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Also Out This Month

- *The Last Exorcism: Part 2* - sequel to the horror hit
- *Therese Desqueyroux* - French drama starring Audrey Tautou
- *Admission* - Tina Fey and Paul Rudd star in the college-set dramady
- *Summer in February* - Dan Stevens and Dominic Cooper are artists fighting over Emily Browning
- *A Haunted House* - the Wayans are back with a spoof on the current trend of found-footage horror films
- *Snitch* - Dwayne Johnson goes undercover in a drug ring to save his son from a prison sentence
- *Hummingbird* - Jason Statham is an on-the-run soldier who navigates through a criminal underworld
- *Stand Up Guys* - Al Pacino and Christopher Walken are criminals in the crime comedy
- *Stories We Tell* - filmmaker Sarah Polley presents a documentary about her troubled family

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## MOVIE OF THE MONTH: MAN OF STEEL

Finally, after years of setbacks and false promises, the last son of Krypton is back.

But gone are the campy overtones, the epic John Williams theme music, and even his famous red pants (probably a good thing in hindsight, after all wearing pants outside his trousers did make him look really geeky), all removed for a brand-new take on the Man of Steel that's called, erm, *Man of Steel*.

This retelling of the popular Superman myth comes courtesy of producer Christopher Nolan who, whilst collaborating with writer David S. Goyer on his *Dark Knight* trilogy, heard Goyer's pitch for a reboot of the classic DC superhero and immediately pitched it to Warner Bros, who quickly put it in the works.

But since Nolan was more or less occupied in Gotham City, he needed someone to run things in Metropolis. Enter director Zack Snyder, whose previous foray into adapting comic-books with *300* and *Watchmen* made him the prime candidate to bring Kal-El back to the big screen.

Just don't mention *Sucker Punch*...

Anyway, with a director in place and a producer ready to support their vision, a cast needed to



Superman really DOES return in Zack Snyder's reality-based superhero reboot *Man of Steel*

be in place. It seems that they lucked out here, because not only does it feature Henry Cavill (*Immortals*) as Clark Kent himself, but also stars Amy Adams (*The Master*), Michael Shannon (*Take Shelter*), Kevin Costner (*Dances with Wolves*), Diane Lane (*Unfaithful*), Laurence Fishburne (*The Matrix*), Antje Traue (*5 Days of War*), Ayelet Zurer (*Angels and Demons*), Harry Lennix (*State of Play*), Christopher Meloni (*Law and Order: Special Victims Unit*), Richard Schiff (*Se7en*), and Russell Crowe (*Gladiator*). The film is essentially the origin story again, which has become synonymous with the geek community. But for those who aren't entirely up to speed, maybe this will help you

out: when the distant planet of Krypton faces destruction, the powerful Jor-El (Crowe) sends his infant son, Kal-El, to a planet far away from the dangers. Landing on Earth, he is adopted by Kansas couple Jonathan and Martha Kent (Costner and Lane) and soon grows up to be their son Clark (Cavill). However, despite being raised on the good values of his parents, he feels alienated - no pun intended - because of his unique super powers and struggles to find a place in life. But when Earth is attacked by surviving Kryptonian General Zod (Shannon), Clark must become Superman to protect the planet and its people.

*Man of Steel* swoops into cinemas from **June 14th**.

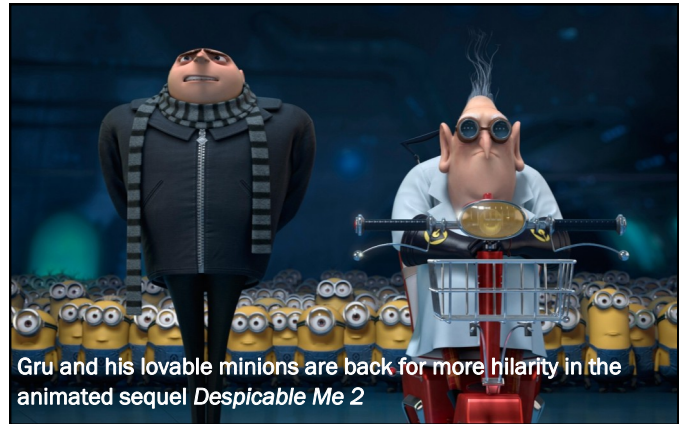
## News Round-Up

- Jon Hamm will voice Herb Overkill in *Despicable Me* spin-off *Minions*
- Kelsey Grammar, Sophia Myles, T.J. Miller and Li Bingbing join *Transformers 4*
- *Jane Got A Gun* loses ANOTHER cast member with Bradley Cooper, and is replaced by Ewan McGregor
- Lily Collins will headline *Pride and Prejudice* and *Zombies*
- Steven Spielberg will direct Bradley Cooper project *American Sniper*
- Jessica Chastain and Michael Caine are cast in Christopher Nolan's *Interstellar*
- *Men In Black 4* is being written
- Luke Evans will play *The Crow* in the reboot
- Tom Cruise officially signs on for *Mission: Impossible 5*, with Drew Pearce (*Iron Man 3*) writing the script
- Ray Harryhausen, legendary stop-motion animator, dies aged 92
- Shane Black signs on as writer-director of *Doc Savage*
- Adam Scott is in talks to headline *Hot Tub Time Machine 2*, but John Cusack isn't returning
- Warner Bros is planning a reboot of *Dungeons and Dragons*
- Richard Madden (*Game of Thrones*) is cast as the Prince in *Cinderella*
- *Jurassic Park 4* is pushed back to allow more time in pre-production
- Alicia Vikander scores the female lead in *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.*, and Henry Cavill is in talks to replace Tom Cruise in the leading role
- William Fichtner joins the *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles* reboot
- Disney reveals *Big Hero 6* as the first animated Marvel film
- *Star Wars: Episode VII* will shoot in the UK

## DESPICABLE ME 2

If *Man of Steel* sees the triumphant return of the ultimate superhero, then *Despicable Me 2* is certainly the triumphant return of the ultimate super-villain... in animation land, anyway. After that film defied low expectations with both audiences and critics, a sequel has been developed by infant animation company Illumination Entertainment and its founder/producer Chris Meledandri (an executive producer on *Ice Age*).

And good timing on their part, too - it's released very close to the summer holidays in schools, so this should get the young'uns excited for the second outing with these characters, especially the little yellow minion creatures that exploded in popularity so much after the first film that they're even getting a spin-off film late next year (you can find some exciting casting information in the news round-up on the left).



Gru and his lovable minions are back for more hilarity in the animated sequel *Despicable Me 2*

Speaking of casting, the voice cast sees old favourites like Steve Carell (*Crazy Stupid Love*), Kristen Wiig (*Bridesmaids*), Russell Brand (*Get Him To The Greek*) and Miranda Cosgrove (*School of Rock*) joined by new additions like Steve Coogan (*The Look of Love*), Benjamin Bratt (*Traffic*) and Ken Jeong (*The Hangover*).

