

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

<i>Life of Pi + Jack Reacher</i>	2
<i>Seven Psychopaths + Pitch Perfect</i>	3
<i>The Oranges + Parental Guidance</i>	4
<i>The Man with the Iron Fists + Celeste and Jesse Forever</i>	5
<i>Summary of November</i>	6
<i>Coming in January</i>	7
<i>Reviews</i>	8-12
<i>Review of 2012</i>	13-21
<i>Release Dates</i>	22

Also Out This Month

- *Confessions of a Child of the Century* - Pete Doherty makes his acting debut in the costume drama
- *So Undercover* - Miley Cyrus is chosen to infiltrate a university sorority. God help us all.
- *Smashed* - Alcoholic Mary Elizabeth Winstead experiences sobriety in this breakout comedy-drama
- *West of Memphis* - Peter Jackson-produced documentary about the West Memphis Three
- *Midnight's Children* - adaptation of author Salman Rushdie's novel of the same name
- *Safety Not Guaranteed* - a man looks for someone to accompany him in a proposed time travel experiment

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**A VERY MERRY
CHRISTMAS AND A
HAPPY NEW YEAR
FROM THE PEOPLE
(well, person) AT FILM
FEEDER!**

MOVIE OF THE MONTH: *THE HOBBIT: AN UNEXPECTED JOURNEY*

Just in time for Christmas, Peter Jackson gives us one heck of a present: a trip back to Middle-Earth.

After spending what essentially felt like eons in development hell - lawsuits concerning ownership rights, the arrival and then departure of director Guillermo Del Toro, and even industrial disputes in New Zealand which led to the filmmakers briefly considering filming somewhere else are just some of the events which held it back - the first film in Jackson's new trilogy based on J.R.R. Tolkien's classic book *The Hobbit* is set for worldwide debut.

Subtitled *An Unexpected Journey*, with *The Desolation of Smaug* to follow in December 2013 and then *There and Back Again* in the summer of 2014, this film chronicles the beginning of a long and perilous trek across Middle-Earth which, once again, features mythical creatures, wizards and beautiful scenery.

One of the vast differences between *The Hobbit* and *Lord of the Rings* is that the former is more of a children's book than the latter, so viewers can expect just a tad more comedy and cuteness than they expect.

Personally, I am hoping that the film is good but part of me feels it could all turn out to be something of a *Phantom Menace* situation - a huge amount of hype for a film that returns us to a popular universe but the results are rather underwhelming to say the least. Then again, *The Hobbit* at least has the distinction of being based on a beloved book whereas *Phantom Menace* came wholly from George Lucas' head - rest assured, we won't be seeing a Jar Jar Binks-like character roaming about Middle-Earth.

In fact, the characters we will see range from some new ones as well as some old favourites. Making a return to the franchise



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

(along with Jackson as director and co-writer) in this film are Ian McKellen (*Gods and Monsters*), Andy Serkis (*Rise of the Planet of the Apes*), Cate Blanchett (*The Aviator*), Hugo Weaving (*The Matrix*), Elijah Wood (*Sin City*) and Ian Holm (*Alien*). There will be more familiar faces to come throughout the rest of the trilogy, but so far only the aforementioned are confirmed to appear in this one.

Meanwhile, new additions include Martin Freeman (*Sherlock*), Richard Armitage (*Captain America: The First Avenger*), Ken Stott (*Prince Caspian*), Aidan Turner (*Being Human*), James Nesbitt (*Jekyll*) and Sylvester McCoy (*Doctor Who*). Again, all of these and a few others are confirmed to appear in this first film and will continue to grow as the trilogy continues.

So, what happens in this first part of the prequel to *Lord of the Rings*?

Through a framing device that will see the return of Frodo Baggins (Wood) and his uncle Bilbo Baggins (Holm), we learn that when Bilbo was younger (as played by Freeman), he was approached out of the blue by

the great wizard Gandalf the Grey (McKellen) and soon finds himself accompanying a gang of thirteen dwarves, led by the legendary warrior Thorin Oakenshield (Arbitage), on an epic quest across the landscapes of Middle-Earth to reclaim the lost Dwarf Kingdom of Erebor from the fearsome dragon known as Smaug (rumoured to be making a minor appearance here, but we'll be seeing him in full in next year's *The Desolation of Smaug*, as played through mo-cap by Freeman's *Sherlock* co-star Benedict Cumberbatch).

Along the way, they encounter goblins, trolls, deadly sorcerers and the strange creature that we all know as Gollum (once again played through mo-cap by Andy Serkis, who also serves as the second unit director for the films). During his encounter with the latter, Bilbo discovers a certain piece of jewelry that unbeknownst to him will seal his later fate...

For what has to be one of the most anticipated Christmas treats ever, *The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey* arrives in cinemas on **December 14th**.

News Round-Up

- Christoph Waltz joins the sequel to *The Muppets*
- Francis Lawrence will stay with the *Hunger Games* film franchise, directing the two-part *Mockingjay* adaptation
- Jamie Foxx is up for the shocking villain role of Electro in *The Amazing Spider-Man 2*
- Warner Bros puts Jon Favreau's *Jersey Boys* into turnaround
- Saoirse Ronan checks into Wes Anderson's *The Grand Budapest Hotel*
- Kristen Stewart eyes rom-com *Focus* opposite Ben Affleck
- David Yates is reportedly set to direct a new version of *Tarzan*, and wants to cast Alexander Skarsgård and Samuel L. Jackson in roles
- Dwayne Johnson is set to play the title role in Brett Ratner's *Hercules*
- *Man of Steel* will be released in 3D
- Mark Wahlberg officially joins *Transformers 4*
- *Hotel Transylvania 2* is planned for 2015
- George Clooney is in talks to headline Brad Bird's sci-fi *1952*
- Michael Arndt (*Toy Story 3*) signs on to write *Star Wars: Episode VII*
- Will Ferrell, Liam Neeson, Alison Brie and Nick Offerman join the voice cast of the animated *LEGO* film
- James Wan (*Insidious*) will direct the *MacGyver* film
- A One Direction 3D concert movie directed by Morgan Spurlock (*Super Size Me*) is set for release next summer
- Christopher McQuarrie (*Jack Reacher*) is eyed to direct the fifth instalment of the *Mission: Impossible* series
- Tom Hardy is to lead the video game adaptation of *Tom Clancy's Splinter Cell*
- Nine minutes of footage from *Star Trek Into Darkness* will be shown in IMAX cinemas this month

It could only fall to one of Hollywood's leading visionary directors to bring such an eccentric story to the big screen, and from the looks of it Ang Lee has certainly succeeded with *Life of Pi*.

The Oscar-winning director of *Brokeback Mountain* and *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon* was instrumental in converting the original 2001 novel, whose fandom extends to even the White House - Obama wrote to author Yann Martel to heavily compliment it - to a feature-length film.

Once considered to be unfilmable due to its storyline, it was passed around many auteurs who each had their own interpretation of it. Interestingly, industry laughingstock M Night Shyamalan was one of the many considered to make the film, but I guess they sussed that the guy who made advanced aliens impervious to wooden doors and water (especially as they were trying to invade a planet where wood and water make up a good percentage) wasn't really well suited to make something as complex as *Life of Pi*.

Nonetheless, Ang Lee was chosen for the job, and he has

LIFE OF PI

A young man is trapped on a lifeboat with a Bengal tiger in the awe-inspiring *Life of Pi*



wisely brought along a wholly international cast with him, with not a single big name amongst them (ex-Spidey Tobey Maguire had shot some scenes, but was cut from the final film).

Newcomer Suraj Sharma joins Rafe Spall (*Prometheus*), Irrfan Khan (*Slumdog Millionaire*), Tabu (*The Namesake*), Adil Hussain (*The Reluctant Fundamentalist*) and Gerard Depardieu (*Green Card*) in the film, which also blends CGI with live-action.

The film, as does the book, follows the story of a young man named Pi (Sharma) who

accompanies his family as they move their zoo across the world from India. However, during the long voyage, the ship suddenly sinks and Pi ends up in a lifeboat, the only survivor of the disaster. He soon discovers that drifting with him on the lifeboat are a group of animals: an orangutan, a hyena, a wounded zebra, and a Bengal tiger which Pi names Richard Parker. Promising to be a visionary delight from start to finish, *Life of Pi* is a life you'll want to experience from **December 21st**.

JACK REACHER

It's perhaps one of the most controversial casting choices in recent years, especially with fans of author Lee Child's book series based on the character of the title.

In said books, he's described as a 6' 5" tall, muscle-bound, blue-eyed, blonde-haired giant of a man.

And who did they get to play such a role? Tom Cruise, who could not be any more different from that description.

I'll just give you a moment for that to sink in...

Okay, but even when you get around that bizarre choice of casting, you can't deny that Cruise knows how to be a badass and does it well. For God's sake, the guy climbed the Burj Khalifa in *Mission: Impossible - Ghost Protocol*. I'm sure he can handle a literary hero that totally doesn't match his physical stature.

But it's got some talent behind it, with *Usual Suspects* writer Christopher McQuarrie (he also wrote for Cruise's *Valkyrie*) writing and directing this film, based on Child's book *One Shot*,

Tom Cruise is a lone wolf concerned about what's right in Christopher McQuarrie's take on *Jack Reacher*



and also has the benefit of starring Rosamund Pike (*An Education*), Richard Jenkins (*Burn After Reading*), Robert Duvall (*The Godfather*), David Oyelowo (*Rise of the Planet of the Apes*), James Martin Kelly (*True Blood*), Jai Courtney (next year's *A Good Day To Die Hard*) and director Werner Herzog (*Grizzly Man*) in a rare on-screen acting role.

The film begins when a shooting in a large city takes place that kills five random people, throwing everything and

everyone into chaos. When the shooter is arrested, he mysteriously requests that Jack Reacher (Cruise), a former Army Military Police Major who is now a drifter with no job, no car and no home, be put on the case. When he is brought in, Reacher discovers there's more to this seemingly-simple case, and teams up with a lawyer (Pike) to discover the truth.

Jack Reacher opens on **December 28th**. Don't let us down, Mr. Cruise...

SEVEN PSYCHOPATHS

After hitting it out of the ballpark with his 2008 debut feature film *In Bruges*, writer-director Martin McDonagh has taken his time in setting up his long-awaited follow-up, even letting his brother John Michael McDonagh take center stage during his absence with his acclaimed Irish comedy *The Guard* last year. Four years later and he's very much back in the game with the black comedy *Seven Psychopaths*.

The Irish playwright-cum-filmmaker plays on a lot of themes and bizarre notations throughout his second feature film, such as the need for inspiration to write decent material in Hollywood, the theft of countless canine counterparts, and diving into the stories of some of the land's most notoriously dangerous nutters.

Sound strange to you? Well, did the idea of dwarves dressing up as schoolboys in *In Bruges* also sound strange to you? Okay, bad example, but you understand where I'm getting at.

Already with an Oscar to his name (he won the Live Action Short category for his short film

Colin Farrell is accidentally drawn into the world of dognapping with his best friend in *Seven Psychopaths*



Six Shooter - check it out on iTunes somewhere), McDonagh has nabbed a rather good cast, including Colin Farrell (in something of a reunion from *In Bruges*), Sam Rockwell (*Moon*), Christopher Walken (*The Deer Hunter*), Woody Harrelson (*Zombieland*), Tom Waits (*The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus*), Abbie Cornish (*Limitless*), Olga Kurylenko (*Quantum of Solace*), Željko Ivanek (*Argo*), Harry Dean Stanton (*Alien*), Gabourey Sidibe (*Precious*) and Michael Stuhlbarg (*A Serious Man*).

The plot focuses on Marty (Farrell), a writer in Hollywood who dreams of finishing his screenplay entitled "Seven Psychopaths". Marty's best friend and part-time dog thief Billy (Rockwell) is eager to help his buddy in any way possible, even after he and his partner in crime Hans (Walken) kidnap the dog of a violent gangster (Harrelson), who will not stop until he gets his dog back and kill everyone responsible, even the innocent Marty. *Seven Psychopaths* comes out on **December 7th**.

