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Also Out This Month

- *Chasing Mavericks* - Gerard Butler features in this surfing biopic
- *For A Good Time, Call...* - a woman starts her own sex line industry
- *Fun Size* - teen-centric comedy set on Halloween
- *Here Comes The Boom* - Kevin James is a teacher-cum-mixed martial artist
- *People Like Us* - Chris Pine finds long-lost sister Elizabeth Banks
- *The Sapphires* - Chris O'Dowd manages an Aborigine equivalent of Diana Ross and The Supremes
- *Amour* - acclaimed French film about an elderly couple whose bond is tested after one suffers a stroke
- *End of Watch* - Jake Gyllenhaal and Michael Peña are LA police fighting a local gang
- *Nativity 2: Danger in the Manger!* - family sequel starring David Tennant as an underachieving schoolteacher
- *Alex Cross* - Tyler Perry stars as the infamous fictional detective
- *The Hunt* - Mads Mikkelsen in an award-winning performance as a social pariah
- *Trouble with the Curve* - Clint Eastwood is a retired baseball scout who brings daughter Amy Adams on a final trip

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MOVIE OF THE MONTH: *THE TWILIGHT SAGA: BREAKING DAWN - PART 2*

The phrase "all good things must come to an end" has never sounded sweeter.

After five years of cinematic torture, laughable dire-logue and a central romance that even a pre-school child would point and laugh at, the somehow-profitable *Twilight* saga has finally reached its swansong.

The second part of the adaptation of Stephanie Meyer's fourth book *Breaking Dawn, Part 2* marks the last time that audiences will have to endure this suck-fest (and yes, that IS a shockingly-bad vampire pun - see, I can do it too, movie!).

So, with all its negativity, you're probably wondering why I even made it the Movie of the Month over more deserving fare like *The Master* or *Argo*? Well, two reasons.

The first: even though the main consensus with the movie-going public is that *Battlefield Earth* seems logical compared to these films, it has to be acknowledged that *Twilight* has a HUGE fanbase and is thus the reason for its financial stability. Before you assemble your torches and pitchforks to hunt them down, it's astonishing to see how so many people (majorly young teenage girls who honestly don't know any better) can take something so terrible and turn it into this industry. That feat alone deserves to be looked at, and not just as a criminal case.

The second: IT'S THE FINAL FILM IN THIS SPECTACULAR CRAPTACULAR!!!! For dragged-along boyfriends and reluctant male attendees everywhere, this has to be some form of satisfaction to you all when you're inevitably dragged along. The mere thought that it's just this film to go with no others to follow, it's got to at least put a smile on your face.

Alright, I guess this is the part I acknowledge who's in this one and what it's about. You know the drill with the main leads - Kristen Stewart (found seducing other older men in *Snow White and the Huntsman* - oh that's right, I went there), Robert Pattinson (*Cosmopolis*) and Taylor Lautner (*Abduction*) all return for the last



Edward and Bella have some unfinished business to take care of in *The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn - Part 2*

time - and the much-larger-than-needs-to-be supporting cast are all here as well, including (but not limited to) Ashley Greene (*LOL*), Nikki Reed (*Thirteen*), Kellan Lutz (*Immortals*), Jackson Rathbone (*The Last Airbender*), Peter Facinelli (*Nurse Jackie*), Billy Burke (*Red Riding Hood*), Maggie Grace (*Taken*), Michael Sheen (*The Queen*), Jamie Campbell Bower (*Sweeney Todd*), Dakota Fanning (*The Only Good Freakin' Actress In These Goddamn Movies*), Cameron Bright (*Birth*). If I happen to have missed off some of your favourite actors in this series, ask yourself "why am I even defending this cast?" Yeah, that's what I thought.

Since this the final movie, you should be entitled to a bit of context from the previous movies. Why? Because I like to punish you that much.

A girl named Bella Swan who thinks she's tortured but is just pretentious falls in love with a self-absorbed vampire named Edward Cullen who does nothing but stare at her in an odd way. That's pretty much the first film. The second sees Edward leaving to "protect" Bella, causing the latter psychological nutcase to become depressed and flirt around with another boy, Jacob Black, a guy who seems more caring, more

sacrificial and actually more of a three-dimensional character (or the closest this franchise will come to one). However, the girl moronically decides she still wants the vampire who, again, just stares funnily at her. The third, a load of other pointless stuff happens and Bella and Edward decide to get married, once again leaving the much-better Jacob in the lurch. The fourth (*Part 1*) saw them getting married, having hilarious honeymoon sex, getting pregnant with a human-vampire hybrid, discussing (read: ENFORCING) the choice of abortion, a rather violent birthing scene and Jacob using his "implanting" skills to tie himself to the newborn baby forever (yeah, that's not creepy...)

Part 2 follows up immediately after, when Bella (Stewart) finally becomes a vampire and acts as mother to her and Edward's (Pattinson) young daughter Renesmee (relative newcomer Mackenzie Foy). But when the young'un is mistaken for an outlawed "immortal child" by the Volturi, the Cullens must band together with tribes old and new to stop the oncoming force.

What happens next? Who cares, the *Twilight* series is finally over as soon as *Breaking Dawn Part 2* comes out on **November 16th**.

News Round-Up

- Seth MacFarlane will host the 85th Oscars
- Matt Reeves is chosen to direct *Dawn of the Planet of the Apes*, while Mark Bombback will rewrite the script
- *Game Change* writer Danny Strong will write two-part film finale *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay*
- Hasbro plans films based on *Monopoly*, *Action Man* and *Hungry Hungry Hippos*
- Sacha Baron Cohen plans a new true-story comedy called *The Lesbian*
- Christian Bale, Bradley Cooper, Jeremy Renner and Amy Adams are set for David O. Russell's ensemble drama
- Kelly Marcel (*Saving Mr. Banks*) will write the film adaptation of *Fifty Shades of Grey*
- An animated *Peanuts* film (based on the comic strip by Charles M. Schultz) will be released in 2015
- Neil Finn will provide the end credits song for *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey*
- *Taken 3* is being developed by 20th Century Fox
- Beyoncé departs Clint Eastwood's *A Star Is Born* remake
- Ralph Fiennes eyes a role in Wes Anderson's *The Grand Budapest Hotel*
- Rupert Sanders could direct Tom Cruise in *Van Helsing*
- Shailene Woodley (*The Descendants*) is up for the role of Mary Jane Watson in *The Amazing Spider-Man 2*
- Tom Harper (*The Borrowers*) is chosen to direct sequel *The Woman in Black: Angel of Death*
- Joe Wright eyes a Houdini biopic
- Clark Gregg will return as the deceased Agent Coulson in Joss Whedon's *S.H.I.E.L.D*
- Christoph Waltz will play Mikhail Gorbachev in Cold War drama *Reykjavik*
- Edgar Wright's *Ant-Man* has a release date of late 2015

THE MASTER

Phillip Seymour Hoffman fronts a cult-like religion in PTA's *The Master*



Paul Thomas Anderson is perhaps one of the most interesting auteurs working today: each one of his films (including ensemble drama *Magnolia*, Adam Sandler-starring romance *Punch-Drunk Love* and especially oil baron epic *There Will Be Blood*) is told in such an odd yet fascinating way that you can't not appreciate it.

This trend appears to continue with his newest, and by far his most complex, film simply entitled *The Master* (and to the one person who genuinely thinks this is a biopic of the famous *Doctor Who* villain... you're an idiot).

Already picking up some momentum for its questionable subject matter, *The Master* is a quiet study of human nature and its rapid decline when provoked by external forces.

PTA (his nickname within the trades) directs and writes his latest magnum opus, and has even assembled an impressive trio of main actors who form a great part of the chain including Joaquin Phoenix (*Walk The Line*), Phillip Seymour Hoffman (*Capote*) and Amy Adams (*The Muppets*).

Also part of the cast are Laura

Dern (*Jurassic Park*), Amy Childers (*All My Children*), Jesse Plemons (*Paul*) and Rami Malek (*Night at the Museum*), to name a few.

The story is of a man named Freddie Quell (Phoenix), a World War II veteran suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder and is thus struggling to adjust to post-war society. Consuming himself to alcoholism and promiscuity with random women, which makes it difficult for him to hold down a job, he seems to be of no hope. One drunken night, he stumbles onto a yacht where he meets Lancaster Dodd (Hoffman), a

charismatic science-fiction writer and the leader of a philosophical movement known as The Cause. Along with his wife Peggy (Adams), Dodd takes Quell under his wing and makes him his right-hand man. But it doesn't take long for Quell to start questioning his new faith and mentor.