The story picks up from where we last saw the dastardly villain Gru (Carell), now a loving father to the

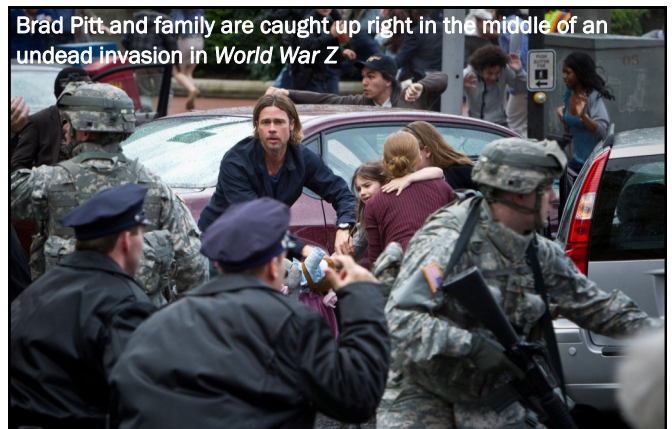
three young orphans he adopted in the first film. One day, he's tracked down by the mysterious Anti-Villain League, led by the pompous Silas Ramsbottom (Coogan) who recruits Gru to help them fight a new villain who goes by the name of Antonio (Bratt). With his daughters, his inventor friend Dr. Nefario (Brand) and, of course, his loyal minions by his side, Gru is on the case. *Despicable Me 2* comes out on **June 28th**.

## WORLD WAR Z

Is it just us, or have we been treated to a zombie overload recently?

With films like *Shaun of the Dead* and *Zombieland* setting the bar, we've since had TV's *The Walking Dead*, their inclusion in video games like *Call of Duty*, and there have even been live attractions that put participants in real (albeit staged) zombie situations. And it looks like the trend is about to continue with the high-budget action-thriller *World War Z*.

Based on the novel of the same name by Max Brooks, the adaptation - directed by Marc Forster (*Quantum of Solace*) - has had quite a few setbacks during its production phase. Filmed during the summer of 2011, it was brought back the following year for reshoots when it turned out everyone was unsatisfied with the film's third act. Writer Drew Goddard (*The Cabin in the*



*Woods*) was brought onboard for a quick re-write of said section of the film, and it looks as though everything's been settled again because it's finally ready for release.

In the lead role, we have Brad Pitt (*Moneyball*) starring against Mireille Enos (*Gangster Squad*) and James Badge Dale (*Iron Man 3*), but also look out for small parts played by Matthew Fox (*Lost*), Bryan Cranston

(*Argo*), and David Morse (*The Green Mile*).

Pitt plays Gerry Lane, a U.N. employee who lives with his wife and two children. However, when it appears that a zombie pandemic is scouring the globe, he is drafted in to travel the world in order to find a cure for the outbreak that is destroying armies and collapsing governments.

*World War Z* takes a bite out of cinemas from **June 21st**.

## AFTER EARTH

M. Night Shyamalan hasn't had it good recently, has he? After such promising hits with *The Sixth Sense* and *Unbreakable*, his career started going downhill with misfires like *Signs*, *The Village*, *Lady In The Water* and *The Happening*, before it culminated with the abysmal, Razzie-winning *The Last Airbender*.

Will *After Earth* prove to be the one that shines through the darkness?

After all, it helps that the director isn't singularly writing it this time like his previous work - he shares the credit here with co-writer Gary Whitta (*The Book of Eli*), with script polishes by none other than Oscar-winning writer Mark Boal (*The Hurt Locker*) - so his laughably wooden dialogue is certain not to be on full display here. Also noteworthy is another major addition: the film's star, Will Smith. As well as acting in the film alongside

The Smiths, including father Will and son Jaden (pictured) must journey across an abandoned Earth in *After Earth*



real-life son Jaden Smith (*The Karate Kid*), he came up with the film's story after watching an episode of survival documentary series *I Shouldn't Be Alive* as well as its sci-fi feel to it.

In addition to Smiths Will and Jaden, watch out for Isabelle Fuhrman (*Orphan*), Sophie Okonedo (*Hotel Rwanda*) and Zoe "daughter of Lenny" Kravitz (*X-Men: First Class*) in supporting roles.

The film's story kicks off in

the future, when mankind has abandoned Earth after certain cataclysmic events. One thousands years after said abandonment, General Cypher Raige (Smith Sr.) and his teenage son Kitai (Smith Jr.) crash-land on Earth and must embark on a journey across uncharted territory, running into evolved animals and an escaped alien creature, to send for help. *After Earth* makes its debut on **June 7th**.

## THIS IS THE END

Seeing as you are now reading this, it has been nearly six months since the feared 2012 apocalypse never came to light.

But that hasn't stopped Hollywood, and in particular its comedic force of actors, from creating a film so end-of-the-world-ish that it's funny... intentionally, of course.

*This Is The End* puts some of today's leading comedians in a situation of pure biblical proportions, and make us laugh with the hysterics that come with it.

Spawning from the short 2007 faux trailer called *Jay and Seth Vs. The Apocalypse*, which saw Jay Baruchel (*Tropic Thunder*) and Seth Rogen (*Knocked Up*) living together alone in a flat after the end of days, that short premise has been expanded into an entire movie with more actors and effects to boot.

Rogen makes his directional debut with writing partner Evan Goldberg for this film,

A group of comedic actors are some of the last people alive after the Apocalypse in *This Is The End*



and as well as featuring in the film with Baruchel, he also brings on board James Franco (*127 Hours*), Jonah Hill (*Superbad*), Craig Robinson (*Hot Tub Time Machine*) and Danny McBride (*30 Minutes Or Less*) for the main roles, as well as drafting in cameos from the likes of Jason Segal (*The Muppets*), Michael Cera (*Scott Pilgrim Vs. The World*), Paul Rudd (*This Is 40*), Christopher Mintz-Plasse (*Kick-Ass*), Aziz Ansari (*Epic*), Kevin Hart (*Scary Movie 3*), Rihanna (*Battleship*) and, of all people,

Emma Watson (*Harry Potter*). All of them play warped versions of themselves, as they party at James Franco's house in Los Angeles one night. But when the world suddenly starts to end, the only survivors appear to be Franco, Rogen, Baruchel, Hill, Robinson and McBride who must all face the true meaning of friendship and redemption when facing the apocalypse. *This Is The End* begins showing in cinemas on **June 28th**.

### News Round-Up

- Chloe Moretz, Marton Csokas and Melissa Leo join *The Equalizer*
- Arnold Schwarzenegger will play a leading role in the remake of *The Toxic Avenger*
- Will Smith may produce and star in a modern-day remake of *The Wild Bunch*
- James Corden, Chris Pine, Jake Gyllenhaal, Emily Blunt and Christine Baranski join the musical adaptation of *Into The Woods*
- Production on *Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon II - The Green Destiny* will begin next spring
- *Assassin's Creed*, starring Michael Fassbender, will hit cinemas summer 2015
- Jon Vitti (*The Simpsons*) will write the *Angry Birds* movie
- Park Chan-wook's *Sympathy for Mr. Vengeance* is getting the remake treatment
- Dennis Lehane will adapt detective novel *Travis McGee*, starring Leonardo DiCaprio and directed by Paul Greengrass
- *Timecop* is heading back to the big screen in a new reboot
- *Iron Man 3* becomes the fifth-highest grossing film of all time
- Sam Mendes is reportedly back in talks to direct *Bond 24*
- John C. Reilly and Glenn Close join *Guardians of the Galaxy*
- Joachim Rønning and Espen Sandberg (*Kon-Tiki*) are hired to direct *Pirates of the Caribbean 5*
- Tom Hardy is wanted for Elton John biopic *Rocketman*
- The popular Grumpy Cat internet meme will become a film
- Johnny Depp exits Whitey Bulger biopic *Black Mass*
- James Bobin (*The Muppets*) might direct the *Alice In Wonderland* sequel, which is currently titled *Into The Looking Glass*