News Round-Up

- Jane Goldman is set to write Tim Burton's *Pinocchio*
- Paul Greengrass' *Memphis*, about the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr., is back on track
- Five-time *Bond* writers Neal Purvis and Robert Wade opt out of writing *Bond 24*
- Horror sequel *Insidious Chapter 2* is set for a late summer 2013 release
- Plans for a 3D re-release of *Independence Day* next year are cancelled
- Paramount sets an October 2013 release for *Paranormal Activity 5*
- Iconic TV actor Larry Hagman (J.R. on *Dallas*) dies at age 81
- 20th Century Fox is planning a Susan Boyle biopic
- Lenny Kravitz is to headline a biopic of singer/songwriter Marvin Gaye
- Ben Mendelsohn (*The Dark Knight Rises*) is cast in Ryan Gosling's directional debut *How To Catch A Monster*
- Patrick Stewart and Ian McKellen will return as the older Professor X and Magneto in *X-Men: Days of Future Past*, while Hugh Jackman is in talks to return as Wolverine
- Waterworld* may be remade as either a big-screen remake or a TV series
- Colin Trevorrow and Derek Connolly (*Safety Not Guaranteed*) are hired to draft a remake of Disney's *Flight of the Navigator*
- Cate Blanchett is in talks to play the evil stepmother in Mark Romanek's *Cinderella*
- George Clooney and Paul Greengrass are to team for an untitled heist thriller
- Nick Hornby and Reese Witherspoon plan to adapt Cheryl Strayed's novel *Wild*
- Derek Connolly (*Safety Not Guaranteed*) is brought on to write a mystery Pixar film
- Seth MacFarlane has an idea for a *Family Guy* movie, but "it's just a matter of when"

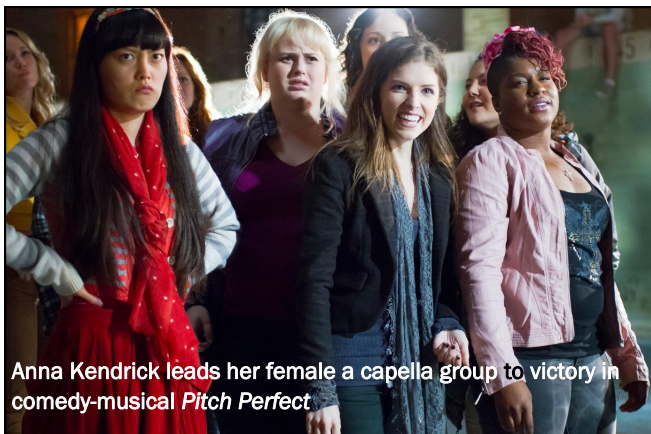
PITCH PERFECT

Imagine if *Bridesmaids* and *Glee* got together and made a baby (since they're both technically female, you're probably wondering to your disturbed self how that can even be possible... I don't know, ask a scientist).

It is in all likelihood that *Pitch Perfect* would be the end result nine months later, and once you start looking at it you can see glimpses of each specimen's DNA all over it (not in THAT way, you perves!).

Seriously though, you can tell that debuting director Jason Moore (who had previously directed musicals on Broadway like *Les Miserables* and *Avenue Q*) was hugely inspired by last year's comedy success, and wanted to create a young-person's musical without necessarily having the cheesy atmosphere of the popular TV series.

Instead, he rounded up

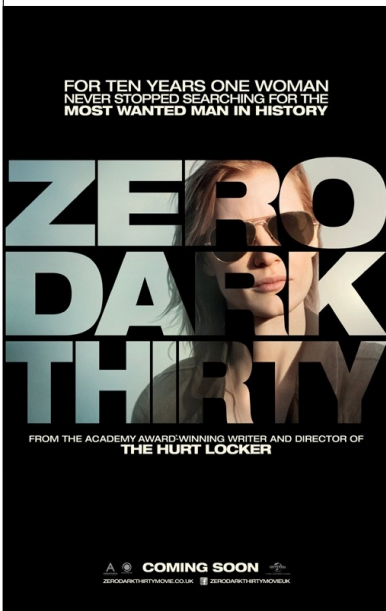


Anna Kendrick leads her female a capella group to victory in comedy-musical *Pitch Perfect*

accomplished female actors like Anna Kendrick (*Up In The Air*), Brittany Snow (*Hairspray*), Rebel Wilson (*Bridesmaids*), Anna Camp (*The Help*) and Elizabeth Banks (*The Hunger Games*) - as well as the odd male actor like Skylar Astin (*Hamlet 2*), Christopher Mintz-Plasse (*Superbad*), John Michael Higgins (*Bad Teacher*) and Freddie Stroma (*Harry Potter*) - to make something that comedy fans will love.

In the film, we follow Beca (Kendrick), a freshman at university, who is soon drawn into joining The Bellas, an all-female a capella group. Beca manages to inject some much-needed energy into the group, and take on their male rivals in a campus competition.

Trust me, it's better and funnier than it sounds. *Pitch Perfect* aims to hit the right note with audiences on **December 21st**.



THE ORANGES



Hugh Laurie is part of a group of dysfunctional families living in the suburbs in *The Oranges*

Ah, the suburbs of America. How is it that you produce some of the most compelling scenarios in recent film history (case study: *American Beauty* - my favourite film ever, by the way)? And now the tradition hopes to continue with the unorthodox *The Oranges*. However, foreword does not bode well for it (a low 26% on Rotten Tomatoes as of time of writing), so in all likelihood it will probably try to imitate Sam Mendes' amazing debut and fail miserably.

Well, what do you expect from a director whose previous filmography includes a large collection of TV shows like *Entourage*, *Coronation Street*, *Sex and the City* and many others?

But as mixed a record as director Julian Farino has, you have to admire he's gotten a decent cast for his new feature film: the likes of Hugh Laurie (*House*), Oliver Platt (*X-Men: First Class*),

Catherine Keener (*The 40-Year-Old Virgin*), Allison Janney (*Juno*), Adam Brody (*Jennifer's Body*), Alia Shawkat (*Ruby Sparks*) and Leighton Meester (*That's My Boy*).

David and Paige Walling (Laurie and Keener) are best friends with their neighbours Terry and Cathy Ostroff (Platt and Janney) as they live comfortable lives in the Orange Drives suburbs in New Jersey. Things start to unravel when the Ostroff's

prodigal daughter Nina (Meester) suddenly shows up for Thanksgiving after a five-year absence, having just broken up with her fiancé. She embarks on an affair with David, which when revealed turns their nice existence upside down.

The Oranges may not reach *American Beauty* heights of suburban cinema, but it still wants to try when it reaches a number of British cinemas on **December 7th**.

PARENTAL GUIDANCE



Billy Crystal is tasked with watching his young grandchildren in *Parental Guidance*

Despite what some people may think about his return to the Oscar podium earlier this year, Billy Crystal hasn't seemed to have lost his touch when it comes to on-screen performances.

Sure, *Parental Guidance* may look like a "hi-larious" family comedy that other actors like Eddie Murphy or Vin Diesel or Dwayne Johnson would sign themselves on for with big dollar signs in their eyes, but Crystal seems to have brought his usual wit and lovable nature to mix up the formula in unexpected ways. Aside from starring, the comedian also takes a producer and co-writer credit for the family film - good thing he didn't also take the role of director, otherwise dear Andy Fickman (*The Game Plan*, *Race to Witch Mountain*) would be out of a job.

Crystal is joined by legendary

entertainer-cum-actress Bette Midler (*The First Wives Club*), Marisa Tomei (*Crazy Stupid Love*), Tom Everett Scott (*That Thing You Do!*) and Bailee Madison (*Don't Be Afraid of the Dark*) as well.

Our story here focuses on Artie (Crystal), an old-school grandfather accustomed to calling the shots, and his eager-to-please wife Diane (Midler), who agree to babysit their three young

grandchildren while their parents (Tomei and Scott) are working. But when 21st-century problems get in the way of their old-fashioned methods of child-rearing, an age-old clash of old vs. new comes into order.

If you're anxious to hear Crystal's voice again in next year's *Monsters University*, then *Parental Guidance* will more than satisfy when it comes out in cinemas on **December 28th**.

THE MAN WITH THE IRON FISTS

If you want the feel of a good old-fashioned Quentin Tarantino, your needs will be fed with next month's *Django Unchained*.

But for now, the legendary auteur has put his name over the promotional material for this new film as he had done with Eli Roth's *Hostel*. So, as the posters suggest, "Quentin Tarantino presents" *The Man with the Iron Fists*.

Hoping to regain the spirit of the kung-fu films of olden days- you know, the ones that Bruce Lee would have been heavily featured in - this gory action flick is the directional debut of Wu-Tang Clan member RZA, who has also had film experience after acting in *Funny People*, *American Gangster*, *Due Date*, and next year's *G.I. Joe: Retaliation*.

RZA also wrote the film with Roth (also with a connection to Mr. Tarantino: he was in *Inglourious Basterds*) and has also put together an



RZA fights enemies alongside the likes of Russell Crowe (!) in 19th century China in *The Man with the Iron Fists*

unlikely cast of actors together to make this movie. Said actors include RZA himself, Russell Crowe (*Gladiator*), Lucy Liu (*Charlie's Angels*), Rick Yune (*Die Another Day*), mixed martial artist Dave Batista, Jamie Chung (*The Hangover Part 2*), Byron Mann (*Street Fighter*), Pam Grier (*Jackie Brown*) and Gordon Liu (*Kill Bill*).

Rather eclectic, but at the same time rather bonkers (!

mean, would you honestly see someone like Crowe doing this? Didn't think so.) RZA plays the Blacksmith, a man who is forced to create elaborate weapons of death in a small village in 19th century China. But when a traitor threatens the community, he teams up with a group of warriors and assassins to protect it. *The Man with the Iron Fists* punches its way into cinemas on **December 7th**.



CELESTE AND JESSE FOREVER

Can you stay best friends with someone even if you're supposed to hate their guts? The new dramedy *Celeste and Jesse Forever* attempts to explore that route, and the answers may come as more of a surprise than you would imagine.

Billed as a rom-com in the press, but never seeming to have any of the schmaltzy charm they usually do in the trailers, it's very possible that this could be something entirely different on its own accord in the genre.

With an original story, likable actors and an uplifting take on an otherwise depressing scenario, it looks like this film cannot seem to fail in the hardest way possible.

Lee Toland Krieger (of indie films *December Ends* and *The Vicious Kind*) directs the film, while talent on-screen consists of Rashida Jones (*The Social Network*), Andy

Rashida Jones and Andy Samberg are a divorcing couple who remain best friends in *Celeste and Jesse Forever*



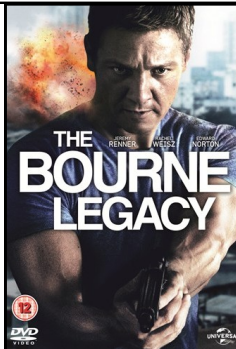
Samberg (*Hot Rod*), Elijah Wood (*Lord of the Rings*), Emma Roberts (*Wild Child*), Eric Christian Olsen (*Pearl Harbour*), Ari Graynor (*Whip It!*), Chris Messina (*Ruby Sparks*), Will McCormack (*The Sopranos*), Rich Sommer (*Mad Men*), Rafi Gavron (*Nick and Norah's Infinite Playlist*) and Matthew Del Negro (*The Sopranos*). Based on a screenplay written by both Rashida Jones and Will McCormack, *Celeste* (Jones) and Jesse

(Samberg) are best friends who met young and eventually got married. But when they decide to get divorced, they become determined to remain best friends even as they start seeing other people, which turns out to be a lot harder than expected. We'll be able to see if *Celeste and Jesse Forever* has lasting power upon its release on **December 7th**.



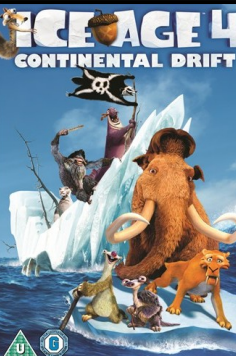
The Dark Knight Rises

- Also available on Blu-Ray
- Released: 03/12/12



The Bourne Legacy

- Also available on Blu-Ray
- Released: 03/12/12



Ice Age: Continental Drift

- Also available on Blu-Ray
- Released: 10/12/12



The Expendables 2

- Also available on Blu-Ray
- Released: 10/12/12

STILL SHOWING: NOVEMBER

With all its Bonfire Nights in the UK and Thanksgivings in the US, November is a nice little pre-cursor to the more festive month we are now in. And as another version of the month passes us, let's look back at some of the biggest releases released over that period.

The first batch of releases were out on the 2nd, and they included Gerard Butler surfing drama *Chasing Mavericks*, phone sex comedy *For A Good Time, Call...*; kid-friendly Halloween comedy *Fun Size*; provocative French drama *Rust and Bone*; and horror sequel *Silent Hill: Revelation*.

Next up, on the 9th, Ben Affleck released his third film as director and instantly went to the front of the Oscar race with *Argo*; Kevin James looked to mixed martial arts as the next thing to make a joke out of in *Here Comes The Boom*; Chris Pine went in search of his long-lost sister Elizabeth Banks in *People Like Us*; and Chris O'Dowd was the manager of an unknown Aborigine soul trio known as *The Sapphires*.