Said to be a loose take on Scientology (PTA denies this, but let's face it, it is), *The Master* is a film that should not be missed in cinemas.

Experience it for yourself from **November 16th**.

ARGO

Director/star Ben Affleck heads a strange operation in political thriller *Argo*



If there's anyone who is more worthy of a rise-and-fall story, it's Ben Affleck.

Just under a decade ago, a string of flops including *Gigli*, *Daredevil*, *Paycheck* and a few others - not to mention a highly-publicized relationship with Jennifer Lopez - were just about enough to kill his already-established acting career.

However, in 2007, he turned to directing with the crime thriller *Gone, Baby, Gone*, and it turned out to be a critical hit with many praising Affleck's abilities behind the camera. Three years later, his second film *The Town* was widely applauded and Affleck had certified himself as an auteur to watch.

Now, he's back to confirm his newfound status with yet another thriller, the intriguing *Argo*.

His first period piece as a director (the film takes place between 1979-1980), Affleck seems to have put his all into making his third film, not least by taking a rather bizarre true-life story and amping the drama and tension up to 11.

Like with *The Town*, he also takes on the protagonist role but, thankfully, allows other players the chance to outshine him in other roles. They include Bryan Cranston (*Drive*), Alan Arkin (*Little Miss Sunshine*), John Goodman (*The Artist*), Kyle Chandler (*Super 8*), Victor Garber (*Titanic*), Tate Donovan (*Swordfish*), Zeljko Ivanek (*The Bourne Legacy*), Scoot

McNairy (*Killing Them Softly*), Richard Kind (*A Serious Man*) and Taylor Schilling (*The Lucky One*).

Argo tells the heroic story of a secret rescue operation that unfolded during the Iran hostage crisis of 1979. When the Iranian revolution reaches boiling point, militants storm the US embassy in Tehran and take 52 Americans hostage. When it emerges that six Americans managed to sneak out of the building and take refuge at the home of the Canadian ambassador, the US government realizes that it's only a matter of time before they are found and most likely executed.

But when everyone seems to be out of options, CIA specialist Tony

Mendez (Affleck) comes up with a strange but plausible plan: he and a select group will pose as a Canadian film crew scouting for film locations for a sci-fi movie named *Argo*, and during so will attempt to locate the missing hostages and smuggle them out of the country back home.

It's a plan that appropriately sounds like it belongs in the movies, but it may just end up working.

How the plan manages to unfold in the gripping tale of *Argo* remains to be seen, but if we're to believe all the positive feedback we've heard so far, then the **November 9th** release date can't come soon enough.

SILVER LININGS PLAYBOOK

Two young actors at the top of their game. A return to form for an acting legend. A filmmaker coming off one of the most successful awards-heavy film of his career.

It seems there's a lot riding on the back of *Silver Linings Playbook*, but it doesn't seem to be dragged down in the slightest.

David O. Russell, who surprised audiences after two troubled productions on *Three Kings* and *I Heart Huckabees* to come back in full glory in *The Fighter*, writes and directs his next film which although different in approach and feel to that Oscar-winning boxing drama could just prove to be his best so far in his career.

Silver Linings Playbook deals with family, mental illness, warped relationships, sports fanatics and *Strictly*-esque dancing - so, in a way, there appears to be something for everyone.

It helps that Russell has brought in Bradley Cooper (*The Hangover*) and Jennifer Lawrence (*The Hunger Games*), two very popular actors at the moment, to play the two central leads. It helps even more that

Bradley Cooper and Jennifer Lawrence are two warped minds that come together in *Silver Linings Playbook*



not only does this film co-star the *Raging Bull* himself Robert De Niro (who, I'm told, is the best he's been in years here) but also features other supporting actors like Jacki Weaver (*Animal Kingdom*), Chris Tucker (*Rush Hour*), Julia Stiles (*10 Things I Hate About You*) and Anupam Kher (*You Will Meet A Tall Dark Stranger*), all of whom have been solid in various other roles throughout their careers so have no reason to not bring the magic here as well.

We follow a man named Pat (Cooper), who is released from a

state institution eight months after assaulting his wife's lover. Now living with his parents (De Niro and Weaver), Pat attempts to restructure himself in order to win his wife back, but when he meets Tiffany (Lawrence), a mysterious woman with problems of her own, things get rather complicated in his quest. If you can see where this could go from there, prepare to think twice when *Silver Linings Playbook* opens on **November 23rd**.

News Round-Up

- Tina Fey and Amy Poehler will co-host the 70th Golden Globes
- Robert Pattinson and Carey Mulligan sign on for crime thriller *Hold On To Me*
- Lee Daniels (*Precious*) is to direct Amy Adams-starring Janis Joplin biopic *Get It While You Can*
- *Ghostbusters 3* is planned for an autumn 2013 shoot
- Andy Serkis will direct a mo-cap version of *Animal Farm*
- Ubisoft and New Regency will partner up for the Michael Fassbender-starring *Assassin's Creed* adaptation
- Tate Taylor (director of *The Help*) plans a James Brown biopic
- James Cameron plans to direct thriller adaptation *The Informationist* after the *Avatar* sequels
- Johnny Depp is to star in *Inception* cinematographer Wally Pfister's *Transcendence*
- Cameron Crowe casts Bradley Cooper alongside Emma Stone in his next untitled film
- Ryan Gosling leaves the *Logan's Run* remake
- Matthew Vaughn drops out of directing *X-Men: Days of Future Past*; Bryan Singer will return to the franchise to direct
- Arnold Schwarzenegger will return as warrior Conan in *The Legend of Conan*
- John Logan will write the next two Bond films
- Daniel Craig, Bill Murray, Cate Blanchett, Jean Dujardin, John Goodman, Hugh Bonneville and Bob Balaban join director-star George Clooney's historical drama *The Monuments Men*
- Samuel L. Jackson, Scarlett Johansson and Cobie Smulders will appear in *Captain America: The Winter Soldier*
- Disney buys LucasFilm for \$4 billion and, perhaps most shocking of all, sets a 2015 release for *Star Wars: Episode VII* (yes, really)

RISE OF THE GUARDIANS

Just when you thought *The Avengers* was the only major team-up this year featuring childhood icons, along comes *Rise of the Guardians* to combat it.

Only whereas that \$1.5 billion-grossing epic was superhero-based, *Guardians* has much more of a connection to children's hearts by featuring ACTUAL childhood icons like Santa Claus, the Easter Bunny, the Tooth Fairy, the Sandman and Jack Frost. The little kid inside you jumping for joy yet?

That's certainly the intention of makers DreamWorks Animation (this being their last distributed film with Paramount: 20th Century Fox takes over that role from next year's release of *The Croods*), who have spared no expense at wowing their target audience.

Leading its impressive voice cast - as is expected, being DreamWorks and all - are Chris Pine (*Star Trek*), Alec Baldwin (*It's Complicated*), Hugh Jackman (*X-Men*), Isla Fisher (*Wedding Crashers*), Jude Law (*Sherlock Holmes*) and Dakota

Santa Claus, the Easter Bunny, the Tooth Fairy, the Sandman and Jack Frost team up in *Rise of the Guardians*



Goyo (*Real Steel*).

We follow the story through the eyes of Jack Frost (Pine), a carefree boy with no real responsibilities apart from bringing winter wherever he goes. But when it soon emerges that the Nightmare King, Pitch (Law), wants to plunge the imagination of children as well as the rest of the world into eternal darkness, Frost is summoned by a group known as the Guardians of Childhood - which consists of North aka Santa Claus (Baldwin), Tooth the

Tooth Fairy (Fisher), Bunnymund the Easter Bunny (Jackman) and Sandy the Sandman (a silent character) - and asked to join them in order to help stop Pitch and protect the children of the world.

Promising to be a thing of animated beauty, *Rise of the Guardians* arrives in cinemas on **November 30th**.



2012 really has a thing for milestones, doesn't it?

Last month, we celebrated the 50th anniversary of James Bond's film career, and now we are treated to the 200th anniversary of celebrated author Charles Dickens.

And what better movie to mark this grand occasion than an adaptation of perhaps his most acclaimed of stories (yes, even above *Oliver Twist* and *A Christmas Carol*), the epic *Great Expectations*.

Of course, like those other titles I mentioned in the brackets, this story has been made into film countless times, most recently as a BBC mini-series starring Gillian Anderson, but for the second hundredth birthday of the man they call Dickens they seem to have really gone out of their way to mark the occasion in grand style.

The first step in providing this is by the hiring of Mike Newell (*Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*) as director of this new version, and even getting acclaimed novelist and screenwriter David Nicholls (writer of both book and film version *One Day*) to have a go at



What happens when you put an Oscar-winning actor, one of the most likable actresses working in Hollywood, a guy who seems to be THE guy to go to for a villain role in most films, and the industry's most celebrated filmmaker siblings into the same mix? Why, you get *Gambit* of course!