## BEFORE MIDNIGHT

We've all heard of the great movie trilogies - *Lord of the Rings*, *Star Wars*, *Back To The Future* etc - but there is one that has been under everyone's radar until now, and with the third film finally made and coming out this month, it's only wise to use this opportunity to explore it and put it among the greats. The journey began in 1995, when director Richard Linklater (*School of Rock*) collaborated with stars Ethan Hawke (*Training Day*) and Julie Delpy (*2 Days In Paris*) to tell the story of two young people, the American Jesse (Hawke) and the French Céline (Delpy), who meet randomly on a train and spend the rest of the film wandering about Vienna simply getting to know each other and then departing the next day. That became only the first part of the story, *Before Sunrise*. Flash forward nine years later to 2004, when the second film entitled *Before*

Ethan Hawke and Julie Delpy return for the third and final time as Jesse and Céline in *Before Midnight*



*Sunset* debuted and saw Jesse and Céline meet once again at very different points in their lives, and becoming reacquainted in real-time as they made their way through Paris. It was met with wide critical acclaim, and was even nominated for an Oscar for its screenplay. So, as you can imagine, there is a surprising amount of hype within the film community about this third film, which sees both Hawke and Delpy return once more

as Jesse and Céline - with Linklater once again directing - another nine years later in 2013. They are now a married couple and parents to twin girls, and spend the film on holiday in Greece while tackling some problems of their own. If you ever get the chance, get a copy of the first two films and catch up on their story. And once that's done, go see *Before Midnight* which comes out on **June 21st**.

## BEHIND THE CANDELABRA

Remember back in March when we declared that *Side Effects* was going to be auteur Steven Soderbergh's last film before his retirement? Well, it turns out that was slightly inaccurate. For years, he had been working on a biopic of the famed pianist Liberace that was entitled *Behind The Candelabra*, but he had a difficult time securing a cinema release in the US (one report I saw was that it was "too gay" for mainstream audiences, which frankly makes us sick). Eventually the film was scheduled to be broadcast on US television channel HBO (and by the time you read this, it had already aired) and I assumed that it would also receive similar treatment here in the UK, which is why I initially left it out. But once we learned that British cinemagoers would



Michael Douglas plays Liberace next to Matt Damon's much younger lover in Steven Soderbergh's *Behind The Candelabra*

have a chance to see it on the big screen, Film Feeder immediately leapt to the challenge. So, with all that said, the cast for Soderbergh's now-official final film includes Michael Douglas (*Wall Street*), Matt Damon (*Good Will Hunting*), Dan Aykroyd (*Ghostbusters*), Rob Lowe (*The West Wing*) and Debbie Reynolds (*Singin' In The Rain*), amongst a few others. The made-for-television

movie (but by some stroke of luck we get a theatrical release of it over here!) is based on the biography of Scott Thorson which describes the rollercoaster six-year relationship between Thorson (Damon) and the infamous, highly flamboyant pianist Liberace (Douglas). *Behind The Candelabra* is a must-see for any Soderbergh fan, especially since NOW he's about to retire, and can be seen from **June 7th**.

# MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

Imagine yourself in Joss Whedon's shoes for just a moment.

You've established a high status within the geek community with popular shows like *Buffy*, *Angel* and the short-lived sci-fi *Firefly* (and its subsequent movie spin-off *Serenity*).

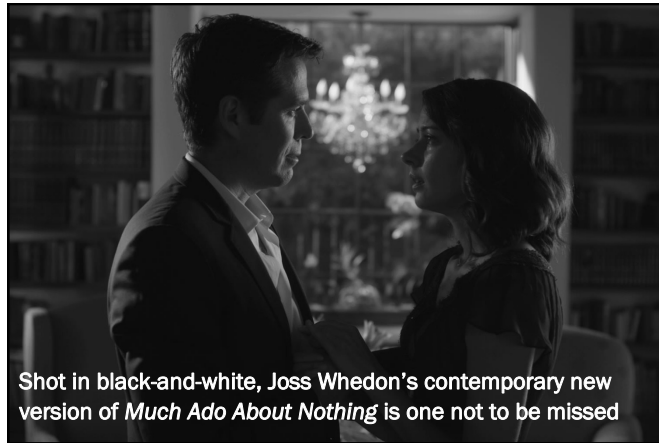
That status has now been elevated to Hollywood royalty following the high-profile release of *Biggest Non-James Cameron Film Of All Time* © *The Avengers*. You now have the power to do whatever the hell you want.

So, what is the next logical step to make as a newly-minted Hollywood player for your next movie?

The answer is... make a low-budget modernized version of a classic Shakespeare comedy.

Well, of course.

It seems that Whedon has had a bit of spare time on his hands over the past couple of years since he wrote and directed a new contemporary version of *Much Ado About*



Shot in black-and-white, Joss Whedon's contemporary new version of *Much Ado About Nothing* is one not to be missed

*Nothing* over a period of 12 days at his own house in California, using actors he has worked with previously like Amy Acker (*Angel*), Alexis Denisof (*Buffy The Vampire Slayer*), Nathan Fillion (*Serenity*), Clark Gregg (*The Avengers*), Reed Diamond (*Dollhouse*), Fran Kranz (*The Cabin in the Woods*) and Ashley Johnson (*The Avengers*), to name a few. And all while juggling post-production and the release of *The Avengers*. Now THAT is a hard-working individual.

Those born without the story of Shakespeare's play, here's the brief: it is essentially an examination of two different pairs of lovers - Benedick (Denisof) and Beatrice (Acker), and Claudio (Kranz) and Hero (unknown actress Jillian Morgese) - who have two very different takes on romance and ways with words, and how everyone around them reacts. Joss Whedon's *Much Ado About Nothing* - sounds weird saying that out loud, doesn't it? - is out on **June 14th**.



# THE ICEMAN

By the end of this month, the world will likely know Michael Shannon for being the evil General Zod in *Man of Steel*. But little would they know that he is actually one of the best character actors to emerge for a while, having stood out in films like *Take Shelter*, *The Runaways*, and *Revolutionary Road* for which he was nominated for an Oscar.

It is this side of Shannon that is very much on display in the violent biopic of he who was known as *The Iceman*. And before you say anything, no it isn't about the life and times of Batman's nemesis Mr. Freeze. He was in *Batman and Robin*, the guy's suffered enough already. Actually, Shannon plays Richard Kuklinski, a real-life Mafia hitman whose notoriety with certain enemies knew no limits. He was also a dedicated family man, spending time with his



Michael Shannon plays notorious contract killer Richard Kuklinski in the biopic of *The Iceman*

wife, portrayed here by Winona Ryder (*Black Swan*), and his daughters. Both lives were so uncomfortably different that when Kuklinski was finally caught by the authorities and sentenced to numerous life sentences, his family found themselves shocked by their husband and father's murderous crimes and clearly had no idea about what he was really doing to make a living. Both of these sides to his

personality are explored in this film, which also stars Chris Evans (*The Avengers*), Ray Liotta (*Goodfellas*), James Franco (*127 Hours*), David Schwimmer (*Friends*) and Stephen Dorff (*Somewhere*), and what perfect an actor to dig deep into the killer's psyche than Shannon. See how he does in *The Iceman*, which goes on general release in the UK from **June 7th**.



