

## HEADHUNTER

★★★★★

OUT APRIL 6

Odious, vainglorious and obnoxious are just three of the words that aptly describe the anti-hero of Morten

**“As Clas hunts down Roger, we’re left revelling in the downfall of this uniquely loathsome leading man.”**

Tyldum’s exhilarating new thriller. Roger Brown (Aksel Hennie) is a ruthless headhunter and art thief on the side, who befriends prospective

employees so he can steal from them. He’s also cheating on his beautiful, far too good for him, wife Diana (Synnove Macody Lund).

His inevitable comeuppance arrives in the shape of Clas (Nikolaj Coster-Waldau), a better looking,

suaver and much taller ex-military tracker, who he believes has seduced his wife. With his ego bruised and designer suit feathers severely

ruffled, Roger plans the theft of a Rubens in his rival’s possession, but the mouse decides to kill the cat first.

This preposterously plotted mainstream adaptation of Jo Nesbø’s bestseller was optioned for a remake even before its Norwegian release. As Clas hunts down Roger, we’re left revelling in the downfall of this uniquely loathsome leading man. As we watch Roger stripped of the material possessions he holds so dear, and forced to endure unimaginable lows in order to survive, we’re rooting for him every step of the way.

Utterly addictive. **Rachael Scott**



## TINY FURNITURE

★★★★★

OUT MARCH 30

It takes a while to realise that the slow-burning personal crises suffered by Lena Dunham’s irritating character Aura are fuelled by post-graduation disaffection, crap boyfriends and antagonism between her (real-life) sister and mother – and a direct satire on Manhattan’s bourgeoisie. If her critique is true, give me Soho over Tribeca any day. Current indie darling Dunham is a young Woody Allen in big knickers, wandering around her artist mother’s spacious loft in less than flattering underwear, whining like an insufferable toddler about pretty much everything. It’s a bold performance, and she cleverly blurs the lines between fiction and self-absorbed autobiography.

**Rachael Scott**

**“Current indie darling Dunham is a young Woody Allen in big knickers.”**



## THIS MUST BE THE PLACE

★★★★★

OUT APRIL 6

Sean Penn as an aged Goth rocker is reason enough to see Paolo Sorrentino’s English language debut, but the Italian writer/director has obviously overloaded on Jim Jarmusch, and once the novelty dwindles in seeing the self-righteous Penn in oodles of black kohl and blood red lipstick gashed across his clown white face, we’re left with a film that often feels quirky for quirk’s sake.

Living off the band’s royalties in a Dublin mansion with his firefighting wife (Frances McDormand), Cheyenne (Penn) is guilt ridden over the suicide of two fans, not

to mention bored. When his father dies, he’s forced back to New York where a new purpose in life becomes clear – he’ll track down the Nazi who persecuted his father in Auschwitz, and assuage his conscience for not speaking to him for thirty years.

Penn, drawing from The Cure’s Robert Smith, is undeniably funny as he travels across America meeting an assortment of oddballs. With his slow gait, camp monotone voice and deadpan expression, Cheyenne is considerably more intuitive than his dislocated demeanour implies.

The scattershot storyline does the film no favours, but Sorrentino is a master of the perfectly framed shot, and saturates his canvas with vivid colour. **Rachael Scott**

**THE DESCENDANTS**

★★★★★

OUT JANUARY 27

There's nothing like your wife falling into a coma to make lazy husband Matt King (George Clooney) realise he's been an absent husband and father. As a single parent, this tight-fisted lawyer is clueless as how to stop his youngest Scottie (Amara Miller) from indulging in macabre

and her stoner boyfriend in telling relatives and friends it's now or never for last goodbyes. He also needs to unmask his wife's lover.

You barely notice the sadness of the subject matter, because director Alexander Payne always gets it right tonally, and is a master of fully realised and delightfully flawed tragi-comic characters; and he's skilfully coaxed Clooney into delivering his absolute best. Despite his array of

**“Director Alexander Payne is a master of fully realised and delightfully flawed tragi-comic characters.”**

pastimes, or how to gain respect from stropky teenager Alexandra (Shailene Woodley). He's in crisis, and things only get worse when he discovers his wife Elizabeth was having an affair. Bizarre, though utterly plausible, situations develop as Matt enlists the help of Alexandra

hideous flowery shirts (the film's set in Hawaii) and high-waisted slacks, he's already won a Golden Globe, so an Oscar seems a shoo-in. He's more than ably supported by a strong cast, with Woodley shining bright as a talent to watch.

**Rachael Scott**



**CARANCHO**

★★★★★

OUT MARCH 2

Road accidents have risen to epidemic proportions in Argentina, and ambulance-chasing insurance lawyer Sosa (Darín) is always first on the scene. Down on his luck, but well intentioned, he works for the unscrupulous Foundation that pockets a disproportionate chunk of the payouts. Things are on the up when he falls for over-worked junkie doctor Luján (Gusman), but his life spirals out of control when a faked accident goes horribly wrong. Less film noir, more middling TV drama.