A remake of the 1966 caper comedy that starred Michael Caine and Shirley MacLaine, and NOT a film about the popular *X-Men* character (yes, people on the internet genuinely thought that - gotta laugh at their stupidity sometimes), the film is directed by Michael Hoffman (*The Last Station*) but is scripted by none other than Joel and Ethan Coen (*No Country For Old Men*) in a rare instance where they just provide the screenplay other than directing the entire thing.

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

Jeremy Irvine portrays the young orphan Pip in a new version of Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*



adapting Dickens' mammoth book.

Its cast is also rather huge and impressive, including actors like Jeremy Irvine (*Now Is Good*), Helena Bonham Carter (*The King's Speech*), Ralph Fiennes (*The English Patient*), Robbie Coltrane (*Brave*), Jason Flemyng (*The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*), Holliday Grainger (*Jane Eyre*), Ewen Bremner (*Trainspotting*), Sally Hawkins (*Happy-Go-Lucky*), David Walliams (*Little Britain*) and Jessie Cave (*Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince*) all taking part.

The story is of the growth and personal development of a young orphan named Pip (Irvine), and his encounters with characters like the cold-hearted Estella (Grainger), the escaped convict Magwitch (Fiennes) and especially the eccentric and mysterious Miss Havisham (Carter).

For anyone who's a fan of the great author's work or just a fan of great British cinema in general, this new version of *Great Expectations* reaches cinemas on **November 30th**.

GAMBIT



Colin Firth and Cameron Diaz try to con an abusive art collector in the new remake of *Gambit*

In terms of cast, we've got Colin Firth (*The King's Speech*), Cameron Diaz (*Bad Teacher*), Alan Rickman (*Sweeney Todd*), Stanley Tucci (*The Hunger Games*), Tom Courtenay (*Doctor Zhivago*) and Cloris Leachman (*The Last Picture Show*) in colourful roles so it should already be a fun ride. Firth plays Harry Deane, an art curator and expert in fine art who for years has been taking substantial abuse

from his eccentric and overbearing boss, Lord Shabandar (Rickman). As such, he plans to trick the avid art collector into buying a fake Monet painting but when he hires a rowdy Texan cowgirl (Diaz) to assist him in his plan to seduce the richest man in England, things don't go so according to plan.

Gambit opens in cinemas on **November 23rd**.

RUST AND BONE

The awards season is coming very shortly, and over the next few months you're gonna be hearing a lot about *Argo*, *Lincoln*, *Les Miserables* and many other contenders in the mix. But like last year's *The Artist*, the French film industry may have a secret weapon of their own to launch into contention.

Ladies and gentlemen, I give you *Rust and Bone*, an unlikely story of courage, love and killer whales all blended together to make a great-looking cinematic experience.

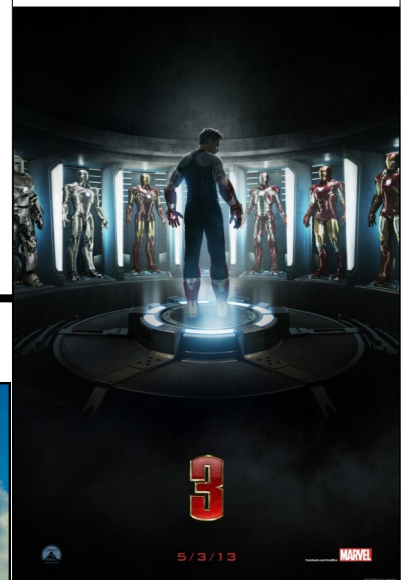
The new film from award-winning French director Jacques Audiard (the man behind previous hits like *The Beat That My Heart Skipped* and *A Prophet*), it also boasts two of France and Belgium's most accomplished actors, one of whom is an Oscar-winner, acting alongside one another and they go by the names of Marion Cotillard (*The Dark*



Matthias Schoenaerts shares a sacred and special bond with Marion Cotillard's troubled killer whale trainer in *Rust and Bone*

Knight Rises) and Matthias Schoenaerts (*Bullhead*). When a man named Ali (Schoenaerts) is put in charge of his young son, he seeks to abandon his violent life in the North of France and move to Antibes to live with his sister and her husband as a family. There, he meets Stephanie (Cotillard) who makes her way as a killer whale trainer, and the two begin to share a bond with each other which

becomes more and more solidified when Stephanie suffers a horrific accident at work. Promising to be yet another triumph for the French filmmaker, and a positive attempt at getting a second Oscar nod for Cotillard, *Rust and Bone* opens in British cinemas from **November 2nd**.



SIGHTSEERS

Has a trip to the countryside ever been murder for you? Not to fear, the main couple in *Sightseers* feel your pain. A new pitch-black comedy-thriller from the minds of some very funny, but also very disturbed individuals, it examines just how far we are willing to go in order to just enjoy a nice, relaxing holiday. Oh come on, like you've never looked over from your quiet caravan or whatever to see a bunch of loud teenagers or prudent rule-keepers attempting to barge in on your relaxation time and wanting to actually do something about it?

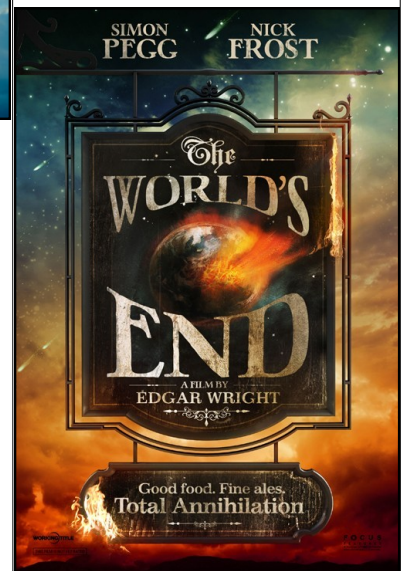
Directed by up-and-coming filmmaker Ben Wheatley (*Kill List*) and produced by Edgar Wright (*Scott Pilgrim vs. The World*), it's also written by its two lead actors Steve Oram (*The Mighty Boosh*) and Alice Lowe (*Hot Fuzz*), who apparently got the wild



Steve Oram and Alice Lowe play a couple who take a dark path on their holiday in Ben Wheatley's new comedy *Sightseers*

inspiration for their characters in this film after working on a recent live tour for fellow comic actor Steve Coogan. So, expect a bit of improve and surrealistic scenarios to pop up every now and then. We follow Chris (Oram), who wants to show his girlfriend Tina (Lowe) his world, and he wants to do it his way - on a journey through the British countryside in his caravan. Determined to give her the

holiday of a lifetime, it doesn't take long for litterbugs, noisy teenagers, pre-booked caravan sites and Tina's meddling mother to shatter their dreams and force them to take a dark, bloody detour on their time away. Already shaping up to be a British black-comedy classic, *Sightseers* can be seen from **November 30th**.



STILL SHOWING: OCTOBER



Men in Black 3

- Also available on Blu-Ray
- Released: 05/11/12



A Very Harold and Kumar Christmas

- Also available on Blu-Ray
- Released: 05/11/12



Friends With Kids

- Also available on Blu-Ray
- Released: 12/11/12



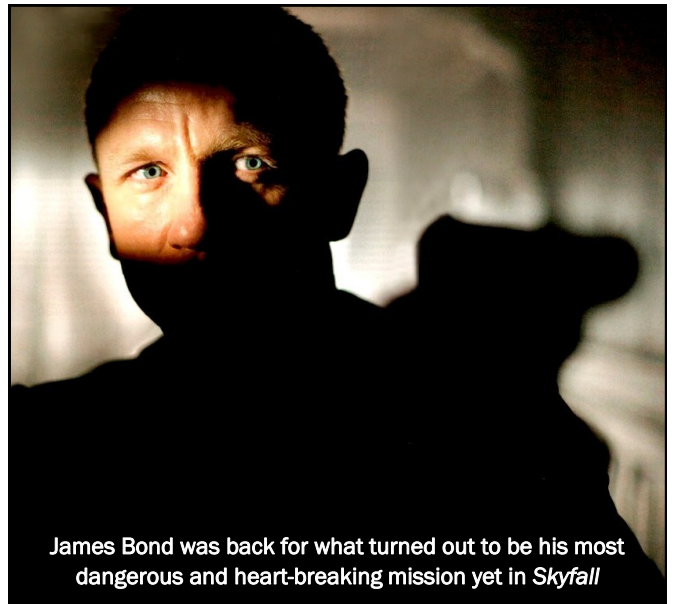
Arthur Christmas

- Also available on Blu-Ray
- Released: 19/11/12

October's time has come and gone once again, so let's do what we always do and have a look at the biggest releases out during the month.