The 16th literally had something for virtually everyone: aging filmgoers appreciated the much-acclaimed French heartbreaker *Amour*; the more adult



cinema crowd were in favour of Paul Thomas Anderson's latest piece of art, the lucrative experience of *The Master*; and dumb teenagers (mostly girls not only enough to be dumb yet) were treated to the fifth and final installment in the long-running *Twilight* saga, *Breaking Dawn - Part 2*. On the 23rd, a whole host of high-profile releases were on display including, but not limited to, Jake Gyllenhaal and Michael Peña cop action-drama *End of Watch*; Colin Firth and Cameron Diaz teaming up to con art collector Alan Rickman in comedy remake *Gambit*; David Tennant takes over from Hobbiton-bound Martin Freeman as the teacher of a primary school class determined to succeed in an *X-Factor*-like contest in festive sequel *Nativity 2: Danger in the Manger*;

and David O. Russell directed Bradley Cooper, Jennifer Lawrence and Robert De Niro in comedy *Silver Linings Playbook*. Finally, out on the last day of the month which, by the way, was the 30th, Tyler Perry became a literary hero in *Alex Cross*; a brand-new adaptation of Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* marked the author's 200th birthday; Mads Mikkelsen was a wrongly-accused sex offender in *The Hunt*; the world's greatest childhood heroes teamed up in *Rise of the Guardians*; Ben Wheatley's gory black comedy *Sightseers*; and Clint Eastwood became a baseball scout in *Trouble with the Curve*. That's it for November 2012, and for my opinions on some of these movies, see pages 8-12.

COMING SOON: JANUARY

It's time for the start of a brand new year, and if the releases of January 2013 are anything to go by then the following eleven months are going to really be something special.

Out first on the 4th of the month, Ewan McGregor and Naomi Watts star in gripping Thailand tsunami drama *The Impossible*; Gerard Butler gets in with various soccer moms in *Playing For Keeps*; Dustin Hoffman turns director for the tale of OAPs becoming opera singers in *Quartet*; and Leatherface makes his big-screen comeback in the not-so-glorious third dimension in reboot *Texas Chainsaw 3D*.

Then, on the 11th, the delayed action-thriller *Gangster Squad* finally gets its release after certain events called for reshoots; one of the most successful musicals of all time *Les Miserables* finally makes it to the big screen with an all-star cast and a rather unconventional approach to filming its many musical numbers; Kevin Bishop stars as a vigilante cyclist policeman during the 2011 London riots in black comedy *May I Kill U?*; and we also



Hugh Jackman plays escaped convict Jean Valjean in the new musical adaptation of *Les Miserables*

get hard-hitting Irish drama *What Richard Did*. Following that on the 18th, Quentin Tarantino makes his long-mooted return with his controversial "Southern" entitled *Django Unchained*; director Michael Winterbottom's newest flick is told over the span of five years in *Everyday*; Pixar takes time to re-release one of its greatest hits in 3D with *Monsters Inc. 3D*; John Hawkes plays a man riddled with polio who decides to finally get himself laid in *The Sessions*; and if you're in the mood for some seriously freaky horror, then you can do no wrong with horror anthology movie *V/H/S*.

Our final batch of releases on the 25th include Arnold Schwarzenegger's

long-awaited return to headlining action films in *The Last Stand*; Daniel Day-Lewis is the Man in the Hat in Steven Spielberg's biopic of *Lincoln*; and Kathryn Bigelow is back after winning multiple Oscars for *The Hurt Locker* for the controversial *Zero Dark Thirty*, about the team who finally found and killed Osama Bin Laden.

Tune in next month for all this and also a first look at this year's awards season, including the nominations for the 70th Annual Golden Globe Awards. Yup, the Awards Central is coming back for another year, and it looks to be the tightest awards race yet...



Total Recall

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



The Watch

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



A Few Best Men

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



Searching For Sugar Man

- Also available on Blu-Ray
- Released: 27/12/12

REVIEWS

STAR RATING SYSTEM



JUST DON'T



I WOULDN'T



MEH



WORTH A LOOK



RATHER ENJOYABLE



SEE IT NOW!



For the final film, the studios decided to put their all out in their most successful saga to date. They were very seriously mistaken.

The second part in the adaptation of Stephanie Meyer's finale *Breaking Dawn* will surely stand its ground as one of the worst conclusions to a popular franchise I've ever seen, if not the worst. But I guess its awfulness is to be expected after five long years of enduring crap after crap by the studio in their vain hopes that it will score an audience outside rabid fans of the series.

Going over them briefly, I did not care for the first two films - the emotionally-bare *Twilight* and the highly-laughable *New Moon* - while I thought its third entry, *Eclipse*, was not as bad (though still rather wretched) as its predecessors.

Then *Breaking Dawn Part 1* came out last year, and it proved to the world that following *Harry Potter's* example of splitting its final book into two films does not always work. Honestly, nothing happens in that movie other than a wedding, a honeymoon with some of the most hilarious over-the-top sex you'll ever see, and a last-minute stance on the hot topic of abortion (yes, they really went there, people - *Twilight* tried, and failed, to lecture its young fan base on the morals and behaviours around abortion. To call its attempt painful is putting it mildly).

And since this final part picks up right where the last one left off - Bella has rather gruesomely given birth to a baby named Renesmee, and to save her from death her undead husband Edward finally turns her into a vampire - you'd expect things to go a lot faster in terms of story and its events, right? Wrong.

The same problem persists in that absolutely NOTHING happens for a good chunk of the first half of the film. It all basically resolves around Bella - who even now, after getting everything she

has wanted throughout the series including a hot vampire husband, a new family, a nice house and immortality with an appetite for blood, STILL CAN'T GET A BLOODY SMILE ACROSS HER FACE!!!! - coming to grips with her new lifestyle, and Lord knows that that's gripping stuff. It does lead to some unintentional laugh-out-loud moments though: when Edward and Bella go to their new cottage and have themselves some hot vampire sex, there's a moment when it looks like the film literally orgasms along with Bella. It's so stupid, it's hilarious.

Oh, and we're also introduced to the newest Cullen in the household during all of this as well; first as an incredibly-creepy CGI baby, and then later as bright newcomer Mackenzie Foy. No fault on her part can be made, she does a nice job at making the new-born sweet and innocent.

She is also the centre point of two storylines in this movie, but let's talk about the most unnerving. Jacob Black (once again played by stony-faced Taylor Lautner) has "imprinted" upon Renesmee after her birth in *Part 1*, which means that she is his soul mate. Got the nerves while just reading that? Don't worry: the film makes it a LOT creepier than it sounds. Honestly, it's the sort of thing that Jimmy Saville would say "Dude, that's a bit much!"

Not forgetting how badly poor Jacob was treated in the latter films, the film takes advantage of this abuse and comes across as just mean in the process. Once she finds out about Jacob's actions, she starts to beat him up with her newfound super strength while Edward just stands there and laughs. THIS is the guy we're supposed to be rooting for, that Bella fancied over the frankly-better Jacob? I don't care if he's been around for a good hundred years or so, the guy's a complete douche (I would call him further things, but this is a family magazine!)

But the film is redeemable on two factors. The first is Billy Burke, who plays Bella's poorly-treated unsuspecting father for the final time. As well as getting the funniest moment in the film - his reaction as Jacob literally strips in front of him is gold - you really feel sorry for him as he demands to get to the bottom of Bella's mysterious habits. Even though his own daughter continues to lie to him about her true nature, he knows he's never going to get a straight answer and tragically accepts the fate that has come across his family.

The second is Michael Sheen's performance as Volturi leader Aro. He seems to be the only actor in this series who is having a great amount of fun, and it shows in his delightfully campy conveyance here. Think John Travolta in *Battlefield Earth*, and just as wildly over-the-top, and you have it.

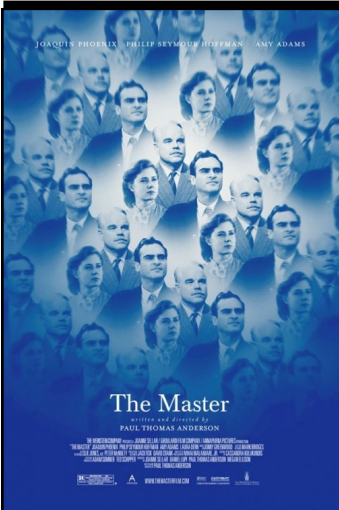
But the ending... God, the ending. Goddamn this final resolution. At first, it seems as though they're actually doing something game-changing, something - dare I say it - exciting. The action is surprisingly gripping characters I never thought I'd see go get taken away from life. But all of a sudden... well, I won't say here but trust me: to call it infuriating, stupid, anti-climactic and an overall terrible cop-out of an ending is a massive understatement.

Breaking Dawn Part 2 is not the worst film I've ever seen, but it's definitely in the top 10.

The only real good thing I can say about this final nail in the coffin is the fact that there is no more of this crap to look forward to.

Good riddance to you, *Twilight* saga. May flights of painful pretentious sing thee to thy fiery death.





Okay, let's clear up one thing first: no, this is not a film about Scientology. There are some strong hints throughout that would draw any skeptic to draw that comparison, but *The Master* has about as much to do with Scientology as *Twilight* does with, say the bombing of Hiroshima. What it IS, however, is a beautifully put-together film that is certain to solidify Paul Thomas Anderson's status as a 21st century Kubrick. Oh, that's right. I called it. I'd like to see the passage of time prove me wrong (I'm writing this in case he ironically turns out to be a Shyamalan-like pariah. But I digress...)

So if it's not intended to be an allegorical interpretation of a certain popular religion, then what does it aspire to be? I can definitely see it as being interpreted in many ways by future critics, perhaps like how many pundits go ahead and interpret certain elements in *The Shining* - the recent documentary *Room 237* shows the great lengths some people will compare it to.

Right now, I see it as an exploration into the human lust for sex. Please stay with me on this.

From the beginning of the film up to the very last shot, we learn that our main character Freddie Quell (performed with magnificent animalistic rage by actor-turned-false-rapper-turned-actor-again-sort-of Joaquin Phoenix) is obsessed with getting laid. The sand figure of a



naked woman, which he proceeds to dry hump and sexually probe with his fingers, and later a woman in his workplace who shows him her breasts, show his uncontrollable want for the female body; as a result, his social skills suffer as we see right after aforementioned breast-showing when he sleeps during a dinner date with the same woman.

When he suddenly enters the life and atmosphere of the charmingly manipulative Lancaster Dodd (a character who Phillip Seymour Hoffman puts his all into and gives a career-best performance as a result), it all turns into something of a bizarre romance between these two men. Strictly platonic - in fact, the closest these two come to loving physical interaction is as they boyishly roll about in the front yard of a house.

But Quell's obsession with sex with the opposite gender remains, as seen in a fantasy sequence where he watches Dodd dance around with fully-naked women.

In addition, those around Dodd feel Quell to be a threat, and use their own cunning and manipulative forces to separate these two. His recently-married daughter is seen to be stretching out to Quell's genital area to which he pushes her away, but then accuses him of wanting her sexually to Dodd later at a family dinner.

Even more significant is the complex role of Dodd's wife Peggy, played in an extremely creepy manner by the wonderful Amy Adams. When she confronts Quell and tells him to give up his alcoholic habits, it is similar to an earlier "processing" session (the film's version of said-religion's auditing exercises) Quell performed with Dodd. Just before, she is seen to physically masturbate Dodd in his bathroom as she pours ego-boosting words into his ears.

It's perhaps a good thing that the film doesn't divulge into whether or not she is Dodd's master as Dodd is Quell's master. It allows for more of a fixation on the dominance in the relationship of our two main actors.

To top all that off, we are treated with some marvellous visuals by PTA's new cinematographer Mihai Malaimare Jr. (one of the film's true unsung heroes) and regular collaborator Jonny Greenwood's haunting and hypnotic score which sets the film's undertones brilliantly.

Whether or not its methods replicate that of the religion I discussed in length earlier in this review is unimportant when analysing what this film really could be about.

What you've just read is just my own interpretation. It's up to all of you to see this cinematic marvel and figure out its true meaning yourselves.



Argo is a combination of many things: a political thriller, a tense action flick, and a satire of the Hollywood system. The three elements that no-one would thought could come together to make a feature film have indeed collided with Ben Affleck's third film as director, but it really, really works in the end.

Affleck has now seemed to reach Clint Eastwood levels of actor-cum-director in terms of success, with this film being his equivalent of *Unforgiven*. Hard to imagine that the guy who everyone seemed to mock for dating Jennifer Lopez not ten years ago would break the mould by certifying himself as one of the industry's top current directors.

The success of this comes down to how he knows exactly where the film needs to go at the right time. When it needs to become tense, you're on the edge of your seat. When it switches to satire, it's really funny. When it turns to something of an action film (albeit a more quieter, more subtle one), you actually care for these characters and pray that they make it out of the situation OK.