**Rachael Scott**



**BILL CUNNINGHAM**

**NEW YORK**

★★★★★

OUT MARCH 16

Bill Cunningham is a New York Times fashion photographer, who's been snapping Manhattan's style icons from the street to the catwalk, since the 1960s. Richard Press' fascinating film doubles up as a fashion encyclopaedia, and an intimate portrait of a legend, that's not to be missed by anyone who loves dressing up. **Rachael Scott**



**“John Madden’s film is funny, sad and heart-warming in equal measure.”**

**THE BEST EXOTIC MARIGOLD HOTEL**

★★★★★

OUT FEBRUARY 24

Reluctantly accepting their prime has seen better days, seven retirees venture to India for one last fling with adventure. They include Judi Dench's recent widow, eager to find independence for the first time; Bill Nighy and Penelope Wilton's squabbling married couple; Celia

Imrie's rebel, man-hunting granny; Maggie Smith's curmudgeonly health tourist; Ronald Pickup's incorrigible flirt, and Tom Wilkinson's demon expunging ex-judge.

Each go through a predictable personal enlightenment once they settle into the dilapidated hotel for elderly British retirees, run by Dev Patel's wildly hackneyed idea of a bumbling subservient Indian, and acclimatise to the country's vibrant flamboyance, beautifully captured by

*Kick-Ass* cinematographer Ben Davis.

Based on the novel *These Foolish Things* by Deborah Moggach, what Ol Parker's disjointed script adaptation lacks in consistent character development, is compensated for with genuine feel good factor. With a cast as rich in talent as this, John Madden's film is funny, sad and heart-warming in equal measure, and has much to delight youngsters as well as its targeted oldie demographic.

**Rachael Scott**

**MICHAEL**

★★★★★

OUT MARCH 2

There's no psychological delving in writer-director Markus Schleinzer's observational feature debut of a seemingly normal man, with a good job, family and friends, who keeps a ten-year-old boy prisoner in his basement. Stripped of sentimentality, Michael is a judgment free

acknowledgment of a paedophile's existence. The sexual abuse is never shown, only implied, meaning the simplest of scenes swell with unbearable tension and potential horror. Its restrained, rudimentary pacing, and thoroughly unpredictable arc, makes the smattering of unexpected shocks truly dramatic. Looking beyond the hard to swallow subject matter, this is a challenging and masterful film. **Rachael Scott**



**HOUSE OF TOLERANCE**

★★★★★

**OUT JANUARY 27**

This languidly paced look at the inner workings of a 20th century high-class Parisian brothel is beautifully shot, with each frame composed like an Old Master:

For a moment, Bertrand Bonello

lures the viewer into thinking that the oldest profession might not be such a bad career path after all, as these tightly bonded femmes go about their perfunctory business of satisfying the sexual peccadilloes of their salivating clients, until the copious nudity and inevitable downward story arc leave us utterly bored. **Rachael Scott**



**J. EDGAR**

★★★★★

**OUT JANUARY 20**

J. Edgar Hoover ran the FBI for nearly fifty years until his death in 1972. He possessed so many salacious facts about the private lives of public figures no-one, not even sitting presidents, was willing to touch him.

Compellingly played here by Leonardo DiCaprio, Hoover believed communists hid under our beds, and subversives and radicals the 1960s equivalent of terrorists. Openly sexist, racist and homophobic, as well as a moral hypocrite, women were relatively absent from his life, apart from his hen-pecking mother (Judy Dench) and loyal office wife Helen Gandy (Naomi Watts). He was widely believed to be gay due to his

**“DiCaprio convinces while Hammer’s closeted longtime companion shines.”**

close relationship with right hand man Clyde Tolson (Armie Hammer).

Director Clint Eastwood is in comfortable territory exploring the life of single-minded anti-heroes. He delivers a measured screenplay, challenging the numerous biographies depicting Hoover as a tyrant. If his stance had been more subjective, the film would have been a considerably more electrifying ride. Still DiCaprio convinces, while Hammer’s closeted longtime companion shines. **Rachael Scott**



**JACK AND JILL**

★★★★★

**OUT FEBRUARY 3**

While department stores put the rubbish they couldn’t flog last year on sale, Hollywood’s at it as well. Two Adam Sandler’s for the price of one is the supposed draw of this lame gender-bender ‘comedy’, that sees Sandler play the titular twins and the breathtakingly improbable prospect of Al Pacino fancying the sister. A cameo from Johnny Depp leaves you wondering if the A-listers’ drinks were spiked. This bargain bucket film is an excuse for tedious fart jokes. BOGOF just about sums it up. **Rachael Scott**



**LIKE CRAZY**

★★★★★

**OUT JANUARY 27**

Felicity Jones and Anton Yelchin test the impossibilities of a cross-continent love affair. She’s an aspiring journalist studying in LA; he wants to design furniture. When they fall in love she outstays her visa, returns home, then can’t get back into the US. They split up and other long-suffering partners emerge, only to be pushed aside when they reunite. Convincing, but neither of these hot young stars produces any real passion. **Rachael Scott**



**RAMPART**

★★★★★

**OUT FEBRUARY 10**

Woody Harrelson plays the ultimate misogynist in Oren Moverman’s story of a corrupt LAPD cop, who tightens the noose around his own neck by refusing to tow the line when he’s caught on tape beating a suspect. With a personal life that matches his professional shame, there is neither contrition nor redemption during his assured downward spiral. A mesmerising Harrelson has us rooting for his smart talking maniac. **Rachael Scott**



**A DANGEROUS METHOD**

★★★★★

**OUT FEBRUARY 10**

David Cronenberg’s obsession with body horror takes a swerve to examine disturbed minds and the birth of psychoanalysis.