## STILL SHOWING: MAY



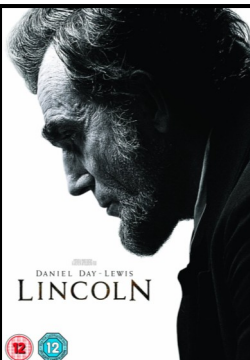
### Flight

- Also available on Blu-Ray
- Released: 03/06/13



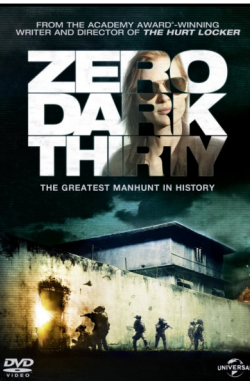
### Wreck-It Ralph

- Also available on Blu-Ray
- Released: 03/06/13



### Lincoln

- Also available on Blu-Ray
- Released: 10/06/13



### Zero Dark Thirty

- Also available on Blu-Ray
- Released: 10/06/13

With *Iron Man 3* bowing at the end of April, May meant that all systems were go for the summer movie season, and it started out good.

On the 3rd of the month, a rite of passage went horribly wrong in *21 and Over*; a young dance group hit the streets in *All Stars*; Disney got up and close with the primates in *Chimpanzee*; Colin Farrell and Noomi Rapace joined forces in a path of revenge in *Dead Man Down*; and director Pedro Almodovar took to the skies in the camp comedy *I'm So Excited*.

Then, on the 10th, Eric Bana and Olivia Wilde split up after a robbery in *Deadfall*; two young boys encountered a fugitive that looks a lot like Matthew McConaughey in *Mud*; Mira Nair made the post-9/11 thriller *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*; and we boldly went where no Trekkie had gone before in the long-awaited sequel *Star Trek Into Darkness*.



Kirk and Spock dealt with a powerful and highly illogical villain in J.J. Abrams' sequel *Star Trek Into Darkness*

The next batch of films arrived on the 17th, with the prime biggies consisting of the brand-new (and for some reason 3D) adaptation of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*; and the gas-powered fifth sequel in the ongoing *Fast and Furious* franchise, simply known as *Fast and Furious 6*. Two other big releases followed the very next week, on the 24th. They happened to be the animated forest-set adventure known as *Epic*; and the final installment in a trilogy of bad decisions, drunken mayhem and amusing Asian caricatures that was *The Hangover Part III*.

Finally, after four

weeks of non-stop glory in cinemas, we reached the end of the month with the last few releases on the 31st. During these final days of the fifth month of the year, we got the starry rom-com *The Big Wedding*; the haunting vampire drama-thriller *Byzantium*; the quirky French secretary comedy *Populaire*; and the contrived attempt at horror known as *The Purge* (a legal day for criminals? REALLY?!). That was all that was for May 2013, but it's not over yet - if you're anxious to read my opinions on some of these films then check out pages 8-12. Be warned: they're quite the read...

# COMING SOON: JULY

July is when the summer REALLY gets into gear, with some of the most exciting releases on display.

The first lot come out on the 5th, and they include Sofia Coppola's portrayal of a fame-hungry group of youths in *The Bling Ring*; Halle Berry finding a kidnapped girl in *The Call*; Gerard Butler turning surfer dude in *Chasing Mavericks*; Ben Wheatley's English Civil War feature *A Field In England*; Owen Wilson and Vince Vaughn vying for a placement at Google in *The Internship*; and a group of magicians turn criminal in *Now You See Me*.

After that, on the 12th, the lovable monsters Mike and Sulley are back in a look at their times at *Monsters University*; Guillermo Del Toro makes a directorial comeback with the epic monster movie *Pacific Rim*; an amnesiac begins a road to recovery in *Trap For Cinderella*;



Simon Pegg and friends attempt the most apocalyptic pub crawl ever in Edgar Wright's *The World's End*

and a documentary examines the times and controversies of WikiLeaks in *We Steal Secrets: The Story of WikiLeaks*. And after THAT, the 19th brings us the tale of an attraction between a foreign exchange student and Guy Pearce in *Breathe In*; Nicolas Cage hunts a serial killer in *The Frozen Ground*; and Edgar Wright concludes his "Cornetto" trilogy with regulars Simon Pegg and Nick Frost as they embark on a pub crawl to end all pub crawls in *The World's End*.

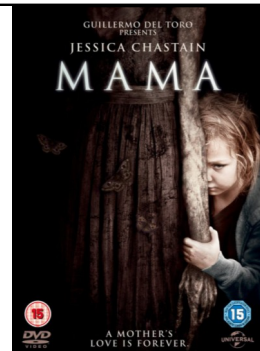
And even after THAT, on the final week of the 26th, Greta Gerwig stars in Noah

Baumbach's *Frances Ha*; Kristen Wiig is looked after by her backwards mother Annette Bening in *Girl Most Likely*; Hailee Steinfeld and Douglas Booth are the two star-crossed lovers in a new version of *Romeo and Juliet*; and Hugh Jackman is back as *The Wolverine*, wherein he is at his most vulnerable than he was ever before. That's what we have to look forward to in July, but don't worry - we've got a whole month to go!



A Good Day To Die Hard

- Also available on Blu-Ray
- Released: 10/06/13



Mama

- Also available on Blu-Ray
- Released: 17/06/13



Warm Bodies

- Also available on Blu-Ray
- Released: 17/06/13



This Is 40

- Also available on Blu-Ray
- Released: 24/06/13

# REVIEWS

## STAR RATING SYSTEM



JUST DON'T



I WOULDN'T



MEH



WORTH A LOOK



RATHER ENJOYABLE



SEE IT NOW!



**DIRECTOR:** J.J. Abrams

**CAST:** Chris Pine, Zachary Quinto, Benedict Cumberbatch, Karl Urban, Zoe Saldana, John Cho, Alice Eve, Anton Yelchin, Simon Pegg, Bruce Greenwood, Noel Clarke, Peter Weller

**RUNNING TIME:** 133 mins

**CERTIFICATE:** 12A

**ONE-SENTENCE PLOT**

The crew of the USS Enterprise hunt down a rogue threat who has attacked Starfleet and left Earth in chaos...

**NOW FOR THE REVIEW...**

The titular term "Into Darkness" never literally happens in J.J. Abrams' sequel to his 2009 Star Trek reboot. However, if by that it means going down a similar path of *The Dark Knight* in terms of sequels, then it is entirely accurate. An iconic villain? Check. Large-scale action scenes shot on IMAX? Check. An expansion on the ideas and characters established in the previous movie? All present and correct.

While it is true that *Into Darkness* owes a lot of its sequel success to that film, it still stands firmly on its own both as a *Star Trek* movie and as an entertaining action-packed sci-fi blockbuster. When it is not providing us with some fun set-pieces - its mini-adventure opening is gleefully reminiscent of Indy's first moments of screen-time in *Raiders of the Lost Ark* - it counteracts that with a heavy display of emotion and, indeed, logic.

That comes down to the characters we are re-introduced to in said opening sequence. Out of all the returning faces, it appears to be Kirk (Chris Pine, as cocksure and valiant as ever) who has the strongest arc this time round. Desperate to avenge the death of a certain loved one, it is during his mission to locate and capture the

perpetrator that he gradually evolves into a captain who is capable of making the right decisions in order to protect the crew he is responsible for. His personal quest throughout the movie perfectly reflects that famous quote: "The needs of the many outweigh the needs of the few."