First up on the 5th, we got disastrous wedding film *The Knot* (and the wedding wasn't good either); Josh Radnor got together with student Elizabeth Olsen in *Liberal Arts*; Emma Watson was part of a gang that got through high school in *The Perks of Being A Wallflower*; Ethan Hawke found some disturbing films in his attic (I would make a *Batman and Robin* joke here, but you've already made it in your head) in *Sinister*; the late Whitney Houston showed up in musical *Sparkle*; and Liam Neeson was forced back into action when outside threats threatened his family (again) in *Taken 2*. Then, on the 12th, the releases were as follows: Bradley Cooper played the villain in car-chase comedy *Hit and Run*; Adam Sandler voiced Dracula as he ran the exclusive *Hotel Transylvania*; the first known adaptation of Jack Kerouac's famous novel *On The Road*; a British remake of Nicolas Winding Refn's Danish thriller *Pusher*; and Paul Dano literally wrote *Ruby Sparks* into the world.

The following week of



the 19th was absolutely packed with new film releases, including (but not limited to) poetic fantasy-drama *Beasts of the Southern Wild*; Tim Burton's latest stop-motion wonder *Frankenweenie*; Elle Fanning and Christina Hendricks put on British accents in coming-of-age drama *Ginger and Rosa*; the eccentric animals of Central Park Zoo were back for more adventures in the animated sequel *Madagascar 3: Europe's Most Wanted*; the scares came fast and quick in the fourth installment of the continuing film series, *Paranormal Activity 4*; and the Rolling Stones featured in a brand-new documentary called *Crossfire Hurricane*. And finally, on the 26th, we got two big films that focused on two dissimilar film legends. The first was an

intriguing look at people's differing interpretations of Stanley Kubrick's classic film *The Shining* in the new documentary *Room 237*; and the second was the 23rd film in the 50-year-old James Bond movie franchise, with Daniel Craig returning as 007 in Sam Mendes' *Skyfall*. Well, that just about wraps up October 2012, hope you all had fun during it with these great film releases. If you want to know what I thought of some of these films, then you can do no harm by reading my slightly-revamped reviews section. Read and enjoy!

COMING SOON: DECEMBER

So it's nearly the end of the year already, and if you believe all the crap on the internet then it's also the end of the world. Of course that ain't gonna happen, but given the quality of films that we're getting then if it does end at least we can all go out happy.

On the 7th of December, Rashida Jones and Andy Samberg are best buddies who also happen to be divorced from one another in *Celeste and Jesse Forever*; Pete Docherty makes his acting debut in *Confessions of a Child of the Century*; Gabriel Byrne is an obsessed detective in *I, Anna*; Wu-Tang Clan member RZA directs Russell Crowe in gory martial arts picture *The Man with the Iron Fists*; an inspirational story about a couple who grow a child from a plant in *The Odd Life of Timothy Green*; Hugh Laurie engages in an affair with a younger woman in *The Oranges*; Colin Farrell is part of a team that kidnaps valuable dogs in *Seven Psychopaths*; and Miley Cyrus is an undercover private-eye detective (God help me) in new teen "comedy" *So Undercover*.

But if the thought of Miley Cyrus as a detective is bad enough, thankfully the week of the 14th brings something very, very



Martin Freeman begins the long journey as Bilbo Baggins in *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey*

special that lightens the mood: director Peter Jackson invites you to come back to the glorious world of Middle-Earth for a brand-new adventure in the heavily-anticipated film (and first part of a new trilogy) *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey*. Also out that day is a new *Tinkerbell* movie and some boring National Geographic documentary but who cares?! It's Gandalf and co on the road again! So after that, on the 21st (the date which may raise some awareness with apocalyptic nutters), Ang Lee returns with a brand-new 3D epic *Life of Pi*; and Anna Kendrick leads a female a capella group to victory in *Pitch Perfect*.

Following that, after that wondrous festive holiday we like to call Christmas, on the 28th we get Tom Cruise's take on Lee Child's

action hero *Jack Reacher*; an adaptation of Salman Rushdie's book *Midnight Children*; Billy Crystal looks after his grandchildren in *Parental Guidance*; and a man searches for a partner to travel in time with in *Safety Not Guaranteed*. Mary Elizabeth Winstead's *Smashed* is also scheduled for a release this month, but the date is still TBA as of time of writing. All this and more next month, when we'll also be looking back over the year 2012, looking ahead to 2013, and my annual countdown of the best films of the year, the best films to look forward to next year, and a whole bunch of "top 5s" of other categories!



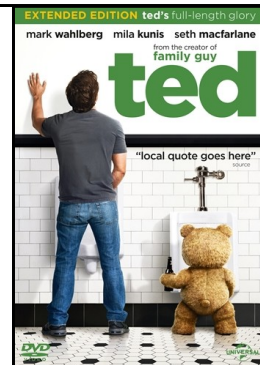
Brave

- Also available on Blu-Ray
- Released: 26/11/12



Magic Mike

- Also available on Blu-Ray
- Released: 26/11/12



Ted

- Also available on Blu-Ray
- Released: 26/11/12



The Amazing Spider-Man

- Also available on Blu-Ray
- Released: 26/11/12

REVIEWS

STAR RATING SYSTEM



JUST DON'T



I WOULDN'T



MEH



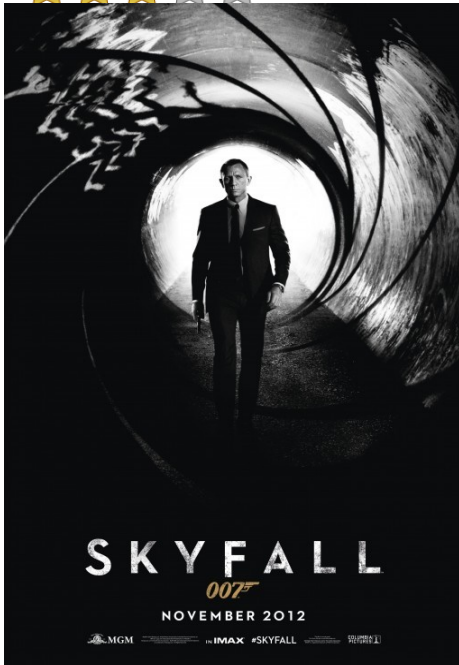
WORTH A LOOK



RATHER ENJOYABLE



SEE IT NOW!



So, as was pointed out numerous times in the last issue, James Bond has reached his fiftieth anniversary after twenty-three films. Throughout his half-decade career on screen, 007 has foiled many villains' evil plans, destroyed countless lairs, slept with so many beautiful women that you start to wonder if he's ever caught an STI, and he's even been to the moon.

It is therefore an amazing thought that it's taken the filmmakers this long to make the ultimate Bond movie, which they certainly have done so with *Skyfall*.

I mean it, this may be one of the best Bond films ever made (well, it's certainly in the top 1), and certainly the most hyped even from the word "go" - with a stellar cast and a heck of a lot of talent behind the screen, who wouldn't want to go see it?

The mere confirmation that Sam Mendes, the guy who directed my favourite film *American Beauty*, was going to be behind this new entry automatically guaranteed my ticket. The hiring of cinematographer Roger Deakins and composer Thomas Newman almost made me go wait outside the cinema for tickets before it even started shooting. Needless to say, I was so freakin' hyped to see this movie, and thankfully it met those expectations with glee.

Mendes, perhaps better known for quieter dramas like *American Beauty*, *Road to Perdition* and *Revolutionary Road*, makes a surprisingly great action director with sequences set in Istanbul, Shanghai and even the London Underground all being superbly handled and held still to let the audience soak it all in (which, after all the shaky-cam stylings and fast editing in *Quantum of Solace*, is a huge sigh of relief). The hiring of Deakins as cinematographer has resulted in the best-looking Bond adventure yet,

with an almost-wordless scene taking place in a neon-lit building in Shanghai looking especially sharp and attractive. Who'd have thought that taking out an assassin 007-style could look so sexy?

You can tell it's a Sam Mendes film when you've got Thomas Newman doing the music (taking over scoring reigns from regular composer David Arnold), and he does a good subtle job with what he's given whether it's a variation on John Barry's infamous theme tune or a new piece of score. Adele is also brought in to sing the traditional title track during the grim opening credits sequence - fans of Halloween-esque gravestones will not be disappointed - and it is as hauntingly memorable as any of the songs one Dame Shirley Bassey once provided.