Despite believing Sigmund Freud (Viggo Mortensen) is obsessed with sexually reductive therapy, Carl Jung (Michael Fassbender) is in awe of his more accomplished mentor; while Freud considers his student’s theories to be lightweight. These ideas are tested with the arrival of Sabina Spielrein (Keira

Knightley), a classic hysteric and abuse victim. Under Jung’s care she shows improvement, great intellect and a desire to lose her virginity. After meeting Otto Gross (Vincent Cassel), a sex-obsessed psychiatrist who believes all sexual urges need exploring; he accepts her offer and uses spanking sessions to indulge his inner sadomasochist.

This highbrow feature has Oscar-bait written all over it, thanks to Knightley’s unshackled performance. All clenched teeth and jutting jaw, she’s excellent here, while Fassbender and Mortensen bring great minds wonderfully to life. **Rachael Scott**

# In REVIEW

The month's movies reviewed and rated



## MY WEEK WITH MARILYN

★★★★★

OUT NOVEMBER 25

When Marilyn Monroe came to England to film *The Prince and The Showgirl* in 1956, she befriended the film's third assistant director Colin Clark. Adapted from his diaries, *My Week With Marilyn* is an account of the time he spent with the world's most famous actress. The blonde bombshell is played by Michelle Williams who gives the performance of

her life, holding her own against some of Britain's finest heavyweights. Everyone around Monroe falls into a cycle of sycophantic gushing and spellbound awe, despite her barely being able to remember a line and repeatedly keeping everyone on set waiting. Even *Showgirl's* director and leading man Olivier, irritated beyond belief by the actress' behaviour, is eventually stupefied by her needy coquettishness.

Clark's (Eddie Redmayne) general dogsbody status doesn't stop Monroe turning to him when a row sends new



hubbie Arthur Miller (Dougray Scott) back to New York. According to a jealous Milton Greene (Dominic Cooper) he isn't the first, and won't be the last love-struck fool to be picked up and undoubtedly dropped. Undeterred, Clark does her bidding forsaking a new relationship with wardrobe girl Lucy (Emma Watson) in the process.

Simon Curtis' thoroughly enjoyable film is bursting with snappy one-liners, most of which tumble forth from Oliviers lips. It's a delight to see

**“Michelle Williams gives the performance of her life.”**

Branagh back in front of the camera playing the ego-raging thespian, with such bitchy gusto. Star in the waiting, Redmayne, expertly draws us into the mind of a young impressionable man bewitched by the unobtainable.

As for Williams, Academy nominations look highly likely. With a sashy here and a wiggle there she basks in the glare of paparazzi flashbulbs one minute, switching to little girl lost the next and wholeheartedly capturing the essence of the troubled star.

Rachael Scott



## MOTHER AND CHILD

★★★★★

OUT JANUARY 6

Frosty Karen (Bening) cares for her ailing mother and writes letters she never sends to the daughter she gave up for adoption. That baby grows into an ice queen lawyer (Watts), who initiates an affair with her new boss (Jackson). Lucy (Washington), unable to conceive, tries to adopt with her husband. The three leading ladies have rarely been better, delivering perfectly calibrated performances with a powerful emotional punch.

Rachael Scott

## CAMP HELL

★★★★★

OUT DECEMBER 2

Tommy (Denton) is packed off to happy-clappy summer camp, where trousers must be worn at all times and talking to girls is out of the question. The camp's quietly hysterical doctrines unleash Satan's little helpers, eager to teach Tommy and pals lessons in the art of atheism. Initial interest plummets to irritation, as events get increasingly silly. As for the scares, there aren't any.

Rachael Scott



## DREAMS OF A LIFE

★★★★★

OUT DECEMBER 16

Carol Morley's fascinating and heartbreaking documentary explores the life of thirty-eight-year-old Joyce Vincent, whose decomposed body was found lying on a sofa in front of a still flickering TV in her North London bed-sit, three years after she died. Despite the lack of testimonials from Joyce's family, extensive research has composed a convincing and thought-provoking picture of Joyce's life, re-enacted by Zawe Ashton.

Rachael Scott



## WE HAVE A POPE

★★★★★

OUT DECEMBER 2

It's a brave Italian who takes the piss out of the Vatican, but eternal damnation doesn't scare Nanni Moretti. His wickedly delightful satire has a newly elected Pope (Michel Piccoli) succumb to a crisis of confidence and do a runner. Moretti could have ripped shreds out of these fusty old men in red-cloaks and white lace dresses, but he keeps proceedings respectful.

Rachael Scott



## MYSTERIES OF LISBON

★★★★★

OUT DECEMBER 9

Directed on an epic scale, Raúl Ruiz's adaptation of Camilo Castelo Branco's three-volume 19th century novel has passion, revenge, murder, prostitution, war and a whole lot more besides. Despite its bum-numbing running time (it was originally a TV mini-series), it remains a masterfully paced, exquisitely designed, kaleidoscopic melodrama of the highest order. A must see.