The rest of the returning crew also fare well, from Zachary Quinto's dry-humoured Spock to Simon Pegg's comic relief Scotty, in an expanded role this time round. As for the newer - and decidedly British - faces, Noel Clarke makes the most of his brief screen-time as a suffering father who risks it all for the life of his sick daughter, and Alice Eve turns in a likable performance as Carol Marcus (even if she is shown, rather pointlessly, in her underwear for pure fan service). The most prominent newcomer, of course, is Benedict Cumberbatch as villain John Harrison. The rumours are true that he turns out to be a huge name in the world of *Star Trek* - but for those still not in the know, I will not reveal who - but Cumberbatch makes the role his own, right down to his eerie charm and soft-spoken complexity. His overall plan may frustrate some, but it still makes for a very memorable villain and a perfect addition to the *Sherlock* actor's improving CV.

In fact, Cumberbatch's overall identity is one of the many things that the more dedicated fans of *Star Trek* will pick up as being similar to another, earlier *Star Trek* film. The other references to the same film come nearer the end of the film, which unfortunately threaten to derail the film in its final scenes. One such scene is almost a carbon copy of another famous scene from that earlier film, and despite it still retaining a heavy emotional tone to it the homage will be the most frustrating aspect of this film to the bigger fans. Even the cry of an emotional character is lifted

directly from that film, which almost kills the heavily emotional mood of the scene directly before it. However, it must be said: it is still an awesome outburst, no matter who says it.

The main focus is on Kirk and Spock for the most part, meaning that other main characters and arcs are shoved to the side or ignored altogether. For instance, a budding romance between Spock and Uhura (an underused Zoe Saldana) that was introduced in the previous film has given way to some complications, but by the middle of the film it is dropped entirely without a mention of it again. One of the great aspects of the 2009 film was that every main character had at least one major part to play in the scenario. Unfortunately, that seems to have been side-lined in order to make room for character development of those two main heroes.

The technicals remain strong, even if those darned lens flares are back and won't go away. Its visual effects, coupled with one of the better 3D conversions in a while, are some of the grandest in the franchise's history, and the incorporation of IMAX footage makes for crispier on-screen images. There may be some leftover shaky-cam shots from the last film - not good news for anyone with motion sickness - but they are not so much a problem this time round. As ever, the make-up on the aliens - including the returning Klingons - is unbelievable and deserving of that Oscar win for the last film.

**OVERALL VERDICT**

*Star Trek Into Darkness* is a worthy sequel, but may not be as fun as its 2009 predecessor. It's safe to say that *Star Wars: Episode VII* is in safe hands...







**DIRECTOR:** Todd Phillips  
**CAST:** Bradley Cooper, Ed Helms, Zach Galifianakis, Justin Bartha, Ken Jeong, Heather Graham, Jeffrey Tambor, Gillian Vigman, Sasha Barrese, Jamie Chung, Mike Epps, Melissa McCarthy, John Goodman  
**RUNNING TIME:** 100 mins  
**CERTIFICATE:** 15  
**ONE-SENTENCE PLOT**  
 A road trip with the Wolf Pack takes a wrong turn when they are forced to locate their old acquaintance, Mr. Chow (Jeong)...

**NOW FOR THE REVIEW...**  
 The moment we open on a slow-motion prison break in a rioting Thai prison, we know that the third and final film in the *Hangover* trilogy is going to be an entirely different beast than its predecessors.

In a sense, it is welcomed after the criticism of *Part II* that it relied heavily on the same formula as the first without many new surprises. On the other hand, the final product feels so far removed from what it originally was that it's difficult to even call it *The Hangover*, or even a comedy for that matter.

The reason that the latter is brought up is that most of what happens seems to be played completely straight with serious intent, rather than for laughs like it had done in the past. There is a moment when a

character smothers a chicken with a pillow – on paper it sounds hilarious, but the way it's portrayed on-screen is overly sinister and too dark to even laugh about it. It thinks it can win us over with shock laughs like it did in the first film, but the difference is that in *Part I* the surprises were genuine and fun to watch; an early decapitation is very much NOT.

The word "fun" must also describe the story and characters, in the sense that it really isn't. The last two films worked well – yes, even the despised *Part II* – because of the chemistry between the three members of the Wolfpack and the entertaining situations they had drunkenly gotten into. However, for this supposed final film with them together, the three actors appear to be on auto-pilot – especially Bradley Cooper, who looks bored even being on set – with their chemistry all dried up and forced here, and the situations this time are too dark and aggressively not-played-forLaughs that perhaps they took an entirely different script for a heist thriller and slapped "*The Hangover Part III*" on it to save some precious time.

Zach Galifianakis' man-child Alan is undoubtedly the main focus here, while Cooper and Ed Helms are mostly shoved to the side and made to react to his actions. Alan

was always an obnoxious and mean character to begin with, a spoilt child with an overgrown beard, and while making him front-and-centre does add for some character development he soon becomes insufferable for how aggressively mean-spirited he is which makes it very hard to root for him when, for example, he's experiencing first love in one long, drawn-out scene.

The film is not entirely devoid of laughs and thrills, which here rely on the nostalgia of the previous two entries. Fan favourite Mr. Chow is back in a much larger role and Ken Jeong appears to have a lot of fun playing him; Black Doug and stripper Jade are back in small roles and they are entertaining when they can be; there is an okay connection with the other films, including setting its third act in Las Vegas again; and a post-credits scene, arguably the funniest in the entire movie – too little, too late I guess – shows us what *Part III* could and should have been like. I'm sad that they didn't use it in the end, that would have been a much better way to end one of the most pointless trilogies in recent history.

**OVERALL VERDICT**  
 You will probably need a lot of alcohol to counteract this lazy end to a trilogy that was never meant to be.



**DIRECTOR:** Baz Luhrmann  
**CAST:** Leonardo DiCaprio, Tobey Maguire, Carey Mulligan, Joel Edgerton, Isla Fisher, Jason Clarke, Adelaide Clemens, Elizabeth Debicki, Amitabh Bachchan  
**RUNNING TIME:** 143 mins  
**CERTIFICATE:** 12A  
**ONE-SENTENCE PLOT**  
 In 1920s New York, a young man (Maguire) befriends the mysterious Jay Gatsby (DiCaprio) and gets caught up in his tragic past...

**NOW FOR THE REVIEW...**  
 Only Baz Luhrmann can create a new adaptation of F. Scott Fitzgerald's timeless novel with 3D effects and a soundtrack with the likes of Jay-Z and will.i.am that surprisingly makes a bizarre amount of sense.

His version of *Romeo and Juliet* may have been irritating and over-the-top, and *Moulin Rouge* is far too overrated, but the reason why they remain so popular with audiences is that he seems to have a unique vision of things we hadn't seen before, and for some reason everyone likes to see that.

The character of Jay Gatsby was always a hopeful individual, clinging on to the most fascinating – if deluded – ideals and never letting it out of his sight. Again, as in the book, everyone and anyone attends his wild parties and have the most

fun they could possibly have, all thank to the one vision this man has.

Baz Luhrmann, quite frankly, IS Jay Gatsby. And the marriage between these two concepts make for not only the best adaptation of Fitzgerald's magnum opus yet – somewhere, Robert Redford is sobbing – but also the most fascinating, thought-provoking and mature film yet offered by the filmmaker.

