in 1993. The business was incorporated in 1996; the first time Needham met any of his fellow directors was in the lawyer's reception before signing the paperwork. The same year, IMDb.com was launched and the site began to sell advertising space, with 20th Century Fox becoming a notable early adopter to promote *Independence Day*. Only then did Needham quit his day job at Hewlett-Packard to become IMDb's first full-time employee.



Already, IMDb was becoming the world's de facto source of credits, goofs and other trivia, its one-click access like finding the Holy Grail for cinephiles hitherto confined to printed guides. In turn, IMDb's user-generated star ratings overrode critical orthodoxy to create a truly populist canon where *The Shawshank Redemption* outperforms critical faves like *Vertigo*... even if the latter, ironically, is Needham's personal favourite. But he doesn't mind. “I'm a great believer that every film, every show, has an audience. It's just a case of making sure that the audience can find that content.”

It wasn't only the fans who had taken notice. In 1998, Needham was approached by fellow online entrepreneur Jeff Bezos, who needed a site partner to help launch Amazon's expansion into selling movies. Needham agreed to an acquisition, enabling IMDb to put all its volunteer shareholders on the payroll as a subsidiary of Amazon, and propelling the site into a new era where visitors could not only discover a film but then buy it online. Needham has no regrets. “Jeff's such a visionary looking forward into the future. Here we are now with things like Amazon Prime Instant Video and Amazon Studios producing TV shows. IMDb fits very nicely within that Amazon family.”

Yet Needham realised that, in addition to audiences, the data could also benefit filmmakers. Even during IMDb's infancy, Hollywood had given its seal of approval. “There was no resistance at all. If anything, it was completely the opposite. People in the film industry would be like, ‘Oh thank goodness we can finally get information about the films that we've made.’”

## ‘Steven Spielberg wanted to shake Needham's hand’



Home work: Needham runs IMDb from his suburban Bristol abode.

So in 2002, Needham launched IMDbPro, the commercial subscription service for entertainment professionals that provides contact information, detailed box office data and the proprietary STARMeter and MOVIEmeter tools, which track the popularity of people and titles over time. Needham believes the latter duo have played a crucial role in shaping modern Hollywood. “Pro subscribers can do searches based on current STARMeter, they can look at historical trends, they can see who's been where and who might be an up-and-coming star.”

*Twilight* offers proof of STARMeter's power. After conventional casting had failed to find a suitable Edward Cullen, STARMeter was used to “find someone who's perhaps been in a *Harry Potter* film, who would meet these criteria to play Edward. [*The producers*] went out for lunch, came back and there's an IMDbPro print-out





Star power: Col Needham with Oscar winner Lupita Nyong'o at the Toronto International Film Festival in 2013.

on the desk and there was Robert Pattinson," beams Needham.

In 2008 IMDb bolstered its strength by acquiring the Box Office Mojo and Without A Box websites, meaning that the entire film experience is in some way mediated by IMDb. Directors submit their films to festivals via the Without A Box service; the project receives its IMDb title page; the film is premiered and then released; the gross is listed on Box Office Mojo; the data on its popularity is fed back to studios via STARMeter.

**I**n more mercenary hands, the sheer power of the data might make IMDb a gateway to the dark side. Couldn't STARMeter give agents greater leverage in pushing hot-but-hopeless actors into A-list projects, cause execs to play safe by green-lighting variations on proven formulae, or reduce the career prospects of older actors? It was exactly the latter fear that led actress Junie Hoang, in 2011, to issue a million-dollar lawsuit against IMDb for listing her full birth date. (At time of writing the case is still under appeal.)

Yet criticism is surprisingly slight, and perhaps the difference is Needham himself. In an increasingly corporate cinema landscape, Needham combines geek affability with an evangelical belief in the magic of movies reminiscent of the Golden Age studio tsars.

Despite IMDb having offices in Seattle and Santa Monica, Needham prefers to control his empire from his Bristol home. "My secret plan, which obviously can't be so secret if I'm telling you, is to make everybody as big a film and TV buff as I am!" If so, he's succeeding. In 2014 alone, more than 300,000 titles were added to IMDb. The mobile app has 115 million downloads and counting. IMDb has 200 million unique monthly visitors.

The latest innovations at IMDb are devoted to extending what Needham calls "that wonderful loop," whereby each new discovery "leads you on a journey to build up your watch list, so you watch more great movies and more great shows and more great web series, and then of course that informs your next view." Pro Casting beds IMDb further into the creation of movies by providing a platform to help producers find cast members. Similarly, the X-Ray function on smart TVs and tablets deepens the audience's ability to harness IMDb's data by offering pop-up, real-time trivia while watching a movie at home.

Certainly, like his creation, Needham thinks in terms of film. Before meeting his hero Steven Spielberg, for example, he couldn't help but recall a famous movie moment. "I'm thinking, 'Oh my goodness, I'm Luca Brasi waiting to meet Don Corleone in *The Godfather!*'" The irony is that Needham himself has become the don; it was Spielberg who wanted to shake Needham's hand, telling him, "I use IMDb all the time!"

Power would never go to Needham's head, though; he recounts meeting a novice 15-year-old director with the same delight as his close encounter with Spielberg. It is this ongoing crusade to promote and preserve film culture that has led to Needham securing an unexpected credit on his own IMDb page: as an actor. "There was a charity auction to raise money for the BFI Archive, and one of the lots was to win a credited non-speaking role in *Suffragette*, directed by Sarah Gavron," he explains. "It's the first film that's been allowed to shoot at the Houses of Parliament since the '50s and my scene was shot there."

Needham might well end up back in Parliament one day; an honour is surely overdue. All that's stopping him is how few people realise that IMDb is run by a Brit. Then again, even Needham downplays his nationality. "The way I think about it, IMDb is really headquartered on the internet!"

Meanwhile, the mission – to find great new movies – remains unchanged, and Needham leads by example. "My current 2015 watchlist has 295 titles in it. I'm getting to the point where there are fewer days left in the year than there 2015 movies to watch." Somehow, you suspect he'll find the time.



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## CHRIS PRATT

After breaking out big-time as the roguish, Han Solo-esque star of Marvel's *Guardians Of The Galaxy*, Pratt's stock is set to soar even higher as the raptor-wrangling hero of *Jurassic World*. With *Guardians 2* in the pipeline and current reports pegging him as Indiana Jones in Disney's upcoming reboot, the future is looking very bright.

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## GILLIAN FLYNN

With *Gone Girl* giving David Fincher his biggest hit yet, author/screenwriter Flynn will reunite with the *Seven* director and star Ben Affleck for a classy remake of Hitchcock's *Strangers On A Train*. Before that, there's two more Flynn adapts on the way – thriller *Dark Places* and Jason Blum-produced TV show *Sharp Objects*.

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## THE HUNGER GAMES: MOCKINGJAY – PT. 2

Katniss is back for war in this epic end to the dystopian YA series, one that's already taken \$2.3bn worldwide. Expect *Mockingjay – Part 2* to carry on that success, using all the book's best bits (Beasts! Bombs! Betrayal!) to send the series out with a bang.



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## THE MARTIAN

Ridley Scott's rekindled passion for sci-fi continues apace with this story of an astronaut (Matt Damon) stranded on Mars and struggling to send an SOS home. Stellar support too, with (deep breath) Kate Mara, Jessica Chastain, Kristen Wiig, Chiwetel Ejiofor, Sebastian Stan, Jeff Daniels and Sean Bean filling out the impressive cast.

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## JENNIFER KENT

*The Babadook* may have been her first film, but the director is destined for huge things. Starting as an actor, later interning for Lars von Trier, Kent's debut won her multiple awards, though she has "no desire to be the queen of horror". She currently has two scripts in the pipeline. We'd love to see what she'd do with a Marvel movie.





# LEA SEYDOUX

The french rising star who's taking on Bond.

WORDS SIMON KINNEAR

41

As Carole Bouquet, Sophie Marceau and Eva Green proved, if it's chic elegance you want in a 007 movie, think French. Until now, however, no

Bond girl can claim a Palme D'Or win amongst their achievements. That's changed with the casting of Léa Seydoux as Madeleine Swann, alongside Daniel Craig's James Bond, in Sam Mendes' hotly-anticipated *SPECTRE*.

Seydoux (alongside co-star Adèle Exarchopoulos) won the coveted Cannes prize for her role in steamy lesbian romance *Blue Is The Warmest Colour*, which also netted her a Rising Star BAFTA nomination. Now, she'll showcase her skills in a gig that – after Judi Dench's M turned Bond girl in *Skyfall* – is no longer merely the eye-candy of popular legend.

Seydoux is up for the challenge. "You have to get rid of the pressure, you just have to invent something new," she mused at last November's cast announcement, adding "she needs to be sexy, she's strong, she's tough, but I think that now she's more sensitive. She's more vulnerable."

Seydoux is no stranger to big movies, having already worked for Quentin Tarantino (*Inglourious Basterds*), Woody Allen (*Midnight In Paris*) and Wes Anderson (*The Grand Budapest Hotel*) – not to mention her memorable appearance as assassin Sabine Moreau in *Mission: Impossible – Ghost Protocol*. Filming that movie, she admitted: "I wasn't used to holding a gun so for me it was really exciting and at the same time I was a little scared about it." As Seydoux joins Craig on the slopes in his first, long-awaited, 007 ski chase, she's now undoubtedly ready for action.

Even without Bond, 2015 will be a banner year for Seydoux, with an appearance in loopy sci-fi thriller *The Lobster* and starring roles in new versions of French classics *Diary Of A Chambermaid* and *Beauty And The Beast*. Yet *SPECTRE* remains the one to beat, and Seydoux is stirred – and definitely not shaken – by the opportunity. "I'm very happy to be part of this film," she says. "It's like a dream."

*SPECTRE* opens on 23 October.







# REBECCA FERGUSON

Keeping up with the Cruiser... WORDS EMMA JOHNSTON

42

Given that *Mission: Impossible 5* has been pulled *forward* to a summer release from its original

Christmas slot, precious few details have leaked about the fifth installment of the successful action franchise – not least its new leading lady, Rebecca Ferguson. Though given she's been spotted on set running through heavy traffic in the streets of London and hanging from harnesses in Vienna

– both at the side of stunt-happy co-star Tom Cruise – chances are she'll be trying to save the world as one of the Impossible Mission Force's latest recruits.

It's quite the change of direction from the roles that the 31-year-old Swedish actress is best known for among English-speaking audiences – a Golden Globe-nominated star turn as Elizabeth Woodville in the BBC historical period drama *The White Queen*, and a smouldering

supporting role as Thracian princess Egeria in Dwayne Johnson's *Hercules*. But lining up alongside Cruise, Simon Pegg, Jeremy Renner and co in Chris McQuarrie's spy sequel is another step against typecasting, with the actress proudly referring to her own CV as “a potpourri of different things, which I love.”

But despite her move into blockbuster territory, she's still refusing to play the Hollywood game. Having tried LA life when promoting *The White Queen* and *Hercules*, Ferguson admits she's happier escaping the craziness of

Tinseltown to return to the small seaside village in the south of Sweden where she lives a rural existence with her partner Ludwig and small son Isac, in the converted windmill they call home. “I'm not interested in ‘cracking America’,” says the refreshingly down-to-earth actress. “My dream is to work with amazing people, them come home, take off these heels, put on my fishing boots... and start working on my windmill!”

**Mission: Impossible 5 opens on 31 July.**





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# THE REVENANT

Alejandro González Iñárritu follows up his Oscar win with a hard-edged, DiCaprio-starring western. WORDS EMMA MORGAN

**I**T'S ACK TO EARTH WITH A bang after *Birdman* for Oscar-winning director Alejandro González Iñárritu, who's turning his focus away from the bright lights of Broadway and brooding superheroes to unlit, 19th-Century Montana, for a no-less-transfixing tale of revenge amongst brutal frontiersmen.

Based on the 2003 novel authored by high-ranking White House insider Michael Punke (a man whose current position within the US Government prevents him from even discussing the book), *The Revenant* is inspired by real-life folk hero Hugh Glass, an expert trapper for the Rocky Mountain Fur Company, who was mauled by a grizzly during an expedition and

expected to succumb to his wounds. When the two men left to watch over him rob and abandon Glass to save their own asses, the never-say-die adventurer sets out to make them pay in the time-honoured way. Leonardo DiCaprio dons the pelts and gun-belts as legendary beaver-trapper Glass, while Brits Tom Hardy and Will Poulter play the mercenaries on whom he's set his sights: John Fitzgerald and Jim Bridger.

Originally earmarked by Park Chan-wook as a Samuel L Jackson vehicle, the project had also passed through the hands of John Hillcoat – who trod similar territory in *The Proposition* and favoured Christian Bale for Glass – before Iñárritu took the reins, with filming finally commencing (after over a decade in development

hell) last October. Due to Iñárritu's decision to shoot chronologically in remote Canadian locations using only natural light, the production has become an epic endeavour, likely to stretch well into May. "We are shooting very small hours, little-by-little jewel moments," Iñárritu explains, "to create intensity in these moments. Every single scene is so difficult: emotionally, technically. I've gotten myself in trouble again, but I'm trying my best..."

With *Gravity*'s Emmanuel Lubezki as cinematographer they're surely in safe hands, but it sounds like it's turning into something of a Method shoot for all involved – not least DiCaprio, whose Glass has to traverse 3,000 unforgiving miles with a badly broken leg and





Hugh Glass (DiCaprio) takes aim and (inset) DiCaprio and Iñárritu on location.



no weapons. "He's a brave, incredible actor," says Iñárritu, "I'm so surprised about how good he is... there's a profound understanding of humanity I can see through his eyes." Could it be enough to finally let DiCaprio get his hands on that most desirable of all Hollywood arm candy – an Oscar? This time next year, we'll know... if they ever finish filming, that is.

**The Revenant opens on 15 January 2016.**



## CRIMSON PEAK

GDT's back to scare us silly.

44

With most modern horror movies apparently giving up the ghost, along comes Guillermo del Toro's fantastically twisted imagination to breathe new afterlife into the genre. Scaling right back after epic blockbuster *Pacific Rim*, del Toro's new, enticingly visual film sees Mia Wasikowska play an aspiring author in the 19th Century who succumbs to the mysterious charms of Tom Hiddleston and moves into a sinister house with supernatural scares hiding behind every door. Del Toro promises a throwback to classical gothic ghost stories, but with some "really, really disturbing" scenes to lend the film a classification worthy of a horrifying frightfest.

**Crimson Peak opens on 16 October 2015.**



## SILENCE

Scorsese's horrible history.

45

Martin Scorsese's adaptation of Shusaku Endo's 1966 novel is about as far from *The Wolf Of Wall Street* as it's possible to get – the story of 17th Century Jesuit priests facing persecution and brutality as they journey through Japan, at a time when Christians were driven underground in the country. Scorsese has been planning the project, starring Liam Neeson and Andrew Garfield, for a long time, telling *TF* last year that, "It's similar to *Mean Streets*, in a way. It deals with spiritual matters in a concrete, physical world; a world where invariably the worst of human nature is revealed."

**Silence opens in 2016.**





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Testosterone:  
Channing's muscles  
front *Magic Mike XXL*.

# SEX AND THE CINEMA

How *Fifty Shades Of Grey* harnessed the power of the bonkbuster and unchained a slew of smut. WORDS EMMA MORGAN

**S**ex sells. That's nothing new, but the revelation that *Fifty Shades Of Grey* made over a quarter of a billion in its opening weekend (an estimated \$270,497,580 worldwide) likely raised far more eyebrows in anything-goes Hollywood than Christian's Red Room. Unaccompanied teens may have rioted when refused entry to screenings (they should pop to France where, in contrast to the US' NC-17 and UK's 18 ratings, they're OK with 12 year olds being *au fait* with S&M) but they'll be of age when the deluge of bandwagon blueies hit screens, even if – as is widely reported without confirmation – Sam Taylor-Johnson has jumped ship from the sequels to which Jamie Dornan and Dakota Johnson are tightly bound.

Until then, there's slightly more chaste material on the way in *Magic Mike XXL*, wherein the Floridian willy wavers make their way to South Carolina for a stripping convention (Q: where will they put their nametags?), without the ass-istance of Matthew McConaughey but *with* erstwhile director Steven Soderbergh acting as cinematographer and editor. Dare he share more than Dornan's infamous flash of pubes'n'shaft, will Joe Manganiello's Big Dick Richie make good on his moniker? If the ante has been upped, the trousers must be dropped...

From the opposite end of the screen-sex spectrum, there's Sundance-celebrated *The Diary Of A Teenage Girl*. More *Blue Is The Warmest Colour* than *Fifty Shades Of Grey*, it's the tale of 15-year-old Minnie losing her virginity to her mum's

boyfriend (opening line: "I just had sex. Holy shit!") on the first stop of an explicit journey of self-discovery. First-time writer-director Marielle Heller has turned Phoebe Gloeckner's semi-graphic novel into a full-frontal showcase for the talents of big-eyed Brit Bel Powley (actually now 23), who more than holds her own beside Alexander Skarsgård's deflowerer and boho mum Kristen Wiig in the '70s period piece.

But no amount of arthouse humping can erase the spectre of EL James' empire spawning sequels. Shooting is expected to start in June on the inevitable *Fifty Shades Darker* adap ahead of a 2016 release, with *Fifty Shades Freed* to follow. (The similarly marketed *Crossfire* series by Sylvia Day, in which a damaged billionaire and a young ingénue find solace – and sex! Don't forget the sex! – in each other, has been optioned by Lionsgate for a TV series, while books by grande dame of glossy bonkbusters Jackie Collins remain shackled to the small screen.)

The real issue is, as the casting of *Fifty Shades* has shown, how to get fully fledged A-listers to take the leap into more adult entertainment. Casting eager unknowns is one thing, jaded stars another. James based Christian Grey on *Twilight*'s Edward Cullen and badly wanted





Rich raunch: *Fifty Shades* has raked it in and (below) *The Diary Of A Teenage Girl* is set to ride the wave.



Robert Pattinson to play the part but, of course, there was no 'win' for him. "I haven't actually read the book," Pattinson airily told Reuters, before admitting "there's some kind of profound connection that a bunch of people have to it and I've never figured out quite what it is..." Lars von Trier might be able to get edgy actors like Charlotte Gainsbourg and Willem Dafoe to simulate shagging but even they opted for porn doubles, digitally imposed genitals and prosthetics (Nicole Kidman quit *Nymphomaniac* altogether). Eva Green and Ewan McGregor could be exceptions, both happy to strip if the script so demands (together, in *Perfect Sense*), and Kate Winslet made her name partly naked, but in mainstream multiplex movies? Forget it.

The closest bone fide stars come to boning is in ludicrous moments like the shower scene in 1994 action dud *The Specialist*, where Sly and Sharon Stone grapple gymnastically against white tile for an interminable, deeply unerotic eternity. (Stone, it's worth noting, has a 'nudity rider' in contracts, allowing her a veto on the final edit of such scenes, as does Charlize Theron, while Julia Roberts and Megan Fox simply refuse to be filmed nude.)

Because as Taylor-Johnson realised, much to the chagrin of James and her devotees, less is more in the movies. Sex is distracting unless it's also the story, which it so rarely is. The most sizzling scenes in cinema aren't the ones where we shift uncomfortably in our seats, praying for a reel change, but when the promise of sex is scented in the air, when chemistry between the leads is heady enough to hint at the activities that may ensue. It's why *The Philadelphia Story* still makes hearts race after 75 years, as Katharine Hepburn and James Stewart flirt boozily by the pool post-engagement party, while romcoms stocked with studio-approved hotties barely merit a mention in the month of release. Screen sex isn't just visual, it's also mental, potential, a tantalising intimation of intimacy rather than a tame recreation where you know full well the male lead's male lead is safely secured in a draw-string pouch. Sex is for sale everywhere but sexual chemistry – that's the x-factor even Hollywood can't replicate.

**Magic Mike XXL opens on 31 July. *The Diary Of A Teenage Girl* is awaiting UK distribution. *Fifty Shades Darker* is expected to open in 2016.**



## 47 KEANU REEVES

There's been talk of a Keanu-ssance ever since *John Wick* hit US cinemas last fall. The Reeve-invention looks set to continue now the *Matrix* star – soon to be hounded in Eli Roth's sexy home invasion thriller *Knock Knock* – has joined the cast of *The Neon Demon*, Nicolas Winding Refn's "horror film about vicious beauty".

## 48 JANE GOT A GUN

Lynne Ramsay, Jude Law, Michael Fassbender... they've all been involved in this 'troubled' western at one stage or another. Yet Natalie Portman's passion project has rolled on regardless and is set to come out, all guns blazing, this autumn. Nats is Jane, an outlaw's wife who inveigles ex-lover Ewan McGregor to defend her homestead against nasty varmints.

## 49 ALEX GARLAND

The *Ex Machina* man may have ruled out a sequel to his stylish robo-thriller but he's not shutting the door on the *28 Days Later* franchise, recently confirming that he and Danny Boyle have an idea for a third installment, to be called, inevitably perhaps, *28 Months Later*. His next directing gig might be an adap of Jeff VanderMeer's scary sci-fi *Annihilation* too.



## 50 VICTOR FRANKENSTEIN

Billed as a "platonic love story" by director Paul McGuigan, the latest spin on Mary Shelley's classic will focus on the relationship between James McAvoy's Frankenstein and Daniel Radcliffe's Igor. "I would struggle to class it as horror," says Radcliffe. "It's really a kind of rip-roaring, fun adventure."

## 51 PAUL FEIG

You wouldn't have thought the dude behind *Bridesmaids* would have made the *Ghostbusters* cut, even with Melissa McCarthy action-com *Spy* out in June. Factor in the all-girl cast, though, and it makes more sense. The 52-year-old also has a producing credit on *The Peanuts Movie*...





# JOHN BOYEGA

This is the rising star you're looking for... WORDS EMMA JOHNSTON

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UP UNTIL LAST YEAR, JOHN Boyega was probably best known for playing alien-fighting gang leader Moses in Joe Cornish's council estate sci-fi, *Attack The Block*.

But that all changed overnight, when Disney and director J.J. Abrams revealed he'd been cast as Stormtrooper Finn in *Star Wars: The Force Awakens*. Ever since that pivotal, career-boosting announcement, Boyega's been enjoying the inevitable fan mayhem that the *Star Wars* franchise brings. "The fan mail and fan art has added to my joy," he wrote in a note on Instagram, not long after the teaser trailer gave us a peek at his character stranded in the Tatooine desert, decked out in classic Stormtrooper armour. "Isn't it crazy that *Star Wars* is actually happening?"

Having learned his trade at London drama schools and onstage at the National Theatre, Boyega made his big-screen debut in 2011's *Attack The Block*, followed by roles in indie LA gang drama *Imperial Dreams* (which nabbed an audience award at the 2014 Sundance Film Festival) and opposite Kiefer Sutherland in TV miniseries *24: Live Another Day*. But his ambition went back to his primary school days, where a feline epiphany set him on his path... "I was playing this leopard [*in a school play*], and I gave him character breakdown," laughs Boyega. "That is the greatest feeling ever – when you're young and you're like, 'Oh, this is quite cool – I really, really want to do this.'"