Like with his last film *The Town*, Affleck takes the lead role of CIA operative Tony Mendez, and he does a good job at portraying the guy, but he manages to step more into the shadows to allow other performers around him to hog the spotlight. Case in point: Alan Arkin and John Goodman. Representing the



Hollywood side of the story, as they team up with Mendez to bring in everything from costumes to storyboards in order to legitimise the fake movie within the rest of the unsuspecting world, this is a fine pairing and they get some of the film's funniest lines. One particular zinger comes from Arkin, and while it's a tad too obscene to repeat here (this is a family publication, folks!), it's going to be something that will catch on in the near future.

When the film does shift its focus to this portion of the story, it's very entertaining: having worked in the business for so long on-screen and only recently from behind the camera, Affleck shows his knowledge of how the Hollywood system works, humiliating and at times painful though it may be. During a table read of the fake movie, a cheap sci-fi *Star Wars* knock-off *Argo* (hence the title), Arkin's producer character retains a cringing look across his face as the expectedly horrendous dialogue is uttered. That look alone sums up the whole idea: they may be saving lives but first they have to endure something that is beyond painful.

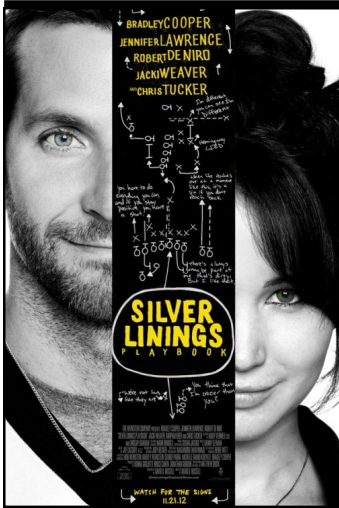
The second half of the movie takes place during the prolonged rescue mission itself in Iran, as Mendez arrives to teach the fugitive Americans how to become their Canadian filmmaker counterparts if they are to escape safely. This is where the tension reaches boiling

point, as revolutionaries approach thick and fast to find any loyalists to the old system. Meanwhile, our bearded hero has to deal with uncooperative fugitives, a sudden pulling of the plug by the White House, and an overall plan that seems too farfetched to even work. It's gripping stuff, with any moment being the one where their cover is blown and everything goes to crap - a hasty confrontation with an angered Iranian man in a market is one, and a slow drive through a protesting anti-Western crowd another.

Some plot points and characters are introduced but then shoved aside to focus on the rest of the story. For example, Mendez's relationship with his young son is never fully explored even before that story thread disappears to make way for the second half; and Kyle Chandler's Chief of Staff at the White House only makes one brief appearance at the start and then suddenly comes back near the climax. Perhaps if more time was spent with these elements then it would have been a bit more rounded.

But for what it is, *Argo* is a good film for the common moviegoer: a tribute to the corny effects-driven films of yesteryear, but more importantly a tale of how Hollywood can probably save some lives now and then, self-glamourizing though that may seem.





The Master. Lincoln. Argo. Silver Linings Playbook. One of these things is not like the other.

Whereas those films had already solidified themselves firmly in the Oscar race this year, no-one expected that fourth film to come in and suddenly become a major contender. I'm serious: some pundits are now predicting for it not only to be a potential spoiler for the big prize, but is guaranteed to win a couple already. All this hype is riding on the film's shoulders, so it leads to the ultimate question: is the film worthy of all its buzz?

The answer is: yes. Yes, it is. Which leads to another question left to be answered: why?

First off, it defies expectations. It's a romantic-comedy, but its lovers are mentally-unstable. It's a sports drama, but we never see the sport on-screen. There's family dilemmas, but the father is just as messed up as his son.

I literally went in to the screening not knowing where things would go with all its established plot points, and I was shocked at just how insanely unpredictable it all seemed. This does slightly wear off in and around the third act, but it still grips you with tension when one thing happens that you realise could change the entire game.

I could see it perhaps getting a nod

for its screenplay, written by director David O. Russell, which bathes itself every minute in soothing wit and luxuriant dialogue that swings back and forth like something out of a Frank Capra movie.

Russell is sensitive behind the camera also, but some of his directional styles (such as the far zoom into a character's face) can get in the way at times.

But what this movie really benefits from is its cast. Let's talk about them individually, starting from the very bottom.

It is admittedly refreshing to see Chris Tucker in a role that isn't partnered up with Jackie Chan, but while he is far less ball-cradlingly annoying here as he was in the past, he doesn't show up for long and when he does, it's almost out of nowhere. It's like in *Ice Age* when suddenly it would cut to a moment with Scrat: every so often, this film has its own Chris Tucker moment.

Jacki Weaver is also in this, and again it's nice to see this underrated actress get some decent work. But like Tucker, she doesn't get to add much to the story and seems like a fifth wheel as the doting and caring mother.

Robert De Niro thankfully fares much better, in what is his best role in years. Playing a sufferer of OCD with an uncompromising obsession for American football - which may

cause some confusion for British audiences, hell I didn't understand half the stuff they were talking about - De Niro seems to unleash all these acting excellences that he seems to have been hiding all this time and lets himself loose in the best way possible. His rage reminds one of his Oscar-winning days as a certain bull that was raging, and good God how we've missed it.

Now, let's move on to our young leads. Bradley Cooper, a character actor for years until his big break in *The Hangover*, proves with this film that he is not only good for comedy but can be extremely powerful with drama. One scene where he frantically searches for his wedding video descends into breakdown and aggressive violence, and he handles it all perfectly.

Then you've got Jennifer Lawrence. Now, I wouldn't necessarily see the film as a whole win Best Picture over others like *Lincoln* or *Argo*. It's really good, don't get me wrong, but I don't think it would prevail in that category. However, if this film were to win one Oscar that night, it would definitely go to Lawrence, who takes her character and amps it up to 11 in ways I couldn't imagine from her introduction onwards. I actually don't want to say what makes it work, you need to see it to believe it. It's THAT good.

Bottom line: come for the Cooper, stay for the Lawrence.



This is the story of a group of unlikely heroes who band together to destroy an oncoming evil that threatens to destroy the world we know and love. No wait, that's the billion dollar-grossing superhero epic *Marvel Avengers Assemble* which came out eight months ago.

Sorry about that, let me start over...

This is the story of a group of unlikely heroes who band together to destroy an oncoming evil that threatens to destroy the world we know and love. I am talking, of course, about *Rise of the Guardians*.

Glad I sorted that confusion out.

Okay, so the first psychological thing to do is to compare this latest offering from DreamWorks Animation to Joss Whedon's earlier blockbuster hit (interestingly, both are distributed by Paramount, although this is the last DreamWorks film to be released by them until the studio moves to 20th Century Fox for distribution next year). But it's true: at times, it does feel like the primary school edition of *The Avengers*.

Here, of course, it sees the combination of characters from our childhoods like Santa Claus, the Easter Bunny, the Tooth Fairy, the Sandman and Jack Frost, all of whom both children and adults are familiar with so it should be captivating for both parties.

But the real question is, is it any good?

My favourite film from the entire DreamWorks branch is *How To Train Your Dragon*, which succeeds in many things but primarily its visuals (with some of the best 3D I've seen in a cinema) and its unique storyline. *Rise of the Guardians* is able to succeed in one of those aspects, but seriously falter in the other.

So what is it that makes it suffer? Unfortunately, it's a major issue: the story. Its overall structure isn't anything new or groundbreaking despite a few new twists - the "Guardians", including new addition Jack Frost, must stop Pitch the Boogeyman from crushing children's faith in them - and for a film with as much potential as was promised in previous promotional material, it's slightly disappointing.

I also didn't like how half of it seemed to be an origin story for Jack Frost, our main protagonist. Throughout the film, his past life is meant to be something of a mysterious secret but once revealed it's not that impressive, and really takes away any magic from the rest of the film. Being voiced by Chris Pine doesn't really help either, but though he's not bad here his deep boisterous voice does not seem to fit the character. Seriously, when you look at Frost on the poster, you reckon he should sound like some late teenager and not by some 30-something Enterprise captain.

The villain, Pitch the Boogeyman,

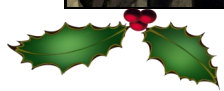
falls under every antagonistic cliché in the sun. Underground, scary lair? Check. Overall feeling of eternal darkness? Check. Voiced by a British actor? Step forward, Jude Law, and receive your Check. He's also kind of a bore, and that's a let-down especially considering he's the freakin' Boogeyman. Every single scene he's in, he has a lengthy monologue about evil and darkness. Yes, that's all very nice, now can you please shut up and actually do something?

Luckily, the visuals help pick it up on its hind legs. For what it is, this is a very beautiful-looking movie and impressively animated at that.

Its strengths also lie in its unique designs in both the sets and characters. I especially loved how they made the Tooth Fairy and her little helpers look and act like little hummingbirds. That's a very nice touch and just makes the character seem new, exciting and more fairy-like than any previous incarnation.

All the other voice actors, including Alec Baldwin, Hugh Jackman and Isla Fisher, also fare well. But the real star is definitely its animation, which should be worth the ticket price alone.

Overall, *Rise of the Guardians* is a good film from DreamWorks Animation, but if certain elements came together better than they really did it could have been a great one.





Christmastime is when we get all of those countless adaptations of Charles Dickens' classic story *A Christmas Carol*. But since there are so many versions of that story, whether it be live-action, animated, or even with Muppets, the original novelty of its story wears off rather quickly.

In fact, it's the same with all of Dickens' classic stories that have been adapted by the media - for example, *Oliver Twist* became a musical, *Little Dorrit* was a TV miniseries a few years ago, even *The Dark Knight Rises* were inspired by the author's *A Tale of Two Cities* - they've been told so many times in so many different ways that there's nothing truly exciting about them anymore.

Fans of the original stories know inside out what happens to the characters, so no real emotional attachment can be made.

Sadly, this also rings true for the newest adaptation of *Great Expectations*, a version which plays it safer than a grown swimmer wearing armbands in a paddling pool.

What it does is nothing more but tell the timeless tale of the orphan Pip and his adventures into adulthood as is in Dickens' book, and that's all. Nothing else truly rings new, there's nothing that really makes it stand out amongst the rest of the adaptations of the same book.



But perhaps that's a good thing: *Great Expectations* is a classic piece of literature for a reason. It's an interesting story with complex characters and brooding scenarios, and remains an essential piece of reading to this day. And since 2012 is the 200th anniversary of the author's birth, the filmmakers - led by *Harry Potter* and *the Goblet of Fire* director Mike Newell - surely wanted to respect that by presenting a faithful version of the story.

For what it's worth, it's a decent adaptation. Not the best or certainly the most memorable especially when one has the lasting memories of David Lean's classic version, but decent nonetheless. It does the job to a degree, and any Dickens fan can ask for nothing more.

Pip is played by Jeremy Irvine, marking his third major film this year after *War Horse* and *Now Is Good*. All three combined show that Irvine is a serious talent to watch out for in the future, and his haunting and arrogant portrayal of the orphaned blacksmith-turned-gentleman is one for the ages.

The eccentric Miss Havisham, the steering force of nature throughout the story, is the character most people will remember from the book and she is brought to loony life by Helena Bonham Carter. A perfect casting choice (one of the few, but we'll get to the negativities later), she practically owns that wedding

dress with such unpredictability and madness.

Other players, including Ralph Fiennes as escaped convict Magwitch and Holliday Grainger as the brainwashed ice-queen Estella, all fare well with what material they have.

However, there are some casting choices that seem to be far too distracting, or didn't work out as well as they had hoped. Sally Hawkins briefly pops up as Pip's abusive sister, but her maniacal nature is far too over the top and a tad bit unbelievable. Hawkins can be really good when she can be, but this is just a slight misstep. Also, the appearance of David Walliams as Pip's relative Pumblechook is way too distracting - some people at the screening giggled when he first appeared - and unfortunately he plays it rather goofily like a character from *Little Britain*.

While the film does look very nice, some of its cinematography can backfire. Shots are sometimes so dark that you can hardly see what's happening.

Its pacing has trouble as well, making it feel like some parts were crammed in for the sake of it. This probably explains why it's better as a TV miniseries: more time, more room.

All in all, *Great Expectations* does its job, but does not stand out amongst the countless versions before it.



So, it appears someone thought it to be a good idea to remake a British comedy caper from 1966 that starred Michael Caine and Shirley MacLaine as they got involved with a high-stakes robbery.

There's a clue to the amount of quality in this remake in that brief description of the original there: the year. 1966. 46 years ago. If *Gambit* v.2 was trying to replicate the comedy that came out almost half a century ago, then it seriously forgot how dated it all feels.

In today's world, I'm sorry to say but it just isn't funny. And seeing how that's the most important element in a comedy, then it fails on all accounts.

I cannot recall even chuckling out loud at what they were trying to do to make the audience laugh. The film's main gag, it seems, is during a sequence which sees the Michael Caine character, here played by Colin Firth, out on the ledge of a hotel and somehow he loses his trousers. This requires him to carry on acting as normal, only his pants are on full view to the rest of the world.