Rachael Scott

## LAS ACACIAS

★★★★★

OUT DECEMBER 2

19th century romantic poet Christina Rossetti said, "Silence is more musical than any song." Her words were meant for Pablo Giorgelli's glorious road movie when gruff trucker Rubén (Silva) begrudgingly takes Jacinta (Duarte) and her baby from Paraguay to Buenos Aires. Most of the journey is spent in silence until both gradually open up, before the film culminates in a nail-biting will they/won't they finale. A truly sublime piece of filmmaking.

Rachael Scott



**“Enjoyable for the whole family, Happy Feet 2 is a visually impressive 3D film worth watching.”**

# In REVIEW

The month's movies reviewed and rated

## STRAW DOGS

★★★★★

OUT NOVEMBER 4

Sam Peckinpah's *Straw Dogs* is considered a classic and remarkable for its depiction of brutal violence and the perceived erotic nature of a rape scene. The film starred Dustin Hoffman and Susan George as a couple who are terrorised in their home by a group of bloodthirsty locals. Released the same year as

the equally contentious *A Clockwork Orange*, 1971 ushered in a new wave of merciless violence that shocked the public.

With Hoffman reportedly giving director Rod Lurie his blessing to go ahead with a remake, the former film critic has a lot to live up to. He dodges shots fired by remaining faithful to the original novel, *The Siege Of Treacher's Farm* by Gordon Williams, and his version holds its own as an entertaining home invasion potboiler.

OUT THIS NOVEMBER!

reviews FILM

The action is transported from Cornwall to Mississippi, where screenwriter David (James Marsden) and his actress wife Amy (Kate Bosworth) move so he can concentrate on a script. David's Ivy League existence instantly winds up the locals, who apart from Amy's former boyfriend Charlie (Alexander Skarsgård), are reduced to ignorant beer-guzzling rednecks. He hires them to fix the roof on a dilapidated barn and, although they are respectfully polite, they're also mocking — knocking off early, helping themselves to beer and eventually

hanging the couple's cat. When a mentally challenged man everyone believes has abducted the daughter of the town's football coach (James Woods) ends up at their house, an angry mob arrives close behind.

In the original, Peckinpah's negative view of humanity was all too evident. Under attack, Hoffman found his inner psychotic and George her inner traitor; while Marsden is merely defending himself with little sign of enjoying the job. His marriage is also far less contentious and Bosworth leaves the audience in no doubt as to how Amy feels about rape.

Curiously the camera doesn't set its gaze on the victim, but on the perpetrator, in an almost fetishistic fashion. Skarsgård is the stand-out performer here, while both Marsden and Bosworth, working with a script that strips away much of original insights into their relationship, are competent rather than distinctive. The film's most unsettling aspect is how it challenges the notion of masculinity, and there's an undeniable catharsis felt through the meted out violence, so don't be surprised if you find yourself cheering when it arrives. **Rachael Scott**



“The ambiguous expression on George's face suggested she enjoyed being raped and led to the film being denied a rating for its video release.”

**THE DEEP BLUE SEA**

★★★★★

OUT NOVEMBER 25

The deafening violin concerto that opens *The Deep Blue Sea*, and lasts roughly ten minutes, leaves us in no doubt that the woman staring out of a window onto a bomb-ravaged London street is in a desperate psychological state. This overbearing

prelude heralds the suffocating tale of the obsessive love Hester Collyer (Rachel Weisz) feels for Freddie Page (Tom Hiddleston) as she sets about taking her own life with the help of twelve aspirins and a gas fire.

Hester always knew that Freddie didn't return the unequivocal love that she felt for him. We can only assume she discovered the joys of sex for the first time – why else would she abandon her sense of

propriety and the privileged social standing she afforded with her devoted high court judge husband Sir William Collyer (Simon Russell), to live in run-down lodgings with her directionless lover?

Freddie is a dashing ex-RAF pilot, dining off post-WWII heroism. His affable, yet blustering, demeanour holds little currency in the workplace and he spends much of his time in the pub or on the golf course. Ten months down the line, the honeymoon period between them is over.

Terence Davies' film, based on Terence Rattigan's 1952 play, is unusual in its calm approach to such melodramatic concerns. Though it befits the beautifully evoked time period – from the costumes to the slightly stilted dialogue – it's difficult to be moved by Hester's plight. They say love is blind, but female audiences will struggle relating to Hester's masochistic tendencies and her quietly controlled drama queening.

Weisz gives a lovely modulated performance as a mournful woman beset by passion she's unable to control, while Hiddleston does his childish uncultured braggart justice. **Rachael Scott**



**WUTHERING HEIGHTS**

★★★★★

OUT NOVEMBER 11

Andrea Arnold strips Emily Brontë's bleak vision of romantic love to its bare bones and delivers a gruelling lovelorn slog that's not without its merits – through class prejudice and racial bigotry.

With frugal dialogue and no

*Fish Tank* and plonked them on the Yorkshire Moors of the 19<sup>th</sup> century – she even throws in the n- and c-word in a bid to capture authentic working-class narrative.

Much has been made of casting a black actor (Solomon Glave) as Heathcliff, despite Brontë describing him as a dark-skinned gypsy in aspect.