Both as a self-confessed *Star Wars* fan and an aspiring thesp, Boyega's childhood dreams were made a bone fide reality with his casting in *The Force Awakens*, a film the actor guarantees is going to be "a great time". "J.J. is a passionate guy," he says. "We're going back to the originals and staying true to practical effects. I think fans should be very excited."

JEFF VESPA / CONTOUR BY GETTY IMAGES, PRESS ASSOCIATION IMAGES





# DAISY RIDLEY

The galaxy's shining new light. WORDS MATT LOOKER

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AS FAR AS LUCKY SHOTS GO, this is one in a million: going from bit-part TV actress to lead star of the biggest movie franchise in the galaxy. Following in George Lucas' footsteps, J.J. Abrams deliberately cast relative unknowns in his new hope for the further adventures of the Force, and that's certainly true of Daisy Ridley, a name that must have been Googled more times in the past year than "funny pugs".

As it turns out, there was reason for the unfamiliarity: Ridley's acting career began just one year before her casting in *Star Wars: The Force Awakens* was announced. And yet, in that time, she had already gathered an impressive CV. One of her first roles was the lead in BAFTA-

nominated interactive film *Lifesaver*. She then picked up guest roles in *Casualty*, *Silent Witness* and *Mr. Selfridge* before her big news was revealed in April 2014. At the time, she tweeted: "This is the greatest day of my life. I'm told I can't say who I'm playing yet, but it's exciting!"

Since then, her character name has been revealed as "Rey", with no other details available. However, with rumours around that her name could be followed by a "Skywalker" or a "Solo", not to mention reports that Ridley will be returning to the series for Episodes VIII and IX, it seems the young actress could be the bright centre of this new *Star Wars* universe.

***Star Wars: The Force Awakens* opens on 18 December.**

## STARS IN THEIR EYES

The new talents of the *Star Wars* universe.

54

### GARETH EDWARDS

The *Godzilla* filmmaker will direct the first *Star Wars* spin-off movie, set for release on 16 December 2016, which is rumoured to feature Boba Fett and other bounty hunters as they plan to steal the Death Star plans. Exactly how the newly announced casting of Felicity Jones fits into that is anybody's guess.

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### JOSH TRANK

The *Fantastic Four* director will be taking on the second standalone *Star Wars* movie, rumoured to be about a young Han Solo. "The magic of the *Star Wars* universe defined my entire childhood," says Trank. "The opportunity to expand on that experience for future generations is the most incredible dream of all time."

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### FELICITY JONES

It was announced in February that the *Theory Of Everything* Oscar-nominee has signed up to be the lead in Edwards' first spin-off, with rumours suggesting that she could be cast as a young Princess Leia. Jones has avoided all questions about the role, however...



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### RIAN JOHNSON

In June 2014, it was announced that the *Looper* director would take over duties on the new trilogy from J.J. Abrams after *The Force Awakens* is released. He is currently slated to write and direct *Episode VIII*, and will also write a treatment for *Episode IX*.

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### DOMHNALL GLEESON

Rumours about Gleeson's *Force Awakens* role refuse to go away – the internet seems convinced that Gleeson will play Luke Skywalker's son in the new films. It doesn't help that a fake Twitter account for Gleeson "confirmed" the news earlier this year.







**Blustery:** Kate Mara plays The Invisible Woman, Sue Storm.



**A stretch:** Miles Teller plays Mister Fantastic, Reed Richards.

**Suit up:** Michael B. Jordan is set to catch fire as The Human Torch, Johnny Storm.





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# FANTASTIC FOUR

Ten reasons why Josh Trank's grittier, more up-to-date take on Marvel's first family could be this summer's most surprising hit... WORDS MATT LOOKER

## IT'S A NEW BEGINNING

Let's face it, the very idea of 'cosmic rays' causing genetic transformations belongs back in the '60s, when the *Fantastic Four* were first introduced. But alternate universes? That's a much more credible idea. Taking its cue from the *Ultimates* series, our awesome foursome get their abilities after a failed experiment in teleportation to a parallel dimension.

## IT WILL BE EDGIER THAN BEFORE

After the previous *Fantastic Four* films, which were light in both tone and substance, this is a reboot that gives the long-standing superhero team the cinematic respect they deserve. Writer Simon Kinberg has said that the film is "more grounded" than the previous efforts, with more focus on character, emotion and drama.

## IT'S DIRECTED BY JOSH TRANK

With just one film to his name so far, director Josh Trank has secured not only this franchise, but also a coveted standalone *Star Wars* movie. With *Chronicle*, he impressed with original storytelling and exceptional cost-cutting visual FX, so with an established property and a much bigger budget, Trank should deliver something truly special.

## THE CAST IS FANTASTIC

With Miles Teller, Kate Mara, Michael B. Jordan and Jamie Bell stepping into the jumpsuits to make up the superhero pseudo-family, and Toby Kebbell on bad-guy duties, this superhero movie is a hotbed of pretty much all the hottest new stars in Hollywood.

## MILES TELLER IS IN IT

Of all of these, Miles Teller stands out as perhaps the most exciting prospect. Fresh from universal

acclaim for his role in the Oscar-nominated *Whiplash*, Teller can lend credibility to a role that previously saw Ioan Gruffudd simply do some silly stretching while raising an eyebrow. This will be a Reed Richards with grit.

## THE THING WILL BE CGI

For the first time, we'll see a big-screen version of Ben Grimm's The Thing in a way that will do his monstrously rocky exterior justice (rather than being made out of rubber and Michael Chiklis). In this new reboot, the character will be created entirely with CGI, with actor Jamie Bell providing the motion capture.

## DOCTOR DOOM HAS BEEN REINVENTED

There's been a lot of fan furore over Doctor Doom's movie reincarnation as a hacker (now simply called 'Doom'), but this is a much more grounded version of his villainy. He is essentially a cyber terrorist in the film, but Kinberg assures that he has "aspirations and struggles that are a little bit more classically tragic than the other characters".

## IT'S AN ALL-ENCOMPASSING ADAPTATION

In adapting the story, Kinberg says this is "a celebration of all the *Fantastic Four* comics that have preceded it", with the more "optimistic and inspirational" elements of the original series running alongside newer ingredients from the 'Ultimates' imprint and the current comics.

## IT'S "HARD SCI-FI"

Josh Trank sees this film less as a superhero movie and more of a "hard sci-fi take" on the Four's origin tale. Even more tantalisingly, Trank cites Cronenberg as a major influence on how the body transformations are handled. A Cronenbergian superhero film? We can't wait.

## IT HAS CROSSOVER POTENTIAL

20th Century Fox's Marvel-property consultant Mark Millar has said that this film takes place in the same universe as the studio's other superpowered series, *X-Men*. Kinberg has since played down the idea of a crossover, but those rumours persist and, if *Fantastic Four* is a hit, surely it wouldn't hurt to take a cast or two from the Marvel mould...

*Fantastic Four* opens on 6 August 2015.







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# MATTHIAS SCHOENAERTS

WORDS JAMES MOTTRAM

The Belgian beau who's romancing Michelle Williams, Kate Winslet and Carey Mulligan...



## FUTURE TECH

Five innovations shaping cinema.

### 61 4K AND 8K TELEVISIONS

Not only will 2015 be the year that the average home is able to at the very least consider forking out for a 4K TV, but it'll also be the year that thousands more companies start making films and TV in higher resolution to meet that increased demand. And that means a better experience for everyone, from the multiplex-goer to the Netflix subscriber.

### 62 THE RISE OF DRONES

Already considered by the tabloids as an evil as insidious as terrorists or tax-dodgers, the cheap drone has had an immediate impact on filmmaking. Pricey crane or helicopter shots can now be replicated for a fraction of the cost – a fascinating extra string to the indie auteur's bow.

### 63 4D OR NOT 4D

Whether you like being tossed around in your cinema seat, wafted with bursts of chemical scent and rudely sprayed with water or not, it's clear that 4D is here to stay. With a bit of luck, someone will work out the best way to use it to transcend the gimmicks and present a proper cinematic experience. Just lay off the bubbles, OK?

### 64 VIRTUAL REALITY

VR is the hottest ticket in tech, and although we're not quite ready to rule out another '80s-esque slide into obscurity just yet, the repercussions for entertainment and film are clear. Who wouldn't want to wander round 18th Century New York? Or indeed the Death Star? Plus, VR will already let you sit in a virtual cinema on the moon, and that's pretty awesome.

### 65 VFX THAT WON'T BREAK THE BANK

Gareth Edwards showed with *Monsters* that you don't necessarily need a huge budget to do blockbuster effects, but even in the few years since its release computers have got more powerful, more accessible and that much more capable of bringing professional standard VFX for those with the talent and patience to dream big.

Let's get this straight: Matthias Schoenaerts does not play tough guys. OK, he was the damaged, hormone-pumping farmer in his 2011 breakthrough *Bullhead*, a bare-knuckle single-father fighter in *Rust And Bone*, a jail-bird in his American debut *Blood Ties* and a psycho-nut in last year's *The Drop*. But the Belgian is no meat-head muscle-man simply leaping from one hard case to the next.

Arguing that with the exception of Anthony in *Blood Ties* none of the aforementioned were ruffians, he admits such typecasting is annoying. "I might look tough, but a lot of people can't see past the form – they can't see past the physical presence," he sighs. "They see a big guy, with broad shoulders, who punches someone in the face in the film – and they pin him down as a bad guy. I try to do everything to get out of that box when I play a character."

An actor of extremes, the 37 year-old is now proving he's got more to his locker than a good right hook. In *Suite Française*, he plays a German soldier in World War 2 who falls for Michelle Williams' rural French lass. He follows it with Alan Rickman's *A Little Chaos*, in which he plays André Le Nôtre, landscape designer to King Louis XIV who romances Kate Winslet's green-fingered assistant at Versailles.

Not enough for you? Schoenaerts can then be seen in the beguiling Thomas Hardy adaptation *Far From The Madding Crowd*, playing lowly farmer Gabriel Oak, one of three suitors of Carey Mulligan's headstrong Bathsheba. Yet he's insistent that he didn't feel the need to change gears. "Of course I am aware there's a romantic aspect [to these films]. But it's not that I thought, 'Now I have to do something different.'"

Certainly in the case of *Suite Française*, with its WW2 backdrop, as Schoenaerts' character Bruno von Falk becomes dangerously entwined with William's Lucille, it's not all hearts and flowers. "The most interesting love stories are about hidden love, or forbidden love, or impossible love," he notes. "Most of the time, those are the films that are the best, when things are not as easy as we would want them to be. Easy is boring!"

While Schoenaerts (pronounced 'SCONE-arts') has a fine command of English, performing in his second language – in three period films no less – was not easy. "It's something that had me breaking out in cold sweats for many, many nights," he laughs. "I was like, 'OK, I've got to work.' But also in *Suite Française*, doing the English, with a slight German accent, I can tell you, the first time [I did that] I could feel my heart pounding in my ear."

Born in Antwerp, he's come a long way since his first screen appearance when he was 15 – a bit-part ("I was playing wallpaper," he jokes) in Oscar-nominated Flemish film *Daens*, which also starred his father, actor Julien Schoenaerts. But he didn't warm to the profession. "The last thing I wanted to become was an actor. Probably that has to do with growing up and going against everything your parents stand for! I didn't like that universe. I didn't like the people within that universe especially."

Eventually he got sucked in after studying at the Academy Of Dramatic Arts in Antwerp. By 2001, he was acting regularly in local productions, even scoring a part in Paul Verhoeven's *Black Book*. But, piling on 60lbs of muscle in a transformation as dramatic as Tom Hardy in *Bronson*, it was *Bullhead* that sent him skywards. "I was totally surprised when it happened, but when I look back it now... if there was one film that it should've happened with, then it's that one. There's some kind of logic to it."

Currently playing a gallery owner opposite Eddie Redmayne in *The Danish Girl*, the new film by *The King's Speech* director Tom Hooper, Schoenaerts has also wrapped *A Bigger Splash*, a re-interpretation of the classic French movie *La Piscine*, with Tilda Swinton and Ralph Fiennes. But he's too mellow to get over-excited about the A-List turn his career has taken. "I don't try to think about it too much," he shrugs. "I just try to go with the flow and try to really be where I am in the moment."

*Suite Française* opens on 13 March. *A Little Chaos* is released on 17 April. *Far From The Madding Crowd* opens on 1 May.





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# MAZE RUNNER: THE SCORCH TRIALS

It's out of the frying pan and into the fire for Wes Ball's post-apocalyptic sequel. WORDS RICHARD JORDAN



IT'S A BALLSY ENDING, MAN," SAYS director Wes Ball of last year's Young Adult adap, *The Maze Runner*. He's not kidding... With Thomas (Dylan O'Brien), Teresa (Kaya Scodelario) and the rest of the surviving 'Gladers' finally making it out of the brutal future maze they were trapped in, only to find themselves confronted by a post-apocalyptic desert wasteland nicknamed 'The Scorch', the film's

coda threw up more questions than answers. Chief among them: why did shady organisation WICKED allow them to escape? And what do they have in store for them next?

To be fair, *The Maze Runner's* intriguing, cliffhanger ending was not entirely of Ball's doing, hewing closely to its source material – James Dashner's bestselling dystopian teen trilogy that continues with *The Scorch Trials* and ends with *The*

*Death Cure*. But it's probably the reason why the adaptation of Dashner's second novel was greenlit by studio 20th Century Fox just days before the release of the first film, meaning Ball and his crew were left little time to prepare for an even bigger, more sprawling production. "We pick up exactly where we left off," says Ball of the series' second chapter. "You could really watch the movies back to back and it would be one long story."

Moving the shoot from the swamps of Louisiana to the dusty open spaces of New Mexico, *The Scorch Trials* boasts a completely different aesthetic to its mostly lush, green predecessor, not to mention an



Running hot: The action bar is raised in *The Scorch Trials*.



expanding cast of scorched-Earth survivors, including the dynamic Brenda (*Insurgent*'s Rosa Salazar) – an anti-WICKED ally who rivals Teresa for Thomas' affections. Not all of the new world's inhabitants are quite as friendly, though, leading to some major bust-ups that will test the bonds forged in the maze. "We're cautiously optimistic," Ball says of his more ambitious sequel. "We're feeling excited that we're about to do something that's way more sophisticated, way more grown up, and really set up a saga."

**Maze Runner: The Scorch Trials opens on 18 September.**



## DEADPOOL

Reynolds' second chance.

67

Expect the fourth wall to crash down as Marvel's scarlet antihero finally makes it to the big screen after years in the wilderness.

Ryan Reynolds is back as the merc with the mouth, opposite *Homeland*'s Morena Baccarin as his love interest and MMA star Gina Carano as super-strong fellow mutant Angel Dust. Little is known about the plot, but given the high octane, gurning, wisecracking test footage that showed up on YouTube last year, we're already expecting it to blow Reynolds' lame duck *Green Lantern* and his Deadpool appearance in *X-Men Origins: Wolverine* out of the water.

**Deadpool opens on 12 February 2016.**

## EVEREST

Don't look down...

68

Director Baltasar Kormákur (*2 Guns*) could well have had something of an, erm, mountain to climb in getting audiences excited for a challenging disaster movie. His solution? A cannily put-together A-list ensemble. Telling the true story of the 1996 Mount Everest climb beset by a fierce snowstorm, *Everest* sees Jake Gyllenhaal and Jason Clarke play expedition leaders Scott Fischer and Rob Hall, backed by support from recent Oscar nominee Keira Knightley, Josh Brolin, John Hawkes and Sam Worthington. Filmed largely on location – and in 3D, no less – it promises to be a stunningly shot, and terrifyingly immersive, tale of tragedy, endurance and survival against the odds.

**Everest opens on 2 October.**







69

# THE WITCH

The breakout Sundance horror hit that will soon be infiltrating your nightmares... WORDS RICHARD JORDAN

**W**HEN I WAS A KID, I REALLY liked horror movies," says *The Witch* director Robert Eggers. "But aside from the Universal and Hammer films, I was too scared to watch them. I watched *It* and I just couldn't operate for months!" The irony of this statement is not lost on the Brooklyn-based filmmaker, talking to *Total Film* in a cosy lounge on Park City's icy Main Street, just days after scaring audiences silly with his Sundance-premiering debut – a terrifically twisted folk tale that proved to be one of the 2015 festival's biggest – and most terrifying – breakouts. But perhaps that makes him the perfect architect... "I feel that by *making* horror, I can kind of control it a little bit," he laughs.

Set in mid-17th Century New England with a script written in Jacobean English and based on real accounts from surviving period journals, *The Witch* follows a Puritan family – headed by none-more-fundamentalist parents William (gravel-voiced *The Office* star Ralph Ineson) and Katherine (Kate Dickie, aka *Game Of Thrones*' Lysa) – as they're cast out, or "banish-ed", from their settlement and forced to fend for themselves in a small house on the edge of a dark, creepy wood. When their baby son is snatched away from under their noses by the titular crone and the rest of the children start to succumb to dark forces, the exiled family begins to implode on itself, fuelled by fear, paranoia and intense religious hysteria – with the suspicion that even eldest daughter Thomasin

(a breakout performance from Eggers' fellow big-screen debutant, Anya Taylor-Joy) might be in cahoots with the devil.

Having grown up in the folklore-rich region of New England himself, Eggers was inspired by the tales he heard and sights he saw as a child. "New England's past was always a part of my consciousness," he explains. "There were all these dilapidated old colonial houses, and graveyards in the middle of the woods. My friends and I used to hear stories about 'the witch lives in that house'. That childhood world was really cool and I wanted to take the audience to that place and further than that – really harness the power of the past and create a nightmare that felt like it was an inherited experience of Puritan terror."



## FEAR FACTOR

Incoming horror to scream about



70

### POLTERGEIST

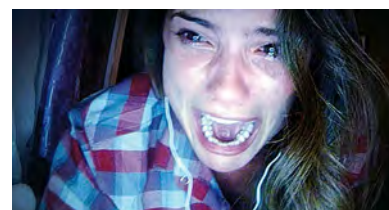
This Sam Raimi-produced reboot of the Steven Spielberg-produced 1982 original again sees a family move into a suburban house that acts as a portal to another dimension. The cast of Sam Rockwell, Rosemarie DeWitt and Jared Harris as an Irish ghost hunter is strong, and Harris promises, "We did fantastic work."



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### THE HALLOW

Award-winning music director Corin Hardy made monsters in his bedroom as a kid, so it's little wonder that his feature debut is in the horror vein, set in Ireland and positing a family confronted with demonic creatures living in the woods. 'Straw Dogs' meets 'Pan's Labyrinth' is the enticing pitch, and Hardy will next direct the long-gestating reboot of *The Crow*.



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### UNFRIENDED

Six Skype-ing friends are joined by a mysterious seventh person who seems to know an awful lot about a terrible event that occurred a year ago. Yes, it's *I Know What You Did Last Summer* given a cyber update. The whole film takes place on a computer monitor, with detours from Skype to Facebook, Spotify and Google. Early reviews have praised the innovation.

Witchery: Anya Taylor-Joy is haunted Thomasin, while (below) William (Ralph Ineson) says grace.



Eggers admits the production was challenging, not least because of his decision to shoot the whole thing on location. "The area was extraordinarily remote," he recalls. "There was no Wifi, no phone service, and the sun kept coming out when we wanted this gloomy, overcast thing." But Eggers' biggest on-set nemesis, it turns out, was the beast playing the family's sinister satanic goat – the scene-stealing 'Black Phillip'. "I would never recommend working with goats to anyone," he chuckles. "There's a reason for the phrase 'as stubborn as...'"

It wasn't just the talk of Black Phillip that had the Sundance crowds flocking to packed cinemas hoping to get an elusive 'waitlist' spot, though. The chilling visuals, drawn-out

tension and unbearably unnerving atmosphere resulted in such positive word of mouth, festival organisers were forced to put on extra screenings. Eggers, for one, is still overwhelmed by the response. "It was such a weird, embarrassingly ambitious project," he says, somewhat perplexed. "Certainly I believed in it, but part of me was like, 'Fuck! I did this thing in Jacobean English – are people going to really dig into it?' But people are. I think that there's proof in this reception that this can reach a wide audience. That's what creating this work is about; it's trying to share human experiences – even really, really dark, horrible ones."

*The Witch* opens later this year.





# BOX FRESH

Ten red-hot TV shows that you don't want to miss... WORDS JAMIE GRAHAM

## GAME OF THRONES

73

SEASON 5 OF HBO'S FLAGSHIP show is going to be huge, in every way. One glance at the trailer confirms the budget has spiralled to match the huge surge in viewers between seasons three and four, and the effects team seems to have received a good whack of it – witness a huge statue tumbling down the side of a mammoth stone structure in a scene that could be straight out of *The Lord Of The Rings*.

Shot in Croatia, Spain and Iceland between July and December 2014, S5 draws heavily on *A Feast For*

*Crows* and *A Dance With Dragons*, the fourth and fifth books of George R. R. Martin's *A Song Of Ice And Fire* saga. It finds Westeros on the brink of collapse, devastated by years of civil war, with Cersei Lannister (Lena Headey), who is the ruling Queen of the Seven Kingdoms in all but name, facing crippling debts and a population turning to religious fanaticism as they face starvation. The Lannisters are now squabbling with old allies the Tyrells, while fresh armies gather with an eye on the Iron Throne.

That, of course, is just a small corner of the Machiavellian politics that result in tides of blood.

So just when you thought things could get no darker, they, well, get darker. Sophie Turner, who plays *GOT* stalwart Sansa Stark, says, "There are some massive moments [*in Season 5*], perhaps even more shocking than the Red Wedding. A lot of blood, a lot of death." Given the Red Wedding, a grand massacre that killed off several key characters, is frequently cited as the most shocking moment in TV history, you'd best get ready for some serious shock and gore.

***Game Of Thrones: Season 5* premieres on Sky Atlantic from 13 April.**





74

**TWIN PEAKS**

Twenty-five years after Season 2 left viewers begging for answers, David Lynch is set to direct every episode of a sequel set in the present day and again starring Kyle MacLachlan as FBI agent Cooper. It's sure to be dark, twisted and surreal, though Showtime's president, David Nivens, says that Lynch and fellow creator Marc Frost "have been very specific in promising closure."



75

**EMPIRE**

Already a hit in the US, this musical drama about a hip-hop mogul (Terrence Howard) and his estranged, warring sons – described by creator Lee Daniels (*Precious*, *The Paperboy*) as "a black *Dynasty*" – has already been renewed for a second series. Expect fabulous outfits, explosive melodrama and the kind of eyebrow-raising material you rarely see on primetime TV.