That's it. That's seriously what they think passes for edgy comedy in today's society.

Movie, movie... let me fill you in on what you've missed for the past 46 years.

You see, we live in an era where newer levels of comedy exist. Some of them, which we call "gross-out"

comedies, take further risks than you do. Toilet humour reigns supreme. Some brave actors even expose their full frontal naked bodies.

This may come as a shock to you, but this is what we humans in the early 21st century consider to be risqué comedic styling.

I'm certain that your attempts at sight gags, especially your little "missing trousers" scenario would have had people rolling in the aisles and gasping about how far they were pushing the boundaries back where - or "when", if you'd rather get technical about it - you came from.

But, you need to understand. That was the past. This is the present. To progress as a comedic classic in the future, you need to take risks, go places no-one even dares to go like they did in your time.

You cannot rely on safe gags, or comedy for the sake of comedy. Firth gets his hand stuck in a money jar. No humour there. It's NOT FUNNY.

The painting that the character is trying to get a hold of, it's guarded by a lion. A little unexpected were it not for the trailers giving every single good gag away in its two-minute runtime, but the point still stands: it's NOT FUNNY.

The feisty woman he recruits to play along with his scheme, they have their disagreements, and then she

goes and flirts with the antagonist while Firth realises he's fallen for her. It's cliché by today's standards, done to death in all sorts of movies, and God bless Cameron Diaz and Alan Rickman for doing their best with what little material they have (by the way, even though the advertising claims it was written by the Coen Brothers I have a sneaking suspicion that someone else came in to rewrite the film entirely and they just used their names for marketing purposes), as the feisty woman and antagonist respectively, and above all NOT FUNNY.

A running gag throughout the film sees Firth being punched repeatedly in the face for no apparent reason, other than I assume because your filmmakers though this would have newer audiences today pissing themselves with laughter. Colin Firth, I really like you as an actor and I acknowledge that your early career was dogged by these sort of British comedies, but you're an Oscar-winning actor now: you don't need to submit yourself to material which I don't know if I've mentioned yet as being NOT FUNNY.

So, as you can tell there's one particular thing that I find seriously wrong about this "comedy". And that's all I can really say about it.

OK, one more time for good measure: NOT FUNNY.





Severe amputees of the world, you now have a credible movie to call your own.

Though it is not the overall main focus of *Rust and Bone*, it is certainly a major part of it - in all, it's a story of how two people are thrown down by fate only for them to come back up to the surface together.

On one hand, you have a man, played by Matthias Schoenaerts, who partakes in a series of underpaying, sometimes violent and illegal, jobs in order to bring in some money to support his son and his sister. But as we learn throughout, he is heavily flawed: a constant womaniser, never afraid to let his true feelings get in the way, and constantly neglecting his son whenever his personal needs come into focus. Safe to say, he's not the most perfect guy you'll meet.

Then, on the other, you've got Marion Cotillard as a woman with a string of relationship problems, none of which seem to matter once things take a turn for the worse one day at her job as a killer whale trainer, and she wakes up in the hospital with less appendages than she came in with (insert "she was rather legless" joke here, and my fiery pit in Hell is reserved).

From the offset, they do not appear to be the normal romantic couple. If anything, it sounds like the beginning of a joke - "A hard man and a cripple walk into a bar..." - and a particularly uncomfortable one at that. But what

director Jacques Audiard has done is focus entirely on the growing relationship between these characters, and not spend its runtime making us pity them.

This is especially true of Cotillard's character. Yes, there are moments after the tragedy occurs when it descends into typical human tragedy clichés - "oh, look, she's crying in shock, she's shutting herself away from the outside, yadda yadda yadda..." but, strangely, that seems to be part of the character. It's like she's seen countless films just like that where someone has lost what makes them tick (in her case, it's her legs) and has been led to believe that these sort of tragic events happen in real life.

Not quite so, when Schoenaerts starts to care for her and never even brings up the elephant in the room whenever they're together; and whenever he does, he seems to do it in a more uplifting manner and never even pities her disability. He sees that despite the loss of her legs, she is still a person and deserves to be treated as such.

And the act of going against the expected genre tropes do not stop there, with even the couple's eventual romance not going the way one would expect. When sex does come into the picture, it's strictly for practical and experimental reasons - Cotillard even requests there be no kissing involved - and it's more or

less a case of helping a friend out with something.

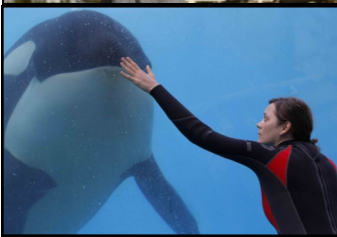
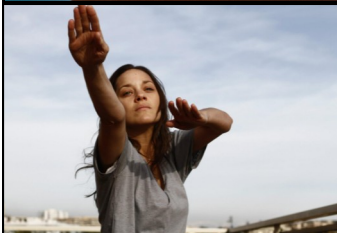
So really, when you start to look at and analyse it, it's a fascinating and unique take on the overtired romance genre, with moments reminiscent of *My Left Foot* and even *Forrest Gump* thrown in for good measure.

Cotillard and Schoenaerts excel in their roles, in particular Cotillard who arguably gets the showier role here which she commits to with great conviction and is destined to get her a good chunk of recognition during the upcoming awards season.

I would say my only downside to the whole experience is that there are moments which are too difficult to follow. For example, Schoenaerts gets involved with an illegal operation to spy on untrustworthy employees and gets into hot water with his sister (a character I did not seem to care for) as a result. I'm not sure if this is a major thing in France, but for me it felt out of place within the whole story.

Apart from that, and the fact that every now and then the film slips into conventional templates of the genre, this is a nice romance that's nicely acted and beautifully told.

It may not be for everyone, but for whoever it appeals to, they will certainly get a real kick out of it (no pun intended...).



Anyone craves a perfect holiday, most of all the two lead characters in *Sightseers*. And as for anyone who threatens to change that... well, here's hoping they had their wills sorted beforehand.

Such are the murderous ways undertaken in director Ben Wheatley's third feature film, a huge change in tone from his previous films *Down Terrace* (a gangster film) and *Kill List* (a horror with hit men). Here, it's nearly all black comedy with the deaths and attitudes toward it being especially morbid.

At least two of the victims are run over, with others having their heads bashed in and in one unfortunate (and accidental) incident - which as we learn serves as some form of catalyst for the film's events - impalement of a cute little animal.

Doesn't exactly ring the bells for a laugh-a-minute comedy, does it? Well, did I mention that the item that impales said animal is a pair of sharp knitting needles?

Yup: death by knitting needles.

If the deep disturbed psyche within you slightly chuckled at that, then you're in for one heck of a ride.

The more gruesome aspects of the film are all played for laughs, each one of them getting a great big giggle out of audience members (or, at least, the audience I saw this with) for just how out-of-nowhere and cartoonish they are.

It has to be admitted, there's a certain comedic joy one gets from seeing someone, say, pushed down a rocky cliff in the most ridiculous of pulley vehicles (what vehicle it is, I'll leave that for you to see but trust me when I say it's incredibly silly). It's like something out of a *Wile E. Coyote/Road Runner* cartoon, only instead of the American outlands it's the quiet and looming British countryside.

But part of the genius of its screenplay (written by its stars Alice Lowe and Steve Oram, who both shine brightly onscreen) is that we have somehow grown to like these people, despite the growing body count. These characters - a couple who simply decide to view the sights such as the Crich Tramway Museum (yes, that really exists) in their small caravan to get away from Lowe's overbearing mother - are sick, twisted and mentally screwed up in the head. And we slowly begin to hate ourselves for following these horrible people as we find out their true motivations. But we just can't help it: goshdarnit, they're just so likable and, even scarier, relatable in their problems and personalities.

But above all, they are really funny creations. Chris (Oram), for example: after "accidentally" running over their first victim - to be fair, he was a rude litterbug - seems to overlook the possible future repercussions of being responsible for his death by

glumly revealing "It's no use - he's ruined the Crich Tramway Museum for me." Tina (Lowe) is also not without her eccentricities: at the Keswick Pencil Museum - yes, THAT really exists too - she purchases the "world's largest pencil" which is about the length of a car and uses it to write a note. The image of her sitting down, large pencil in one hand scribbling letter after letter is both tragic and somewhat hilarious.

The rest of the film has very funny moments bordering on the grim but also ones that add a lot to the character's personalities - plus, some of the most erotic use of knitting you'll ever see.

I guess if there was one thing I would have to not be entirely comfortable with, and Wheatley is guilty of this in *Kill List* as well, is that it all ends very suddenly. I won't DARE ruin the ending here as it's just too good to spoil, but after it happens it just kind of stops and starts rolling the credits. What happens next with these characters? Do their actions have repercussions? None of these questions seem to be answered, and it's infuriatingly ambiguous.

That doesn't distract from that *Sightseers* is not only dark, twisted and extremely funny, but is also a well-written, well-acted, well-directed and well-shot exploration of murderous holiday makers in a caravan.

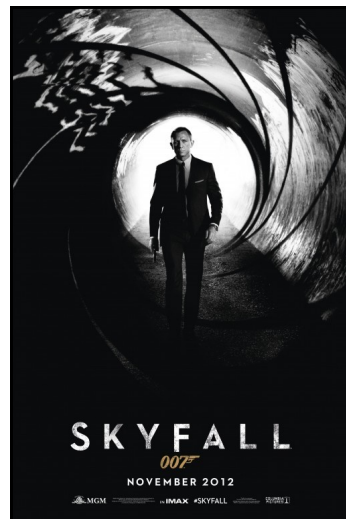




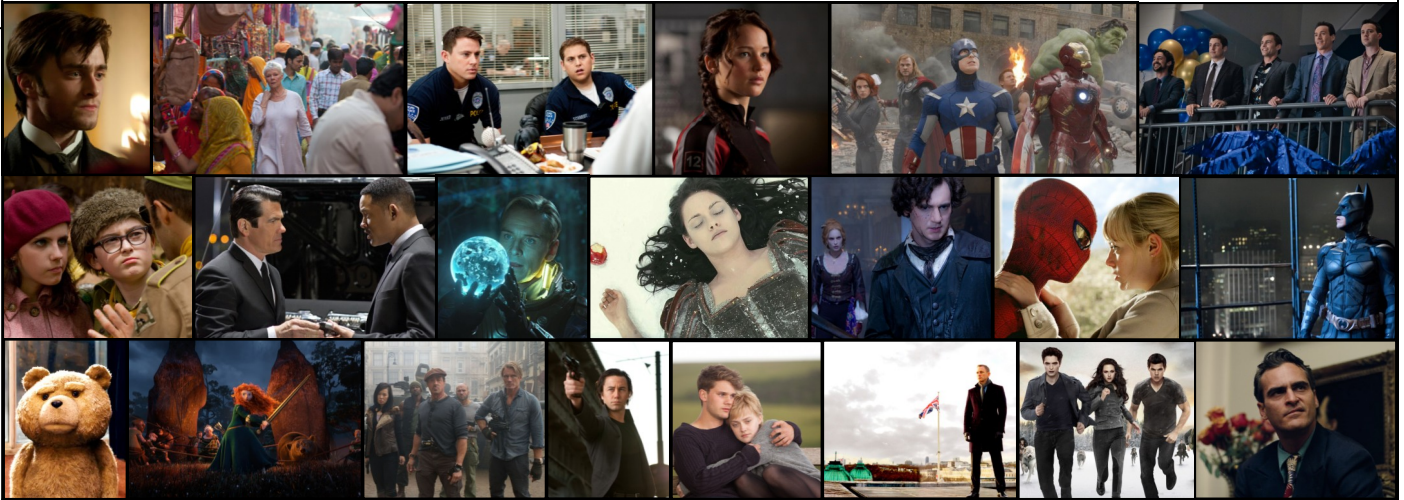
REVIEW OF



2012



Review of 2012



First Row: *The Woman in Black*, *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*, *21 Jump Street*, *The Hunger Games*, *Marvel Avengers Assemble*, *American Pie: Reunion*

Second Row: *Moonrise Kingdom*, *Men in Black 3*, *Prometheus*, *Snow White and the Huntsman*, *Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter*, *The Amazing Spider-Man*, *The Dark Knight Rises*

Third Row: *Ted*, *Brave*, *The Expendables 2*, *Looper*, *Now Is Good*, *Skyfall*, *The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn - Part 2*, *The Master*

January

Awards season dominated the majority of the first month of the year, with contenders like *War Horse*, *The Iron Lady*, *The Descendants*, *Shame*, *J. Edgar* and *Coriolanus* making up the majority of the month. Newer releases were not forgotten either, such as Jonah Hill's new raunchy comedy *The Sitter*, director Steven Soderbergh's all-star action-thriller *Haywire*, and Liam Neeson fighting against a pack of wolves (is there anything that guy CAN'T do?) in *The Grey*.