Leonardo DiCaprio is the perfect Gatsby - charming and brass, while hinting at his true pathetic nature, he pulls it off wonderfully and with aplomb.

All the other actors, with emphasis on Carey Mulligan's doe-eyed and flaky rendition of femme fatale Daisy Buchanan and Joel Edgerton has her abrasive and unfaithful husband, do a fine job but the clear star of the film is Luhrmann himself, even more so than DiCaprio.

Aside from getting wife Catherine Martin to design the luxuriant sets and costumes (don't be surprised to see her up for a few awards next winter) he puts his own signature on the adaptation with his many "Luhrmannisms". Some of his problems do remain, like the fast editing and strange tonal shifts – an out-of-nowhere car chase in the middle suddenly turns it into "*The Gatz and the Furious*" – but the

positives once again work in his favour, in particular the soundtrack. Sceptics of the decision to have tracks by Jay-Z, Beyonce, Lana Del Ray, will.i.am and others in a film set in the Jazz Age of the 1920s will be silenced to know that they work in the context of the adaptation. The louder, more bombastic numbers appear during the party scenes or when anyone is dancing crazily. Luhrmann seems to know the audience going in – mostly younger people hoping to see DiCaprio in action – and has made the vibrant and brave decision to make the parties of the 1920s eerily resemble the parties nowadays. Paradoxically, it harks back to the days of the talkies while also unabashedly embracing the future – it cannot be explained, but it proves to be highly effective.

Some would argue that this is all style over substance, which is easy to understand given the overlong running time and awkward framing device, but that strangely makes it all the more moving and poetic.

Just as Fitzgerald probably intended, and he'd be proud because of that.

**OVERALL VERDICT**  
 While not perfect, Baz Luhrmann's irreverent but respectful *The Great Gatsby* is still welcome meat in the cultural sandwich of summer 2013.





**DIRECTOR:** Justin Lin  
**CAST:** Vin Diesel, Paul Walker, Michelle Rodriguez, Jordana Brewster, Dwayne Johnson, Tyrese Gibson, Chris Bridges, Sung Kang, Luke Evans, Gina Carano, Rita Ora  
**RUNNING TIME:** 130 mins  
**CERTIFICATE:** 12A  
**ONE-SENTENCE PLOT**  
 Dom (Diesel) and his crew are recruited by Hobbs (Johnson) to take down a criminal organisation in London...

**NOW FOR THE REVIEW...**  
 After four lacklustre entries, the Fast and Furious franchise FINALLY became fun to watch with Fast Five, where its drag-racing scenes were nixed in exchange for a typical – and typically brainless – heist caper. While technically not a good movie in its own right, it benefited from its sheer stupidity.

It's a shame, then, that this latest entry is nowhere near as thrilling as its most recent predecessor.

This is especially true of its second act, set primarily to London. It is underwhelming after the fun opening, which includes a brawl in an interrogation room that's as dumb as it is awesome (and presumably illegal), and the excitement that follows in its final two major set pieces, the last of which features the world's longest airport runway.

But the middle is where it drags, and heavily so. Slow, boring and dull are just some of the words the thesaurus uses to describe it, because it focuses mainly on character development for people who we honestly never cared about even from the first film. For a franchise that has sold itself on its loud, stupid action, this is wildly out of place.

One of the main offenders in this soap opera on wheels is the re-introduction of Letty, played by the permanently-pissed-off Michelle Rodriguez, who was supposedly killed in the fourth film. "Soap opera" is the right phrase to describe the reason for her antagonistic switch, but even soap operas would snigger at it. Her arc isn't engaging either, and her lack of chemistry with Vin Diesel makes the supposed re-romance element fall flat.

The other offender is Luke Evans as the lead villain. It doesn't help that Evans was always rather dull an actor to begin with, but even so his character isn't intriguing and has no clear motivations of what he wants to do that makes him evil. He's an especially weak villain when you take into account that this is supposedly the end to a major story arc in the series. The irony is that the best villain in the film appears during the credits, and without

giving away spoilers he is much more charismatic than Evans is. Those are the true main faults with it, but with that said there are some decent moments that do their best to save it from falling into forgettable territory.

We are fortunate enough to get a reprisal of the team's on-screen chemistry that made so much of Fast Five work. Tyrese Gibson and Chris Bridges provide some of the biggest (intentional) laughs together; Dwayne Johnson still walks away with the film even though he is slightly demoted to expository dialogue most of the time; and Vin Diesel has some good moments even though he descends into the typical "action hero" mould. And, of course, the action is highly impressive whenever it can be. A fight between Rodriguez and newcomer Gina Carano in an Underground station stands out for its practical effects that make the action more effective, but there are other times – including a highway chase with a tank – where the CGI becomes too apparent. Even so, they are still fun to watch.

**OVERALL VERDICT**  
*Fast and Furious 6* is all the "god-dumb awesome" entertainment that we have come to expect from the franchise so far.



**DIRECTOR:** Chris Wedge  
**CAST:** Amanda Seyfried, Josh Hutcherson, Colin Farrell, Beyoncé Knowles, Christoph Waltz, Aziz Ansari, Chris O'Dowd, Pitbull, Jason Sudeikis, Steven Tyler  
**RUNNING TIME:** 102 mins  
**CERTIFICATE:** TBC  
**ONE-SENTENCE PLOT**  
 A young woman (Seyfried) is shrunk down to miniature size and drawn into an age-long battle between two forces of nature...

**NOW FOR THE REVIEW...**  
 Epic does try to live up to its own name with its heavy imagination, but the restrictions around it prevent it from going above just being decent.

The animation and visuals are absolutely gorgeous which make for one of the more beautiful animated films to come out in a while. Whether we're roaming the green forest or visiting the insides of a murky villain's lair or even glancing over the designs of some of the side characters (some of them are anthropomorphic flowers, which are better than they sound), there is a load of visual wonder that has gone into every frame of the movie, and director Chris Wedge – his first solo directing job since 2005's Robots – and the rest of the team at Blue Sky deserve special mention for achieving this.

The characters also do their job in getting the audience invested, even if some of the voice acting is not as strong as it hopes to be. Amanda Seyfried and Josh Hutcherson are enjoyable as the lead female M.K and aspiring leafman Nod respectively, while Christoph Waltz is clearly having fun in the villain role even if his motivations appear to be just for the sake of evil, although we do see early on something that personally affects him and gives him even more of a reason to go after the heroes which is fascinating. Other contributors like Colin Farrell, however, do not seem to be that invested with their role and therefore turn in a dull vocal performance as a result. A shame, because his character is also likable enough to want to see him get out of danger.

While it is an impressively-made family film, the biggest flaw is that it IS a family film.

That means we get the usual kid-friendly tropes in these films, including the comedy relief snail and slug duo voiced by Chris O'Dowd and Aziz Ansari for the age group. O'Dowd is fine, but Ansari fares worse with his obnoxious delivery and character. While their humour is primarily geared toward that age demographic, it may become insufferable for parents and worse still they tend to kill any

serious mood the film tries to convey. The same can be said for Jason Sudeikis' bumbling scientist and M.K.'s father, whose constant focus on his work and half-hearted attempts to connect with his estranged daughter will prove grating to older viewers.

In addition, Epic continues the tradition of celebrity voiceovers, most notably Beyoncé Knowles (charming in a small but poignant role), Steven Tyler (energetic, but miscast) and Pitbull (completely pointless addition for a completely pointless character). Also, some mythical characters also use words like "awesome" and "baby-girl" which feel uncomfortably forced and contrived in a supposedly timeless world.