78

**HANNIBAL**

With the news that *The Hobbit's* Richard Armitage is stepping into the huge shoes of serial killer Francis Dolarhyde aka The Tooth Fairy (played by Ralph Fiennes in *Red Dragon* and Tom Noonan in *Manhunter*), *Hannibal's* third series can't come along quickly enough. Also expect to see Will Graham (Hugh Dancy) hunting Lecter (Mads Mikkelsen) in Italy. Brrr.



81

**UNTITLED WOODY ALLEN SHOW**

Who'd have thunk it? Woody Allen, at 79 years of age, is writing and directing his first TV series. Hired by streaming service Amazon Prime, whose *Transparent* won raves and Golden Globes, the half-hour episodes are currently shrouded in mystery. Not even Woody knows. "I have no ideas and I'm not sure where to begin," he jokes.



76

**WET HOT AMERICAN SUMMER**

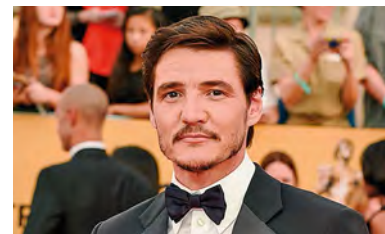
The cult 2001 romcom, set at a Maine summer camp in 1981, is set to get a 10-episode prequel that'll look to reunite many of the cast. Which is a big deal given we're talking Paul Rudd, Janeane Garofalo, Molly Shannon, Bradley Cooper, Amy Poehler and more. Amusingly, the cast, now in their 30s and 40s, will play high school and college kids.



79

**ASH VS EVIL DEAD**

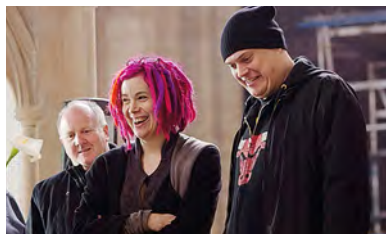
This 10-episode series for US cable channel Starz finds Bruce Campbell's iconic Ash 30 years older, just trying to chill the hell out and avoid life's travails – y'know, responsibilities, chainsaws, stuff like that. He's shit out of luck, of course, when a plague of those pesky evil Dead(ites) arrives to threaten humanity with armageddon if Ash doesn't rev into action. Grooooooooooovy.



82

**NARCOS**

Jose Padilla (*RoboCop*, *Elite Squad*) is directing this Netflix take on the rise and fall of notorious Columbian drug kingpin Pablo Escobar (Wagner Moura) and the Mexican DEA agent (Pedro Pascal) sent to South America by the US to kill him. "This version of the Escobar saga will be like nothing you've ever seen before," promises Netflix Chief Content Officer Ted Sarandos.



80

**SENSE8**

The Wachowskis' latest sci-fi think-tank puts forward eight strangers around the world who become mentally and emotionally linked. What does it mean for mankind? Debuting on Netflix, the Wachowskis say they are looking to "change the vocabulary for television production" while simultaneously exploring themes of identity, sexuality, gender and bigotry.





83

# LEGO

The world's favourite toy becomes a Hollywood franchise to be reckoned with. WORDS SIMON KINNEAR

**F**OR A MOMENT IN January, everything *wasn't* awesome. The film community was shocked when the Academy Awards shut out pre-nomination favourite *The LEGO Movie* from the Best Animated Feature shortlist. Then co-director Phil Lord tweeted a picture of a brick-built Oscar statuette, saying, "It's OK. Made my own." Awesomeness restored.

The snub will do LEGO no harm. Indeed, as Lord's message underlines, it restores the franchise's underdog charm and grass-roots popularity. No mean feat when Warner Brothers has gambled on at least three further big-screen outings for the iconic Danish toys: next year's *Ninjago*, followed by *The LEGO Batman Movie* and the return of Chris Pratt's Emmet in *The LEGO Movie Sequel*.

The challenge now for Lord and creative partner Chris Miller is to avoid becoming like Will Ferrell's dad in the film and trying to glue their successful formula into place. That's why, while staying on as producers,



they have vacated the directors' chair to allow new master builders to step up to the LEGO mat.

First up is veteran TV animator Charlie Bean, entrusted with samurai epic *Ninjago*. Potentially, it's a tricky sell to those unfamiliar with the mystical martial art of Spinjitzu. Yet, *Ninjago* is among LEGO's most popular and profitable properties. TV spin-off *Masters Of Spinjitzu* was originally conceived as a one-off special to launch the toy range; it's currently on its fourth season, early proof of LEGO's onscreen potential.

Then, Will Arnett returns as the mini-figure Caped Crusader, under the direction of *LEGO Movie* editor Chris McKay. The latter recently aroused the jealousy of Batfans worldwide by announcing that, "we went to Warner Bros. and opened up all the Batmobiles; we took photos of the interiors and the exteriors, as well as of the costumes and artwork... It was the best trip."

Don't expect total fidelity to the blueprints, though. Key to the success of *The LEGO Movie* was its joyful emulation of decades of lo-fi, fan-made 'brickfilms' in which anything

goes. Exec producers Miller and Lord have already stated that they'll be having fun with their *Batman*, taking advantage of all the comedy crossover potential the LEGO universe offers and teasing the appearance of other non-DC characters. They'll also be probing the Dark Knight's psyche like never before. "The movie is really exciting," says Lord. "It's about [whether] Batman can be happy: 'Wah, I'm so rich and handsome, and women like me, and I've got a McLaren! Something about my parents!'"

And then there's *The LEGO Movie Sequel*, for which Lord and Miller have been enticed to return as screenwriters – albeit not as directors. Miller hopes to build upon the first film's 'meta' elements, hinting that Emmet will undergo an existential crisis when his real-life master builder grows up. More importantly, will the *Sequel's* awards chances have improved now that Academy voters have their own LEGO Oscars (as distributed during this year's ceremony)? Don't bet against Lord and Miller winning one for real next time.

***Ninjago* opens on 14 October 2016. *The LEGO Batman Movie* and *The LEGO Movie Sequel* are currently in development.**

Very dark grey: Will Arnett will be hanging around as LEGO's mini Batman and (below) no nomination? LEGO fixes everything.





84

# AMY SCHUMER

Meet Judd Apatow's fiercely funny new muse. WORDS EMMA MORGAN

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HE'S HOSTING THE MTV MOVIE Awards. She's written and stars in Judd Apatow's new movie. She's the best female comedian you've never heard of... but that's all about to change.

Amy Schumer is a 33-year-old native New Yorker with her own acclaimed Comedy Central sketch show, *Inside Amy Schumer* (the third season of which starts soon), and a slew of bit-parts in all the best US sitcoms: *30 Rock*, *Curb Your Enthusiasm*, *Louie* and *Girls*. So she's the new Lena Dunham? Not exactly. To Dunham's self-aware narcissist schtick, Schumer is the fearlessly funny feminist willing to make herself the butt of jokes – and a tall-poppy target for trolls – so long as she's taking

one for the team. "I have fought my way through harsh criticism and death threats for speaking my mind," she told a gala of women last May, in a gone-viral speech. "I am a woman with thoughts and questions and shit to say."

Its augurs well for Apatow's *Trainwreck*, which inverts the genders in the classic romcom trope of a commitment-phobe meeting The One: "Bill Hader plays my love interest. I work at a men's magazine and I'm at that crossroads of not being a kid. My behaviour isn't that cute any more, it's kind of catching up with me... it's an R-rated comedy, for sure."

Trolling has already begun, one online critic saying of the red-band trailer: "There's no way she'd

be an object of heated romantic interest in the real world". This isn't the first time Schumer's had to deal with schmucks ("Ever since my first audition when I was 21 they were like, 'You should either lose weight or gain a bunch of weight, like be the fat friend or the romantic lead'. Can you believe they said this?") so she dealt with it effortlessly, posting body-positive pics on Twitter with the hashtag #prettyenough. The hack soon back-tracked: "Social attractiveness standards have changed over the past decade or so... but I could have put it a bit more delicately and diplomatically." First blood to Amazing Amy.

***Trainwreck* opens on 28 August. The MTV Movie Awards take place on 12 April**





85

Sky-scraping stars:  
Luke Evans and  
Tom Hiddleston  
head up *High-Rise*.

# HIGH-RISE

Ben Wheatley attracts an A-list cast for a towering action-thriller. WORDS JAMIE GRAHAM

**N**EVER MIND THE ANNUAL BLACK List put together by development executives, agents and other Hollywood insiders to direct attention to the best unproduced screenplays in circulation. If you really want to know the most exciting project that's failed to make it to our screens, look no further than J.G. Ballard's incendiary 1975 novel, *High-Rise*.

Almost made by Nicolas Roeg (*Don't Look Now*, *The Man Who Fell To Earth*) in the late '70s, Ballard's

bleak 'n' blood-soaked satire is set in a not-too-distant future that we're now living in, and focuses on a newly erected, state-of-the-art tower block replete with swimming pool, supermarket and school. The poorer tenants occupy the lower floors, the wealthier the higher, while imperious architect Anthony Royal (Jeremy Irons) appraises his super-structure from the magnificence of the penthouse. Then a series of power outages spark petty grievances among the tenants, and minor tribulations escalate to tribal warfare as cliques are formed, social restraints cast off and primal urges satisfied. Why does no one call the authorities? Because it's too much damn fun.

"The material in the book is very challenging; the adaptation will be very challenging," promises British uber-producer Jeremy Thomas, who shepherded David Cronenberg's sublime adaptation of Ballard's

*Crash* to the screen in the mid-'90s. "It appealed to me as an idea for a film."

Thomas has owned the rights to the book since the '80s, yet has never quite managed to put together a filmmaker and cast capable of conquering the abrasive, blackly humorous material. Enter director Ben Wheatley (*Sightseers*, *A Field In England*) and the stellar ensemble of Tom Hiddleston, Luke Evans, Jeremy Irons, Sienna Miller, James Purefoy and Elisabeth Moss. It was Wheatley who suggested the adaptation, penned by his partner in life and work Amy Jump, be grounded in 1975, and it proved a eureka-moment for Thomas, who'd only ever considered a near-future setting.

"I think that we need the distance to appreciate the ideas," says Wheatley, explaining his admiration for the novel – he first read it in his twenties, and it acted as a "rites-of-passage into the underground". Out comes a grin. "I really liked the idea of a book from the past talking about the future, and that we were in the future making a film about a futuristic past," he continues. "Also, I wrote a list of things that unnerve me and the '70s was top of the list!"



Thomas confesses to being delighted with Wheatley's footage, and also with the intensity brought by a cast that he and his director chose together; Wheatley needed to be sure that the actors were right for the roles, while Thomas, as he coolly puts it, "Required them to give me what I need in Italy and Japan". So who better in the two lead roles than Tom 'Loki' Hiddleston and Luke 'Bard' Evans, two Brits who have proved adept at juggling indies among Marvel and *Hobbit* movies. Talk about guaranteeing cash and kudos.

"Ballard's interested in the patterns of human behaviour," explains Hiddleston, who wrote out entire paragraphs from the novel on the back of his script pages. He plays Robert Laing, a young doctor who finds himself caught up in the nightly raids to conquer higher floors. "Is it possible to find madness, schizophrenia, depression, melancholia... perverse tropes of behaviour that are separate and subversive to the conventional? What explains our essential weirdness? Because *everybody* is weird."

Evans also stresses the psychological acuity behind the brutality, bloodshed and bellbottoms.

An admirer of Wheatley's work, he was impressed by the singular vision presented to him when they first met to discuss the possibility of Evans portraying Richard Wilder, a documentarian and provocateur who rises from the lower floors. "This is the guy," he stresses when Wheatley is mentioned. "He's got a grasp on the material, which is incredibly difficult material, which is why it's taken so long to make."

All signs suggest it will be well worth the wait. Certainly none of Ballard's prescient ideas have exceeded their sell-by date, with his bleak vision of a dystopian urban landscape and the terrors wrought by advancing technology now more pertinent than ever. Just don't make the mistake of thinking this high-concept psycho-thriller will be a downer. Bracing, certainly, but also a total blast.

"*High-Rise* is pretty confrontational but it has a sense of humour and style," promises Wheatley. "The anarchy in the building is fun for the residents... up to a point."

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***High-Rise* opens later this year.**





# SPECIAL AGENT

Her alter-ego Peggy Carter is popping up all over the Marvel-verse but first she'll be jerking tears in *Cinderella*. TF meets the most down to earth heroine around. WORDS JAMES MOTTRAM

## HAYLEY ATWELL

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"AM I IN ANT-MAN?" CRIES Hayley Atwell, glancing towards an unseen publicist hidden in the annex of her London hotel suite.

"I don't know yet! I have no idea!"

After a casting call was made for Atwell's body double, the internet has been awash with rumours that she will be reprising her role as Agent Peggy Carter in Marvel's forthcoming tale about the insect-sized superhero played by Paul Rudd, with suggestions the first act will be set in the Carter-era decade of the 1940s.

Dressed in a floral jump suit, black tailored jacket and red suede heels, Atwell fixes those deep brown eyes of hers on *Total Film*. "Yeah, but the internet also thinks that my boyfriend is Stephen Merchant and we were in a car crash in LA yesterday." Cue snort. "Did you hear about that? I mean...amazing! I thought that was hilarious. I was sitting there in my pyjamas eating my cereal - with my actual boyfriend [model/musician Evan Jones] - going 'Hmm!'"

This is typical of the bright, candid 32-year-old British star, currently enjoying "the happiest time in my career". After starring on the London stage in gay rights drama *The Pride*, she's since

completed roles in this year's wartime drama *Testament Of Youth* and this month's Kenneth Branagh-directed fairytale *Cinderella*.

Then there's the little matter of Ms. Carter. She may or may not be in *Ant-Man*, but it hardly matters. Captain America's girlfriend has just got her own show, *Agent Carter*.

"I'd been waiting for the last year-and-a-half to see if we were going to do the TV show, so there was this big carrot dangled in front of my face," says Atwell, who first appeared as Peggy in 2011's Marvel movie *Captain America: The First Avenger*. "[It was] a part that I loved and people that I'd worked with before that I really wanted to work with again. So it was a waiting game. I feel like now it's done, everything has paid off. It's all - thank god! - worked out the way I would've loved it too."

The eight-episode first season has just finished its run in the US, broadcast on ABC during the mid-season break for *Marvel's Agents Of S.H.I.E.L.D.* - the crossover television show set in the world of *The Avengers* that Atwell's Peggy has twice-featured in. After appearing in the Marvel One-Shot short film *Agent Carter*, then returning as a memory-addled 96-year-old









in last year's *Captain America: The Winter Soldier*, Peggy is fast-becoming the best-connected character in the Marvel Cinematic Universe.

It's easy to see why. While she never swallowed the Super Soldier serum that turned Steve Rogers into the shield-flinging ass-kicker that Cap became, her no-nonsense approach in *Captain America: The First Avenger* saw her become an instant audience favourite, convincing the Marvel execs that she was worthy of expansion. "It was the right chemistry between myself and Marvel that they just went, 'I think she has a life now. Organically, we can make her grow and go to other places.'"

**W**hen it comes to *Agent Carter*, the show follows on from the Marvel One-Shot short, set in 1946, with Peggy still working for the Strategic Scientific Reserve – but now relegated to a desk job. Also coping with loss of her superhero lover – lest we forget, Cap is missing-presumed-dead in the Arctic – she is given the chance to exonerate Howard Stark (Dominic Cooper), after some of his weapons are stolen and put up for sale, inadvertently putting him at the top of SSR's hit list.

The first female-driven comic-book show to make it to the small screen, Atwell calls it "groundbreaking in that regard." She might "dress like Veronica Lake", but there are more subtle aspects to her character. "She's not threatened by women and women aren't threatened by her," adds Atwell, pointing to her friendship with waitress/aspiring actress Angie Martinelli (Lyndsy Fonseca). "That's really a testament to the qualities of her, but also the fact that Marvel want to create a much more relatable character."

It's this that convinced Joss Whedon to pen Atwell a brief appearance in his upcoming sequel *Avengers: Age Of Ultron*. Cue another glance from Atwell at the publicist to make sure she's not speaking out of turn. "It's a lovely cameo," she says. "If Joss is telling the truth... he gave me that part based on a drunken night out in Blacks in Soho! We just met for a drink and he said, 'I think I might write a scene for you!' So befriend your director, get him drunk... and that will give you a bit of a career."

Not that Atwell needs to ply her filmmakers with alcohol. Even before Peggy Carter came along, her work-life was doing quite nicely thank you. Graduating from the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in 2005, within a year she was starring with *Downton Abbey*'s Dan Stevens in



Hayley acts well: in *Agent Carter* (left) and *Cinderella*.

Andrew Davies' BBC2 drama *The Line Of Beauty* before winning a role in Woody Allen's *Cassandra's Dream*, despite the legendary filmmaker proving not the chattiest of directors ("I hardly felt he ever talked to me," she sighs).

By 2008, she took on the obligatory British costume dramas, from the rather maligned film version of *Brideshead Revisited* to *The Duchess*, which saw her dubbed 'the new Keira' after co-starring with Ms. Knightley. Rather than pursue the crown of corset queen, she turned down similar roles in favour of a theatre production of George Bernard Shaw's *Major Barbara*, playing an idealistic Salvation Army lass. "Whatever happens in my career, in terms of film and TV, I will always go back to the stage," she notes. "That's where I learn, that's where I get better, that's where I get fulfilled."

While there was a part in the short-lived AMC series of *The Prisoner* alongside Sir Ian McKellen, Atwell also deliberately steered clear of Hollywood – until Marvel came along. "A young actresses' greatest fear is getting a big job, but then having to fly to L.A, working all the hours God sends, being told to lose weight, go on a strict diet, all that boring old bullshit," she says. "It's all about what you look like – here's the script, here are the lines, here's the director, do what we say, then go home."

Atwell admits that steering her acting career through the minefield that is celebrity culture is no cake-walk. "It's been tricky," she concedes, "I used to be terrified because I'd think, 'I can't go to that party because that means this and I can't be seen with that person because

that means I'm like this.' It was very hard to navigate in the early years. And it's now much easier, and I'm feeling like my work is starting to stand for itself a little bit more, so I can relax."

Indeed, there's arguably a new-found maturity to her roles – not least playing Cinderella's mother in Branagh's lavish live-action fairytale inspired by both the classic 1950 Disney cartoon and the Charles Perrault story *Cendrillon*. It's a small-but-vital role that, in just a few minutes of screen time, elicits a torrent of tears as she goes from sprightly to gravely ill. "It has to be very sensitively done," admits Atwell. "It's a weeper. You start the film weeping! Where are we going to go now?"

The idyllic life is shattered."

You might think the same for her. Born in London, Atwell's parents divorced when she was two, but there are no signs of trauma. "My childhood was like a fairytale in how emotionally involved my parents were in my psychological well-being," she says.

"They taught me a lot about myths. I was brought up on a lot of Joseph Campbell's ideas of archetype and Carl Jung and various philosophers. So it was less fairytales and more philosophy."

Remarkably, she was reading Descartes at 13.

Her mother Allison, a motivational speaker, met her father Grant, who is part Native American, when he came over from the States. "[He] was part of this movement in the '70s, New Age thinking and self-help, all these weird and wonderful alternative therapies." After the divorce, he returned to his native Kansas City, where he began working as a photographer and massage therapist. Atwell, who has dual citizenship, spent summers there.







## HAYLEY ATWELL



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### SCARLETT JOHANSSON

Hollywood's most glamorous baby-momma has a hectic year ahead juggling *Age Of Ultron* and *Captain America: Civil War* with her latest girl group side-project The Singles. She's also signed up to the live-action adap of *Ghost In The Shell*, putting die-hard anime fans up in arms.

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### TOBY KEBBELL

Doom in *Fantastic Four*, Durotan in *Warcraft*, Messala in *Ben-Hur*: Kebbell – last seen as Koba in *Dawn Of The Planet Of The Apes* – has been snapping up juicy roles. But he's not only making blockbusters, having also signed on to play the dad in J.A. Bayona's film of much-praised children's novel *A Monster Calls*.

89

### UNIVERSAL MONSTERS REBOOT

Forget *Dracula Untold*: the official starting point for Universal's shared-universe reimagining of its horror icon stable will be Alex Kurtzman's *The Mummy*, set for June 2016. Next, in April 2017, a vehicle for an unknown property (possibly *Frankenstein's Monster*), leading no doubt to an *Avengers*-style mash-up somewhere down the line.

90

### JACK O'CONNELL

The *Unbroken* star is using some of his new-found leading-man clout to finally bring Terry Gilliam's *Don Quixote* project to the screen, a tall order that previously proved too much for one Johnny Depp (see *Lost In La Mancha*). Before that he'll be seen in period piece *Tulip Fever* and as a hostage-taking gunman in Jodie Foster's *Money Monster*.



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### THAT'S WHAT I'M TALKING ABOUT

"It's a party film," says Richard Linklater of his *Boyhood* follow-up, an '80s-set dramedy about baseball-playing college kids. "It's set in the first weekend of college, one big weekend of partying and chasing tail." *Glee*'s Blake Jenner and *The Boy Next Door*'s Ryan Guzman are among the cast.

A

tending what she calls "quite a rough comprehensive school", Atwell blew her chances of a place at Oxford to study theology and philosophy when she didn't get the requisite A-level grades. She switched to drama school, with full parental support. "They always wanted me to be happy and follow my dream. I was quite a shy kid and – God love them – I didn't give them any inkling whether or not I had any talent! My Mum, in my third year at drama school, came to see me play Hedda Gabler and she went, 'Phew! I get it now!'"

While those early post-drama school years were difficult, Atwell was never swayed by fame or money. "As I get older, I see what I went through, to just navigate my way through that bullshit – trying to collaborate and work with people that I thought were good people and true creatives and to stay away from bullies and characters that were too over-sexualised or too dumbed-down or characters that I knew if I'd watched them at a young age would've influenced me in a particularly destructive way."

It's stood her in good stead. There's no attitude to Atwell. When the doorbell rings part-way through our chat, she doesn't rely on the publicist to attend to it. "I'll open it, just in case it's my boyfriend," she trills, bounding across the room. Still based in London, it's easy "very, very easy to be under

the radar," she says. "Little things like I don't really wear much make-up and I'll wear leggings and boots and a jumper to go to the shops, rather than look fabulous and glamorous. Or the fact that I don't make a point of befriending celebrities."

Right now, she's desperate to get back to Peggy. While the first season is still searching for a UK broadcaster (fear not – it won't take long), Atwell admits she and the others behind the show are "ready to go" if they get the green-light for a second season. "Creatively, there are so many interesting ideas about where Peggy could go, and what country she could be in and what time-frame it is," she says. "Is it the same year, is it five years later, is she married, does she have kids, do we see her back-story?"

The possibilities are endless – even if she doesn't end up in *Ant-Man*. Time up, *TF* is about to make a hasty retreat when a last question occurs. What are the chances of an appearance in the forthcoming *Captain America: Civil War*? "I was 96 years old in *Captain America 2* – there's not much scope left really," she laughs. Surely those Marvel magicians can figure it out? Atwell's eyes widen. "Yes! I could've stolen some blue serum and become invincible!" Don't rule it out – Peggy Carter is here to stay.