February

Some more awards leftovers came this month, with *Carnage*, *A Dangerous Method*, *Martha Marcy May Marlene* and *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* being a select few, but there were some new offerings like Daniel Radcliffe's horror *The Woman in Black*, oldies-go-to-India drama *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel*, and action-thriller (with added Denzel Washington) *Safe House*. Oh, and we also got something about puppets...

March

Our first big money-maker of the year came from Lionsgate and their first instalment in their *Hunger Games* film series, and it was well deserved. The biggest surprise came from *Wrath of the*

Titans, which proved how a sequel can really be better and far more entertaining than its shoddy predecessor. Also out this month: Aardman set sail with *The Pirates! In An Adventure with Scientists*, Jonah Hill and Channing Tatum brought the funny with *21 Jump Street*, and no-one went to see *John Carter*. Fun times.

April

A fairly quiet month around these parts: *Battleship* came and went faster than Tiger Woods at a prostitute convention, *The Cabin in the Woods* was something of a letdown, and *Titanic* was re-released in 3D. That, and *Marvel Avengers Assemble* just went and broke almost every single box office record known to man. No biggie.

May

Blockbuster after blockbuster just couldn't keep up with the *Avengers*, with *Dark Shadows*, *The Dictator* and *American Pie: Reunion* all failing to find an audience outside of Marvel. However, *Men in Black 3* wasn't bad, *The Raid: Redemption* now has something of a fanbase, and do I even need to say how good *Moonrise Kingdom* was?

June

While the Queen celebrated her 60th year on the throne, cinemas across the country had something for everyone.

Ridley Scott returned to sci-fi with *Prometheus*, it was OK. Kristen Stewart made headlines (for the wrong reasons) with *Snow White and the Huntsman*, it's was also OK. *Rock of Ages* saw Tom Cruise singing - that, awesome. Rest of the film? Meh. *A Fantastic Fear of Everything* sucked. *The Five-Year Engagement* was rather good. *Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter* was really enjoyable. That's pretty much it.

July

Again, not much to say hear other than two very popular superhero offerings - Batman returned for the final time under Nolan's eye in *The Dark Knight Rises*, and a new version of the webslinger was unveiled in *The Amazing Spider-Man* - and some rather weak animated offerings (*Dr. Seuss' The Lorax* being the main offender). I am also led to believe London was host to a large sporting event, but that's not so important, is it?

August

The final month of summer was packed to say the least, with *Ted*, *Brave* and *The Expendables 2* dominating the month, while *The Bourne Legacy* shouldn't have been born, *Total Recall* was just OK, and Keith Lemon tried to replicate the success of *The Inbetweeners Movie* with his own film. And failed miserably.

September

Some more worthy offerings this

month, like the wonderful weepie *Now Is Good*, enjoyable sci-fi reboot *Dredd*, original sci-fi not-reboot *Looper*, and animated horror-comedy *ParaNorman*. Joe Wright's unconventional take on *Anna Karenina* drew a mixed response, and the world wondered why the hell a fifth *Resident Evil* was even made.

October

Sequels abound in the month of Halloween, with one great (*Madagascar 3: Europe's Most Wanted*) and one not so great (*Taken 2*). Elsewhere, Tim Burton brought *Frankenweenie* back to life, Emma Watson returned to high school in *The Perks of Being A Wallflower*, Adam Sandler voiced Dracula in *Hotel Transylvania*, and James Bond celebrated his 50th birthday in *Skyfall*.

November

Some awards contenders like *The Master*, *Argo*, *Silver Linings Playbook* and *Rust and Bone* made their debut, while the pain was finally lifted with the last instalment of *The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn - Part 2*, Colin Firth and Cameron Diaz took on the heist of the century in *Gambit*, and DreamWorks Animation brought out their secret weapon of the year with *Rise of the Guardians*.

December

See pages 1-5 for further details.



Preview of 2013



First Row: *A Good Day to Die Hard*, *Oz The Great and Powerful*, *G.I Joe: Retaliation*, *The Host*, *Carrie*, *Scary Movie 5*, *Iron Man 3*
Second Row: *The Great Gatsby*, *Star Trek Into Darkness*, *Fast Six*, *The Hangover Part 3*, *Despicable Me 2*, *Man of Steel*, *Monsters University*, *Kick-Ass 2*
Third Row: *The Wolverine*, *Pacific Rim*, *The Lone Ranger*, *Rush*, *Elysium*, *Turbo*, *Thor: The Dark World*, *The Hunger Games: Catching Fire*, *The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug*, *Jack Ryan*

January

See page 7 for further details

February

Some contenders for the current awards season hit our shores, including *Hyde Park on Hudson*, *Flight*, *Hitchcock* and *Cloud Atlas*. We are also treated to some newer films like Disney animation *Wreck-It Ralph*, Judd Apatow's "sort-of sequel" to *Knocked Up* called *This Is 40*, and Bruce Willis back as John McClane in *A Good Day to Die Hard*.

March

In this month, Jason Bateman tracks down fraudster Melissa McCarthy in *Identity Theft*, Sam Raimi walks the yellow brick road with his Disney-fied prequel *Oz The Great and Powerful*, DreamWorks Animation takes us back to the stone ages with *The Croods*, the delayed sequel *G.I. Joe: Retaliation* finally comes out, and the spirit of *Twilight* still haunts us with the adaptation of Stephanie Meyer's OTHER popular book *The Host*.

April

No shortage of April Fools can be found this month, with some major releases coming into serious play. For starters, we have the anticipated remake/re-adaptation of Stephen King's classic story *Carrie*, female buddy cop comedy with Sandra Bullock

and Melissa McCarthy in *The Heat*, a fifth offering in the long-running *Scary Movie* spoof franchise, Tom Cruise going sci-fi in Joseph Kosinski's *Oblivion*, and a remake of the classic horror-comedy *The Evil Dead*. But none of that can compare with the expectedly-huge *Iron Man 3*, and one year after the events of *Marvel Avengers Assemble*, all eyes are going to be on this one.

May

Somewhat surprisingly, Michael Bay has a film out this summer that DOESN'T involve giant robots: instead, it's his muscle-bound comedy *Pain and Gain*. Also out this month, the delayed adaptation of *The Great Gatsby*, J.J. Abrams' second trip on the Enterprise in sequel *Star Trek Into Darkness*, the wolfpack reunites for the third and final time in *The Hangover Part 3*, and the car chases keep on coming in *Fast Six*.

June

Superman's long-awaited return to the big screen dominates this month, with Zack Snyder's *Man of Steel* hoping to please. Also, the month gets pretty apocalyptic with Brad Pitt zombie drama *World War Z*, Seth Rogen comedy *End of the World*, and Will Smith sci-fi *After Earth*. But more cheerful fodder is

among us, such as animated sequel *Despicable Me 2*, and who doesn't love those little yellow minion things?

July

Pixar fans will get a return to Monstropolis with animated prequel *Monsters University*, Guillermo Del Toro will do sci-fi with *Pacific Rim*, and maybe - just maybe - we'll get a good *Wolverine* movie with *The Wolverine*. Also, prepare for the return of "superheroes" *Kick-Ass* and *Hit Girl* in *Kick-Ass 2*.

August

THIS! IS! A PREQUEL! Which is how most people will be announcing *300: Rise of an Empire*. Also, Johnny Depp turns native for Gore Verbinski's *The Lone Ranger*, Edgar Wright and Simon Pegg and co unite for the final part in the "Cornetto" trilogy *The World's End*, the popular Steve Coogan character gets his own film in *The Alan Partridge Movie*, while Bruce Willis returns with his septuagenarian buddies in *RED 2*.

September

After destroying the White House in *Independence Day*, Roland Emmerich seeks to destroy it from within in action film *White House Down*, while Chris Hemsworth portrays a famous racer in *Rush*, Matt Damon takes on a sci-fi dystopia in *Elysium*, Aaron Eckhart is alive in comic adap *I, Frankenstein*, and Arnie and Sly

are teamed up together in old-fashioned action flick *The Tomb*.

October

Tom Hanks teams with Paul Greengrass to make hero story *Captain Phillips*, DreamWorks Animation tells the tale of a fast snail in *Turbo*, we return to the animated town of Chewandswallow in *Cloudy 2: Revenge of the Leftovers*, and a stary cast is on board for the adaptation of the popular book *Ender's Game*.

November

Too early to say what is really on board for this month, other than the two biggest releases already scheduled: superhero sequel *Thor: The Dark World*, and the second entry into the *Hunger Games* series, called *Catching Fire*.

December

Following the same pattern as *Lord of the Rings* did, this month sees the release of Part 2 of Peter Jackson's *Hobbit* trilogy, *The Desolation of Smaug*. Also, Chris Pine reboots the character of Jack Ryan in, erm, *Jack Ryan*, and a group of older men travel to Nevada for a good time in *Last Vegas*.

2013 TBC

Ridley Scott's ensemble *The Counsellor* is right now undated and unconfirmed for a 2013 release, but stay tuned for news nearer the time...



The Top 10 Films of the Year

10 - Now Is Good



I am not usually one to go for one of those “weepee” films that drag teenage girls out of the house faster than a *Twilight* marathon would - hell, I couldn't stand *The Lucky One* - but *Now Is Good* was not only nothing I expected it to be, but better. It's very much a version of *A Walk To Remember*, a 2002 film starring Mandy Moore as a dying girl pursuing a romance, only here it's done 100% better: it feels more real, the romance between our two main young characters is likable enough to engage in, and it stars Dakota Fanning. It's no secret that I call myself a fan of hers and there's no shame in that, and she does a really great job at making the character of Tessa a rounded, realistic character. Yes, she's selfish at times and sometimes narcissistic, but you know what? That's a teenager, and she gets it down to a tee (the British accent is rather impressive, too). Other performers, including Jeremy Irvine, Olivia Williams, and especially Paddy Considine all do marvellous jobs, and Ol Parker deserves a special mention for his witty screenplay and his subtle direction. So, with all these qualities it should make a runaway British success, right? Unfortunately, the fact that no-one went to see it really annoys me - it didn't even make the top 10 at the UK box office on opening weekend - and I really think you all missed out on something special. Just like the title, now is good a time as any to go and check out what I believe to be the **Best Undiscovered Gem of the Year**.

9 - TIE: Brave and The Hunger Games



AND



It was difficult to decide which of these films was the better one, since they share some of the same themes and even some of the characteristics, so I decided to give them both the same slot on this countdown. Both of them were able to prove to the world that strong female protagonists could open to huge numbers at the box office. There are other factors that contributed to their financial successes as well (*The Hunger Games*, because of its huge hype based on fandom of the book series; *Brave* because, well, it's freakin' Pixar) but it's the leads that stand out as the prime reason. They are also connected through one instrument which both characters use throughout their films: a bow and arrow. In Katniss Everdeen's case, she has to use it to defend herself from dangerous forces that come to try and kill her, and also to get food for her poverty-stricken family as we see early on. With Merida, it symbolises her desire for independence and to be her own person as opposed to what society (namely her overbearing mother) wishes her to be. Both serve as good role models for young women everywhere, and are destined to be studied as to how to do a female protagonist in the right way. On top of that, each film gave a unique story with memorable characters and surprising amount of depth in subtext, more than enough qualities to make both *Brave* and *The Hunger Games* the joint winner of the title of **Best Feminist Film(s) of the Year**.

8 - Ted



Seth MacFarlane has dominated the realms of television ever since *Family Guy* skyrocketed back up to worldwide popularity, so it was only a matter of time before Hollywood decided to give him a shot at high-concept filmmaking. What the talented entrepreneur managed to turn out was something that was not just laugh-out-loud hilarious (at times, admittedly some of the jokes may fall flat with audiences not in the know of the joke) but also something that was actually rather warm-hearted. In anyone else's hands, the story of a child's teddy bear who comes to life only to become a pot-smoking, foul-mouthed slob could have been something that was ugly, mean-spirited and just downright unpleasant. But instead, we are given time to emotionally connect with and really like these characters, especially Ted himself (as voiced and mo-capped by MacFarlane). He may be un-PC with some of the stuff he comes out with, but at his fluffy centre is an actual heart as real as anything, knowing when to back down and make things right again, even going so far as to selflessly put himself out of the picture. I admire that in a film, especially one aimed at teenagers and older men who want nothing more than a dumb buddy comedy. Instead, they got a good load more than they hoped for, and that like other factors including one of the year's funniest cameos make *Ted* the **Funniest Film of the Year**. Now, don't let me down with hosting the Oscars, MacFarlane...