Skyfall also benefits from having one of its best ensembles of the series, with each actor taking what they're given and turning it into something memorable.

Daniel Craig can now fit into the role of James Bond like a sleeve. He plays Bond at his most mature here, compared to his beginner's arrogance and vengeful motivations as seen in *Casino Royale* and *Quantum of Solace*, and commands the screen whenever he needs to.

Javier Bardem is a great villain, mixing Hannibal Lecter with his own Anton Chigurh to make something slightly camp but never over-the-top. He also gets one hell of an entrance, just over an hour in, through one long shot of him walking from one end of the room to another. Trust me, it's a lot better than it's written here.

Everyone else, including Ben Whishaw as a younger version of Q, Naomie Harris as a spicy field agent working alongside Bond, and Ralph Fiennes as a no-nonsense government agent all turn in likable performances, and it will be great

to see them again in future films (without giving anything away, of course).

The film's biggest acting stand-out, and the most unlikely Bond girl ever, is Judi Dench who is finally given some heavy stuff to work with as Bond's boss M. Hell, she may even be the main character above even Bond in this one; she certainly gets a good share of screen time, and the majority of the plot revolves around her and her past.

This being the fiftieth anniversary of Bond, there are many fan-pleasing elements to be found here. Bond's classic DB5 Aston Martin plays a part here, we get our classic gun barrel sequence at the end of the film, as well as the promise that "James Bond will return", and we are reintroduced to some familiar characters other than Q (again, that's without giving anything away).

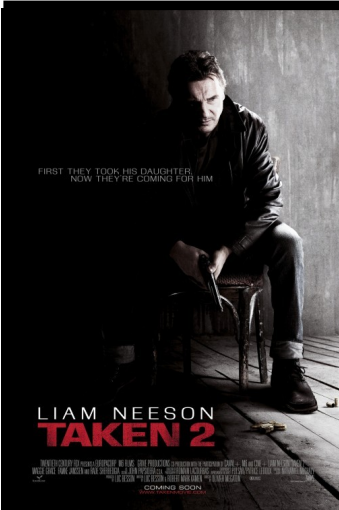
I feel that the last three films, including this one, have been something of a three-part prequel to Bond's film career: *Casino Royale* introduces a younger, inexperienced James Bond on his first assignment; *Quantum of Solace* is 007 basically having a two-hour long hissy fit; and *Skyfall* is Bond all grown up.

I wish I could say more about the film's ending, but to keep it as vague as possible you'll definitely want to see what happens to him in the next one. And if *Skyfall* is anything to go by, we're in for a thrilling experience.

By far and away one of if not the best of all the Bond films, not even parachuting with the Queen at the Olympics can top the birthday present that is *Skyfall*.

Here's to another fifty years, James.





When Liam Neeson let the world know of his “particular set of skills”, no-one ever knew until now that those skills were to bore the audience half to death.

In what can best be described as a lazy, cash-grabbing sequel to the surprise action hit, we get another chance to see Mr. Monotone himself Liam Neeson go up against the odds and fight back to protect the people he loves the most. Problem is, how ever, that it just isn't as thrilling as it was made out to be the first time.

The action is there, no doubt about it, but it all comes from the second half of the movie. Before that, we have to deal with a long, over-blown first act that sets up the family dynamics once again. After a lengthy seizure-inducing opening credits sequence, we see that Neeson's still the same old overprotective father, the mother (Famke Janssen, not given much to do other than be the one to save) is still useless, and the daughter (Maggie Grace, still somehow able to pull off being a teenager) seems to have completely disregarded all traumatic memories of her time in Paris. Annoyingly, these characters never even acknowledge that with each other, like it never happened. Though I guess it would be a bit awkward to bring up in conversation all of a sudden - “Hey darling, remember the time you were kidnapped in Paris and were almost sold into sex slavery? If that wasn't a

bonding experience (no pun intended), I don't know what is.”

Our next problem lies in how they get from one state of affairs to the other state of affairs. Neeson needs to travel to Istanbul, a location much better used in *Skyfall*, for reasons not very well explained and what does he do? He invites his wife AND his daughter to come along with him. Well, I guess that's as good an excuse as any to move the action to Turkey, but does anyone else see the flaw in that logic? This extremely overprotective father, whose daughter was kidnapped very recently (this movie takes place a year after the events of the first one) in a foreign country by Albanian sex traders, wants to bring his family, including said daughter, to yet another foreign country, one that we CLEARLY SEE is just one border check away from Albania. He's asking for trouble when you move yourself and your family CLOSER to the enemy rather than further away from it. Neeson's a bit of a thick-o, isn't he?

But I digress. Things get a bit more exciting when the action does start to come in, but not by much. Its shaky-cam style can get a bit old after a while, and can even confuse the audience as to what is going on. Some of the action is completely uncalled for as well, for example there's one part where Neeson and daughter literally drive a taxi into the

US Embassy, provoking the many guards around it. Did I miss something, cos Neeson never had a beef with this embassy before, so why suddenly decide to nearly wreck the place? Did he just get a sudden thirst and want for destruction? Is simply stopping the taxi outside the building and letting the passenger out not applicable anymore? Oh, who cares?

Even the final confrontation between Neeson and the main antagonist is so quickly and dully resolved that it makes the whole thing so anti-climactic. There's even a conclusion scene where I was praying that there would be like a last-minute scare or something, but obviously that never happens. It just felt like it was so rushed and therefore left little to no impact on me as I left the theatre.

Bottom line, this is not a film I would personally recommend if you want a satisfying action flick and especially a satisfying sequel. I guess if you watched the original then you may get some kick out of it, but standing alone it feels too much like an extended epilogue and is simply a waste of space.

(By the way, I'm writing this review without having seen the first one - don't judge, I just never got round to seeing it - so if I've brought up any plot holes that require seeing the original to make sense of them, please let me know.)



What does *Madagascar 3: Europe's Most Wanted* have in common with *The Bourne Ultimatum*, *The Dark Knight Rises* and *Lord of the Rings: Return of the King*?

Aside from the obvious fact that they're all threequels, they are all sequels to films that are made not simply to make money off its popularity, but they also move the STORY forward each time.

Let's go back in time to 2005, when the first *Madagascar* graced our screens. Looking back on it now, it doesn't feel as rounded a story as one might expect: characters aren't given closure, personalities haven't changed and whatever threat there was (and it wasn't even that major) is so quickly resolved.

Slight jump forward to 2008 and the arrival of its first sequel, *Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa*. What they did then was use plot elements from its predecessor - in that film, we see a crashed plane in the trees which here they actually use - in its continuity and start to give the main characters more depth and even some genuine development.

Put simply, the *Madagascar* franchise so far has resembled an extended three-act structure of one movie. *Madagascar* is Act 1, the set-up; *Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa* is Act 2, where things start to turn in a different direction; and now we get *Madagascar 3: Europe's Most*

Wanted which is, inevitably, the third and final act of the movie. Here, stuff REALLY finally happens, and does it well.

Not only is this third act (I can't hesitate to call it a third movie cos let's face it: it's the third act of one long film) the most enjoyable, funny, well-animated and interesting of the lot, but it's also the most ROUNDED in terms of character, motivation and, above all, story.

Our main heroes actually learn a valuable lesson here, one that has been the thesis of the entire series thus far - there's much more out there in the world than captivity - and as such they feel more like complete people (or animals, if you want to get literal about it) by the end of it.

There is also much more of a threat here with ruthless animal control officer DuBois, enthusiastically voiced by Francis McDormand. This villain is absolutely laugh-out-loud hilarious but also simultaneously terrifying, especially when you get down to the fact that all she's meant to do is simply stop the animals from running amuck. But no, she's crawling on the ground sniffing like a dog picking up the scent of her target, literally running through walls like an unstoppable Terminator and even using her bizzare powers of singing classic Edith Piaf to heal her comrades. That is not even a joke: one rendition of “Non, je ne regrette rien” and suddenly her

fellow officers live to fight another day.

One thing I probably should have mentioned is that the film's humour - hell, ALL the humour in each film - is constantly on each side of the border of Tex Avery cartoons and bizzare comedy. One subplot sees everyone's favourite lemur King Julien (once again wildly voiced by Sacha Baron Cohen) have a very strange romance with a circus bear on a tricycle and a tutu. See what I mean by “bizzare comedy”? But it works, it really works, as each moment of comedy whether it be with the antics of our hilarious villain or a pair of monkeys dressing up to be the King of Versailles (I'm dead serious) gets a great big laugh out of children and adults everywhere.