***Cinderella* opens on 27 March. *Avengers: Age Of Ultron* opens on 24 April.**





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# GAME ADAPTATIONS

With a flurry of exciting new projects on the horizon featuring credible stars and indie-spirited directors, could the troubled videogame movie finally be on the right track?

WORDS JAMES MOTTRAM



**F**ROM MORTAL KOMBAT TO MAX Payne, movies based on video games are about as appealing as trading your PS4 for a ZX81. We all know that. It's like saying all Rob Schneider films are terrible. There's no need to point it out; it's just how it is. The genre hardly got off to a good start – the late, great Bob Hoskins slumming it in dungarees as everyone's favourite plumber in 1993's risible *Super Mario Brothers*. A year later, Jean-Claude Van Damme was hamming it up in that classic arcade brawler *Street Fighter*.

Cheap, camp B movies, designed in the days before digital effects got good, it was enough to make you throw your console out of the window. But even as technology evolved, Hollywood never learned its lesson. Beloved titles – *Silent Hill*, *Wing Commander*, *Alone In The Dark*, to name but three

– all morphed into wretched films. Only Paul W.S. Anderson's *Resident Evil* series has turned any major profit (\$915 million from five films, with a sixth due next year) – and you could put that down to our undying fascination with the undead, not the game.

Gradually though, with videogames becoming ever-more sophisticated (and profitable), the studios are waking up to the fact that gamers want quality, in front and behind the camera, if their favourite title is coming to the big screen. Already Tom Hardy and Christian Bale have flirted with as-yet-unrealised adaptations of *Splinter Cell* and *Metal Gear Solid*, respectively, while *Deadwood* creator David Milch was hired to script an adap of the brilliantly noir-ish *Heavy Rain*.

Even more advanced is an adaptation of stealth classic *Assassin's Creed* – set for a 2016 release, starring Michael Fassbender and Marion Cotillard and





Surefire hit(man): Zachary Quinto as mysterious bad guy John Smith in *Agent 47*.

directed by Justin Kurzel (all three have just made *Macbeth*). And fresh from *Homeland*, British actor Rupert Friend takes the lead in *Hitman: Agent 47*, wiping away (hopefully) memories of 2007's abysmal *Hitman* with Timothy Olyphant. Popular titles like *Angry Birds*, *Ratchet And Clank* and even *Minecraft* are also in the works.

The most exciting up-and-comer is Duncan Jones' *Warcraft*. Based around the huge fantasy game series, popularised with the 2004 edition *World Of Warcraft*, which has over 10 million subscribers playing online, anticipation is high for what Jones (*Moon*, *Source Code*) will do. Dominic Cooper, who stars alongside the likes of Ben Foster and Toby Kebbell, estimates they've "made something that will be very exciting for the fans who know this game very well".

Scripted by Jones and Charles Leavitt, whose credits include Ron Howard's upcoming biographical whaling tale *In The Heart Of The Sea*, the story is "compelling" claims Cooper. "It has a lot of questioning aspects, even towards the world we live in now. It's about domination of lands and who is right – who do those lands belong to, who do we believe to be our heroes, who is good and evil? For me, it wasn't just a computer game about Orcs being put on the big screen."

Of course, story is vital in any movie but particularly so when adapting a video game. Unlike a book or

a play, some titles simply don't have one – take driving game *Need For Speed*, for example. So when it comes to making a movie, it means finding a suitable narrative that fits into the spirit of the game. Needless to say, the 2013 film that slotted Aaron Paul behind the wheel failed miserably on that score. Doubtless it's why the proposed big-screen outings for such classic arcade titles as *Asteroids* and *Space Invaders* have stalled.

Then there's the issue of taking on a game that has an in-built storyline. Either filmmakers try to put their own spin on it (bad idea) or the increasingly interactive nature of game-play – particularly when it comes to 'open world' or so-called 'sandbox' games – makes it impossible to replicate the immersive nature of the game on film. As Cooper puts it, gamers are "almost directors of their own film in a way", so you'd better come up with something special if you're going to catch their attention.

Thankfully, there are measures being taken. Like long-form narratives. The long-gestating adaptation of Xbox sci-fi title *Halo* (once a Peter Jackson project) is now set to debut on the small screen. Executive produced by Ridley Scott, *Halo: Nightfall* is a five-episode series that bridges the gap between the fourth game and the upcoming *Halo 5: Guardians*. And talking of Scott, with the recent release of *Alien: Isolation*, we might now be entering into a world where game narratives influence future movie spin-offs.

Then there's the example of *The Last Of Us*. Already hailed as one of the greatest games ever made, the movie adaptation is being scripted by Neil Druckmann, the creative force behind the game, with *Game Of Thrones* star Maisie Williams in talks to play Ellie, the young girl who holds the key to humanity's survival after an infestation turns the population into flesh-eaters. Handing the keys to the kingdom to the game designers? It's risky, but it might just work.

***Hitman: Agent 47* opens on 28 August. *Warcraft* opens on 11 March 2016. *Assassin's Creed* opens in 2016.**

## GAME ADAPTATIONS

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### TOMORROWLAND

Brad Bird welcomes you to 'A World Beyond' (the film's UK subtitle) in a sci-fi loosely inspired by the futuristic land of the Disney parks. Plot details are tightly guarded, but be excited that Bird chose this over *Star Wars*: "It's rare to do a film of this size that's original."



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### DITCHING TWITTER

Edgar Wright has resolved to spend less time communicating in 140-characters or less, and Simon Pegg has given over his personal feed (all 5m followers worth) to his official team at Peggster.net. Even Stephen Fry's on a break. Is 2015 the year to log out of Twitter?

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### JAKE GYLLENHAAL

After the one-two punch of *Nightcrawler* and *Enemy*, the former Donnie Darko is once again one of the must-watch actors of his generation. Next up? Getting ripped for Antoine Fuqua's boxing drama *Southpaw*, scaling *Everest*, and tackling *Demolition* (with awards favourite Jean-Marc Vallée).



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### LEGEND

What's madder than Max? How about playing both Ronnie and Reggie in a Krays biopic? Tom Hardy is going toe-to-toe with himself in one of the year's most thrilling pairings, with *Kingsman* breakout Taron Egerton supporting. Egerton praises Hardy as "incredible", and has shared in-character pics of the pair "looking like bad men".

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### DONALD GLOVER

Besides fans petitioning to have him play Spider-Man, the future's already looking bright for the former *Community* star. This year he's covering all bases with Blumhouse horror *The Lazarus Effect* and pec-fest *Magic Mike XXL*, before going stellar with Ridley Scott's *The Martian*.





# JURASSIC WORLD

Could the series' mysterious new dino-menace be the year's scariest monster? WORDS SARAH DOBBS

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AN ENTIRE GENERATION OF cinemagoers still shudders at the memory of the T. Rex attacking the Jeep in *Jurassic Park*. Prepare yourselves, then, because *Jurassic World* director Colin Trevorrow is gearing up to terrify us all over again with his lab-grown super-dino, Indominus Rex – an all-new threat ready to claw its way into your nightmares. Here's how...

## IT'S A GENETICALLY-ENGINEERED MONSTROSITY

Things have changed at the world's worst idea for a theme park since the last time we visited. Now, *Jurassic World* is a fully functioning attraction that gets thousands of visitors a year. But how do you get people to come back once they've seen it all? By inventing a new monster, of course. Indominus Rex is a hybrid dino that's been deliberately engineered to appeal to thrill-seekers. Made of spliced-together DNA from pre-history's greatest predators, it's a horrifying mixture of *Tyrannosaurus Rex*, *Carnotaurus*, *Majungasaurus*, and *Gigantosaurus* – plus, if *Jurassic Park* was anything to go by, probably some other stuff – bird, lizard, frog – thrown in too.

## EVEN ITS NAME IS SCARY

Branding is everything, so if you're going to create the world's scariest monster, you need to give it a suitably frightening name, right? Hammond Creation Labs clearly agreed when they named the Indominus Rex. 'Tyrannosaurus Rex', boiled down from latin, means 'king of the tyrant lizards'. Indominus Rex is a step up: the 'unmasterable king'. Or, as per the *Jurassic World* viral site, it's a "fierce or untameable king". The kids are gonna love it.

## IT'S BIGGER AND LOUDER THAN ANYTHING WE'VE SEEN SO FAR

The T. Rex was never the biggest dinosaur in the park – the vegetarian *Apatosaurus*, for instance, is far bigger – but it was big enough to be terrifying. So imagine how much scarier Indominus Rex is going to be, since even the *Jurassic World* scientists don't seem to know how much bigger it'll get from its

"current" size of 12 metres long. We're gonna need a bigger pen. And while we're at it, some earplugs, too. The roar of an I. Rex is estimated to be between 140db and 160db. That's the same volume as a jet plane taking off.

## IT ABSOLUTELY WILL ESCAPE ITS ENCLOSURE AND EAT EVERYONE

As Chris Pratt's character puts it in the trailer, "She'll kill anything that moves." And probably some things that don't, too. The whole point of this dinosaur is that it's scarier than a T. Rex, so its tiny weaknesses have all been "fixed". Indominus Rex has long arms, constantly growing teeth, and if the Hasbro toy range is anything to go by, chameleon-style colour changing, too. Throw in an aggression rating of "very high" and you've got something we don't want to share a planet with, let alone buy a ticket to gawk at.

## OH, AND IT'S FEMALE

Why is that scary? It shouldn't be, really – the *Jurassic Park* scientists deliberately made all the dinos on the park female, in order to stop them reproducing. But life finds a way, and the Indominus Rex will almost certainly find a way to make babies. Because the only thing scarier than one Indominus Rex is a whole litter of the things...

*Jurassic World* opens on 12 June.





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# INSIDE OUT

Five reasons why Pixar's latest will see them retake the 'toon throne... WORDS EMMA JOHNSTON

## THE HIGH CONCEPT

Pixar's strength has always been in wrapping up deep psychological ideas about the nature of humanity (even if humanity comes in the form of toys, monsters or binman-robots) in a kid-friendly package. This time it's about what's going on in our heads, as we see the life of Riley, a little girl coming to grips with moving to a new city, through the bickering but cute emotions guiding her through the world.

## THE COMIC HERITAGE

The presence of some of US comedy's finest talents suggests the timing will be impeccable. Riley's emotions are played by Amy Poehler (Joy), Mindy Kaling (Disgust), Bill Hader (Fear), Lewis Black (Anger) and Phyllis Smith (Sadness). Oh, and the ever wonderful Kyle MacLachlan is dad.

## THE DEPENDABLE DIRECTOR

Writer/director Pete Docter is in charge, a sure-fire sign of quality – after all, he's the man who made us laugh and cry uncontrollably to two of Pixar's most beloved films: *Monsters, Inc.* and *Up*. It's going to be pathos a-go-go. Bring tissues.

## THE CHARMING SURREALISM

While Riley's external life looks normal, the scenes played out by the characters in her head are bright, beautiful and a little bit trippy. "The characters are created with this energy because we are trying to represent what emotions would look like," Docter says. "They are made up of particles that actually move. Instead of skin and solid, it's a massive collection of energy."

## THE CROSSOVER APPEAL

There's no talking cars or planes. Parents rejoice!

*Inside Out* opens on 24 July.



She's got bite:  
Those teeth don't  
look friendly...









**HE'S THE CHARMING LEAD IN BRIT ROMCOM MAN UP, HE'S SHARING STUNTS WITH TOM CRUISE IN MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE 5 AND HE'S NOW PENNING THE SCREENPLAY OF STAR TREK 3.**

# **SIMON PEGG**

**HAS TRULY HIT THE A-LIST...**

**"WE'RE WRITING STAR TREK IN ONE ROOM AND THERE ARE CHEWBACCA NOISES IN THE NEXT ROOM..."**

WORDS JAMIE GRAHAM PORTRAIT AUSTIN HARGRAVE/AUGUST



**D**ressed down in jeans and casual shirt, Simon Pegg is in good spirits. He's just come from a date and it went very well indeed. "She's so much fun," he says with a Cheshire-cat grin. "We have a hoot on a daily basis."

The woman in question is New York actress Lake Bell, not actually his new squeeze but his co-star in romcom *Man Up*. She impressed the hell out of everyone by writing, directing and starring in 2013's *In A World...* and then stole *Million Dollar Arm* from under the nose of Jon Hamm. It's little wonder that Pegg only has nice things to say about her, and *Total Film* has just seen the evidence to support his sweet-talk as the pair traded verbal volleys in a crazed scene set in a Mexican cantina. Shots were downed, filth was talked and fire extinguishers were engaged.

*Man Up* sees Jack (Pegg), recently separated from his wife (Olivia Williams), go on a blind date with Nancy (Bell), a 34-year-old singleton who's had her fill of romance. But here's the catch: Nancy isn't the woman Jack thinks he's meeting under the clock at Waterloo Station; that woman Nancy happened to meet on the train and she's now stealing her date – a reckless, snap decision. What follows is a long night in south London as Nancy pretends to be a woman 10 years younger with interests she knows nothing about. The truth, inevitably, will out, sparking plenty of soul-raking to go with the merry-making.

The first big-screen outing for director Ben Palmer since *The Inbetweeners Movie*, *Man Up* is the start of a huge year for Pegg. As is his wont, it's a homegrown movie shuffled among Hollywood tentpoles. In July, five months earlier than originally planned, we'll see his third outing as Benji in the *Mission: Impossible* franchise, with the 46-year-old actor now getting in on the action.



## WHEN YOU DO HEIGHTENED CHARACTERS, YOU'RE PLAYING WITH HEIGHTENED EMOTIONS

And then in July 2016 he'll once more board the USS Enterprise as engineer Scotty for *Star Trek 3*.

And if that's not enough, it was announced, on 21 January, that not only will Pegg don his red shirt as part of the famous space crew but he'll be telling everyone what to do and say, also. With proposed director Roberto Orci (who wrote the first two movies) exiting to be replaced by Justin Lin (entries 3-6 of the *Fast & Furious* franchise), it was decided that the script needed a reboot... and Pegg, along with co-writer Doug Jung, was tasked with the responsibility.

"[Producers] J.J. [Abrams] and Bryan Burk are both very good friends of mine, and I've spent a lot of time with them, hanging out and chatting about stuff," explains Pegg when *TF* phones him a couple of weeks after the news broke, and a full year after chatting on the set of *Man Up*. "We invariably talk about films and the films that we make, and we'd been talking about *Star Trek* and throwing stuff around. When they decided to restart the writing process, this came my way..."

More on *Star Trek* and *Mission: Impossible 5* later. But let's start with Britain's answer to *When Harry*

*Met Sally*, where *Man Up* offers one of Pegg's most winning performances to date....

**Total Film was at the cast and crew screening of *Man Up*...**

...I haven't seen it yet! I literally haven't had a chance. [Puts on jokey, blasé tone] I'm sure I'll catch it on video or something...

**There's a lovely chemistry between you and Lake Bell. Is that something you felt during the shoot?**

It has a lot to do with the whole film, with the whole vibe. If you're relaxed enough to feel at ease, then it really helps with that kind of thing. It was a happy set. Ben Palmer engendered the right atmosphere to develop chemistry with everybody. It's funny, we were actually struggling to find a British actress who was right for the role, and suddenly Lake's name came up. Not only was she perfect for it but she could do accents! [*In A World... is set in the trailer-voiceover industry and Bell is renowned for her mastery of dialects*]. It was like, "Fuck, this is amazing!" There are usual [casting] suspects in these situations and we just wanted to find someone who would be surprising and fresh.





Bottoms up: Simon Pegg and Lake Bell kindle a romance in *Man Up*.

**Was there ever any discussion to make *Nancy American*, if only to appeal to the US market?**

Yes, briefly, but it felt like it was doing the script a disservice. So that was it.

**Is the character of Jack the closest you've played to your own personality?**

Yeah, possibly. There are things that I've done in the past that require slightly heightened characters. My roots are more in naturalistic style. Even when we started doing stuff like [surreal sketch show] *Big Train*, that was all about underplaying it as much as possible, and trying to be as real as you can. *Man Up* is an unabashed romcom but it has its feet firmly planted in reality. That comes from Tess [Morris], the writer. But it's also big and silly and there is some great, broad comedy of misunderstanding. There's some slapstick. It is a stretch – there are moments where you have to suspend your disbelief – so in order to counter that, we tried to make it as natural as possible so that you care about the characters, and so that the comedy rings true.

**Is it more exposing to play a character that is not as heightened?**

Yeah. When you do heightened characters, you're playing with heightened emotions, or heightened versions of emotions. The funny thing is, I felt a similar way about Gary King in *The World's End* – even though he's extremely heightened, that was all part of his armour. His coping device was to be bombastic, and underneath it all, he was as realistic as any character I've ever played. And with Jack, he's also a bit wounded and a bit vulnerable, and it's nice to draw on reality. And you do, in a sense, have to demonstrate the reality of *you* when you do that, otherwise it's not very believable.

**Tess says the script is partly autobiographical, and it certainly feels honest...**

Oh, absolutely. But then writers, that's what they do – eat their young [laughs]. It's Tess' first feature script, and she's done such a great job. She wrote it from the heart. It's quite raw, at times, on both sides of the gender divide. She kinda nailed it. That's why I liked it when I read it for the first time. Nira [Park, founder of Big Talk Productions] gave it to me and it felt like it wasn't apologising for what it was. It's very much a romcom and it isn't arch or trying to undercut that particular genre, but it has enough truth in it to save it from its own pitfalls.

**Talking of writers... it must have been a tremendous thrill to be given the *Star Trek 3* gig...**

Yes, but it wasn't something where I immediately went [puts on winy, ingratiating voice], "Yes, please!" I had to think it through. Well, not think it through... It's the sheer size of the job; it's kinda scary. And obviously we don't have much time – we're 17 weeks out from shooting!

**But obviously the answer had to be 'yes'...**

It's such a great creative environment. I've just got back from LA. I was working at Bad Robot. It's such a great place to work. It's full of toys and everybody's having such a great time. We're trying to write *Star Trek* in one room and there are Chewbacca noises in the next room [laughs]. JJ and I were laughing about it last week, that there are two very different stories, one a fantasy, one a future-world, and even though they both have 'Star' at the beginning of them, they're a lot more different than a non-sci-fi fan would ever assume. But here they are in the same building now. It's kind of wonderful.

**And how is it having Doug Jung as a writing partner, after so many years of scribbling opposite Edgar?**

We met in London, had an ideas session. He's really collaborative and he's got a great structural awareness, and is brilliant at just pushing things forward. It's hard when you stare at the blank page and have to come up with something completely new with someone you've never met before. But it's not just me and Doug. We've also got Bryan Burk and Justin Lin, who's obviously in on stuff as it's his movie and we want to make the right film for him. It's a nice melting pot, and then Doug and I go off and do the legwork when we've come up with stuff we're all happy with. So yeah, it's a new experience for me, in terms of the method, but >>

## FIVE STAR TURNS PEGG NAILS IT...



### 1 **SHAUN OF THE DEAD** 2004 ★★★★★

In the 'Art' episode of *Spaced*, Pegg fought off imaginary zombies after bingeing on *Resident Evil*. "Edgar and I said, 'Wouldn't it be great if we could actually make a zombie movie...'" recalls Pegg. Cut to a ragtag group of mates holing up in a pub to survive the apocalypse in the most beloved horror-comedy since *Scream*.



### 2 **STAR TREK 2009** ★★★★★

After a cameo in George Romero's *Land Of The Dead*, a small role in *Mission: Impossible III* and *Hot Fuzz*'s explosive lampooning of the Hollywood action movie, Pegg boarded the USS Enterprise as engineer Scotty in J.J. Abrams' shiny reboot. "I tried to play it cool but I was running around like a kid in a toy shop," he confesses.



### 3 **PAUL** 2011 ★★★

Pegg joined another franchise to voice unhinged weasel Buck in *Ice Age: Dawn Of The Dinosaurs*, then reunited with Frost on sci-fi comedy *Paul*. Playing geeks who have an alien encounter en route to Comic-Con, no research was necessary. "I'm into my comics and science fiction, so I know what it's like to obsess about things like that," laughs Pegg.



### 4 **MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE – GHOST PROTOCOL** 2011 ★★★★★

Tech-head Benji Dunn gets into the field in the fourth *Mission* (Pegg's second). The biggest hit of Tom Cruise's career (\$695m), its success made a fifth inevitable, and it promises an even bigger part for a made-up Pegg. "I used to watch the TV series," he grins. "It was on at tea time – the same time as *Star Trek*."



### 5 **THE WORLD'S END** 2013 ★★★★★

A good year: *Star Trek Into Darkness* split opinion but racked up \$467m while *The World's End* closed the Cornetto Trilogy in style, as Pegg and co saw off an alien invasion during an epic pub crawl. Pegg identified with his protagonist: "I think I could have been Gary King if I hadn't had the foresight to improve my life."



I feel equipped to do it, not just because I'm a fan of *Star Trek* and I understand it, but because I've written a few films now so I don't feel too green.

**The pressure must be a good deal more intense given it's a huge studio movie. Do you feel it?**

I do, but because I know how beloved that story is and it's not mine. *The Cornetto Trilogy* was ours, and we'd do what the hell we wanted with it, and if you don't like it, tough! We defined what that was but I don't define what *Star Trek* is. It's a story I'm taking care of and I want to do a good job of that.

There are things that I'm interested in exploring, and lessons we've learned from the previous films. I'm really excited about what we have the opportunity to do here.

**You mentioned Justin Lin. How have you found working with him, after two *Trek* movies with J.J. at the helm?**

We've only just met. We started working together a few weeks ago. We're having to do years' worth of getting to know each other very quickly! But I like him. He has an incredibly assured visual understanding of the medium, and he has great ideas. He communicates in a different way to J.J., but he's no less dynamic and exciting in terms of what he wants to do.

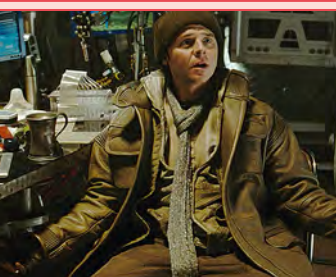
but there's a reason why they wear red, yellow and blue in *Star Trek*. Well, actually it's because colour television had just come in [*laughs*], but it's as simple as that, and I think it should be. *Star Trek* should have the courage of its convictions. It's easy to make fun of *Star Trek*, it's easy to make fun of *Star Trek* fans, but it's something that you should never be tempted to exploit. It should never take the piss out of itself.

**A final *Trek* question: how tempting is it to put Scotty front and centre? Will he now be captaining the Enterprise?**

[*Laughs*] I almost feel the opposite. If I'm not in it as much, it's because I feel more comfortable writing for other people. I don't really want to write a film where it's obvious I've bigged myself up! I'll probably be in it for just a few minutes.