7 - The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel



When you look over the facts, it's not difficult to see why this film became such a popular crowd-pleaser. Casting everyone from Judi Dench to Bill Nighy to *Downton* favourite Maggie Smith in major roles, setting the main bulk of the film in the beautiful location of India, and just all around having a nice little storyline to it, how can audiences not embrace it? And rightly so too, for it remains a good, universal film that may play its cards safely but gets round just fine on the strength of its likability. Special mention must go to Ol Parker (making his second appearance on this list), whose witty and charming screenplay makes that happen, giving us nice characters (well, most of them anyway) to root for throughout and funny one-liners to make us laugh - the latter come mostly from Smith's bigoted former housekeeper. All the actors are given large chunks of material to work with, and they get by with great subtlety and emotion (Penelope Wilton is a highlight, the closest this film comes to a pantomime villain and yet she gives it her all by adding constant layers to her performance). On top of that, we are treated to the wondrous visuals of India and its culture, all getting moments of awe from the older audience members I saw this film with. It may seem to be nothing more than an extended advert for the country to some, but to me *The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel* gets by on its own accords, to become the **Nicest Film of the Year**.

6 - ParaNorman



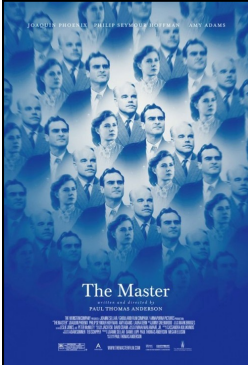
I am a huge fan of Laika Animation's previous stop-motion animation *Coraline*, but for some reason I didn't find myself caring much about their newest film, a horror-comedy that takes its cues from some of the cheesy horror films of yesteryear. One viewing later, and I instantly regretted my carelessness. Not only is *ParaNorman* a very well-made animated film, but it is also very well put together as a film, period. Stylistically, it resembles a real live-action film with some of its shots and angles positioned to make it so which can prove rather effective for the common moviegoer - for a split second, they could feel they were watching real life rather than a cartoon. Its characters, like I've mentioned before, are great - highlights include Anna Kendrick's ditzzy older sister and Casey Affleck's dim jock (who gets a hilariously unexpected punchline in terms of character near the end) - and the humour is top-notch, if at times far too adult for younger audience members. On that subject, I think it works to the film's advantage that it takes a more adult feel to it. Aside from appealing to its target demographic, there's a great deal of jokes, subtext and especially story that parents or any other older viewer can enjoy. In addition, a nice little message for kids about the dangers of bullying and its consequences is highly relevant to today's alarmingly-prejudiced world and can pave the way for the new generation to take a stand against it once and for all. What more can I say about *ParaNorman*, the **Best Animated Film of the Year**, other than summing up what this zombie movie has: "Brrraaiinnnss...."

The Top 10 Films Of The Year



5 - The Perks of Being A Wallflower

The world of high school has had its ups and downs in Hollywood in recent years. For every *Breakfast Club*, we get a *High School Musical*, for every *Easy A*, we get a *Project X*, and so on and so forth. One of the reasons that *The Perks of Being A Wallflower* works so well as a high school movie is that it never slips into either the cheesy genre clichés of *High School Musical* or the obnoxious and aggressive nature of *Project X*: it is its own individual and, like the wallflower of the title, can therefore stand out in front of the rest. Led by extremely likable characters (played beautifully by Logan Lerman, Emma Watson and Ezra Miller) and a fun screenplay by director Stephen Chbosky (author of the original novel), it almost never falls victim to the usual genre tropes that John Hughes introduced in the 80s, and gets by on its grounded reality surrounding the problems they are faced with. There may be some aspects to the overall story that some viewers may not agree with (he regains friends through violence? Sure, it's to help someone in despair but violence is never really the answer in any situation. You'll see what I mean when you get round to watching this film), but overall it's a film that celebrates being young and that place where it's all a part of growing up: high school. Forget all that *Twilight* bullcrap, all teenage girls out there, THIS, *The Perks of Being A Wallflower*, is the **Best Teen Film of the Year**.



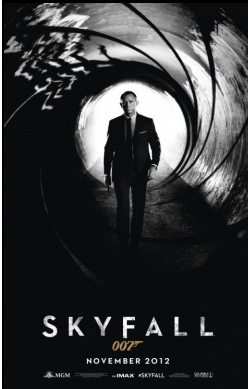
4 - The Master

The most recent film on this list, but it deserves to be here for many, many good reasons. For most of them, read my review on page 9. Here, I will say that its provocative, mysterious and downright disturbing nature is one that will live with you forever after seeing this film. Its morals and resolutions may seem ambiguous and even cold-hearted, but they're powerful nonetheless. The masters behind the camera - from cinematographer Mihai Malaimare Jr. to composer Jonny Greenwood to, of course, writer-director Paul Thomas Anderson - are at equals with its on-screen masters Joaquin Phoenix, Phillip Seymour Hoffman and Amy Adams, all giving some of the best performances of their career (though I will admit it is difficult to understand Phoenix's mumblings at times, and is it me or is his character more creepy than Hoffman's L. Ron Hubbard-knockoff half the time? Early on, the guy admits to performing incest because "she was lookin' good" - if that doesn't tick every box of wrong, I don't know what does). Masterfully crafted, masterfully shot, masterfully acted - see what I'm doing here? - these reasons and more are enough to put *The Master* on the number 4 spot on this list. And since I've given every other film a special title ("Best Film of the Year" etc), the one I'd give *The Master* would be the **Most Sexually Vibrant Film of the Year**. Why? Again, I point you in the direction of my page 9 review for you to find out.



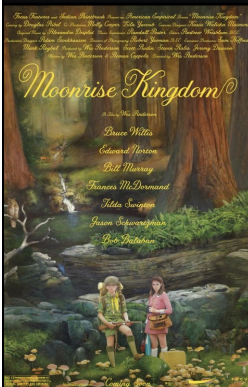
3 - TIE: Marvel Avengers Assemble and The Dark Knight Rises

Okay, okay - last tie on this list, I promise! But again, it was so difficult to decide which was better because they were both really, really good. With *The Dark Knight Rises*, a lot of people knew they were going to get a good film especially when it had the same production team as *The Dark Knight*, which may explain why some were rather underwhelmed when it finally hit cinemas. Yes, it may have some of its flaws, but then again so did Christopher Nolan's other *Batman* movies. The Caped Crusader was always going to have some nonsensical comic book logic inhabiting its soul (though this series never took it to Schumacher levels of wrong, give them credit for that) and even then it's still a very thrilling, exciting and satisfying conclusion to Nolan's trilogy. *The Avengers*, on the other hand, had no-one predicting how it would turn out. A relatively big gamble in its own right - from *Iron Man* to *Captain America: The First Avenger*, there were teases placed in each of those films for this big one - it would take a miracle to make it credible. \$1.5 billion later, it's safe to say it delivered and more. Joss Whedon's words, proper portrayals of its superheroes (especially the Hulk) and THAT third act all make *The Avengers* one hell of a film. Marvel, DC, you're both winners in your own right: your shared prize is the joint title of **Best Superhero Movie(s) of the Year**. Oh and DC, please make a Wonder Woman movie in the future. The feminist community REALLY needs it. REALLY.



2 - Skyfall

Speaking of unstoppable supermen, James Bond celebrated his 50th anniversary in grand style this year. Not only did he gain worldwide credibility by parachuting out of a helicopter with the Queen for the Olympics Opening Ceremony, but he managed to be in what is now one of the absolute classic Bonds, up there with *Goldfinger* and *Dr No* - in my honest opinion, it exceeds even those. This is the first Bond film, to my knowledge, that finally explores the troubled backstory of agent 007 and makes great use of its M, played remarkably by Judi Dench. Both elements come together perfectly and allows for a great depth of drama and personality with both troubled characters; but thankfully, it never forgets to bring the action and usual Bond tropes. The introduction of "Bond, James Bond"? Present and correct. A villain who can both terrify and create awkward laughs during homoerotic tensions? Absolutely. Thrilling action-packed sequences, the most impressive being the almost-wordless pursuit in neon-lit Shanghai? All of the hells yes. I had been heavily anticipating this movie ever since director Sam Mendes - who directed by absolute favourite film ever *American Beauty* - was brought on board, and this was one of the first times that something like this has not only met my expectations but exceeded them in ways I cannot begin to imagine. No better reason can be found to name *Skyfall* the **Best Blockbuster of the Year**, as it pulls the *Wizard of Oz* hat trick: it has brains, courage, and a heart. But perhaps not as much as my eventual #1 choice...



1 - Moonrise Kingdom

Good God, where do I begin with this film? Firstly, what a cast. Wes Anderson is known for bringing in an eclectic but unusual ensemble for his films (watch *The Royal Tenenbaums* and its showcase of actors), but if you never thought you'd see Bruce Willis (thankfully subdued, resulting in one of his best performances ever here) and ex-Hulk Edward Norton paired up together - the latter wearing incredibly silly Scout shorts - just watch this film in sheer amazement. Secondly, such beauty in its story. The idea of two young children running away together and everyone going to find them is very simple, but it works so well because of it. There's no complicated loophole to be found within its structure, thereby it's very easy to follow for any viewer. Thirdly, it allows for wonderful characters to come forth and shine: the young runaways themselves are wonderful, taking on such a big independent task but at their core they're still innocent children - that alone is fantastic characterisation. Fourth, there is something great to look at in every single frame of this film: from its fantastic scenery to close-ups of human emotion from characters to even a child jumping on a trampoline, there is SOMETHING that always gets your attention, and every time I watch it there's something new to discover. So many more reasons - it's really funny, some of the nicest writing you'll see in a film, a well-rounded story et cetera - so little space to write about all of them. Simply a perfect film from beginning to end, *Moonrise Kingdom* more than deserves its spot as the **Best Film of the Year**.

The Top 10 Anticipated Films Of Next Year



10 - Carrie

Horror is not usually one to be excited for, but when it comes as a new version of a classic Stephen King story that was already made into a classic film, that's got to get SOMEONE excited. There are certainly some feminists out there who are eager to take a peek at this flick, least of all because Kimberly Peirce (*Boys Don't Cry*) is behind this new version of *Carrie*, the third to be adapted for the screen. Chloe Grace Moretz is the latest actress to fill shoes worn by Sissy Spacek in the 1976 version, and she certainly has the fragility to pull off the tough role of the teenage clairvoyant Carrie White (though if they decide to do the famous shower scene, they'd better do it in a sensitive manner otherwise they'd be drifting into Jimmy Saville territory). Also a heavy addition, Julianne Moore is on board as Carrie's nuts Fundamentalist mother - she should be good, and always is when given hard, complex characters to have a crack at. But really, it just aspires to be something that *True Grit* was a couple years ago: not just a remake of the film but also a re-adaptation of the original story. Hopefully this will give *Carrie* the edge against its competition when it comes out in **April 2013**.



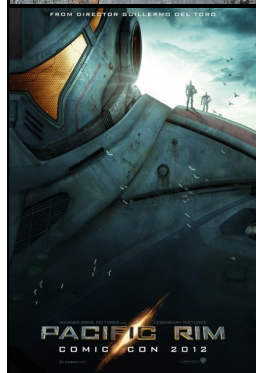
9 - The Wolverine

Five movies based on the X-Men franchise, and only one of them has been remotely enjoyable (that'd be *X-Men: First Class*), the rest was just "meh". Will *The Wolverine* break the trend and be up there with Matthew Vaughn's film, or will it crash and burn like the others (*X-Men 3*, I especially can't stand - you just DON'T give someone as badass as Wolverine to the guy who gave Chris Tucker a career!)? Fox hopes it will, and honestly I can see why: said to be based on the fan-favourite story arc by comic legend Frank Miller, wherein Wolverine (once again played by Hugh Jackman) travels to Japan and gets involved with a forbidden love triangle, it hopes to bring the classic character back to reality - or as real as you can get with a guy with adamantium claws in his knuckles - and make him credible in his own right. It'll certainly take advantage of the wondrous settings of Japan and definitely has a lot of confidence behind it (at one point, Darren Aronofsky was on board before going to work on his 2014 release *Noah*; he was since replaced by *Walk The Line* helmer James Mangold), and we'll see if that confidence pays off when *The Wolverine* makes its grand entrance in **July 2013**.



8 - The Lone Ranger

This one is somewhere in the middle of anticipation. On one hand, I'm sure some people are excited about the idea of Johnny Depp and director Gore Verbinski back in live-action filmmaking after their Oscar-winning team-up with *Rango*, as well as their collaborations on the first three *Pirates of the Caribbean* films, and with a full-on Western like that animated feature. On the other hand, however, once you take into account some of its stories behind the scenes (filming was temporarily shelved due to budgetary issues; a crew member sadly died in an on-set accident), you might think that this could be a big-budget disaster in the making. But the reason I put it on this list regardless is because no-one has absolutely no idea how it could turn out: it could be something either really good or really bad. Considering many people thought *Pirates of the Caribbean* would bomb, I'm not casting it aside just yet and am interested to see how it pans out. With Depp portraying the Native American Tonto (hmm, good luck on not offending people with that) and *Social Network* star Armie Hammer as *The Lone Ranger* himself, it could be something special once released in **August 2013**.