A new generation of Brontë non-purists will see *Wuthering*



**'Arnold has taken the council estate characters from *Fish Tank* and plonked them on the Yorkshire Moors.'**

soundtrack as such Arnold relies on the impressionistic performances of her mostly non-professional cast. Her decidedly non-glitzy adaptation feels as though Arnold has taken the council estate characters from

*Heights* as an admirable experiment, be attracted by the young cast and absence of period drama stuffiness. Others may wonder what on Earth the Oscar-winning director was thinking. **Rachael Scott**

**MISS BALA**

★★★★★

OUT OCTOBER 28

All those little girls who dream of winning a beauty pageant should be careful what they wish for – especially if they live in Mexico. *Miss Bala* is a tense thriller, starring newcomer Stephanie Sigman who delivers a knock-out performance as an aspiring beauty queen who gets caught up in the middle of Mexico's drug wars.

Excited about their audition for the Miss Baja California contest, Laura (Sigman) and her friend Suzu celebrate at a rundown nightclub the evening before. When an armed gang let rip a barrage of gunfire on revellers, Laura manages to escape before she finds Suzu. When she goes to the police for help, they hand her straight back to the

gunmen. Laura is then forced into a three-day nightmare, doing the bidding of quietly menacing drug lord Lion (Noe Hernandez).

With the knowledge that nearly thirty-five thousand people have died in drug-related killings in Mexico, there's undeniably a strong political message running through Gerardo Naranjo's ambitious film, but he refrains from pointing a direct finger at cartels, governments or police. Events unfold through Laura's confused and terrified point of view, making *Miss Bala* primarily a human story that will resonate with anyone, and just like her, we're often left with a distorted perspective of what's happening and why.

With a combination of fragility and strength, former model Sigman is powerfully restrained, while Naranjo assuredly takes us on a thrill ride while educating us in his country's plight. **Rachael Scott**

**'There's undeniably a strong political message running through Gerardo Naranjo's ambitious film, but he refrains from pointing a direct finger at cartels, governments or police.'**



**WE NEED TO TALK ABOUT KEVIN**

★★★★★

**OUT OCTOBER 21**

Does nature or nurture dictate the person you will become? That question has never been so poignantly posed than in *We Need To Talk About Kevin*, Lynne Ramsey's adaptation of Lionel Shriver's novel, starring a magnificent Tilda Swinton. *Kevin* explores one of the last taboos — a mother who dislikes her child and is haunted by the idea she may be responsible for the atrocious act he commits as a teenager. It's a classic Greek tragedy with Oedipal overtones and an unsympathetic portrayal of a dysfunctional family that turns into a psychological horror.

*Kevin* is told from the mother's tortured, subjective memories that make her, by default, an unreliable narrator. Through flashbacks it's clear that adventurous travel writer Eva Khatchadourian (Swinton) struggled with motherhood. As a

baby Kevin constantly screams, as a toddler and small boy (Rocky Duer and Jasper Newell) he's detached and manipulative. Eva is alone with the fear that her son may be evil because her photographer husband Franklin (John C. Reilly) dishes out unconditional love no matter how he behaves. By the time he's a teenager (Ezra Miller), his contempt for Eva is breathtaking.

Now on her own and tormented by neighbours, Eva accepts everything that's thrown at her, believing she deserves to be punished, if not for producing such a monster, then for helping create one from her own ambivalence as a parent.

*Kevin* is assured filmmaking from the long absent Scottish director of *Ratcatcher* and *Morvern Callar*. Swinton couldn't be better. Her raw emotion churns the gut as she's battered in the present by what has already passed. Reilly is uncharacteristically understated, while Miller, pale and handsome, louche and petulant, plays the perfect sociopath. **Rachael Scott**

**THE GREATEST MOVIE EVER SOLD**

★★★★★

**OUT SEPTEMBER 14**

Morgan Spurlock's entertaining documentary is about the insidious nature of product placement in the movies, but entirely financed by the companies who pay to have their products placed. A very amusing first half charts Spurlock being repeatedly rejected before bringing pomegranate juice heavyweights POM onboard as main sponsors, plus a smattering of sceptical, but willing small players. Taking centre stage, Spurlock's investigative hound can't bite the hand that feeds it too violently, and the film gets bogged down with strategy meetings and a story about a broke Florida school using unconventional advertising methods. **Rachael Scott**



**RESTLESS**

★★★★★

**OUT OCTOBER 21**

Gus van Sant is in a morbid mood in his melancholy tale of two teenagers drawn together through a shared fascination with death. Annabel (Mia Wasikowska) has cancer and three months to live; Enoch (Henry Hopper) spends his time crashing

strangers' funerals and playing Battleships with an imaginary friend, the ghost of a WWII kamikaze pilot.