If the movie tried to remove or at least tone down one or both of these elements then we could perhaps have something as strong as The Secret of NIMH that treats every viewer like intelligent adults. The visuals are already there, we just need more of a balance on the style and substance scales to make this more memorable than it is.

**OVERALL VERDICT**  
 It may occasionally suffer from kids' film syndrome, but *Epic* is still wonderfully animated and highly imaginative, if somewhat forgettable compared to other family films.





**DIRECTOR:** Pedro Almodovar  
**CAST:** Javier Cámara, Cecilia Roth, Lola Dueños, Raúl Arévalo, Antonio Banderas, Penelope Cruz, Paz Vega  
**RUNNING TIME:** 90 mins  
**CERTIFICATE:** 15  
**ONE-SENTENCE PLOT**  
 When the engines of a plane fail, it's up to the flight crew to keep the passengers entertained...

**NOW FOR THE REVIEW...**  
 With such acclaimed dramas like *Talk To Her* and *The Skin I Live In*, it's astonishing to think that Pedro Almodovar actually started out making comedies and has followed those films with a new film that supposedly goes back to his roots. But with *I'm So Excited*, it seems that he's lost that comedy touch deep in the mix of his higher-profile work. It says a lot about the film's humour when the funniest moments come at the very beginning. Featuring cameos from Antonio Banderas and Penelope Cruz whose combined incompetence causes the scenario for the rest of the film, it is a mini-comedy in of itself with some funny lines and interesting hints of personality with these minor characters.

Other than that, the film is mostly laugh-free, relying heavily on degrading sex and gay jokes for cheap laughs from its cultured

audience (or at least we assume they're cultured, since they paid money to see a Spanish-language film). A running joke seems to revolve around a pilot's experience of homosexual fellatio, which wouldn't be so grating if they decided not to hammer it in with every appearance of the character until it becomes too in-your-face. Not to diminish the film's attempts at comedy entirely, for there is the odd funny one-liner - but even those are extremely rare - and, most prominent of all, it is enjoyable for how camp the overall feel is. Nowhere is this more felt than with the gay flight attendants whose bickering and over-the-top flamboyancy almost turn it into a Spanish version of the *Carry On* movies. They also star in the film's biggest, and most enjoyable set-piece which sees them entertaining the highly-strung passengers by lip-synching the Pointer Sisters' song that provides the film's English title. Good luck trying to get it out of your head once you see this scene.

As the film goes on, we learn more about the characters but even so none of them are remotely likable. One is a highly-strung passenger whose constant complaining and paranoia make her instantly insufferable, while another is an irritating self-proclaimed "clairvoyant" desperate to lose her

virginity - how she comes around this is what makes her detestable, but even worse it's all disturbingly played for laughs - and even the flight attendants are too prissy and self-absorbed to care about. It's also difficult to be invested in this film due to it being full of red herrings that constantly throw its viewers off. An early warning that someone will die is never realised; a good five-to-ten minute scene set on the ground - the film is 90% set on the plane - only leads to a brief confrontation with no pay-off; and the main dilemma of the malfunctioning engines is handled without difficulty and sacrifice. Even the *Father Ted* episode this film rips off had more excitement than this misguided attempt at being the crowd-pleasing feel-good comedy it thinks it is. Unfortunately for Almodovar, it aspires to be the best airborne comedy since *Airplane!* but fails to even match 1/10th of its humour. The lesson here, kids, is that just because you can go back to your comedic roots doesn't mean you should.

**OVERALL VERDICT**  
*I'm So Excited* suffers from few laughs and hateful characters - next time, try and stick with the heavier stuff, Pedro...



**DIRECTOR:** Jeff Nichols  
**CAST:** Matthew McConaughey, Tye Sheridan, Jacob Lofland, Reese Witherspoon, Michael Shannon, Sarah Paulson, Sam Shepard  
**RUNNING TIME:** 131 mins  
**CERTIFICATE:** 12A  
**ONE-SENTENCE PLOT**  
 A mysterious fugitive known as Mud (McConaughey) befriends two young boys who help him reunite with his true love (Witherspoon)...

**NOW FOR THE REVIEW...**  
 In every review for Jeff Nichols' spectacular third film as writer-director, you have probably read countless comparisons to the work of Mark Twain, how it's very much like the worlds he created et cetera. And, to your complete surprise, you're about to read another one. There is no other way to put it: Mud really does capture the spirit and essence of the *Tom Sawyer* and *Huckleberry Finn* author's imagination, while also adding some newer and more modern elements to create the story from scratch. When our boy heroes (the wonderful duo of Tye Sheridan and Jacob Lofland) encounter the main character's shoeprints for the first time, they are stunned to see crosses embedded in them. This sense of wonder and creativity is exactly what drove Twain's stories to become the

classics they are today, and the mystery surrounding this one character is what drives our investment in the rest of the movie. But although the character of Mud is a very well-written one, Matthew McConaughey is what makes so much of it work. When we first meet him, he is enigmatic but charming enough to like from the word "go", which is no difficult feat for McConaughey to pull off since he can do it in his sleep by this point. But further along the line, we learn more about him and what he is truly trying to achieve - like DiCaprio's *Gatsby*, he is pining for a long-lost love and the methods he is using to reunite with her are as pathetic and, well, dorky as they come. But, also like *Gatsby*, Mud truly believes in his cause and cannot bring himself to think about how it can go wrong. You can sense in his eyes the downtrodden heartbreak when the boys inform him later in the movie that the object of his affections, Juniper (played by a decent Reese "it doesn't matter if she was arrested recently, she's still smokin' hot" Witherspoon), has been hanging out with other men seemingly without care for her most dedicated suitor. The one scene they share together, near the end, only features communication in the form of a wave and their different actions - one is a little more lively,

the other doesn't seem bothered enough to even raise their hand high - perfectly sums up their individual feelings toward one another, and provides a bittersweet but still satisfying end to this tragic-of-sorts romance. But it is not entirely about Mud, as Nichols gives the younger protagonists - especially Sheridan - enough respectable material to work off of as well. The ideas of divorcing parents and young love may reek of Spielberg whimsy but it is handled with care and a sense of adult respectability. Sheridan's star-making performance overshadows Lofland's role as just being "the other one" in the duo, and even other adult actors like an underused Michael Shannon. An out-of-place, and hastily put-together, sub-plot involving bounty hunters may threaten to derail it at times, but at its centre, it remains a tale of a young boy's encounter with a strange man with crosses in his footprints.  
**OVERALL VERDICT**  
*Mud* proves three things - Jeff Nichols is a serious talent to be reckoned with; Matthew McConaughey is truly cementing himself as one of the industry's top actors, as is young Sheridan; and the spirit of Mark Twain lives on in one of the year's best films (so far, anyway).



**DIRECTOR:** Neil Jordan  
**CAST:** Gemma Arterton, Saoirse Ronan, Sam Riley, Jonny Lee Miller, Caleb Landry Jones, Tom Hollander, Daniel Mays, Maria Doyle Kennedy  
**RUNNING TIME:** 118 mins  
**CERTIFICATE:** 15  
**ONE-SENTENCE PLOT**  
 A vampire mother-daughter team move to a rundown coastal town where all hell breaks loose...