Some moments during the runtime do fall victim to the usual “kid's film” tropes like the revealing of liars (a cliché I am usually annoyed by, but what can you do?) but even those flaws don't stop the film from having great humour, memorable characters, stunning animation (a sequence set to Katy Perry's “Firework” stands out as perhaps one of the year's best and most colourful sequences) and, above everything else, a feel of closure to this strange three-film series/three-act film we've all come to know and love.

There's talk about doing *Madagascar 4*, but given how this film wraps things up perfectly, I really hope they don't.





After a few critical and commercial disappointments with *Alice in Wonderland* and *Dark Shadows* (respectively), former animator Tim Burton is finally back on form with a return to his roots and his most passionate early project, the live-action short of the same name as its new stop-motion remake.

After just five minutes of entering this world, you can clearly recognise some of the elements that make Burton the icon that he is today, such as the creative sets, unique character designs, slightly eerie atmosphere and the whimsical Danny Elfman score in the background. None of these fail here, they are just as wondrous as the likes of his other earlier films.

Another way to spot how this is definitely a Tim Burton you're watching? It's actually kind of creepy when you really get down to it. The main plot sees a young boy resurrect his dog from the grave just so he can play with him again - while not overly disturbing a premise, some people will feel at slight unease at this thought, especially perhaps children who have had their dog accidentally killed in some manner.

Some of the characters are also chillingly uncomfortable, for example there is a young hunchbacked boy named Edward E. Gore (insert drum snare here, and we can move on) whose aggressive and borderline touchy-feely nature will have shivers

going up and down your spine by film's end. Special mention must also go to a young girl whose bulbous eyes are always open and fondles around in her cat's litter box (trust me, it's better than it sounds). Of course these characters and others are mere homages to classic character stereotypes in older horror films, and if that's the case then a whole new generation now have something new to be terrified by.

The film's stop-motion animation techniques are nicely done, and for a film that both satirises and homages the early creature features of the 1930s through to at least the 1950s - you know, the ones with all those Harryhausen stop-motion monsters in live-action settings (the original *King Kong* is an example of this) - it's extremely appropriate.

Naturally, you have the classic Boris Karloff version of *Frankenstein* as the main homage complete with laboratory, the bolt through the monster's (or in this case dog's) neck and hunchbacked side character - there is even a nod or two to its infamous follow-up *Bride of Frankenstein* - but in its third act we get exciting and funny callbacks to *The Wolf Man*, *The Mummy*, the original Japanese *Godzilla* and even *Gremlins*. These and many more reference make this a horror fan's wet dream.

It's also interesting to point out how it differs from the original short film

for the better. I found a copy on YouTube after getting back from seeing this film and while it's virtually the same basic premise there are some major differences. For instance, a lot more time is given here to the relationship of the boy and the *Frankweenie* of the title, Sparky, before the latter's fatal accident that serves as the plot's catalyst, whereas in the short it's done in just the first few minutes without establishing a real clear connection with man and dog. We as an audience grow to like Sparky as he interacts with other dogs and innocently destroys neighbours' plants, which makes it all the more tragic when he eventually meets his maker.

But sadly, as much as this is a definite improvement in the recent works of Burton, it's not entirely perfect.

For one, it seems to end rather abruptly, as if they forgot about a foregone conclusion to give closure to most of the characters who seem to just disappear before the end credits. The main boy also unfortunately suffers from what I like to call *ParaNorman* syndrome, where the main young male lead isn't that interesting to really follow (I guess the idea is that he was the only normal one in a town full of weirdos, but I'm not sure).

Not one of Burton's best, but a good sign of future projects to come soon.



I have to admit, I saw the trailer for Sony Pictures Animation's latest and thought "Okay, they've clearly lost it. I mean, Adam Sandler voicing Dracula? Come on, really?" But it turns out that American audiences really dug that idea and turned it into something of a surprise box office hit (leaving other spooky kid's films like *Frankweenie* in the lurch), not unlike the surprise success of the same studio's highly underrated *Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs*.

That and the fact I had to review it anyway, were key factors in finally getting me to see this film.

The result? Well... it's *better* than I thought it would be, but not by much.

There are just as many good moments that work as there are ones that don't, and the end result is something that feels rather unbalanced but is by no means a horrible movie, definitely better than most projects Adam Sandler has been involved with in recent years (need we be reminded of the whole *Jack and Jill* fiasco?).

Like I said, I wasn't as thrilled as some other people to hear that Sandler was going to voice the ultimate vampire in this tale but he isn't as grating as you might think: he has the great opportunity to really camp the character up in the voicing booth, he could have gone out and deliver the most stereotypical portrayal of Bram Stoker's most famous creation. Thankfully, he never

goes beyond the required Transylvanian accent and manages to keep a surprising distance from overall parody. In fact, he seems more annoyed at humans' perception of him, including the belief that he'll suck people's blood when in fact he just drinks "blood substitute" and the annoying habit of going "bleh, bleh, bleh" every so often for no good reason. In short, Sandler delivers a surprisingly grounded Dracula and triumphs because of it.

I was actually surprised by how well the rest of the celebrity voice cast were used instead of just being there for show. Various actors and celebrities like Steve Buscemi, Andy Samberg, Selena Gomez and even Cee Lo Green are given fun, memorable characters to work with and they don't ever seem to waste their opportunities.

The film's humour is also very good and knows when to strike - for example, Dracula watches an extract from *Twilight* and loudly bemoans how THIS is how vampires are portrayed in the media nowadays. That got a great laugh from me, as did a load of other parts.

Animation fans will also surely get a kick out of this because not only does it have some unique character designs, beautiful set pieces (a floating table chase is particularly cool) and vibrant, colourful looks about it, but it also has the

distinction of being the first animated film directed by acclaimed Russian animator Genndy Tartakovsky (perhaps most famous for works like *Samurai Jack* and *Dexter's Laboratory*, the latter being something of a childhood favourite). Fans of his work will instantly be able to recognise his trademarks, and we are even treated to an end-credits animation featuring 2D-animated versions of the characters which will make you wonder why they didn't just decide to make this 2D instead of the popular trend of 3D.

But unfortunately, even some of the animation can be troubling at times. It's perhaps a bit too manic for its own liking: some sequences go by so fast that you are left trying to figure out what on Earth had just happened. It thankfully does know when to stay still at times, but at others it can be something of an annoyance.

The overall premise - Dracula opens a hotel for the world's most famous monsters - is so wonderful and unique that it's a shame it's let down by a predictable father-daughter story arc. Nothing wrong with that, it delivers a good message to both parent and offspring, but it's been done to death in countless other films that it just feels rather stale.

Some things work better than others, but it's still a decent fun ride for all.





For a long time, they said that Jack Kerouac's classic novel *On The Road* was unfilmable. Seeing the end result on screen, I can now see why.

It's not that director Walter Salles' take on the book fails completely, but it is not a film that would really get people excited and recommending it to their colleagues.

For the most part, it's kind of a bore. So much stuff feels crammed in either to please fans of Kerouac's work or just to attempt to be as faithful as possible that it feels extremely disjointed in its execution.

The book is told in five parts, which again perhaps explains the reason for its unfilmable nature: it's hard to condense five important parts of a book into the traditional three-act structure of a studio film. You have to admire the filmmakers for trying though, even though they didn't succeed for the most part.

On The Road simply shares the exact same problem as *The Iron Lady* did earlier this year: the filmmakers took something that was so big (a classic piece of literature, the life of the first female Prime Minister) and tried to squeeze all that they could into a ninety-minute to two-hour feature film and as such they both feel very episodic and unfocused.

Like I keep saying about *The Iron Lady*, *On The Road* may have benefited more as an adaptation for the screen if it had been made into a



Whether it be through using obscene gross-out humour or a great collection of wit, high school has been open to many interpretations in film.

But while the likes of *American Pie* and *Easy A* capture those respective visions perfectly, *The Perks of Being A Wallflower* manages to do something that those films (yes, even a film I love like *Easy A*) didn't managed to really pull off: treat the entire high school experience as uplifting and emotional.

On the outside it may seem to be that typical teen coming-of-age story which we're so used to in films of this magnitude, but it's what the filmmakers (especially writer-director Stephen Chomsky, who also wrote the book on which this is based) do with it that makes *Wallflower* really stand out.

First of all, it's surprisingly dark. Each of our three main characters (played by Logan Lerman, Emma Watson and Ezra Miller - we'll talk about them in a bit) have at least one thing about them which seems out of place in the environments of high school but just adds to their humanity. For example, the outspokenly gay Patrick (Miller) is heavily involved with the school's leading sports star but is desperate to keep it secret so the latter's abusive father doesn't find out - a later scene where he hurls homophobic insults at Patrick in front of his jock-type friends is all the more heartbreaking when you know the context.

five-part TV miniseries: that way, it could have had more room to move about in and more time to focus on certain events that occurred in the actual book.