**Benji, on the other hand, is growing with every movie. In *Mission: Impossible III*, he was behind a desk. In *Ghost Protocol*, he was in the field. Can we now expect him to be running shoulder-to-shoulder with Ethan Hunt in *Mission: Impossible 5*?**

The idea that J.J. had after *III* was that Benji was inspired by his little Shanghai surprise that he got from Ethan; he enlisted in the field-agent programme, and then in *Ghost Protocol*, it was



**STAR TREK IS A FUN, COMPELLING STORY, AND WE WANT TO KEEP IT THAT WAY**

But seeing what he's done with the *Fast* movies, how much fun he made those films... It's a testament to him that they're still as popular as they are; he's kept them alive. To see him do some of that crazy stuff with spaceships is gonna be awesome!

**Presumably he will be looking to lighten the tone after *Star Trek Into Darkness*. And that will start with your script...**

I imagine the reaction to the news that I'm writing was, "Oh, is it gonna be a comedy, or whatever?" It's gonna be *fun*. *Star Trek* was always fun. Never at its own expense, but it isn't, y'know, *The Dark Knight Rises*. It's a fun, compelling story, and we want to keep it that way, and not feel the need to drag it into something which it isn't, which is the morass of the amoral hero. That has its place, I guess,

his second or third mission, probably. Now we join him a few years in. He's been out there. He's still the same guy, the technical guy, but he's a little bit more experienced and that plays out in the movie.

**Keeping up with Cruise must be tough. His stunts are crazier than most stuntmen's...**

There was a lot of footage of us in Morocco doing a car chase. That was very exciting. I never, ever, at any point, got in the car with a stuntman. It was always Tom doing the driving, and he is an extraordinary driver, so we had a lot of fun just bombing around the streets of Casablanca at breakneck speed. It was absolutely terrifying. No acting was required! Working with him is great because he's Mr. 100 per cent, so if you don't match that, you'll vanish off the screen. It's great fun.



Also, he pushes himself, so if a stunt comes along, you can't say, "Nah, I don't want to do that". It's just not the way. I also had really good fun working with [*director*] Chris McQuarrie. He's a lot of fun.

**The franchise has previously given us two or three bar-raising stunts. Is it possible to up the ante once more?**

Wade Eastwood is our stunt coordinator and he's had to bring it to the table because *Ghost Protocol* sets a really high bar – that stunt with Tom off the Burj Khalifa. But as you probably saw, because somebody was taking pictures, Tom's actually hanging off a plane in this one [*laughs*]. It's literally like, "Well, how can we top that – we'll put him at the same height but just not connect the thing that he's on to the floor!" But the word that has been used the most on

KOBAL, AUGUST

## LIFELINE

**1970**

Born Simon John Beckingham in Brockworth, Gloucestershire.

**1998-2002**

Flexes his funnybone in TV sketch show *Big Train* and sitcom *Spaced*.



**2004**

Reunites with *Spaced*'s Edgar Wright and Nick Frost for *Shaun Of The Dead*.

**2006**

Impresses director JJ Abrams as IMF agent Benji Dunn in *Mission: Impossible 3*.





Beam me up: Pegg is penning the next *Star Trek* movie, and will stay on in his role as Scotty.

set is "character", as in the relationships between the main characters. We set up this thing in *Ghost Protocol* that they're like a family, and Tom's been really interested in playing the team rather than the lone wolf, which has been really nice.

**Do you have scenes with any of the new guys, like Alec Baldwin and Rebecca Ferguson?**

Absolutely. Alec is hilarious, such good value. And Rebecca, for someone who's kinda new, is so assured. She has that sort of Scandinavian moxie about her. Fun to be around. I always wondered if the fifth one would be tough because *Ghost Protocol* was so much fun. But it's been great, and it's always down to Mr. Cruise.

**In all the *Star Trek* and *Mission Impossible* excitement, it shouldn't be overlooked that you also**

**have *Absolutely Anything* in the pipeline, with Terry Jones...**

I've seen a rough cut and it's really fun; very silly, as you'd expect from Terry Jones. It was a lovely thing for me to do, as a fan of Python, to get to work with Terry and be in a film, albeit indirectly, with the rest of the guys. I think it's going to be a bit of an audience-pleaser. It's a good, crazy British comedy, completely, utterly silly. I play this schlubby teacher – I don't know why they got me to play that – who's suddenly imbued with this ultimate power by these aliens who decide to test Earth. So he's given the responsibility of having absolute power and of course squanders it terribly!

**You've worked with more than your share of quality directors now. Will you ever have a crack yourself?**

I might actually direct something when I'm free next [laughs]. There have been a couple of things that I've looked into optioning. Directing is such a long commitment compared to acting, so if I was to do that, I probably wouldn't be able to act for a year or so. I always watch and learn. Partly I haven't directed because of Edgar... I feel like, if I can't do it as well as Edgar, what's the point?

**Will you work with Edgar again? And, for that matter, with Nick Frost?**

Oh God yeah, absolutely. From the outside, people see the collaboration but they don't see that we're kind of like a family. Since *Spaced*, we're like family. I speak to Nick and Edgar all the time. I text or Skype every day. We were already talking about our next film when we were doing the press tour for *World's End*. So that will absolutely happen. We always go off and do different things, but we always come back together. I'll be making films with Edgar for the rest of my career. That's our safe zone. That's our home base, to invoke a DIY store [laughs].

**Time's up but you can't go without a mention of *Star Wars*. Knowing what a huge fan you are, and given you have J.J. on speed dial... Are you hidden away in *The Force Awakens* as a Stormtrooper or something?**

[Laughs] What I will say is that I spent a lot of time on set, that's for sure, because obviously Pinewood is just down the road for me. So I went to visit and it was quite wonderful to behold. I'm very, very excited. I think J.J.'s nailed it with aplomb. You only have to watch the teaser to know that. Everything that it promises, it delivers, and more. It's going to be extraordinary.

**Being an old-hand in the industry now, do you still get exhilarated? Presumably if 15-year-old Simon was told he'd one day be on set of a *Star Wars* movie, he'd explode?**

One hundred per cent. There was a great sense of excitement on the set. A lot of the crew's parents worked on the original, and everyone was so invested because they cared so deeply about it. You see certain things, plastic things, that you've known all your life, and when you see them appear before you, in the flesh, as it were... It's overwhelming. There were tears often shed from various people. I remember Kevin Smith came to visit and he saw a Stormtrooper and started crying! It means so much. It's such an incredibly weighty thing, in terms of cinema. It's why we are where we are right now, for better or for worse. It has great significance for all of us. **TF**

***Man Up* opens on 10 April. *Mission: Impossible 5* opens on 31 July. *Absolutely Anything* opens later in 2015. *Star Trek 3* opens on 8 July 2016.**

**2007**

Teams up with Wright and Frost for the second in their Cornetto trilogy, *Hot Fuzz*.



**2009-2011**

Goes blockbuster mad with Abrams' *Star Trek*, Brad Bird's *Mission: Impossible* – *Ghost Protocol* and Spielberg's *Tintin*.

**2013**

Returns as Scotty in *Star Trek Into Darkness* and rounds off the CT with *The World's End*.

**2015**

Gives good romcom with *Man Up*, gets his action on for *M:I5* and writes *Star Trek 3*.



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Why *Interstellar* didn't break Oscar's sci-fi curse

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ILLUSTRATION BY LIZZY THOMAS

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The Breakfast Club	★★★★	p134
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Doc Of The Dead	★★★★	p131
The Drop	★★★★	p131
FairyTale: A True Story	★★★	p135
Get On Up	★★★	p131
The Grandmaster	★★★★	p129
The Homesman	★★★★	p130
The Hundred Foot Journey	★★★	p131
The Hunger Games: Mockingjay - Part 1	★★★	p132
Interstellar	★★★★	p126
The Imitation Game	★★★★	p130
The Judge	★★★	p131

The Legend Of The Lone Ranger	★	p135
Leviathan	★★★★	p131
Life Itself	★★★★	p131
Man Of The West	★★★★	p135
Mr. Turner	★★★★	p132
[REC] Apocalypse	★★★	p132
My Life Directed By Nicolas Winding Refn	★★★★	p131
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Raise The Titanic	★★	p135
The Rewrite	★★	p131
The Skeleton Twins	★★★★	p130
Spring In A Small Town	★★★★	p135
Starry Eyes	★★★★	p128
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N/A Extras not available at time of going to press

Follow the bear to p129







## Lost in space

Why Nolan's epic failed to blip on Oscar's radar...

### INTERSTELLAR <sup>12</sup>

Film ★★★★★ Extras ★★★★★

OUT 30 MARCH DVD, BD, DIGIBOOK



**W**EEKS PRIOR TO THE FIRST press screenings of Christopher Nolan's ninth film, *Interstellar*, buzz suggested that this was the one to finally see the Brit filmmaker triumph at the Oscars. Nolan had twice previously been nominated for writing (*Memento*, *Inception*) and once for Best Picture (*Inception*), but had not, as yet, garnered a directing nomination. *But this was it!* The rumour emanated from the hallowed halls of its studio, Warner Bros, indicating that a fistful of salt was perhaps required. But, more tellingly, it also built from the whispered 'wows' of a handful of directors who Nolan had trusted to show latest opus. 'Not just

cerebral but emotional' went the murmurs – surely the Academy would at last warm to the greatest blockbuster architect of our time?

Cut to three months later and nobody seemed surprised when *Interstellar* was nominated for just five Academy Awards, none of them (Production Design, Score, Visual Effects, Sound Editing, Sound Mixing) the 'biggies'. This despite Nolan's space odyssey getting its share of five-star reviews and indeed erecting its miraculous, science-based spectacle around a legitimately beating heart. So what went wrong?

Certainly nothing in the first hour of the near-three-hour run time, as Nolan introduces the rather traditional hero of his story, ex-NASA

test pilot Cooper (Matthew McConaughey), a widower raising two kids in a near-future, dust-bowl America while dreaming of the stars. This earthbound segment has a wonderful, well, earthiness to its action, with DoP Hoyte van Hoytema (*Let The Right One In*) cleaving to the hardscrabble protagonists in a world where crops are failing and oxygen is dwindling. Witness a \$165m event picture as urgently cut, dirt-under-nails domestic drama.

### Silent running

Then some odd, *Poltergeist*-like activity that belongs in an M. Night Shyamalan movie leads Cooper to a covert NASA base housing his old boss Professor Brand (Michael Caine, naturally). With the Earth dying, Brand has been investigating the possibility of relocating the human race – a wormhole in the vicinity of Saturn has opened up (the gift of an alien species?) with the hint of inhabitable planets beyond. Cooper of course agrees to pilot



Her latest diving suit innovation proved a little too buoyant.



'If you can boldly go with open eyes and heart, transcendence awaits'

a reconnaissance mission, his crew comprising Brand's scientist daughter (Anne Hathaway), two researchers (Wes Bentley, David Gyasi) and a pair of robots.

Too often cinematic spectacle arrives with little build-up and less wonderment, intent only on bludgeoning. "We used to look up and wonder about our place in the stars, now we just look down and worry about our place in the dirt," says Cooper, and he might be talking about today's blockbusters. Nolan, though, has seen things in his mind's eye that you people wouldn't believe... and then makes converts of us all by hiring the best technicians in the business. Be it utilitarian spacecraft *Endurance* gliding soundlessly through the

enormity of star-speckled space or the light (and dark) show inside a three-dimensional black hole or frozen clouds like gigantic sky-glaciers or a planet with waves the size of skyscrapers, the visuals, courtesy of VFX supervisor Paul Franklin, make *Gravity* seem contained.

Indeed, so grand are the designs that Hans Zimmer's score, soaring from minimal keyboard melodies to religious crescendos via flybys on Johann Strauss and Philip Glass, feels anything but overblown. Anchoring the spectacle, meanwhile, is the heartfelt theme of fractured family that likely dates back to Spielberg's involvement in 2006, and thorny concerns

with the mutability and preciousness of time that is pure Nolan. The acting is strong throughout, with a sustained close-up on McConaughey's face trumping the sight of even a pirouetting event horizon.

### Sentimental block

So why the Oscar snub? Well, less successful is the exposition-heavy dialogue, the repeated (three times!) quoting of Dylan Thomas' 'Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night' by way of glorifying the human spirit, and a final act that sees Nolan and fellow scribe, brother Jonathan, conjure moral meanings and visual metaphors that require a huge leap of faith. If you can boldly go with open eyes and heart, transcendence awaits as the Nolans offer their equivalent to 2001's star-child; pause and blink, however, and it's sentimental, pseudo-philosophical claptrap. It's here that *Interstellar*'s failure to land with the Academy can be located – it is art's place to provoke debate, but you don't win awards from a 6,500-strong body if your film is divisive.

DVD extras? Zero. Blu-ray, however, offers three-plus hours of Making Of content, diced into 14 featurettes (plus an extended cut of TV special *The Science Of Interstellar*). Nolan's love of the practical comes through loud and clear in the thoroughgoing emphasis on in-camera effects and use of real locations: cue shots of full-sized spacecraft props dangling on cranes, the puppetry behind robot TARS and a nose-around every nook, cranny and fold-away stool aboard the *Endurance*. One word of warning: with the movie's score wallpapering pretty much all the content, you may find yourself earwormed by Hans Zimmer's church organ. **Jamie Graham**

EXTRAS > Featurettes (BD) > Booklet (Digibook)





SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED...

**SUNSET BOULEVARD 1950**  
It's not just getting into the business that's hard... it's staying in it.

**SCREAM 2 1997**  
Very different in tone to *Starry Eyes*, but Hollywood's again under the knife.

**MULHOLLAND DRIVE 2001**  
Another woman with shimmering dreams gets lost in the nightmare factory.

For full reviews of these films visit [totalfilm.com/cinema\\_reviews](http://totalfilm.com/cinema_reviews)



Insomnia plays havoc with your complexion.

## Scream factory

Welcome to the casting ouch...

### STARRY EYES 18

Film ★★★★★ Extras N/A

OUT 16 MARCH DVD



**I**N 2014, WHILE ONE-TIME HORROR auteur David Cronenberg was touring the world's glitziest film festivals with black-hearted Hollywood satire *Maps To The Stars*, another Tinseltown takedown was doing the considerably-less-glitzy (but a good deal more fun) genre circuit. Earning the tag "the mumblegore *Mulholland Drive*", *Starry Eyes* is a class act, if a movie in which the protagonist vomits maggots can be described as such. It makes Cronenberg's film look polite and anaemic by comparison.

Jobbing actress Alex Essoe plays desperate-for-a-job actress Sarah Walker, living with a coterie of fellow wannabe stars. At once confident of her talent and suffering from self-doubt that spills into self-loathing – she pulls viciously at her hair to punish her perceived shortcomings – Sarah's dreams start coming true when she's

invited to audition for a role in horror movie *The Silver Scream*. But a second audition and a meet with the producer (Louis Dezseran, going for a 'world's creepiest uncle' vibe) throws up the question of just how far Sarah is willing to go to achieve fame. "It's my love letter to this town. Ambition is the blackest of human desires," purrs the producer of *The Silver Scream*, which is, of course, a mirror to *Starry Eyes*. Sarah replies, "But, I mean, it's a horror movie as well?"

*Starry Eyes* is most certainly that, and long before an astonishing final act plunges elbows deep into some of the ickiest body horror since, yes, early Cronenberg, then takes a left turn that will leave you quivering. Mostly, this impressive amalgam of genre and satire is all about mood: dialogue delivered fractionally off-note and with too-long pauses; a music-box score,

innocent, ominous, that tinkles over an electronic pulse; claustrophobic close-ups and medium shots that are leached of all colour (the two establishing shots of LA find the city shrouded in grey smog); Essoe's awkward little snarl-smile revealing imperfect teeth; the double-edged remarks of a support circle who can make "I like your shoes, Sarah" sound both insulting and threatening; and the lurking presence of Maria Olsen, who has, quite simply, one of the most arresting faces in the movies – she played a Death Eater in web series *Harry Potter And The Ten Years Later* and has Bond henchwoman written all over her.

Kudos to writer/directors Kevin Kolsch and Dennis Widmyer for making a film this grisly, twisted and surprisingly sad, and for putting it together so neatly it will surely act as a Hollywood calling card. Let's only hope that the hand still wants to feed. "The industry is a plague of unoriginality," says the producer. "Hollow be thy name, shallow be thy name." With talent like this coming through, it doesn't have to be.

**Jamie Graham**

EXTRAS > Commentary > Alex Essoe audition

> Deleted scenes > Score to picture





## Fantastic fur

Family fun ursine, sealed, delivered...

Who has the more haunting eyes?

### PADDINGTON PG

Film ★★★★★ Extras ★★☆☆☆

OUT 23 MARCH DVD, BD



**E**VERYONE LOVES AN underdog who beats unlikely odds, even when it's an under-bear. Before release last year, *Paddington* looked stuffed. As if worries about voice-star changes (Ben Whishaw replaced Colin Firth) and gratuitous 'modernisation' in the trailer (creepy CGI, gross earwax) weren't enough, a bizarre PG certificate suggested that Michael Bond's gentle creation would succumb to broad farce.

One whopping hit for Studiocanal later, director Paul King's loving care of the bear who moved to London is wonderfully clear. Whishaw's soothing tones are a pure pleasure, as is King's sense of measure: even with political subtexts and more movie in-jokes than a 'creepyPaddington' Tumblr squeezed in, a winning lightness prevails.

Sally Hawkins' benign smile sets the tone, but even risky punts work. A fast and 'fur'-ious street chase is

self-parodied by "bear left" gags and a kinky-booted Nicole Kidman plays her villainous taxidermist with a wink. Elsewhere, episodic plotting is made palatable by loving handling: check out Mr Brown's (Hugh Bonneville) eye-blink change from pre-parenthood thrill-seeker to fretful hover-dad for a masterclass in character observation.

The slapstick sequences are equally delicious, played with a silent-comedy-ish charm that channels genius French mime Jacques Tati's generous humour. But it's King and co-writer Hamish McColl's sly political slant that best conveys this update's generosity. Seamlessly woven into Bond's creation, its anti-UKIP plea for a kinder, gentler Britain warms like a bear-hug in a long, cold winter. Extras, alas, are not so generous: three sweet but short featurettes. The bear necessities, little more. **Kevin Harley**

EXTRAS > Featurettes > Gallery



### THE GRANDMASTER 15

Film ★★★★★ Extras ★★★★★

OUT 30 MARCH DVD, BD

YEARS IN THE MAKING, WONG KAR-WAI'S take on Ip Man – initially developed at the same time as the 2008 Hong Kong biopic *Ip Man* – was the worth the, ahem, wai(t). Regular Wong star Tony Leung is sensational as the martial arts maestro famed for teaching Bruce Lee the 'wing chun' style of kung fu, while the action scenes are both stylish and kinetic, lovingly photographed by Philippe Le Sourd (who lost out to *Gravity* for his work at last year's Oscars). Some may be perplexed that this only tackles Ip Man's pre-Lee early years, but Wong blends history, romance, action and melancholy with consummate skill. Pity, though, that this a significantly shorter cut than the 130-minute original.

**James Mottram**

EXTRAS > None



### THE MAZE RUNNER 12

Film ★★★★★ Extras ★★★★★

OUT NOW DVD, BD

PITCHED SOMEWHERE BETWEEN THE *Hunger Games* and *Divergent*, *The Maze Runner*'s first problem is trying to find a way out of the crowd. Luckily, director Wes Ball's YA trilogy opener more than cuts its own path. Dylan O'Brien is the youngster who wakes up in the middle of a giant labyrinth, finding himself the newest member in a tribe of feral lost boys trying to figure out how to escape. The young cast never annoys, the industrial visuals impress and Ball toggles sci-fi horror and Spielbergian set-pieces with enough confidence to keep the story twisting nicely towards next year's *Scorch Trials*. **Paul Bradshaw**

EXTRAS > Commentary > Making Of (BD)  
> Short film (BD) > Video diary (BD) > FX breakdowns (BD) > Deleted scenes > Galleries

## Blu news

The maker of *Bad Taste* – plus, bad taste.



### The eagles are landing

For some years now, Christmas has been the new summer, pumped with shiny family blockbusters, often featuring luxuriantly bushy beards. This past Yuletide was no different, the pack led for the umpteenth time by Peter Jackson, whose *The Hobbit: The Battle Of The Five Armies* hits Blu on 20 April. Naturally, this is the pre-Extended Edition edition, so it's the theatrical cut and modest extras: two featurettes (*Recruiting The Five Armies*, *Completing Middle-earth*), music video and another plug for the New Zealand tourist board. More expansive is Ridley Scott's *Exodus: Gods And Kings* (27 Apr), a three-discer including chat-track, documentaries and 14 'enhancement pods'. Whatever they are.



### Cult movements

If you read our Greatest Cult Movies feature (*TF229*) and thought, "All very well, but when the Dickens can I buy *Society* on Blu-ray?" we have an answer for you: 18 May is the day for the dual-format release of the 1989 horror satire that still makes *The Human Centipede* look like *Frozen*. Extras include commentary by director Brian Yuzna, and featurettes including the charmingly titled *The Champions Of The Shunt*. Another of our cult picks, *Darkman*, also arrives on Blu on 25 May, in a boxset with its two obscure, non-Liam Neeson-starring sequels.





Authentic period costume and wartime parting.

## The code warrior

Cumberbatch gets cracking...