**NOW FOR THE REVIEW...**  
 In about half a decade, Stephanie Meyer has managed to ruin the dignity of vampires forever. But Neil Jordan, returning to the mythology for the first time since his 1994 cult classic *Interview with the Vampire*, may prove to be its saviour with easily the most astonishing tale of bloodsuckers in recent years.

We recognise how stunningly visual the film is right from the very first shot, and it never lets go of its impressive artistic vision until the credits start to roll. Cinematographer Sean Bobbitt – whose has recently impressed with his work in *Shame* and *The Place Beyond The Pines* – deserves full credit for bringing to life Jordan's dark tale but making it an absolutely beautiful tale at that. The many shots of a blood waterfall (you'll understand when you see it) are grand and wondrous even if the imagery itself is unnerving; and

another scene of Saoirse Ronan's character lusciously sucking on a bloodied tissue is disturbing as it is hypnotic and pure.

With visuals like these, it is easy to become a case of style over substance, but Jordan thankfully avoids that trap also with an evenly-paced story that always keeps your attention throughout. As we are shown historical flashbacks that explain how certain characters come to where they are now, Jordan does a good job at making this exposition very entertaining to watch.

As for its characters, while the film is certainly anchored by the great performances and characters of Gemma Arterton and Ronan – both of whom have never been better – it proved that Caleb Landry Jones, or at least his character, to be the most interesting in the whole film. Admittedly, his inclusion and subsequent romance with Ronan's Eleanor may have been brought in to please the audience members unfortunately associated with Meyer's take on vampires. The twist here, though, is that his character has already faced death after a long period of chemotherapy so his curiosity and fascination with immortal life makes more logical sense than it did with Bella Swan. Jones may suffer from constant mumbling at times, but that

perhaps makes his nervous character stand out even more. Being a vampire film and knowing what experience Jordan has with them, it is a nice surprise that he can still conjure up some clever additions and subtractions for the creatures. Gone are the sharp fangs, which are instead replaced by sharp fingernails – it's not as stupid as it sounds – which the film's vampires use to stab their victims before drinking their blood. However, some clichés never die (no pun intended) as the "invitation into the house" rule still applies as does the immortality element.

The only major fault is that some of the more interesting story points are not focused on enough. For instance, a sub-plot sees another pair of vampires attempting to track the protagonists down in order to destroy them due to a mixture of a sexist belief and a major betrayal on Clara's front. However, it is resolved with a predictable outcome and only serves to give the film a villain for a villain's sake.

**OVERALL VERDICT**  
*Byzantium* may have faults, but it is easily the best vampire film in ages and gives hope to their future in film after five years of sparkling in the friggin' sunlight.



**DIRECTOR:** Niels Arden Oplev  
**CAST:** Colin Farrell, Noomi Rapace, Dominic Cooper, Terrence Howard, Isabelle Huppert, James Biberi, F. Murray Abraham  
**RUNNING TIME:** 117 mins  
**CERTIFICATE:** 15  
**ONE-SENTENCE PLOT**  
 A vengeful criminal and a mysterious young woman become intertwined in a path of retribution...

**NOW FOR THE REVIEW...**  
 Making his English-language debut after the international success of the Swedish adaptation of *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo*, Niels Arden Oplev has ironically chosen a project that seems to have been lost in translation.

Once we have established the criminal underworld wherein the events of the film take place, you almost need a seatbelt to counteract the many twists and turns it likes to take which ultimately make for a contrived and increasingly silly plotline. For instance, we discover that Farrell has been keeping an Albanian gangster hostage in an abandoned warehouse, with intent of using him as a pawn to let the feuding mob bosses carry out his Machiavellian revenge. Many plot holes emerge from this revelation alone, and it is sadly many times like these that the audience is asked to play the "suspension of disbelief"

card far too many times because not even half of what we see happen in this film would ring true in the real world.

Without segue, the focus shifts frequently. One moment, we are led to believe that the film is an intense crime thriller, signified in the pre-credits shootout and in a later tense scene which involves the nuanced Terrence Howard sitting in a chair in an empty apartment building seemingly confronting Farrell, but every so often it switches to a forced romantic subplot between our two main leads that takes one too many predictable turns.

It doesn't help that Farrell and Rapace don't have much chemistry with each other to make it work, but that also doesn't mean that they are horrible in any right. Farrell fares well, but Rapace is the better performance as a scarred woman – internally and externally – seeking revenge.

Oplev does not fail on all accounts, for he does get in some very nice camera shots and moments of subtle cinematography, as well as scenes of pure tension.

Unfortunately, everything worthwhile that the film has been working towards is completely undone by the film's highly misjudged climax sequence. After countless scenes of character

development, quiet emotions and slow-but-necessary scenes of plot devices and forced romance, the loud bombastic thrills that these final scenes offer – the kidnapped girlfriend; a slow-motion car crash into a house; a large explosion; rapid gunfire; rainfall (of sorts); an anti-climactic villain defeat; and a final surprise stand-off – belong in a much larger, clichéd generic action thriller, and not with something that takes itself so seriously like *Dead Man Down*. This laughably lame ending turns pure Hollywood, which is a shame given that everything leading up to it had a decidedly indie feel to it all. It is as if the film sold out and transferred its grounded scenarios and exchanged them with something far too overblown and unsatisfying to the rest of the film that had come before.

Even if you stripped the film bare of this climax, there is not much about this film that is memorable in the slightest, aside from maybe Rapace. Instead, it falls into that category of "meh" with all the others, though this will get some heads turning for what stupidity it offers in the final showdown.

**OVERALL VERDICT**  
*Dead Man Down* is only mediocre, when not extremely silly and stupid, especially with its climax.



# UK Film Release Dates

## JUNE

### 7TH

- After Earth
- Behind The Candelabra
- The Iceman
- The Last Exorcism: Part 2
- The Stone Roses: Made of Stone
- Therese Desqueyroux

### 14TH

- Admission
- Man of Steel
- Much Ado About Nothing
- Stuck In Love
- Summer in February

### 21ST

- Before Midnight
- A Haunted House
- Snitch
- Spike Island
- World War Z

### 28TH

- Despicable Me 2
- The East
- Hummingbird
- The Seasoning House
- Stand Up Guys
- Stories We Tell
- This Is The End

## JULY

### 5TH

- The Bling Ring
- The Call
- Chasing Mavericks
- A Field In England
- The Internship
- Now You See Me

### 12TH

- The Deep
- Monsters University
- Pacific Rim
- Trap for Cinderella
- We Steal Secrets: The Story of WikiLeaks

### 19TH

- Breathe In
- The Frozen Ground
- Wadjda
- The World's End

### 26TH

- Frances Ha
- Girl Most Likely
- Romeo and Juliet
- The Wolverine

All release dates are correct as of time of press.

## AUGUST

### 2ND

- The Conjuring
- From Up On Poppy Hill
- The Heat
- Only God Forgives
- Red 2
- The Smurfs 2

### 9TH

- Alan Partridge: Alpha Papa
- Grown Ups 2
- The Lone Ranger
- Percy Jackson: Sea of Monsters

### 16TH

- 2 Guns
- Kick-Ass 2
- Planes

### 23RD

- Elysium
- Jurassic Park 3D
- Lovelace
- The Mortal Instruments: City of Bones
- Pain & Gain
- We're The Millers
- What Maisie Knew

### 30TH

- In Fear
- One Direction: This Is Us
- R.I.P.D
- The Way, Way Back

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