While we're comparing *The Iron Lady*, the acting at times may not be Streep-high standards (seriously, she was the ONLY good thing about that film) but at least one or two of them get close here.

For one, Garrett Hedlund shines as the mysterious Gatsby-esque character of Dean Moriarty, a young man so lacking in responsibility and regard for anyone else's feelings other than his own. If anything, Moriarty is the human embodiment of every young adult in post-war America: privileged but never satisfied, constantly self-serving and leaving other, better people in the lurch et cetera. Grasping a clear hold of the problems and anxieties that come hand-in-hand with him, Hedlund makes the character his own and adding further complexity to a Moriarty that even Sherlock couldn't figure out.

Kristen Stewart is also a delight as Moriarty's young troubled ex-wife Marylou, and it's certainly clear from the first shot of her onwards that this role is far different from what we've seen her do before. Now that she's almost freed from the dreaded chains of the *Twilight* saga, she now has more of an option to step down and do more independent films, of

which this is hopefully the first of many accomplishments to come.

But that's unfortunately where the main praise for actors ends for *On The Road*, as everyone else is either too bland or given too short an amount of screen time that it's hard to really judge their performances.

Sam Riley falls into the former, which is especially upsetting as he is our narrator and audience surrogate here. Riley isn't bad, but not much was given for him to flex the character out in more interesting ways than this.

Big-name actors like Kirsten Dunst, Viggo Mortensen, Amy Adams and Steve Buscemi amongst a few others also pop up here and there, but are not given so much to do and can feel a bit wasted in their smaller roles. Like with Riley, it's sad because they all do have talent but not enough room to be as memorable as say Hedlund and Stewart.

Its luscious cinematography perfectly captures the spirit of American wasteland at the time, but even that doesn't excuse the complicated storyline that does not translate through film as well as perhaps the filmmakers thought.

Next time Hollywood, if you ever decide to have another go at Kerouac's magnum opus, make sure you contact HBO to negotiate the terms of an engaging miniseries.



As for our other characters Sam (Watson) and especially Charlie (Lerman)... well, they came as a surprise to me when I saw it and I want it to be the same for you too. But you get the idea: for a high-school movie, the personal dilemmas are rather adult and handled with a great amount of dignity.

Secondly, it does its best to avoid typical high-school tropes. You get the odd one here and there, but they're mostly in the background and not the primary focus. Drugs, for example: I could count on both hands the number of these genre films that have usage of cannabis and the like, but it never takes a stand and suddenly becomes a PSA anti-drugs message: it's just an experience for the characters. And since they're more of a focus than the actual drugs themselves, it's perfectly balanced.

Third, it's really, really likable. Like *The Amazing Spider-Man* a few months ago, it does a great job in setting up these very likable characters, making them so you really want to get behind them when trouble comes their way. To use Patrick as an example again, we first see him as the class clown, but he's not doing it to be mean or anything, he's just trying to make other people feel happy. That's a great introduction to a fun character who gets a lot of great moments (fan of

The Rocky Horror Picture Show will get a real kick of a sequence involving said movie).

It's no secret by now that I really like Ezra Miller as this character: he's funny, he's considerate, he's even a little tortured inside and I really find that sort of character fascinating if done right, and he's certainly done right.

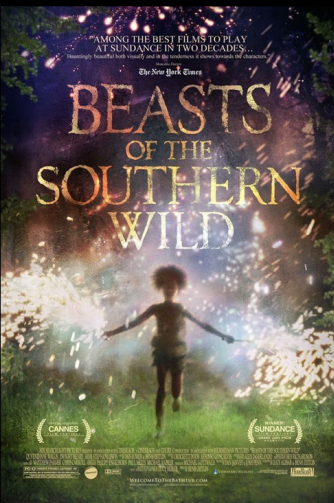
But it's not just about him either: Emma Watson really comes into her own here, showing great promise of a film life outside Hogwarts and perfectly nailing the American accent to her advantage. Great actress, great character.

The unsung hero in all of it, however, is Logan Lerman: getting the nervousness and anxieties of starting life in this strange new environment down to a tee, I identify a lot with his character (I was terrified of starting school and making new friends too) and Lerman is a great lead to suck you in and root for him all the way.

Not many flaws I can really think of, other than certain logic at times - violence gets your friends back? Yeah, that TOTALLY seems logical (you'll understand when you see the movie) - but that's just a minor blip on the radar.

If you ever get a chance to see *The Perks of Being A Wallflower*, it's an experience you won't soon forget,





For all the remakes out there, *Ruby Sparks* is definitely up there with being the most intriguing.

Now I know what you're thinking: "But wait, isn't this an original screenplay, the typed-up mind-set of writer-star Zoe Kazan?"

Well yes, yes it is. This film has originality plastered all over it, with a great story, interesting characters and a great sense of feeling that went into it. Make no mistake, *Ruby Sparks* is a genuine original delight.

So why the hell am I calling it a remake?

Well, maybe I used the wrong word: where I said "remake", I actually meant "reimagining". And not of the source material you might think.

For to my eyes, this film is a "reimagining" of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*.

Think about it: a man somehow brings to life a creation that originated in his mind (though here, it's with a typewriter instead of a full-on laboratory) and he manages to assume almost complete control over said creation, that is until they start to get independent thoughts of their own.

That doesn't necessarily make it a bad movie, though.

If anything, it's a breath of fresh air to that story, of a man who in a way or two plays God.

Paul Dano plays said God, a writer

who after suffering a case of writer's block decides to write about a fictional character named Ruby Sparks (played by Kazan), who then inexplicably comes to life and starts living in his apartment. But she's not part of that clichéd trope of her only being seen by the main character and no-one else: here, EVERYONE can see her, therefore she really exists. That's also kind of a breather from other films that have done this to death (films like *Harvey*, *The Iron Lady* and, erm, *Drop Dead Fred* come to mind).

Dano does have some strong moments here and there as our main protagonist, but there are a few moments when you just think "really? We're meant to be following this guy?" Given the whole created-a-person context, you can kind of see where he's coming from but in those few moments you kind of see a darker side to him as he starts to take more advantage of his magical writing skills and becomes the closest thing that this movie comes to a villain.

The film really does belong to Kazan, who through her skills as both a screenwriter and an actress (she shows great promise with both) makes the Frankenstein's Monster herself Ruby Sparks a believable, likable and hugely adorable presence throughout the entire film. Her mood swings which change as Dano continues to add to the page

are nothing short of laugh-out-loud real: one segment she's written to be a complete wreck without her creator, but she ends up being extremely needy and clingy; the next she's written to be a bundle of joy but she's constantly manic. It's all relatable emotions, and Kazan gets them down perfectly.

It all pays off in one climactic scene when Sparks confronts her creator, and her sudden reactions to things as hastily written by Dano, like walking into an invisible barrier to speaking fluent French to acting like a dog to rolling around repeating phrase after phrase - ALL WITHIN THE SPACE OF AT LEAST TWO MINUTES - is surely going to be recognised as not only one of the best scenes of the year, but a great acting showcase for Kazan and even Dano.

I guess the only downside to this movie is that there isn't that much time to focus on other characters outside these two: great character actors like Annette Bening, Antonio Banderas, Steve Coogan and Elliott Gould are featured but contribute very little to the overall story and it feels like a bit of a missed opportunity with each.

But that's only a minor nitpick, for this is a beautifully-written, wonderfully acted and simply original piece of modern cinema.



What on earth can I say about *Beasts of the Southern Wild* that every other critic on the planet hasn't said already?

I mean it, from its debut at Sundance back in January and after playing at almost every film festival known to man it's been getting an insane amount of praise from every right and left. I honestly don't think I've seen so much buzz for a film this year that's NOT one of the major summer blockbusters.

As you can imagine, I got a ticket to see it as soon as it started showing at a local cinema and sat down to experience what everyone was talking about from day one.

And, to tell you the truth, I'm not entirely sure what to make of it.

Well, let's get the positives out of the way first: when you get right down to it, it's a very beautifully-made movie. It's clear that debuting director Benh Zeitlin really knows his stuff as bright colour after colour enters the picture every so often with great majesty and complexion. Case in point, the image that has been used to market this film all over the world (which you can see in the poster in the top left) which just screams excitement and marvel every time you see it. Now, if they only felt they didn't have to use that damned shaky-cam all the way through...