7 - Pacific Rim

Despite worldwide acclaim with *Pan's Labyrinth*, poor Guillermo Del Toro hasn't had it so easy as a director over the past few years. After coming on board to direct *The Hobbit*, only to depart after several delays during production, and having his big-budget adaptation of H.P. Lovecraft's *At The Mountains of Madness* shut down by a cowardly studio, the Mexican auteur has finally settled on this new sci-fi tale, which seems to pay homage to the Japanese giant monster films (like the original *Godzilla* et al) known as "Kaiju" worldwide. From the looks of it (we've only had the poster you see on the left officially released by the filmmakers so far), this is going to be HUGE and Del Toro wants to emphasise that fact tremendously. With a group of international actors - such as Charlie Hunman, Idris Elba, Rinko Kikuchi, Charlie Day and Ron Perlman - on board to keep the cost down to put aside for making it so damn big, it should put good ol' Guillermo back on top of the film world upon its release in **July 2013**. *Hellboy* fans: sorry, you're gonna have to keep on waiting for the third film, if it ever gets made, that is...



6 - The Hunger Games: Catching Fire

With the first instalment delivering in all its hype and especially in box office receipts, it was only inevitable that Lionsgate would option the rest of Suzanne Collins' books in the *Hunger Games* trilogy, starting with the second instalment *Catching Fire*. With director Gary Ross departing after only one film, we now get Francis Lawrence on board for this and the forthcoming two-part *Mockingjay* adaptation as well (though looking at the story for that, I'm not sure how that's going to work as two films, but I digress). That's reasonable because if there's anyone who knows something about post-apocalyptic futures, it's Mr. Lawrence (see *I Am Legend* for further details). Another Lawrence, Jennifer, is also back as fan-favourite heroine Katniss Everdeen along with her other co-stars and a whole bunch of new characters who have surprisingly good talent behind them - Phillip Seymour Hoffman, Amanda Plummer, Jena Malone, Jeffrey Wright, and that's just to name a few - so you know that's going to kick much arse. As you saw in my top 10 films of 2012 list, I really liked the first film so it's clear that *The Hunger Games: Catching Fire* is most certainly going to have a lot of anticipation with many fans when it comes to cinemas in **November 2013**.



The Top 10 Anticipated Films of Next Year



5 - Monsters University

No doubt about it, *Monsters Inc.* was my late childhood, and this is why I am rather excited for this return to that world. But Pixar has something of a mixed record when it comes to follow-ups of their previous work (*Toy Story 2* and *3*, great; *Cars 2*, the less said the better), so should we fear what they have in store for *Monsters University*? Probably not, because this one is a little different than those immediate sequels: 1) this is Pixar's first prequel, which means the events in this film will eventually lead to the events of *Monsters Inc.* so that storyline with THAT perfect ending is thereby not ruined, 2) they managed to get back the inseparable voice duo of Billy Crystal and John Goodman as Mike and Sulley at earlier points in their lives, and 3) it's set during their times at university, a stage of life which I am currently in right now. This last point is most interesting because by this point, all of the eight or nine year olds who saw this movie in cinemas will be at university themselves so, in a way, these characters have grown - or in this case shrunk - along with us the entire time and this will be something of a fun reunion for both parties. Looking forward to **July 2013** now? You betcha!



4 - Star Trek Into Darkness

With J.J. Abrams successfully revitalising the near-extinct *Star Trek* series back in 2009, it was only expected that he and many of the same cast and crew would return for a follow-up. Refreshingly, Abrams and co have decided to take their time rather than rush a half-baked product through the oven, and the end result could be not only a worthy sequel but one that could work on *Dark Knight* levels. The entire crew of the USS Enterprise is back - Chris Pine, Zachary Quinto, Karl Urban, Simon Pegg, Zoe Saldana, Anton Yelchin and John Cho as Kirk, Spock, Bones, Scotty, Uhura, Chekov and Sulu respectively - while we also get some interesting new additions like Benedict Cumberbatch as the new (as yet unconfirmed) villain, original *RoboCop* Peter Weller, Noel Clarke and Alice Eve in smaller supporting roles. As is with the work of Abrams, absolutely nothing on the storyline as of yet - the guy likes to keep things as secretive as possible up until the last minute (why do you think *Lost* was so difficult to sit through?) - but hopefully *Star Trek Into Darkness* will be a worthy sequel when we finally get the chance to see it in **May 2013**.



2 - The Hobbit: The Desolation of Smaug

Originally *The Hobbit: There and Back Again* before Peter Jackson's shock announcement this year of the two-partner's promotion to a trilogy (that film will get its release during summer 2014), *The Desolation of Smaug* is the continuation of the story started in this month's *An Unexpected Journey*. Right now, I have no clue whether the first part will live up to expectations or be declared the *Phantom Menace* of Middle-Earth, but in the likely event that the former prevails, it's safe to bet that part two will be just as enthralling. It will also be the first great reveal of the feared dragon himself, Smaug, voiced and motion-captured by Benedict Cumberbatch, and given how much fans have wanted to see what his film design looks like I can guess that they are looking forward to this one. Not only that, but we have the return of Orlando Bloom and Christopher Lee as Legolas and Saruman respectively as well as all the old and new characters established in *Journey*. If part one lives up to what many are hoping it to be, then part two should be a walk in the park come its release date of **December 2013**. Like with last year, it would have been number one on this list, but then this guy happened...



1 - Man of Steel

As troubled a relationship with Hollywood though it may have, culminating with 2006's misfire *Superman Returns*, there's no denying that we all need a bit of Kal-El in our lives. Producer Christopher Nolan and director Zack Snyder (the latter desperate to make up for his own mistake of *Sucker Punch*) have gone and given the classic DC character a much-needed restart on his film legacy. There's no triumphant John Williams theme tune this time round, there's only *Dark Knight*-esque brooding and realistic backdrops. You can already tell that they're trying their hardest to make it work, and that more than anything gives this project and its makers strong, plentiful balls. Henry Cavill is the latest actor to put on the suit, while Amy Adams, Michael Shannon, Kevin Costner, Diane Lane, Laurence Fishburne and Russell Crowe all add their talents to the starry cast. The teaser shows no signs of Snyder's signature slo-mo techniques (well, not yet anyway), and if the film turns out to be anything as effective as that short teaser was, then the film community will be more than thrilled. Look up to the skies for the *Man of Steel* to be flying past around the world in **June 2013**.

The Top 5 of Everything Else



WORST FILMS OF THE YEAR

1. A Fantastic Fear of Everything
2. The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn Part 2
3. Mirror Mirror
4. This Means War
5. Dr. Seuss' The Lorax



BIGGEST GUILTY PLEASURES OF THE YEAR

1. Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter
2. Wrath of the Titans
3. The Expendables 2
4. John Carter
5. Magic Mike



BEST MALE PERFORMANCE

1. Phillip Seymour Hoffman (The Master)
2. Bruce Willis (Moonrise Kingdom/Looper)
3. Michael Fassbender (Prometheus)
4. Joseph Gordon-Levitt (The Dark Knight Rises/Looper)
5. Paddy Considine (Now Is Good)



BEST FEMALE PERFORMANCE

1. Jennifer Lawrence (Silver Linings Playbook/The Hunger Games)
2. Zoe Kazan (Ruby Sparks)
3. Amy Adams (The Master)
4. Dakota Fanning (Now Is Good)
5. Penelope Wilton (The Best Exotic Marigold Hotel)



BEST HERO

1. Katniss Everdeen (The Hunger Games)
2. Bruce Wayne/Batman (The Dark Knight Rises)
3. Agent Phil Coulson (Marvel Avengers Assemble)
4. James Bond (Skyfall)
5. Merida (Brave)



BEST VILLAIN

1. Bane (The Dark Knight Rises)
2. Raoul Silva (Skyfall)
3. Captain Chantel DuBois (Madagascar 3: Europe's Most Wanted)
4. Loki (Marvel Avengers Assemble)
5. Jean Vilain (The Expendables 2)



BEST CHARACTER

1. Bruce Banner/The Hulk (Marvel Avengers Assemble)
2. Katniss Everdeen (The Hunger Games)
3. David (Prometheus)
4. Merida (Brave)
5. Patrick (The Perks of Being a Wallflower)



BEST COUPLE

1. Jared Gilman and Kara Hayward (Moonrise Kingdom)
2. Bradley Cooper and Jennifer Lawrence (Silver Linings Playbook)
3. Mark Wahlberg and Ted (Ted)
4. Andrew Garfield and Emma Stone (The Amazing Spider-Man)
5. Jonah Hill and Channing Tatum (21 Jump Street)

The Top 5 of Everything Else



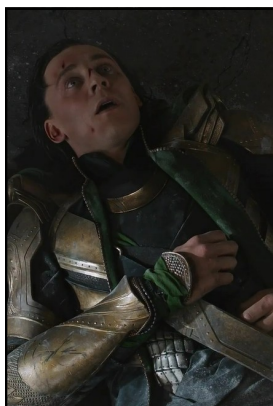
BEST CAMEO

1. Sam Jones/Flash Gordon (Ted)
2. Chuck Norris (The Expendables 2)
3. The Aston Martin DB5 (Skyfall)
4. Johnny Depp (21 Jump Street)
5. Stan Lee (The Amazing Spider-Man/Marvel Avengers Assemble)



BEST SCREENPLAY

1. Moonrise Kingdom (Wes Anderson, Roman Coppola)
2. Ruby Sparks (Zoe Kazan)
3. Looper (Rian Johnson)
4. Sightseers (Alice Lowe, Steve Oram)
5. Marvel Avengers Assemble (Zak Penn, Joss Whedon)



BIGGEST LAUGH

1. Hulk vs. Loki (Marvel Avengers Assemble)
2. Mark Wahlberg punches a fat kid (Ted)
3. Death by knitting needles (Sightseers)
4. Hulk's bro-punch (Marvel Avengers Assemble)
5. Circus Afro (Madagascar 3: Europe's Most Wanted)



BEST SEQUENCE

1. Bond in Shanghai (Skyfall)
2. New York battle (Marvel Avengers Assemble)
3. "Firework" Circus (Madagascar 3: Europe's Most Wanted)
4. Ruby confronts her creator (Ruby Sparks)
5. The final montage (The Dark Knight Rises)



BIGGEST LETDOWN*

1. Dark Shadows
2. The Bourne Legacy
3. Rock of Ages
4. On The Road
5. Total Recall

*OR: films that I thought would be rather good, but ended up sucking hard



BIGGEST SURPRISE*

1. Wrath of the Titans
2. Men in Black 3
3. 21 Jump Street
4. Madagascar 3: Europe's Most Wanted
5. The Amazing Spider-Man

*OR: films that I thought would suck hard, but ended up being rather good



TOP MONEYMAKERS (as of 30/11/2012)

1. Marvel Avengers Assemble (\$1.5 billion)
2. The Dark Knight Rises (\$1.08 billion)
3. Ice Age: Continental Drift (\$874 million)
4. Skyfall (\$789 million)
5. The Amazing Spider-Man (\$752 million)



BIGGEST BOX OFFICE BOMBS OF THE YEAR

1. John Carter (\$250 million budget; \$73 million gross)
2. Battleship (\$209 million budget; \$64 million gross)
3. Dark Shadows (\$150 million budget; \$77 million gross)
4. Wrath of the Titans (\$150 million budget; \$81 million gross)
5. Total Recall (\$125 million budget; \$52 million gross)



UK Film Release Dates

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
- False Trail
- The Hobbit: An Unexpected Journey
- Love Crime
- Smashed
- Tinkerbell and the Secret of the Wings

21ST

- Life of Pi
- Pitch Perfect
- West of Memphis

28TH

- Jack Reacher
- Midnight's Children
- Parental Guidance
- Safety Not Guaranteed

JANUARY

4TH

- The Impossible
- Playing For Keeps
- Quartet
- Texas Chainsaw 3D

11TH

- Gangster Squad
- Les Miserables
- May I Kill U?
- What Richard Did

18TH

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

25TH

- The Last Stand
- Lincoln
- Parker
- Zero Dark Thirty

FEBRUARY

1ST

- Bullet To The Head
- Bullhead
- Cirque du Soleil: Worlds Away
- Flight
- Hyde Park on Hudson
- Movie 43

8TH

- Antiviral
- Hitchcock
- I Give It A Year
- A Liar's Autobiography
- No
- Song For Marion
- A Turtle's Tale: Sammy's Adventures 2
- Warm Bodies
- Wreck-It Ralph

15TH

- Beautiful Creatures
- A Good Day to Die Hard
- This Is 40

22ND

- Cloud Atlas
- Guilt Trip
- Hardy Bucks: The Movie
- Mama
- To The Wonder

All release dates are correct as of time of press.



Next Issue: January 2013