### THE IMITATION GAME 12

Film ★★★★★ Extras ★★★★★

OUT NOW DVD, BD



**T**HIS OTHER PERIOD TRIUMPH-and-tragedy movie about an uber-geeky Cambridge science boffin bagged nominations rather than trophies during awards season. But Morton Tyldum's pacey, well-honed and super-solid biopic about 'odd duck' maths genius Alan Turing and the Bletchley Park crossword crew racing to break the Nazis' Enigma code richly deserves all its plaudits. First-time writer Graham Moore created an unexpectedly propulsive vibe "so that it wouldn't feel like something stuffy you're assigned in school," as the extras explain. But the thriller-ish plotting, which keeps the high-stakes wartime tension of the code-cracking mission upfront, is balanced by its compassionate character study of the obsessive, and initially unpopular Turing. It's excellent too on how painful secrecy ruled his life – from his then-illegal homosexuality to the necessity of sacrificing

Allied troops for 'cover'. Granted, the themes of Turing's lost schoolboy love and his platonic wartime romance with Keira Knightley's jolly Joan are a tad pumped up, but his '50s downfall feels convincingly grim. The glossy extras package underlines the key role of careful period styling (authentically shabby wartime clothing included) and classy casting (Charles Dance's military scorn and Mark Strong's breezy MI6 deceptions add valuable tensions). But go-to prickly genius Benedict Cumberbatch lights it all up with a thin-skinned performance riven with arrogance and loneliness that captures the range of Turing's achievements, his burdens, and his untold heroism. As Moore marvels: "Genius, war hero, invented the computer, prosecuted for homosexuality, driven to suicide... it's an extraordinary combination." **Kate Stables**

EXTRAS > Featurettes



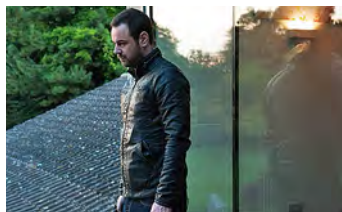
### THE SKELETON TWINS 15

Film ★★★★★ Extras ★★★★★

OUT 16 MARCH DVD

FROM THE OUTSET IT MAY SEEM LIKE familiar 'quirky dramedy' material, but *The Skeleton Twins* digs deeper. As the witty Milo, reconnecting with his estranged twin following a suicide attempt, Bill Hader pitches the gallows humour perfectly. Meanwhile, Kristen Wiig shows dramatic heft as the crisis-ridden twin, Maggie, who cheats on her doting husband (Luke Wilson) against her better judgment. While this exploration of real-life complications wraps on a slightly bum note, a brilliant midway lip-sync sequence more than makes up for it. **Matt Looker**

EXTRAS > Commentaries > Making Of  
> Outtakes > Deleted scenes



### ASSASSIN 15

Film ★★★★★ Extras ★★★★★

OUT NOW DVD, BD

DANNY DYER'S CINEMATIC REHAB IS not quite complete, but since *Vendetta* he's been getting closer to the Neeson-style reinvention he surely deserves. In this gangland thriller from J.K. Amalou (*Deviation*) he's a hitman working for Kemp brothers Gary and Martin (*The Krays*), "a cocky fucker" who falls for his target Holly Weston (*Splintered*). It's not a stretch for anyone, and continuity problems abound, but the cinematography's crisp, the Kemps' exchanges crackle with charisma, and anyone looking for po-faced, paunch-free action could do much worse. Dyer certainly has. **Matt Glasby**

EXTRAS > None



### CONTINUUM 15

Film ★★★★★ Extras ★★★★★

OUT NOW DVD

TRYING TO REMEDY THE PAST IS A recipe for trouble in time-travel films, but Richie Mehta's wormhole drama sorely needs a time machine to go back and fulfil its half-baked potential. *The Sixth Sense*'s Haley Joel Osment broods convincingly as a troubled top scientist trying to finish his mysteriously long-lost dad's timey-wimey experiments, travel back in time and save him. But classy casting (Gillian Anderson, Victor Garber) and teasing subtexts can't fix the logic leaps and longueurs. After umpteen draining chats over blackboard equations, it's clear something isn't adding up. **Kevin Harley**

EXTRAS > None



### THE HOMESMAN 15

Film ★★★★★ Extras ★★★★★

OUT 23 MARCH DVD, BD

DIRECTED BY TOMMY LEE JONES, co-written by Tommy Lee Jones and starring Tommy Lee Jones, this sombre western feels made for just one person: Tommy Lee Jones. But his clear passion for the period makes for a beautifully shot horse-opera. Hilary Swank plays spinster Mary Bee Cuddy, who agrees to transport three crazed women cross country, dragging sadsack deserter Briggs (Jones, surprisingly animated) along for the wagon ride. Thankfully, the refreshing feminist perspective and a conveyor belt of cameos are enough to add substance to the wonderfully scenic wrapping. **Matt Looker**

EXTRAS > Featurettes





## DOC OF THE DEAD 15

Film ★★★★★ Extras ★★★★★

OUT 30 MARCH DVD

IF THERE'S ANYTHING MORE TO SAY about zombie flicks, Alexandre O' Philippe's entertaining free-for-all provides the "double tap", with contributions from the major players (Romero, Pegg, Savini) alongside scholars and survival experts. Shuffling agreeably to 77 minutes, it's more like a great DVD extra than a feature in its own right, compiling zombie weddings, pop songs and porno clips, while trotting out the old slow/fast debate. In some ways the most rabid fans have started to resemble zombies themselves, flocking, without question (but with costume) to endless conventions while Romero and co look on bemused.

**Matt Glasby**

EXTRAS ▶ None



## THE DROP 15

Film ★★★★★ Extras ★★★★★

OUT 23 MARCH DVD, BD

RIGHTLY, THIS DENNIS LEHANE-scripted tale of Brooklyn lowlifes will be remembered as James Gandolfini's swansong – he's superb as Cousin Marv, an embittered bar owner under the thumb of the Chechen mob. But there's much more, beginning with Tom Hardy's sly turn as Marv's barkeep, showing his softer side as he nurses an injured pitbull and romances Noomi Rapace's troubled local. Add in the reunion of director Michaël Roskam with his *Bullhead* star Matthias Schoenaerts, full of menace, and *The Drop* reeks of crumpled authenticity. One of the most hardboiled, street-smart films in recent memory. **James Mottram**

EXTRAS ▶ Commentary ▶ Featurettes

▶ Deleted scenes (BD) ▶ Gallery



## THE JUDGE 15

Film ★★★★★ Extras ★★★★★

OUT NOW DVD, BD

SLEDGEHAMMER SUBTLE, DAVID Dobkin's drama sees Roberts Downey Jr. and Duvall spend almost all the 141 minutes at each other's throats as estranged father and son. Returning to his hometown, Downey is the hotshot lawyer asked to defend his papa – the local judge, no less – from a murder charge after a hit-and-run. A belligerent, Oscar-nominated Duvall is energising, but Downey's snark wears, as does the overly-sentimental script that Dobkin has little control over. Thank heavens for Billy Bob Thornton, brilliant as the prosecuting attorney – but even he is underused.

One Blu bonus: 'Getting Deep With Dax Shepard'. Eww! **James Mottram**

EXTRAS ▶ Featurette (BD)



## GET ON UP 12

Film ★★★★★ Extras ★★★★★

OUT 30 MARCH DVD, BD

JUMPING AROUND JAMES BROWN'S life more frantically than he ever did on stage, Tate Taylor's (*The Help*) confusing biopic of the Godfather Of Soul takes a perfectly adaptable rags-to-riches story and needlessly complicates it. Luckily for us, it has Chadwick Boseman's dynamic central turn to hold it together, one that might well have shouldered its way into this year's Oscar conversation had there been a more coherent picture around it. A strong selection of Blu extras proves this disc's strongest suit, with everyone from Mick Jagger to Ice Cube lining up to pay tribute to the Hardest Working Man In Show Business. **Neil Smith**

EXTRAS ▶ Commentary ▶ Deleted/alternate scenes ▶ Featurettes ▶ Song performances



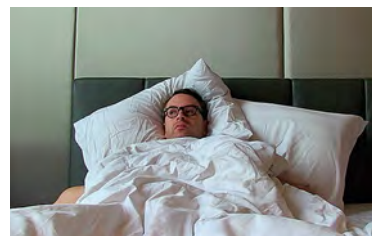
## LEVIATHAN 15

Film ★★★★★ Extras ★★★★★

OUT NOW DVD, BD

ONE MAN'S MOUNTING MISERIES COME to represent an entire country's plight in Andrey Zvyagintsev's sprawling, bleak, but often blackly funny drama. Hothead mechanic Kolya (the excellent Aleksey Serebryakov) makes Job-like attempts to hang onto his land, his wistful wife, and his troubled kid, in a backwater fuelled principally by corruption, thuggery and vodka. Sly rather than preachy, the film turns its satirical eye on everything from friendship to religion, and takes its sweet time about it. The windswept Russian coastal landscapes are heartlessly beautiful, and as stark as the film's tough truths. **Kate Stables**

EXTRAS ▶ Making Of ▶ Deleted scenes ▶ Interview



## MY LIFE DIRECTED BY NICOLAS WINDING REFN 12

Film ★★★★★ Extras ★★★★★

OUT NOW DVD

LIV CORFIXEN TURNS THE CAMERA ON her eponymous husband during the filming of *Only God Forgives* to offer a personal portrait of the Danish director at work. He tries hard to keep her at a distance, but she catches him at a fascinating turning point in his career – with anxiety turning to deep depression over worries that he might just be making another *Drive* (and then that he won't be making another *Drive*). His state of mind goes some way to explaining the something-missing air of his last film, but it inspires to see how deeply he cares about his craft. **Paul Bradshaw**

EXTRAS ▶ None

## The round-up

Culture clashes and critics versus critics...

Faint-praise klaxon! **The Rewrite** (★★★, out now, DVD, BD) isn't as bad as some of Hugh Grant and writer/director Marc Lawrence's other pair-ups (*Music And Lyrics*, *Did You Hear About The Morgans?*). But for all its



frothy charm and A-grade cast (J.K. Simmons, Marisa Tomei), this tale of a has-been screenwriter-turned-college tutor indulges the same Hollywood clichés it attempts to pick apart...

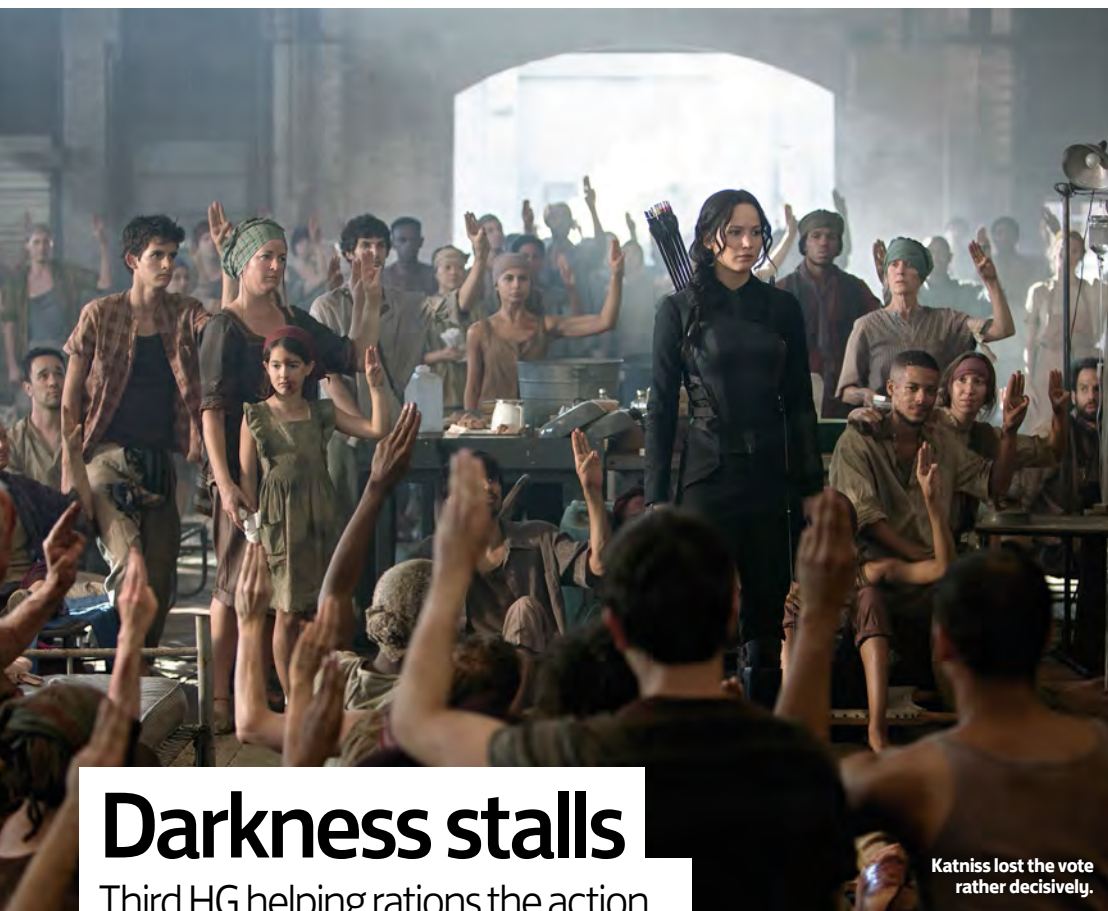
A man who could smell a cliché at 1,000 paces, the late Roger Ebert receives a rich, rounded tribute in doc **Life Itself** (★★★★, out now, DVD), based on his memoir. If you need one reason to watch, it's the bicker-banter footage of Ebert and TV partner/best frenemy Gene Siskel. If you need two, it's Werner Herzog hailing Ebert as a "ssssoldier of cinema"...

**The Best Of Me** (★★★, out now, DVD, BD) could be the worst of the many Nicholas Sparks adapts that have (dis)graced the screen, but does make for an inexhaustible game of Sparks bingo (Star-crossed romance! Terminal illness! Risible tragedy!)...



Veteran Sparks director Lasse Hallström (*Dear John*, *Safe Haven*) travels a less-mawkish route in **The Hundred-Foot Journey** (★★★★, out now, DVD, BD), largely thanks to a haughty Helen Mirren as a French-restaurant owner not taking kindly to competition from a new Indian eatery. Aims to offer culture-clash food for thought, though it's probably the actual grub you'll remember most...





## Darkness stalls

Third HG helping rations the action...

Katniss lost the vote rather decisively.

## THE HUNGER GAMES: MOCKINGJAY – PART 1 12

Film ★★★★★ Extras ★★★★★

OUT 16 MARCH DVD, BD, STEELBOOK

**S**TRETCHING ROUGHLY HALF of Suzanne Collins' final *Hunger Games* book out to 118 minutes, *Mockingjay – Part 1* proves to be something of a test for the franchise's fanbase. In their co-commentary, director Francis Lawrence and producer Nina Jacobson congratulate themselves on expanding Collins' passages about heroine Katniss (Jennifer Lawrence) adapting to life below ground in bunkered District 13, but it makes for a turgid first act, mainly boardrooms and brainstorming, until shit gets real out in District 8.

Francis Lawrence's action direction is strongest, but it's relatively light here with much happening off-screen. The first rule of screenplays is Show, Don't Tell, yet the epic decimation of Katniss' native District 12 is recounted by Gale (Liam Hemsworth), sans flashback. Elsewhere, the vast sets swamp the story, director Lawrence having spent the \$125m budget on a life-size *Star Wars* playset here – stormtroopers, rebel alliance, vaguely incestuous love triangle and all.

When human moments do manage to resonate, they achieve great emotive impact. J-Law has never been more impassioned as Katniss than when issuing a call-to-arms amid the blazing remains of 8, while the use of 'The Hanging Tree' – sung by Katniss then broadcast across the land, soundtracking the snowballing rebellion – is goosebump brilliant.

The main extra, a 12-part documentary, is longer than the feature, production footage spliced with talking heads, and there's a standalone 11-minute tribute to Philip Seymour Hoffman with intriguing excerpts of informal rehearsal footage. Lorde waffles on about the soundtrack in another featurette and there's her video, and nine deleted scenes. Most are superfluous but two, Peeta with President Snow in his mansion, and Katniss and Effie remembering Cinna, should have made the final cut, really. Bugger the boardroom, show us their souls. **Emma Morgan**

EXTRAS > Commentary > Making Of (BD)  
> Featurettes (BD) > Deleted scenes > Music video



### SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED...

#### STAR WARS: EPISODE IV – A NEW HOPE 1977

Simple country kid, fascist dictator, rebel alliance, feisty female lead... Sounds good!

#### MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE III 2006

Machinations from Philip Seymour Hoffman, as an arms dealer outwitting the IMF.

#### THE MAZE RUNNER 2014

The all-boy dystopian sci-fi with a competitive element comes alive when a girl arrives...



## MR. TURNER 12

Film ★★★★★ Extras ★★★★★

OUT NOW DVD, BD

BRITISH CINEMA'S HARRUMPHING HERO Mike Leigh rides in to rescue JMW Turner from chocolate boxes in this engrossing biopic – and in the process shows the painter as an even greater harrumphing hero. Rather than falling into the trap of shoe-horning a long, complex life into a triumph-over-adversity narrative, it comprises instead a collection of revealing moments. Ultimately it's Timothy Spall's film, grunting and growling his way through a career-best performance that's by turns hilarious and moving. Appropriately enough, there's a new visual sheen here from Leigh, too, emerging from his and DoP Dick Pope's embrace of digital techniques. The Leigh-directed featurette is predictably a cut above the usual Making Of puff. **Andrew Lowry**

EXTRAS > Featurette



## [REC] APOCALYPSE 18

Film ★★★★★ Extras ★★★★★

OUT NOW DVD, BD

AFTER TWO GREAT HORROR MOVIES, and a bizarrely comic threequel, Jaume Balagueró and Paco Plaza's *[REC]* franchise closes with comparative disappointment. Working alone this time, Balagueró moves the infected action to a quarantine ship, swaps found footage for CCTV, and utilises iffy CGI (the practical FX are still beautiful) to pit series protagonist Manuela Velasco against a boatload of monster marines. Though watchable, it's a little bit *Under Siege*, lacking the pace and (black) magic of its forebears. A decent Making Of details Balagueró's struggles, but 2011's *Sleep Tight* shows his real skill. **Matt Glasby**

EXTRAS > Making Of



## Extras

The other stuff we're excited about this month...

### AARDMAN BATMAN AND ROBIN

ACTION FIGURES **OUT NOW**

Here's an unexpected twist on the Dynamic Duo – Batman and Robin done the Aardman Animation way! This pair of officially DC licensed action figures re-imagine the Caped Crusader and his sidekick with Aardman's signature bug-eyes, silly grins and cartoonish bodies. In fact, stubby Batman looks positively chuffed about some possible cheese, while Robin appears to be mulling his poor choice in trousers. **BLAM!** Get these guys on your shelf!



### FIFTY SHADES OF GREY

SOUNDTRACK **OUT NOW**

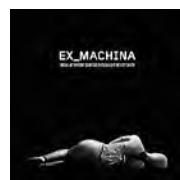
Lights-low R&B/MoR balladry is the size of it for the soundtrack to the bonk-buster du jour. Jessie Ware and The Weeknd do OK by it, Ellie Goulding and Awolnation less so – the latter's cover of Springsteen's 'I'm On Fire' deserves

whipping. But the record's producers avoid punishment thanks to such classy cuts as Beyoncé's purring 'Crazy In Love', Frank Sinatra's 'Witchcraft' and samples of Danny Elfman's score (available in its own right).

### THE IRON GIANT DELUXE TALKING FIGURE

COLLECTIBLE **OUT SEPT**

Back in '99, Brad Bird had an undeserved flop with animated Ted Hughes adap *The Iron Giant*. Today, it's a beloved classic, and Mondo is honouring the metal softie with a 406.4mm figure. Created from the animation files used in the film, he features 30 points of articulation, Vin Diesel-voiced quotes from the film, interchangeable heads (including one that lights up), accessories and a tiny Hogarth. Banzai!



### EX\_MACHINA

SOUNDTRACK **OUT 10 APRIL**

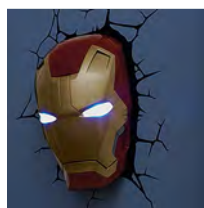
Composer Ben Salisbury and Portishead honcho Geoff Barrow's score for *Dredd* went unused (they released it as *Drokk*), but there's dread aplenty in their drone-basted score for Alex Garland's techno-thriller.

Dissonant, dense and intense, its electro-doom mood-pieces throb and pulse with claustrophobic, precision-sculpted threat. Like Brad Fiedel and John Carpenter in malign union, the peak is 'The Test Worked': all nine minutes of it, but mostly the scalping six-minute mark. Yikes.

### 3D WALL DECO LIGHTS

LIGHT FIXTURES **OUT NOW**

'Crack Sticker Included' is one of the more ominous things we've seen on a box lately, but it's actually what transforms a cool themed wall light into a really cool themed wall light. Thanks to some adhesive-backed optical cleverness, you can have LED night lights in the form of Iron Man's head, Hulk's fist, Cap's shield and more bursting through your bedroom wall. And they're battery-powered, so no need for any monkeying about with wires. For more, see [www.3dlightfx.co.uk](http://www.3dlightfx.co.uk).



## TOTAL FILM competition



# WIN!

## AN LCD TV AND BLU-RAY PLAYER WITH THE HOMESMAN!

OUT TO OWN FROM 23 MARCH

Let's face it, Tommy Lee Jones was born to make westerns. The veteran star has form both in front of the camera and behind it, from classic '80s series *Lonesome Dove* to his lauded big-screen directorial debut *The Three Burials Of Melquiades Estrada*. He returns to the Old West with *The Homesman*, writing, directing and starring in this tale of a frontier heroine (Hilary Swank) who volunteers to chaperone three unstable women across the Nebraska wilds. Along the way she forms an unlikely partnership with an on-the-run reprobate (Jones); soon enough, the pair find themselves pushed to their limits in the face of constant threat and tragedy.

Swank and Jones aren't the only big names on show: the superb cast also includes Meryl Streep, James Spader and William Fichtner. Epic but intimate, stark yet beautiful, *The Homesman* saddles up on DVD and Blu-ray on 23 March (download early from 16 March!). To celebrate, we've teamed up with Entertainment One to offer the chance to win a home-entertainment system, comprising 42-inch LG flatscreen LCD TV with matching slimline Blu-ray player and a copy of *The Homesman*. Five runners-up will win the film. For a chance to win, head to [www.futurecompetitions.com/TF231](http://www.futurecompetitions.com/TF231) and answer the question below:

**What was Tommy Lee Jones' acting debut?**

- A *The Godfather*
- B *Love Story*
- C *Grease*

**TO ENTER ONLINE HEAD TO**  
**[WWW.FUTURECOMPETITIONS.COM/TF231](http://WWW.FUTURECOMPETITIONS.COM/TF231)**

**TERMS & CONDITIONS** You can enter this competition at any time between 13 March 2015 and 9 April 2015 by entering online at [www.futurecompetitions.com/TF231](http://www.futurecompetitions.com/TF231). By taking part in the competition you agree to the Competition Rules which are summarised below but can be viewed in full at <http://www.futurenet.com/futureonline/competitionrules.asp>. By entering you confirm you are happy to receive details of future offers and promotions from Future Publishing Ltd and carefully selected third parties. If you do not want to receive information relating to future offers and promotions, follow the instructions online. Competition helpline number 01225 442244. Late or incomplete entries will be disqualified. Entries must be submitted by an individual (not via any agency or similar) and, unless otherwise stated, are limited to one per household. The Competition is open to all GB residents of 18 years and over, except employees of Future Publishing (including freelancers) and any party involved in the competition or their households. By entering a Competition you give permission to use your name, likeness and personal information in connection with the Competition and for promotional purposes. If you are a winner, you may have to provide additional information. Details of winners will be available on request within three months of the closing date. If you are a winner, receipt by you of any prize is conditional upon you complying with (amongst other things) the Competition Rules. You acknowledge and agree that neither the Company nor any associated third parties shall have any liability to you in connection with your use and/or possession of your prize.





## Brat magic

Still the leader of the teen pack...

Emilio Estevez stays stoic despite Molly Ringwald's armpit attack.