Jason Lew's screenplay doesn't ring true though — Enoch has too many idiosyncrasies and Annabel is too perpetually cheery considering the circumstances. Despite lovely performances from the two young leads and a surprisingly uplifting, low-key exit for Annabel, *Restless* is a depressing exercise. **Rachael Scott**

# In REVIEW

The month's movies reviewed and rated

5<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST -  
30<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER

## ONE DAY

★★★★★

OUT AUGUST 24

When Anne Hathaway was cast as Emma in the film adaptation of David Nicholl's best-selling novel, there was much speculation that the actress was too beautiful to play the sensible heroine and that she'd never be able to pull off a Yorkshire accent. Well, Deirdre Barlow glasses and straggly hair kept in check by a few hairgrips solved the first dilemma and a good voice coach sorted out the second. Timing is everything in Nicholl's intelligent romantic drama that follows the relationship between Emma (Hathaway) and Dexter (Jim Sturgess) over twenty years on a single day. The Danish director of the Oscar-nominated *An Education* has developed a keen eye for English culture and she skilfully casts aside the classic three-act structure to accommodate Nicholl's episodic narrative. Everything flows together seamlessly, unlike Emma and

Dexter's to-ing and fro-ing romantic entanglement. But they get there in the end despite Emma's long-term and ill-fated relationship with struggling comedian Ian (Rafe Spall) and Dexter marrying and having a child with the high maintenance Sylvie (Romola Garai). Hathaway captures Emma's understated hope that the long-running friendship between her and Dexter might one day be more than platonic and her survival instinct when it looks unlikely. It's easy to believe that this mega-famous Hollywood star is straight-laced, insecure and vulnerable. Sturgess gives Dexter a dangerous charm. He's a classic Peter Pan forced to grow up and appreciate Emma's grounded world when his Bret Easton Ellis lifestyle expires. Solid supporting roles come from Spall and Patricia Clarkson and Ken Stott as Dexter's parents. **Rachael Scott**

reviews FILM



## THE SKIN I LIVE IN

★★★★★

OUT AUGUST 26

Maestro of the bizarre, Pedro Almodóvar ventures into the world of horror and plastic surgery porn. Dr. Robert Ledgard (Antonio Banderas), is a maverick plastic surgeon, who has created a pain resistant skin. Grieving for the death of his wife and daughter, he isolates himself in the house he shares with housekeeper Marilia (Marisa Paredes) and a beautiful woman called Vera (Elena Anaya) who is kept under lock and key and spends much of her time attempting suicide. Based on the novel *Mygale* (Tarantula) by Thierry Jonquet, the director takes his preoccupation with gender identity to the extreme, getting away with every second thanks to confident storytelling. His characters' quiet acceptance of their appalling personal tragedies eventually gives way to a fresh level of calculated madness before culminating in a calm retribution of the kind Almodóvar has become

fond of. Banderas delivers his best performance for years and by casting the handsome actor as a Frankenstein figure, we are allowed a sprinkling of perverse pleasure from watching a monstrous act. The appeal of being remoulded into the perfect form or creating the partner of your fantasies surely can't be denied, begging the question of whether we would be less sympathetic towards Robert if he were unattractive. Vera unequivocally demonstrates that the skin we live in has very little to do with who we actually are and Anaya gracefully outshines the potentially belittling experience of acting much of her role naked or wearing only a flesh coloured body stocking. As we have come to expect from Almodóvar, photography is crisp and vivid. His favourite red hues persist, but the cold sexiness of surgical steel adds to the seduction. **Rachael Scott**

## COLOMBIANA

★★★★★

OUT SEPTEMBER 9

Eager to step into Angelina Jolie's kick-ass high heels, Zoe Saldana brings some class moves to a guilty pleasure revenge thriller. Directed by Olivier Megaton and co-written by Luc Besson, the man responsible for turning thirteen-year-old Natalie Portman into a child assassin in *Leon*, *Colombiana* has the *Nikita* director's fingerprints all over it. When nine-year-old Cataleya's (Amanda Stenberg) parents are murdered by the henchmen of Colombian drug lord Don Luis (Beto Benites), she begins contract killing for her gangster uncle Emilio (Cliff Curtis), picking off Don Luis' associates in her spare time, waiting patiently for her chance to ice the big cheese. While it's still rare for women to open big films, let alone action flicks, Saldana proves she has the balls to pull it off. It's also impossible to take your eyes off her slender framed beauty. Male sexual fantasies are blatantly pandered to here, but women will be equally mesmerised watching this graceful actress knocking out men twice her size. **Rachael Scott**





“Lars von Trier has become a master in creating female characters who experience breakdowns”

**MELANCHOLIA**

★★★★★  
OUT SEPTEMBER 30

Danish miserabilist Lars von Trier gets romantic about the end of the world, depicting the obliteration of mankind as a quiet wimper. His story centres around two sisters, Justine (Kirsten Dunst) and Claire (Charlotte Gainsbourg), who react very differently to the news that a planet has emerged from behind the sun and may crash into Earth. Opening with vividly retouched, but doom-laden stills to a soaring Wagner score, the film is broken into two chapters, told in the director's typical handheld style. Will Smith and Roland Emmerich weren't invited to this party. Metaphysical cries for clarification of our existence Terrence Malick-style are absent and there's no hint that a happy reunion awaits in the afterlife. Considering the shock quotient of *Antichrist*, *Melancholia* is a disaster movie that no one expected von Trier to deliver. Having suffered

acute bouts of depression, von Trier has become a master in creating female characters who experience resplendent breakdowns. They endure a hellish existence, but always escape into a peaceful reverie, even if it's due to their own demise. Justine, who suffers from severe depression, prefers to die rather than tolerate the all-consuming pain that plagues her every thought. As one of his least hysterical heroines, her journey from darkly suicidal to someone luminous with a lust for death won Dunst the Best Actress prize at Cannes, despite her director's tactless remarks about understanding Hitler. There are notable supporting roles from Kiefer Sutherland's coward and John Hurt as Justine's immature flirt of a father. Charlotte Rampling as her vitriolic mother delivers a brief, but memorably coruscating turn. **Rachael Scott**