A lot has also been said about the lead performance of young

Quvenzhané Wallis, who was five when she was cast, and how she has the potential to become the youngest Best Actress nominee in the Academy's 85-year history. I wouldn't doubt it: Wallis has a lot on her shoulders what with her appearing in almost every single scene, but she manages to pull it off like a pro and have one heck of a screen presence throughout. She succeeds in making the potentially-annoying and obnoxious role of Hushpuppy (yes, that is the character's name, please don't giggle) a very likable and free-spirited young individual and the film very much belongs to her as it does to other people.

I also wouldn't ignore Dwight Henry as her hot-tempered father Wink, who has as much ferocity as the titular beasts (more on them in a sec) but a lot more of the heart. Viewers could be frightened of him at first, but gradually you understand exactly what it is that makes him this way and you're just as taken aback by him as you are by Wallis.

As for its story, it's very imaginative and rings a few bells with some of the more classic fairy tales. Its setting of the "Bathtub", an isolated bayou with its own community and celebrations, is enjoyable for the most part and you will enjoy some of the eccentricities of some of its inhabitants (one character heats up their cooking equipment with a

flamethrower while casually wearing a football helmet for protection).

There are some similarities between the fictional events here and the real-life treatment and rescue of survivors of Hurricane Katrina back in 2005 - the Bathtub could be an allegory for the devastated New Orleans after the tropical storm hit the city, and the much-criticised handling of its victims during the Bush administration - but that is mostly downplayed to make room for the film's more fantastical elements.

The giant boar-like creatures known as Aurochs are seen throughout the movie, from their melting away from the polar ice caps to their perilous journey across the land and eventually to a face-to-face confrontation with our young protagonist. I guess the idea is that they're a part of her active imagination (but this theory is in doubt, we see other children running away from them screaming) but I'm not convinced that they were needed in the first place. They could have just kept the story about this community, these characters and their ways of survival and it would have made no difference to the overall product. That fantasy element therefore feels a tad pointless and out of place.

That aside, *Beasts of the Southern Wild* is a great little indie which any storyteller is bound to cherish in the future.



BFI 56TH LONDON FILM FESTIVAL

10 – 21 October 2012 In Partnership With



Clockwise from top-left: Tim Burton with Catherine O'Hara, Martin Landau and Martin Short at the Opening Night Gala *Frankenweenie*; Jason Biggs strikes a pose on the red carpet for *Grassroots*; Alice Englert, Timothy Spall and Elle Fanning arrive for *Ginger and Rosa*; Marion Cotillard arrives for acclaimed French film *Rust and Bone*; Dustin Hoffman was in town for his directional debut *Quartet*; Chris O'Dowd poses with his new wife at *The Sapphires*; Bill Murray made an appearance for *Hyde Park on Hudson*; yours truly at the 56th BFI London Film Festival; John Hawkes, Helen Hunt and producer Julie Levine pose with writer-director Ben Lewin for *The Sessions*; former Pythons Terry Jones and Michael Palin remember the late Graham Chapman at the gala of *A Liar's Autobiography*; actor-director Ben Affleck poses with John Goodman and Bryan Cranston at *Argo*; the Rolling Stones came out in force for their new documentary *Crossfire Hurricane*; Terrence Stamp and Gemma Arterton with young co-star Oria Hill for the gala of *Song For Marion*; and Helena Bonham Carter looked stunning in her evening wear for the Closing Night Gala for *Great Expectations*

Bright lights, red carpets, and lots and lots of stars - it can only be the London Film Festival, back in town for another year and taking place once more in the heart and soul of British cinema, the wondrous Leicester Square. But for the first time this year, the branch has been extended to feature other cinemas across the capital so more locations can get in on the action with galas and screenings galore.

Things kicked off on the **10th October** with the Opening Film Gala of Tim Burton's stop-motion animation *Frankenweenie*, with the acclaimed director and members of its voice cast Martin Landau (*Ed Wood*), Catherine O'Hara (*For Your Consideration*) and Martin Short (also heard in last month's *Madagascar 3: Europe's Most Wanted*) all in attendance. The successful screening paved the way for its nationwide release one week later, with audiences all over the country embracing the tale of a boy who resurrects his dog from the grave (my review of the film can be found on page 10).

From there, the only way was up - the Festival welcomed many established stars and filmmakers to its shortened 11-day timespan, many of whom had exciting new films to share with audiences. Some of the guests welcomed included, but weren't limited to, *American Pie* star Jason Biggs, who was around to show off his new film *Grassroots*; young Oscar hopeful Quvenzhané Wallis joined her much older director Benh Zeitlin for the UK screening of *Beasts of the Southern Wild* (see my review for that one on page 12); Elle Fanning was on top form as she joined co-stars Alice Englert and Timothy Spall as well as director Sally Potter for the gala of *Ginger and Rosa*; Marion Cotillard wowed audiences with her new film *Rust and Bone* (read more about it on page 5); Dustin Hoffman walked the red carpet with Dame Maggie Smith and Billy Connolly for the Rain Man star's directional debut *Quartet*; Bill Murray was brave enough to make an appearance for the Mayor of London gala of the sort-of-sequel to *The King's Speech* called *Hyde Park on Hudson*; John Hawkes and Helen Hunt supported writer-director Ben Lewin with the British debut of his acclaimed film *The Sessions*; ex-Pythons Terry Jones and Michael Palin were on hand to introduce a new film celebrating the life of the late member of Monty Python Graham Chapman with *A Liar's*

Autobiography; actor-director Ben Affleck came to town with co-stars John Goodman and Bryan Cranston for the UK premiere of *Argo* (see page 2); legendary rock band the Rolling Stones reunited on the red carpet for their new feature documentary *Crossfire Hurricane*; Terrence Stamp and Gemma Arterton were on hand for feel-good drama *Song For Marion*; and the festivities were mostly capped by an elaborate awards show, where Tim Burton and Helena Bonham Carter were awarded BFI Fellowships and films in competition *Rust and Bone* and *Beasts of the Southern Wild* were awarded the coveted Best Film and Best First Feature respectively.

But eventually the end came on the **21st October**, with the Closing Film Gala selected to be the new retelling of the Charles Dickens classic, *Great Expectations* (you can read about it more on page 4), which had not only newly-minted BFI fellow Helena Bonham Carter in attendance but also co-stars Ralph Fiennes, Jeremy Irvine, David Walliams, Robbie Coltrane and Holliday Grainger as well as director Mike Newell.

In the past, I have used my BFI membership to secure tickets to festival galas for films such as *Let Me In*, *The King's Speech* and last year's *Martha Marcy May Marlene*. This year I continued that trend by getting a ticket to the festival gala for *The Sessions*, which had stars John Hawkes and Helen Hunt in attendance as well as writer-director Ben Lewin. While the film does not come out until January (look out for an official review in the February issue), I can tell you that it's simply a joy from beginning to end, with witty humour matched perfectly with amazing and brave performances by Hawkes and Hunt. Mark my words, it will definitely be one to watch throughout the upcoming Oscar season, and especially upon its release on **January 18th**.

Well, there you go everyone - once again the London Film Festival has come and gone, leaving us only begging for more. But not to fear, film fans - the Festival will be back next October for us to indulge in its film-y goodness!

UK Film Release Dates

NOVEMBER

2ND

- Chasing Mavericks
- For A Good Time, Call...
- Fun Size
- Rust and Bone
- Silent Hill: Revelation

9TH

- Argo
- Here Comes The Boom
- People Like Us
- The Sapphires

16TH

- Amour
- The Master
- The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn - Part 2

23RD

- End of Watch
- Gambit
- Nativity 2: Danger in the Manger!
- Silver Linings Playbook

30TH

- Alex Cross
- Great Expectations
- The Hunt
- Rise of the Guardians
- Sightseers
- Trouble with the Curve

DECEMBER

7TH

- Celeste and Jesse Forever
- Confessions of a Child of the Century
- I, Anna
- The Man with the Iron Fists
- The Oranges
- Seven Psychopaths
- So Undercover

14TH

- Chasing Ice
- The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey
- Tinkerbell and the Secret of the Wings

21ST

- Life of Pi
- Pitch Perfect

28TH

- Jack Reacher
- Midnight's Children
- The Odd Life of Timothy Green
- Parental Guidance
- Safety Not Guaranteed

TBC

- Smashed

JANUARY

4TH

- The Impossible
- Playing For Keeps
- Quartet

11TH

- Gangster Squad
- Les Miserables
- Texas Chainsaw Massacre 3D

18TH

- Django Unchained
- Monsters Inc 3D
- The Sessions
- V/H/S

25TH

- Broken City
- The Last Stand
- A Liar's Autobiography
- Lincoln
- Parker
- Zero Dark Thirty

All release dates are correct as of time of press.

Next Issue: December 2012