## THE BREAKFAST CLUB: 30TH ANNIVERSARY EDITION **15**

Film ★★★★★ Extras ★★☆☆☆

1985 **OUT 6 APRIL** BD

**H**ARD TO BELIEVE THAT THE *Breakfast Club*, that preserved-in-amber adventure in bonding, oversharing and make-unders, is now 30 years old. When you're dealing with such a milestone, it's the absences that are most notable: primarily writer/director John Hughes, whose death at 59 brought forth touching recollections from muse Molly Ringwald and many others. Shame, then, that what's also missing here are fresh extras that pay fitting tribute. Most of the bonuses on this remastered-from-35mm reissue are old news. The 12-part doc *Sincerely Yours* (which lacks Hughes, Ringwald and Emilio Estevez), featurette about the term 'Brat Pack' (ditto) and chatty Anthony Michael Hall/Judd Nelson commentary were all on the 2008 DVD. New here are a mere trivia track and trailer.

Few would argue it deserves the full Criterion treatment. But, as any devotee of the teen movie will attest, *TBC* is one of the

best. It's in essence a classic chamber play about rebellion, repression and self-expression, in which five mismatched peers share a Saturday detention (and a smoke) and slowly bare their souls. Its intense character study is more sophisticated than you'd find in most dramas, the dialogue refreshingly unmannered. Sure, Nelson's sociopath, Bender, is a smart-mouthed antecedent to Kevin Williamson's verbose wisecrackers but the rest are sweetly self-conscious, revealing class and background in their every authentic word.

The remastering is a step in the right direction, previous iterations being grimy and glitchy. But what of the 150-minute director's cut that Ally Sheedy mentioned at the 25th anniversary reunion? The Brain, the Athlete, the Basket-Case, the Princess, the Criminal – and we – deserve better.

**Emma Morgan**

EXTRAS > Commentary > Documentary  
> Featurette > Trivia track

### SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED...

#### PRETTY IN PINK **1986**

Hughes scripts Ringwald's finest 96 minutes as poor oddball Andie, falling for a rich guy.

#### FERRIS BUELLER'S DAY OFF **1986**

Another Hughes classic – also featuring the same disused Illinois school as seen in *TBC*.

#### EASY A **2010**

Easy to imagine Emma Stone as a Hughes heroine in this *Breakfast*-referencing teen-com.



## TOY SOLDIERS **15**

Film ★★★★★ Extras ★★★★★

1991 **OUT NOW** DVD, BD

A PROPER BLAST FROM THE PAST, *Beverly Hills Cop* scribe Daniel Petrie Jr's 1991 *Die Hard* homage is a legitimately YA action film. There are 30 careful, character-building minutes before a boarding school is taken hostage by Andrew Divoff's (*Wishmaster*) drug lord – and the time investment pays off in organically escalating tension. Lead Sean Astin and chums from *The Regis School* make enterprising, empathetic heroes, Divoff sweats condensed menace, and veterans Louis Gossett Jr and Denholm Elliott add class. The result is *much* better and more brutal than remembered, and couldn't be cleared to be made today, when school shootings are, tragically, not just a Hollywood proposition.

**Matt Glasby**

EXTRAS > None



## WILD RIVER **PG**

Film ★★★★★ Extras ★★★★★

1960 **OUT NOW** Dual Format

AN UNEXPECTEDLY LYRICAL OFFERING from the normally stagey Elia Kazan (*A Streetcar Named Desire*), this is set in 1933 Tennessee, when a series of dams was planned to prevent flooding and bring electricity. Montgomery Clift is the official promoting the plan, Jo Van Fleet's the feisty old dame who ain't movin', and Lee Remick's her granddaughter who – of course – falls for Clift. The use of genuine locations adds realism and beauty, Remick's fresh loveliness is breathtaking, and Kazan makes good use of Clift's facial stiffness (the legacy of a bad car crash) to suggest emotional reticence. **Philip Kemp**  
EXTRAS > Commentary > Gallery > Booklet





Man to the east,  
woman to the west.

# Gang related

Sheer Mann power...

## MAN OF THE WEST <sup>12</sup>

Film ★★★★★ Extras ★★★★★

1958 **OUT 23 MARCH** DUAL FORMAT



**T**HE LAST – AND MANY WOULD say the best – of Anthony Mann's great run of '50s westerns (including the likes of *Winchester '73*, *Where The River Bends*, *The Naked Spur*, *The Man From Laramie*...), this stars Gary Cooper as Link Jones, a seemingly solid citizen left stranded after his train's attacked by gunmen. But it turns out he was once a member of this same notorious outlaw gang, headed by the chortling Dock Tobin (Lee J. Cobb, giving it all he's got and then some) and finds himself trapped into rejoining them. Upping the ante is the presence of attractive saloon singer Billie (Julie London), also left stranded and dependent on Link for protection.

Master, as ever, of meaningful landscape, Mann uses the terrain to symbolise Link's journey back into his seared past, from the bustling streets and green hills where he starts out to the crumbling ghost-town

ringed by barren rocks that bears witness to the showdown. The tone of the film steadily darkens in parallel with its scenery: Link, at first a clumsy, almost comic figure, turns increasingly grim and vengeful, driven by homicidal urges resurfacing from his criminal past. The fight between him and Coley (Jack Lord), the most psychotic of the gang, is disturbingly prolonged and brutal, as though Link's punishing his younger self for what he did.

As so often with Mann, the tensions between the characters play out like twisted family relationships, with Dock Tobin as the evil patriarch and the gang members as fratricidal siblings. Blu-ray does full justice to Ernest Haller's widescreen lensing, and extras include a perceptive intro from western-movie expert Douglas Pye. **Philip Kemp**

EXTRAS ▶ Commentary ▶ Introduction ▶ Booklet



## SPRING IN A SMALL TOWN <sup>U</sup>

Film ★★★★★ Extras ★★★★★

1948 **OUT NOW** DVD

LONG THOUGHT LOST, FEI MU'S drama surfaced in the '80s and soon became rated one of the finest Chinese movies ever. It's set in the limbo period just after WW2 when China lay shattered by the Japanese occupation, not yet gripped by Mao's Communists. Tied to her gentle but sickly husband, a young woman lives a dejected life – until her childhood sweetheart shows up. Their passion plays out in hints and glances and half-involuntary gestures. *Spring* was Fei's last film; he died in 1951, aged 44. **Philip Kemp**

EXTRAS ▶ Shorts ▶ Booklet



## THE LEGEND OF THE LONE RANGER <sup>12</sup>

Film ★★★★★ Extras ★★★★★

1981 **OUT NOW** DVD, BD

THIRTY YEARS BEFORE JOHNNY DEPP put a crow on his head, another *Lone Ranger* reboot got killed by bad publicity – and deservedly so. A notorious turkey in 1981, William A. Fraker's clumsy hoedown puts Clint Eastwood in the mask, killing his career before it ever started. Baddie Christopher Lloyd fails to play it straight, Tonto's still an offensive stereotype and helmet-haired Spillbury was so bad his *entire* dialogue had to be dubbed by another actor. Hi Ho-hum.

**Paul Bradshaw**

EXTRAS ▶ Music suite ▶ Image gallery ▶ Promo material PDF



## RAISE THE TITANIC <sup>PG</sup>

Film ★★★★★ Extras ★★★★★

1980 **OUT NOW** DVD, BD

LEW GRADE'S LEGENDARY REMARK that it would have been cheaper to lower the Atlantic has long outlived the reason for its coinage, a torpid Cold War thriller that, appropriately enough, sank without trace after running aground at the box office. This 35th anniversary re-release doesn't make its case, beyond offering a chance to hear John Barry's stirring score in a self-contained suite. Grade had hoped to build a franchise around Clive Cussler's Dirk Pitt character, as boringly portrayed here by Richard Jordan as he would be by Matthew McConaughey in *Sahara* 25 years later. **Neil Smith**

EXTRAS ▶ Soundtrack suite ▶ Galleries



## FAIRYTALE: A TRUE STORY <sup>U</sup>

Film ★★★★★ Extras ★★★★★

1997 **OUT 23 MARCH** DVD

DO YOU BELIEVE IN FAIRIES? SIR Arthur Conan Doyle did, risking his reputation by claiming that plainly faked 1917 fairy photos were the genuine article. Charles Sturridge dramatises this whimsical cause célèbre with the help of Peter O'Toole (as Conan Doyle), Harvey Keitel (a hirsute Harry Houdini) and CG pixies that charmingly tip this so-called 'true story' into the realm of heartwarming, if slightly twee, fantasy. Paul McGann and Bill Nighy swell a cast-list that also includes Mel Gibson and Sturridge's son Tom as a fairy called Hob. **Neil Smith**

EXTRAS ▶ None





TV

## Grue detective

Behind the scenes of crime show with braaaains, iZombie...

**B**ELIEVE IT OR NOT, zombies aren't everyone's cup of tea. There's all that putrid desiccation, lack of personality... and that whole obsession with brain-eating? Frankly off-putting. But what if a different breed of zombie could turn those prejudices on their head? Rob Thomas and Diane Ruggiero, the creative team behind *Veronica Mars*, are betting that Olivia 'Liv' Moore (Rose McIver) can convert the undead haters. Or at the very least make them laugh trying.

*iZombie* the television series is loosely based on the Vertigo comic of the same name created by Chris Robertson and Michael Allred. And while both revolve around a young woman who is zombieified and then eats the grey matter of the recently dead to retain her humanity, Thomas and Ruggiero are veering their adaptation into a unique procedural

zom-com millennial-angst mash-up that truly stands alone.

"Thematically, we're very interested in Liv having the worst ever quarter-life crisis," Thomas says of his heroine. In the pilot, audiences meet Liv fresh out of medical school with a bright future and gorgeous fiancée. Everything looks perfect until she goes to a boat party that changes everything.

### My so-called death

Scratched by a zombie during an undead outbreak, Liv wakes up in a body bag, pale and dead with a craving for brains. "The arc of the pilot is that she wakes thinking she has no reason to get up every day," Thomas continues. "She is merely surviving because she *bad* this great life. She had a great guy and was going to be a doctor but when she turns into a zombie all of that goes away." Appalled at her

'Liv is the heroine, but she's also trying to eat brains in a socially responsible way' **ROSE McIVER**

'condition', she retreats from everyone around her, takes a job at a morgue for access to her necessary sustenance and sinks into a serious funk.

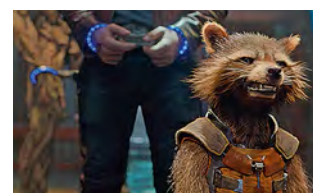
"You see all of these 25-year-olds coming out of school and there's nothing waiting for them," Thomas says, hinting at the show's real-world resonance. "Liv's got that with a baseball bat. Everything she thought she worked for is stripped away from her so she's starting over."



## ON DEMAND

The latest films and shows to stream or download...

If you only stream one movie this month, it has to be **Guardians Of The Galaxy** (2014, ★★★★★), available on Sky Movies On Demand from 20 March. It's *The Avengers* in a funhouse mirror, *Star Wars* with semen jokes (that naughty-naughty Jackson Pollock reference), the best



use of an angry animal in a lead role since *Cujo*. There's more MCU action over on Virgin Movies from April with Phase 1 origin stories **Iron Man** (2008, ★★★★★), **Thor** (2011, ★★★★★) and **Captain America: The First Avenger** (2011, ★★★★★). Chris Evans swaps his shield for a thesaurus

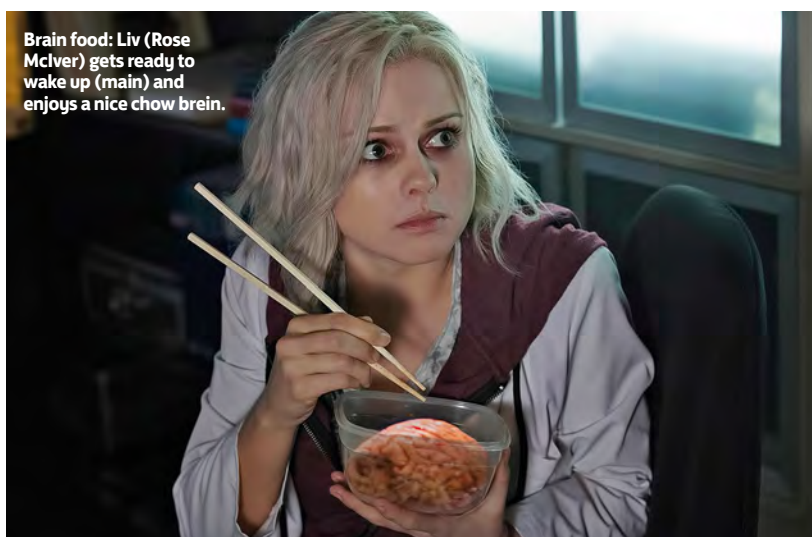


in **Playing It Cool** (2014, ★★), as a romcom screenwriter who doesn't believe in love – until Michelle Monaghan walks in. Sadly Evans' character is too unlikeable for you to care if he lives happily ever after.

For a much funnier exercise in self-awareness, get down to **22 Jump Street** (2014, ★★★★★, on Netflix now), which plays like its own *MAD Magazine* spoof, right down to jam-packing every frame with gags big and small. Netflix is also offering one of the Coen bros' very best, gangster noir **Miller's Crossing** (1990, ★★★★★).

Netflix Originals **House Of Cards S3** and the Tina Fey-created **Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt** (with *Bridesmaids*' Ellie Kemper) will already be up in their entirety by the time you read this; and from 15 March there's Netflix un-original **3rd Rock From The Sun S1** (1996, ★★★★★) – loveably loopy alien nonsense with Joseph Gordon-Levitt. And with **Game Of Thrones** back on telly on 12 April, it's time to reacquaint yourself with the characters you've completely forgotten with Sky's **GOT S1-4 Boxset** (2011-14, ★★★★★).

Brain food: Liv (Rose McIver) gets ready to wake up (main) and enjoys a nice chow brein.



"I think what was appealing with Liv is that she is cynical and jaded. Although she maintains some sarcasm and her dark sense of humor, she's got a purpose as well, thanks to Ravi [Rahul Kohli], her colleague."

### Thanks for the memories

"He's the only character in the show who knows her secret," Kohli says excitedly of his character, Dr. Ravi Chakrabarti. When he spots Rose sneaking brains on the side, he confronts her but doesn't judge. "For him, she is this medical marvel and greatest scientific find in modern history. We're talking about a dead person who is alive! His enthusiasm brings her out of her shell a little bit because there's no disgust or alienation from him. He's also working on a cure which is something she hadn't even contemplated as an option so he gives her hope. They become a team and are able to use her condition in a positive way."

Liv quickly discovers that she can pick up memory flashes and traits from the brains she ingests, which in turn steers her towards crime fighting. "Liv is the heroine solving these crimes and fighting against injustice in her community, but she's also a zombie who is trying to eat brains in a socially responsible way," says McIver. She eats the brains of people who have died already in order to preserve some of Olivia."

Which is in direct contrast to one Blaine Debeers (Dave Anders – another *Once Upon A Time* alum), the very charming zombie who turned Liv and has less honourable intentions regarding his newfound undead powers. "We start the show with one good zombie and one bad zombie," Thomas teases. "It's much easier to be a bad zombie; you can create other zombies at will. So the long arc will involve her trying to stave off a zombie apocalypse..." **Tara Bennett**

> *iZombie* debuts in the US this month and will be shown in the UK at a later date.

### SEE THIS IF YOU LIKED...

#### BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER 1997–2003

Sarah Michelle Gellar discovers it's her destiny to protect unsuspecting humans from supernatural scum.

#### VERONICA MARS 2004-07

Mars is the alpha female when it comes to sardonic, interior-monologuing heroines.

#### PUSHING DAISIES 2007-09

"Forensic fairytale" no less obsessed with the dead than *iZombie*.

Which makes her a sympathetic character, right? Yes, except for that pesky undead part. Which is why Thomas says finding the right actress who could make audiences see past her undead-ness was key. It took an 11th-hour Aussie to make everything snap into place. "When we cast *Veronica Mars*, Kristen Bell was literally the first of 100 actresses that I saw for the show," Thomas remembers. "This time, Rose McIver was the 100th of 100 actresses I saw. We were down to the last day and I was panicked because I did not think we had 'it', which is a dark quality. Turns out Rose is magnetic and people want to watch her."

Best known for her recent recurring roles in *Once Upon A Time* and *Masters Of Sex*, McIver says she was charmed by Liv as soon as she read the script. "I've always been drawn to comedies with a strong sense of tragedy at their centre," McIver admits.





Introducing the human blackboard extension.

## Maps to the startups

Mike Judge ventures into office cyberspace...

### SILICON VALLEY: SEASON 1 <sup>15</sup>

Show ★★★★★ Extras ★★★★★

2014 **OUT 23 MARCH** DVD, BD



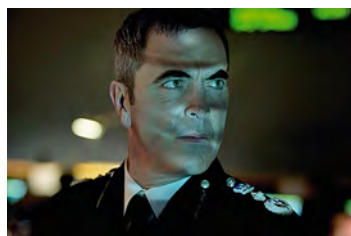
**I**T'D BE EASY TO DESCRIBE MIKE Judge's HBO sitcom *Silicon Valley* as *Office Space* meets *Beavis And Butt-Head*... and so we shall, because in many ways it's also true. Specifically, this eight-episode first season has the same keen eye for petty battles in the workplace as the cult 1999 comedy. And, like *Beavis And Butt-Head*, it nails a zeitgeist with pinpoint accuracy, catching something essential about a particular moment in time and culture.

That time is right now, and the culture is that of San Francisco tech mecca Silicon Valley, a billion-dollar circus of ego and vision statements through which a group of twentysomething nerds and coders – our protagonists – find themselves blundering following unexpected success. It's the 'close-knit house of new guys in town' set-up of HBO stablemate *Entourage*, only swapping the James Cameron

cameo for one from Google chairman Eric Schmidt and raising the financial stakes by a factor of a thousand.

Dead-eyed observations of the Valley are the show's greatest strength – not just riffs on easy targets like Google and Facebook (though they're here) but deeper digs at tech's tendency towards cult of personality, youth worship and promises to "change the world". In comparison it takes the cast and their characters a few episodes to settle in and get chemistry firing, though it's no surprise they do eventually – fine cast and crew commentaries on every episode (sensibly recorded as a gang) reveal a happy working group who play off each other well, and whose improvised lines often end up in the show. A standard *Making Of* featurette is the only other extra. **Nathan Ditum**

EXTRAS > Commentaries > Making Of



### BABYLON <sup>18</sup>

Show ★★★★★ Extras ★★★★★

2014 **OUT NOW** DVD

A PROMISING TV PILOT DIRECTED BY Danny Boyle and written by *Peep Show*'s Sam Bain and Jesse Armstrong ended up being an uncomfortable blend of sharp satire and serious drama. This six-part series follows in the same vein. Brit Marling plays PR guru Liz Garvey, hired by James Nesbitt's police commissioner to improve the police's image. The ensuing farce, all cutting one-upmanship and profane insults, gives it the potential to be the new *The Thick Of It*. Sadly, it actually falls halfway between that and *The Bill*. **Matt Looker**

EXTRAS > Feature-length pilot  
> Interviews



### THE AVENGERS: SERIES 4 <sup>PG</sup>

Show ★★★★★ Extras ★★★★★

1965-66 **OUT NOW** DVD, BD

AFTER HONOR BLACKMAN'S BOAT-rocking departure, the Brit-spy classic returned with a vengeance – and, crucially, Emma Peel. Arriving on-screen fencing, Diana Rigg joined Patrick Macnee's Steed like she was born to parry Series 4's increasingly fantastical threats, all while purring arch slap-downs. The scraps are playful, the kinks cheeky and the sets gorgeous, but cast chemistry clinches it: 50 years on, the banter still fizzles like Steed's favoured bubbly. **Kevin Harley**

EXTRAS > Commentaries > Interview  
> Test footage > Alternative scenes  
> Galleries



### OLIVE KITTERIDGE <sup>15</sup>

Show ★★★★★ Extras ★★★★★

2014 **OUT NOW** DVD, BD

ADAPTED FROM ELIZABETH STROUT'S 2008 novel, Frances McDormand's passion project casts her as a combative New England schoolmarm with family issues. Over four hour-long episodes we see this testy woman grapple with 25 years of depression, disillusion and even diarrhoea to discover she's wormed her way into our hearts – a testament not only to its star's flawless performance, but also to Lisa Cholodenko's (*The Kids Are All Right*) direction. Bill Murray, Richard Jenkins and Peter Mullan pad out yet another HBO success story. **Neil Smith**

EXTRAS > Episode recaps (BD)



### HALO: NIGHTFALL <sup>12</sup>

Show ★★★★★ Extras ★★★★★

2014 **OUT 16 MARCH** DVD, BD

A FEATURE-LENGTH RELEASE OF LAST year's webseries, set between *Halo 4* and the forthcoming *Halo 5: Guardians* and designed to introduce protagonist Agent Locke to eager gamers with cash to spare. This is less cynical than you might expect, with Ridley Scott executive-producing and a clear respect given to the *Halo* canon, but the effects often look cheap and dialogue almost always sounds like pompous nonsense. Hardcore *Halo* fans will doubtless find something to admire, but others will find this a whole lot of fanfare over nothing. **Matt Looker**

EXTRAS > Featurettes > Unlockable extras





## BOOKS

# Command performance

Thomson knows thesp...

Method: like pulling teeth.

## WHY ACTING MATTERS

Book ★★★★★

DAVID THOMSON | Yale University Press



"OH, GRACIOUS, why doesn't the dear boy just act?" Laurence Olivier's famous dismissal of Dustin Hoffman's Method madness on the set of *Marathon Man*

lies at the heart of David Thomson's latest book, a tribute to the importance of pretending onscreen and off, which also confirms the writer's pre-eminence in film criticism.

Arguably, Thomson has been mired of late preserving the legacy of his lauded *Biographical Dictionary Of Film*. This book, part of a non-film series called *Why X Matters*, allows Thomson to cut loose in freewheeling style. Not every writer can move so wittily and wisely from *Hamlet* to the matinee idol 'performances' of football ace Cristiano Ronaldo.

As a teenager, Thomson saw Olivier on stage and theatre dominates much of his thinking. Yet he is wise to the screen's increasing hold on the acting profession. Before cinema, we

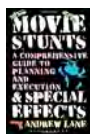
had to take the careers of great actors on trust. Today, thanks to film and TV, we sometimes spend more time with actors than with real people. What effect, wonders Thomson, does that have on our willingness to become actors in everyday life?

The book's spine is the parallel careers of Olivier and Marlon Brando, two rival philosophies in which Thomson finds uncanny similarities and paradoxes... especially when he swaps established fact for fantasy casting to prove a point. Olivier as Don Corleone? It might have happened and Thomson is astute on its hypothetical effects. At once scholarly and sacrilegious, playful and preposterous, the book provides a welcome reminder of why Thomson matters. **Simon Kinnear**

## MOVIE STUNTS & SPECIAL EFFECTS

Book ★★★★★

ANDREW LANE | Bloomsbury



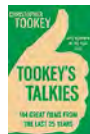
WHETHER IT'S falling, fighting or running through fire, this book aims to be a bible on "creating the illusion of painful events".