**COWBOYS & ALIENS**

★★★★★  
OUT AUGUST 17

The clue is in the title of Jon Favreau's cheeky genre mash-up, starring Daniel Craig as Jake, the anti-hero who saves the Wild, Wild West from alien invaders with Harrison Ford's help. Imagine the shock. It's the 1870s when only birds are able to fly and Hollywood has yet to instil the malevolent nature of extraterrestrials into our collective psyche. But the posse Woodrow (Ford) commandeers to rescue loved ones pretty much get down to business. They're certainly gob smacked, but the *Iron Man* director doesn't linger on the comical, and potentially camp, aspects of the scenario. The story sticks firmly to classic western and sci-fi formulas. The cowboys are suitably gruff, enigmatic tough guys with buried soft centres – Craig channels Clint Eastwood and Ford siphons off a sober

Rooster Cogburn. Olivia Wilde plays a mysterious love interest, while Sam Rockwell's meek saloon owner learns how to shoot a gun like the big boys; and there's a faithful dog that gets left behind, but finds his way back Lassie fashion. Naturally the aliens are visually grotesque, just as bloodthirsty harvesters of humankind should be, and show signs of limited intelligence when confronted with Woodrow's makeshift army, which later comprises of Jake's former gang and a tribe of Apache; despite managing to build a spaceship the size of a skyscraper and get themselves from wherever they've come from to Earth. Conventionality aside, *Cowboys & Aliens* is an enjoyable yarn that belongs to Craig who never drops an ounce of cool and looks mighty fine in a pair of chaps. **Rachael Scott**



“The cowboys are suitably gruff, enigmatic tough guys with buried soft centres”

**RISE OF THE APES**

★★★★★  
OUT AUGUST 11



Rebooting a classic franchise can be tricky, but director Rupert Wyatt has made a valiant effort with this prequel to 1968 original. Will Rodman (Franco) is a scientist developing an Alzheimer's cure, using apes as test subjects. When ordered to shut down the experiment by this boss, he takes home Caesar, a baby chimpanzee, who has inherited enhanced intelligence from his mother. But when he is hauled off to an ape compound, he begins to formulate a plan that will ultimately lead to revolution. Plenty of nods to the original film will delight fans

and weave in to the mythology of the series. Andy Serkis provides the computer-generated Caesar with real depth, an almost soulful quality that carries the rest of the film. Franco is great as the determined scientist. Felton is fantastic as the horrendous Dodge Landon (named after two of the astronauts from the original) who has so few redeeming features he makes Draco Malfoy seem well adjusted. After Tim Burton's dire remake in 2001, *Planet Of The Apes* finally has a contemporary reincarnation to be proud of. **Natalie Peck**

**ATTENBERG**

★★★★★  
OUT SEPTEMBER 2



Twenty-three-year-old virgin Marina (Ariane Labed) is more interested in wildlife documentaries than interacting with humans and finds the idea of sex disgusting. When her father becomes terminally ill, she starts exploring her sexuality. Writer-director Athina Rachel Tsangari makes a direct correlation between sex and death, suggesting the way in which humans deal with the two is what sets them apart from other species. The characters test one's patience and the non-linear storyline feels deliberately obscure, but Tsangari has crafted an interesting debut putting her on the 'one to watch' list. **Rachael Scott**



**30 MINUTES OR LESS**

★★★★★  
OUT SEPTEMBER 16

Two deadbeats strap a bomb to a pizza delivery boy (Eisenberg), giving him ten hours to rob a bank or it's meat-feast with extra topping for everyone. Similarities to the real-life tragedy of bankrobber Brian Wells taint the fun. Eisenberg plays it lite with Danny McBride and Aziz Ansari giving a grating all. Director Ruben Fleischer slap-dashes his way through an unfunny mess that defies the logic of its own unrefined universe. **Rachael Scott**

**SARAH'S KEY**

★★★★★  
OUT AUGUST 5



Kristin Scott Thomas' journalist unearths a little known slice of France's dark history when she discovers the house her husband is renovating has disturbing connections to a Jewish family deported to a concentration camp by French authorities in 1942. Based on a best-selling novel by Tatiana De Rosnay, downplayed performances and assured direction elevate the film above familiar Holocaust territory. **Rachael Scott**

**THE DEVIL'S DOUBLE**

★★★★★  
OUT AUGUST 10

The role of a lifetime for Dominic Cooper, who gives two dynamic performances as Saddam Hussein's lunatic son Uday and his reluctant body double Latif Yahia. Based on true events, Uday's often difficult to watch depravity alongside director Lee Tamahori's fast and loose version of historical events never detracts from the enjoyment of this electrifying and relentlessly paced thriller. Equally enthralling is sultry Ludivine Sagnier. **Rachael Scott**



# In REVIEW

The month's movies reviewed and rated

OUT THIS JULY!

## THE TREE OF LIFE

★★★★★

OUT JULY 8

Cinephiles and critics alike have been brought to their knees in anticipation at the release of Terrence Malick's latest transcendental masterpiece. Covering the birth and death of the universe, this mesmerising piece of filmmaking hypnotises and intrigues and no one will be disappointed with such an exquisitely beautiful ode to the meaning of life. The story revolves around the O'Brien family in 1950s small town Texas. Eldest son Jack, played by Sean Penn in the present day, reflects on his childhood and the death of his younger brother at 19. Malick paints Jack's memories as a tussle between carefree play >

reviews FILM

under the ethereal and graceful eye of his mother (Jessica Chastain) and the must do better attitude of his disciplinarian father (Brad Pitt, particularly good). As we follow the natural ebbs and flows of the young Jack's (newcomer Hunter McCracken) childhood, not all is as idyllic as it appears behind the closed doors and the stuff-shirts of the perfect white picket fenced family. Twenty years in the making (four of those in the editing suite) Malick is a cinematic magician with a unique vision. At one point he interrupts his story with a technically superior and vastly ambitious twenty-minute mini-movie, charting the creation of the universe that bursts on to the screen like a *Planet Earth* documentary. Malick's fifth film in nearly forty years is his magnum opus and something

**“No one will be disappointed with such an exquisitely beautiful ode to the meaning of life.”**

you experience rather than merely watch. At two hours and eighteen-minutes long, it's a challenging work that's short on dialogue and solid plot and demands an element of patience. Weighty metaphysical questions (“Lord. Why? Where were you?” asks Chastain) underpin *The Tree Of Life* and even at his most impressionistic Malick makes one thing clear – people are insignificant in the greatness of the universe they inhabit. **Rachael Scott**





“As refreshing as it is to see Aniston having a break from saving the rom-com single-handedly, she doesn’t cut it as a slut.”

### HORRIBLE BOSSES

★★

OUT JULY 22

Jennifer Aniston sexually harassing a co-worker? Colin Farrell with a potbelly and a comb over? What's going on? *Horrible Bosses* plays its stars against type for shock value when three persecuted drones decide to murder their tyrannical employers played by Aniston, Farrell and a hammy Kevin Spacey.

Aniston is a sex-crazed dentist who's blackmailing her hygienist Dale (Charlie Day) in to sleeping with her. Farrell's obnoxious playboy is determined to ruin the company that Kurt (Jason Sudeikis) loves working for, and Spacey's slave driver snatches Nick's (Jason Bateman) promised promotion. With the help of Jamie Foxx's hit man consultant, the friends' pathetic plan to ice their bosses yield few unexpected results.

There's an easy chemistry between the bumbling trio and a free-flowing script garners plenty of laughs during the first half, until the ineptitude of these Keystone Kops of crime begins to grate. Seth Gordon's R-rated comedy is a subversive effort by Hollywood standards, but like its characters, it isn't brave enough to carry out the threat to its most frightening, or funniest, conclusion.

*Horrible Bosses* is a rush job cashing in on the raunchy black-humoured bandwagon left in wake of *The Hangover* and hasn't been thought through properly. As refreshing as it is to see Aniston having a break from saving the rom-com single-handedly, she doesn't cut it as a slut, her eternal girl-next-door persona overshadowing the sex-crazed nymphomaniac dropping "pussy" into the conversation at every opportunity. Whilst Spacey, Artistic Director of the Old Vic, delivers a performance fit for an audience at a church hall pantomime. Farrell, snorting coke and shagging prostitutes in his office, is the only evil boss who's mildly convincing. **Rachael Scott**

### HOLY ROLLERS

★★

OUT JULY 15

Jesse Eisenberg's devout path as a Brooklyn Hasidic Jew takes a distinct swerve towards hell when his best friend (Justin Bartha) offers him an all expenses paid trip transporting "medicine" from Amsterdam. When the penny drops, initial indignation is quickly eclipsed by his lust for the power, hedonistic lifestyle and beautiful girl (Ari Graynor) that accompanies the job description of drug trafficking kingpin.

Inspired by a true story, Kevin Asch's solid first feature is a conventional rise, fall and redemption tale sadly lacking in any real dramatic tension. Eisenberg can do coming of age arcs like this in his sleep.

**Rachael Scott**



### THE PRINCESS OF MONTPENSIER

★★★★

OUT JULY 8

Those blessed with exquisite beauty can lead dangerously complicated lives, as Mélanie Thierry's aristocratic stunner finds out when two passionate Dukes, a philosophical Count and a shy Prince, vie for her affection. Forced into a marriage of convenience to the latter, she represses her longing for Gaspard Ulliel's hot-headed hunk. Meanwhile, Lambert Wilson's tutor and confidante, along with France's future King, get hot under their ruffs in her presence.

Bertrand Tavernier's near perfectly realised melodrama boasts immaculate couture and sumptuous sets. It's an education in why feminism exists and a fascinating snapshot of 16th-century mores when honour, duty and chivalry superseded personal desire.

**Rachael Scott**

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