It's a remarkably practical look at a less-than-glamorous side of filmmaking, complete with cost efficiency and insurance tips. While Lane often evokes the tone of a health and safety pamphlet, anecdotes from well-known films stop the book from being too niche. Plus you have to admire a guide so comprehensive it has an entire chapter dedicated to 'Horses and livestock'. **Matt Looker**

## TOOKEY'S TALKIES

Book ★★★★★

CHRISTOPHER TOOKEY | Matador



TOOKEY IS A DIVISIVE figure in film criticism, campaigning to ban David Cronenberg's *Crash* during his tenure at the *Daily Mail*.

But this collection of 144 of his favourite recent talkies (including, er, *The Artist*) is resolutely uncontroversial. Tookey writes illuminatingly about *Cape Fear* and *Fight Club* but, bar the odd taste lapse (is *The Lion, The Witch, And The Wardrobe* really worthy of being called "stupendous"?) and a touch of the Partridge, it's enjoyable if arbitrary, spending as much time on Oscar winners as rarer treats like *The Secrets In Their Eyes*. **Matt Glasby**

## STARLIGHT

Book ★★★★★

MARK MILLAR & GORAN PARLOV | Image Comics



Duke McQueen is an ageing widower on fish oils, until an oppressed alien planet needs him to be the rhombus-jawed hero he once was. Will his joints survive? *Kick-Ass* trouble-causer Mark Millar's story arc channels Dan Dare through Eastwood's *Unforgiven*, with one distinguishing factor: feeling. Millar's standard snark and pastiche are here, but *Starlight's* addition of elegiac writing and loving art to extreme violence knees you in the nuts and strokes your heart. Bring on the film: paging Liam Neeson? **Kevin Harley**

## Three more...

Aliens! Allied forces! Amphibian thunder gods!



## THE AVENGERS VAULT

★★★★★

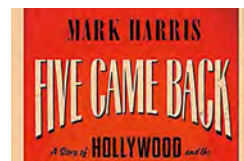
Less a (visual) history of the team per se than of key members Cap, Iron Man, Hulk and Thor. Comes with removable posters (frog Thor!), colour guides, first drafts etc. for you to pull out and put back in the incorrect envelopes.



## THE ART OF HOME

★★★★★

You can taste the rainbow from the very first spread of this retina-razzing companion to DreamWorks' alien animation. If the colours don't bowl you over then Jim Parsons' amusingly awestruck foreword will ("I went from abject horror... to sheer joy").



## FIVE CAME BACK

★★★★★

Paperback edish of Mark Harris' superlative account of five studio-era greats – Capra, Ford, Huston, William Wyler and George Stevens – and their mixed personal/professional fortunes during WW2. Fastidious and fascinating.





Stormy: The T-Rex has a taste for flesh...

## Unprotected Rex

**JURASSIC PARK** | Spielberg gets it down to a T

**B**ASED ON MICHAEL CRICHTON'S bestseller, Steven Spielberg's 1993 ground-breaker is set at the "most advanced amusement park in the entire world" – where everything, inevitably, goes pear-shaped.

While the story warns of testing the limits of technology, the film positively delights in it, unleashing a menagerie of photo-realistic dinosaurs, such as this rampaging T-Rex, which still convinces 20 years on.



**1** With systems down and a storm rolling in, the driverless cars ridden by Alan Grant (Sam Neill) and Ian Malcolm (Jeff Goldblum) grind to a halt.



**2** In the second car, kiddies Tim (Joseph Mazzello) and Lex (Ariana Richards) and lawyer Donald Gennaro (Martin Ferrero) watch water rippling in a glass. A dead goat lands on the roof.



**3** When the T-Rex looms out of the darkness, Gennaro runs – understandably – to the toilet. The kids scream and – rather less understandably – shine a torch in its eye.



**4** The T-Rex attacks the car, shattering the windshield and trying to get at the kids. It tips it over, crushing it and chomping on a tyre.



**5** Mud slips in and Lex crawls to safety as Alan, then Ian, try to distract the T-Rex by waving a lit flare around. It takes out the toilet and hilariously chomps on the lawyer instead.



**6** The T-Rex spins the car with Tim trapped inside. Together, Alan and Lex abseil over the cliff to safety as the T-Rex sends the car plummeting past them... **Matt Glasby**

*Jurassic Park* is available on DVD and Blu-ray now.



### THE BACKGROUND

Spielberg bought the rights to *Jurassic Park* for \$1.5m before it was published. He assembled Hollywood's top SFX artists; a full-scale robo T-Rex was created by Stan Winston. Phil Tippett's stop-motion minis were intended for complex movements, but they looked too jerky, so ILM's Dennis Muren suggested using then-nascent CGI.

### THE VIBRATIONS

The only way SFX expert Michael Lantieri could make perfectly circular ripples in a glass of water was by placing it on his guitar while he played. He rigged guitar strings through the car to recreate the effect. The idea for the vibrating rear-view mirror came to Spielberg while driving. He was listening to Earth, Wind And Fire so loudly that his car shook.



## THE CGI

Building on their breakthrough work in *The Abyss* and *T2*, ILM convinced Spielberg with a CG dinosaur rendered in harsh sunlight. When Tippet saw how realistic it looked, he admitted, "I'm extinct," a line used in the film. But he knew so much about dino movements, they kept him on as a CG "animal trainer".

## THE ANIMATION

Tippet's practical team found computer animation like "animating with boxing gloves on", so ILM created the Dinosaur Input Device (DID), a puppet-like model that would register the minutest movements and translate them into screen action. Spielberg edited the film without dinosaurs; ILM then added in more than 50 CG shots.

## THE T-REX

This entire scene was filmed on a soundstage, but the (fake) rain was problematic. With the added weight of the water, Stan Winston's four-ton T-Rex started shaking and needed to be dried off. The T-Rex is CG when it runs, but the effect was so good, Spielberg rewrote the ending to bring it back for the climactic raptor fight.

## THE DETAILS

Most of the objects the T-Rex touches – crushed cars, snapped fences – were practical effects performed on set. But there are also difficult-to-spot CG inserts such as the splashing water under the T-Rex's feet and the crushed car in later, more dangerous, shots. Even Ferrero becomes a digital facsimile once he's firmly clamped between the T-Rex's jaws.

## THE SOUND

Nobody knows what dinosaurs sounded like, so sound designer Gary Rydstrom recorded animals such as swans, hawks and howler monkeys and mixed them together. The T-Rex's roar was a baby elephant slowed down; the noise it makes while shaking Ferrero is Rydstrom's Jack Russell terrier, Buster, chewing a rope toy.

## THE MOVEMENT

Experts disagree about how T-Rex ran – as animator Steve 'Spaz' Williams puts it: "There's no reference for a seven-ton bipedal animal that can move at 30 mph." Tippet had the animators take mime classes and film their own dino-running. When experts saw the T-Rex footage, they admitted the filmmakers might have got it right.



## INSTANT EXPERT

# Samurai Movies

The genre that keeps on ronin.



Think of the samurai movie as Japan's answer to the western – familiar, around since the silent era, and kept fresh through constant reinvention. A specific subset of 'Jidaigeki' (period films), 'chanbara' cinema is set in the Edo period of Japan's history (1603-1868) when regional daimyo chieftains employed an elite social order known as 'bushi', or 'samurai', to protect their kingdom and uphold a code of honour which usually ends with someone sticking a sword in their own gut.



Shozo Makino's 1919 one-reel swashbuckler *The Loyal 47 Ronin* was one of the first in the genre – and, since retold seven times, it's at the root of the chanbara trend of repetition. No less than 26 films have been made about the blind swordsman Zatoichi, dozens for famed warrior Miyamoto Musashi and at least six about the amoral Ryunosuke Tsukue. What's more, manga and TV series regularly expand the universe beyond movies, turning minor historical figures into pop-culture legends.



Samurai cinema only *really* falls into two categories – before and after Kurosawa. The director's rain-soaked action epics rewrote the rules during his '50s and '60s heyday. Taking literary cues from Shakespeare and stylising violence almost to the point of still-life paintings, films like *Seven Samurai*, *Throne Of Blood* and *Yojimbo* are still the samurai film measuring stick.



Keanu Reeves, RZA and Tom Cruise might have tried to bring the samurai movie to Hollywood in recent years, but it's always been there. Sergio Leone riffed on Kurosawa's films, inspiring a young Tarantino. Clint Eastwood owes his whole career to *Yojimbo*; *Seven Samurai* provided the plot for *The Magnificent Seven*; and Lucas stole *Hidden Fortress* for *Star Wars*. As Sun Tzu sort of said: "True victory lies in a thousand battles, a thousand victories and a thousand American remakes..."



Around the mid-'60s, honour and tradition gave way to revenge and bloodlust. Kihachi Okamoto's *Samurai Assassin* (1965), Toshiya Fujita's *Lady Snowblood* (1973) and Robert Houston's 'video nasty' *Shogun Assassin* (1980) all marked giant steps in the evolution of chanbara. More recently the likes of Takeshi Kitano's 2003 *Zatoichi* reboot and Takashi Miike's blockbusting *13 Assassins* (2010) and 3D debut, *Hara-Kiri: Death Of A Samurai* (2011) have refreshed the genre.

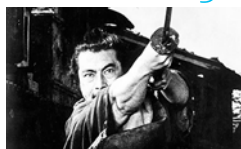
## Key movies



### SEVEN SAMURAI

1954 ★★★★★

The granddaddy of samurai movies, and one of the most influential films of all time, Kurosawa's epic sees a ragtag bunch of warriors defend a village from bandits.



### YOJIMBO

1961 ★★★★★

The original 'man with no name', Toshirô Mifune's silent assassin provided the blueprint for every cool antihero since, playing rival gangs against each other before blowing out of town.



### LONE WOLF AND CUB: SWORD OF VENGEANCE

1972 ★★★★★

The first in a series of six, *SOV* follows a wronged assassin who seeks revenge with his baby son in a (armoured) pram.



### 13 ASSASSINS

2010 ★★★★★

Not much happens for the first two hours of Takashi Miike's stately, realistic period piece – followed by some of the maddest, baddest 20 minutes in action movie history.

## Vital statistics

17

Direct remakes of Kurosawa movies

\$150m

Estimated amount lost by Keanu Reeves turkey, *47 Ronin*

207 mins

Uncut running time of *Seven Samurai*, unseen until 2004

145

Total deaths over the course of *13 Assassins*



RANT

# Is it just me? ...or is *Bring It On* a teen classic?

asks Jamie Graham

'The gravity-defying routines are both ballistic and balletic'

OFFICE-OMETER

The TF staff verdict is in!

**H**IGH-KICKING INTO cinemas in 2000, cheerleader romcom *Bring It On* met with middling reviews (63 percent on Rotten Tomatoes, 52 percent on Metacritic) and vitriol ("jumbled and stupid plot, bad acting... predictable gags," spat the *San Francisco Chronicle*). Critics were in agreement with the brutish choreographer who's brought in to up the game of the Toro squad from Rancho Carne High School: "Cheerleaders are dancers who have gone retarded," he opines. Or maybe the mostly male, middle-aged film journos didn't want to be seen getting excited; to argue the *brains* of a film with so many sports bras and bellybuttons on show is to risk being accused of intellectualising some unseemly thigh-rubbing.

But I'm convinced that *Bring It On*, written by Jessica Bendinger and marking the theatrical debut of *Ant-Man* director Peyton Reed, really is smart. It's not so much the routine plot, as Torrance (Kirsten Dunst, herself a cheerleader at high school) is crowned captain of the all-conquering Toros and must balance dreamy boys, mean girls and school work with working up new, kick-ass routines. No, it's the

quote-worthy vernacular, the snappy satire, the sincerity mixed with self-awareness (cheerleading is presented as a highly disciplined, supremely skilled *sport*, but we're still invited to snigger at Torrance saying, "My entire cheerleading career has been a lie") and the strategic comments on class, race and sexuality. White-skinned, blonde-haired and super-privileged, the Toros take on lower-class teams and strike up a fierce rivalry with the Clovers from East Compton High School. "That's alright, that's OK, you're gonna pump our gas some day" goes one of the Toros' chants, while Isis (Gabrielle Union), captain of the Clovers, asks, "Were the ethnic festivities to your liking?" when Torrance and new teammate Missy (*Buffy*'s Eliza Dushku) spy on a rehearsal.

Yes, *Bring It On* is PG-13 entertainment, meaning the sex, bullying and social commentary only go so far, and there's truth in Roger Ebert's assertion that it would have been more potent as a "hard-edged, R-rated comedy". But it does go far enough for cultural historian Maud Lavin to have praised the film's treatment of women, class and homophobia (the male cheerleaders are perpetually

taunted by football jocks), and to suggest that Peyton's use of bright colours and crisp edges – cinema du plastique-fantastique, if you will – is integral to the satire, not because it was shot on a Nickelodeon budget.

*Bring It On* is also, like, just awesome to watch, with the gravity-defying routines of the climactic cheer-off proving ballistic and balletic. Never mind that stunts more than two bodies high, flyovers and head-over-heels rotations are not actually allowed at high school level – the athleticism is astonishing, the choreography exhilarating. So while I'm not about to defend the four direct-to-DVD sequels and the stage musical, I am here to say that *Bring It On* should be mentioned in the same breath as *Heathers*, *Clueless*, *Mean Girls*, *Election* and John Hughes' catalogue. It's not cool to pooh-pooh the pom-poms. Or is it just me?

**Agree or disagree? Have your say at [gamesradar.com/](http://gamesradar.com/) or [totalfilm.com/](http://totalfilm.com/) on Facebook**



IT'S JUST YOU  
IT'S NOT JUST YOU

## LAST MONTH...

In *TF230*, Matt Glasby argued that TV is not 'the new cinema'? You respond...

**CHAD ELLIOT PRICE** It's not the new cinema. Especially that overrated dross *Breaking Bad*.

22 hours of varying quality on your budget TV? Cinema wins every time.

**GAZ PLANT** Watching a well-done movie in a building that is purpose-built for entertainment, or watching

**SIMON JAMES BASHFORTH** The only reason TV seems like the new cinema is that some A-list actors have started doing

TV. But bear in mind some actors started in TV first.

**NICHOLAS ADAMSON** If anything, there is more shit TV now than ever. For every *Breaking Bad* there are a million *Kardashians*.



**SCOTT GOOLSBY** *Boardwalk Empire*, *Breaking Bad*, *Game Of Thrones*, *The Bridge*... all better than anything in cinemas.

**DEAN JAMESON** Cinema is the new TV. Every film must be part of a series, with multiple

episodes and continuous character arcs.

**DAVE G-DADDY MACKAY** TV is absolutely not the new cinema, because I can watch TV naked without fear of prosecution.



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**SPOILER ALERT!**

**FADE IN:**  
EXT: CHICAGO

**MILA KUNIS** cleans toilets for a living with her family of Russian caricatures.

**MILA KUNIS**  
My first scene and I'm up to my elbows in crap. Talk about signposting!

**MILA'S MUM**  
Shyyut uyp, Myeg!

**MILA KUNIS**  
If only I had a telescope like my dad James D'Arcy, who died in the prologue. The lucky sod. I could look to the stars and see posh aliens talking Machiavellian bollocks!

**MILA** attempts to flog her eggs to a fertility clinic where she's attacked by space bastards but saved by flying beefcake **CHANNING TATUM**.

**CHANNING TATUM**  
I am half-man, half-wolf. Hence the pointy ears and persistent smell of wee.

**MILA KUNIS**  
Oh, I'm used to it. You're the floater I've been waiting all my life for! Talk about a Mr Muscle!

**CHANNING TATUM**  
Lordy. This is more

embarrassing than giggling my junk in *Magic Mike*.

**CHANNING** and **MILA** seek aid from **SEAN BEAN**, initiating audience wagers on how long before the latter carks it.

**SEAN BEAN**  
[scanning script] 'Alf-man, 'alf 'oneybee?!? Flamin' 'ell... Eh oop, yer majesty!

**MILA KUNIS**  
[harmlessly mobbed by bees] What is this, a bid to out-dumb the *Wicker Man* remake? Come on then you lot, make us a Crunchie, chop chop!

**MILA** is captured by bounty hunters who spent six days in make-up for three minutes of screen time and taken to a planet that looks like it was found down the back of George Lucas' hard drive.

**TUPPENCE MIDDLETON**  
Hello Mila, I'm the sister of the two main villains who you don't need to worry about. Actually, you don't need to worry too much about them either, you could have them both with one punch. Anyway, you look like our dead mum, which by some fantastically mangled logic means you own Earth.

**MILA KUNIS**  
Oh my God... this movie could do for inheritance law what *The Phantom Menace* did for tax disputes!

**TUPPENCE** has her one big moment - getting in a bath - then clears off for the rest of the story without anyone noticing.

**CHANNING TATUM**  
OK Mila - let's take the action up a notch by schlepping round a load of post office windows! Perversely, this will actually be one of the more exciting scenes.

Galactic toff **DOUGLAS BOOTH** coerces **MILA** into marrying him by subjecting her to an excruciatingly tedious dinner date.

**MILA KUNIS**  
Great - forced to wed in a dress that looks like a loo-roll cover. Apt, I suppose.

**CHANNING TATUM**  
To the rescue! Again! Only 36 more times to go!

EXT: EYE-SPRAININGLY DETAILED PLANET SOMEWHERE OR OTHER

Pout king of the universe **EDDIE REDMAYNE** raises the stakes to their highest

level by threatening **MILA's** unsympathetic family.

**EDDIE REDMAYNE**  
Behold... the... face... of... ultimate... evil: a... whispering... fop... who... sounds... like... a... stoned... Maggie... Thatcher...

**MILA KUNIS**  
Are you being paid by the pause or something? Pick up the pace! We've still got a load of lizard-man gubbins to get through!

The CGI scenery starts falling like Tetris, **MILA** fights and defeats **EDDIE**, even though she could've just let a stiff breeze do the job, and **SEAN BEAN** somehow makes it to the end of the movie without being beheaded, crushed or quartered by horses.

EXT: NORMAL, UNPIXELATED EARTH, THANK GOD

**CHANNING TATUM**  
Oh joy, a great big fluffy pair of wings, just in case I had any dignity left. Jupiter Ascending? More like stoopid-ass ending!

**FIN**

Next issue: *Fifty Shades Of Grey*

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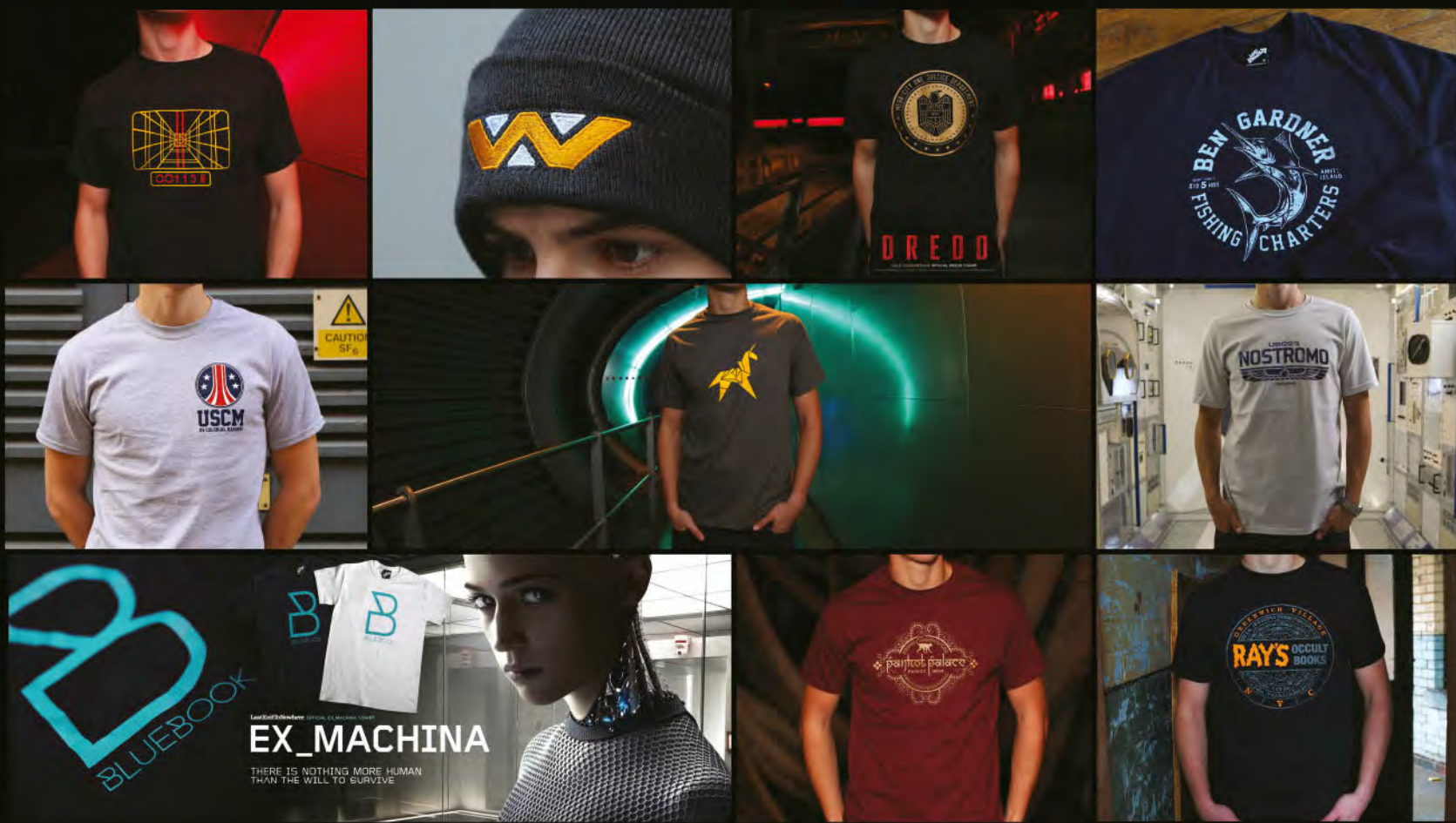




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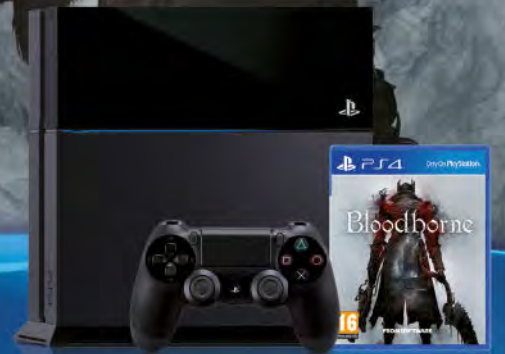
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