

SCENES

June 2026

Issue 001

**The best independant
cinemas in the UK**

The face behind Dorothy

Bethany Weaver's journey to
the Wicked: For Good set



MARVEL STUDIOS
SPIDER-MAN
 BRAND NEW DAY
 EXCLUSIVELY IN CINEMAS
COMING SOON

SCENES

EDITORIAL

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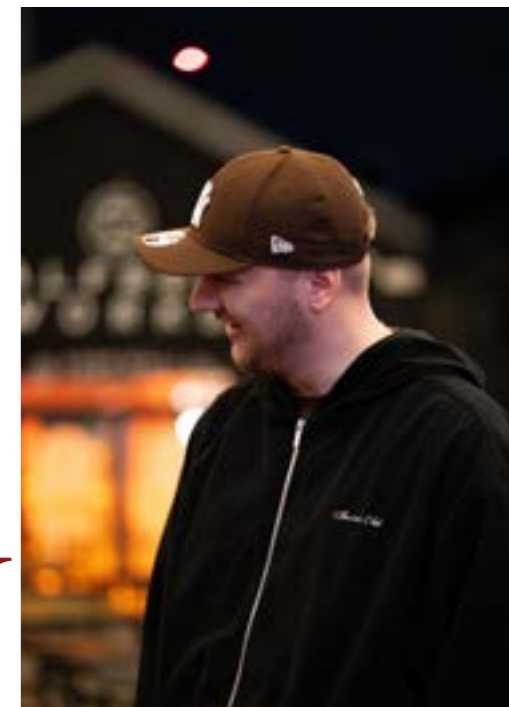
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COVER LOOK



Bethany Weaver and her journey to the *Wicked: For Good* set.
 Read interview on page 56



W

hen creating the identity of this magazine, I often referred back to the late Catherine

O'Hara's monologue in the first episode of Seth Rogan's show, *The Studio*.

It's a long one, but two parts in particular really stood out to me. She said: "It makes you stressed, panicked and miserable... But when it all comes together, and you make a good movie, it's good forever."

Stressed, panicked and miserable are three great words to describe how I've felt at several points during this process, but the accurate description of my mental state isn't the reason this speech held any significance during the creation of *Scenes*.

It is because it speaks to the essence of film. Each film, no matter how good or bad, has had hundreds, maybe thousands of people who have worked tooth and nail to bring the best product. From actors to directors, to the caterers and sound designers — each person, no matter how small, has poured their all into the films we grow to love.

This magazine is an appreciation to those hundreds of people who keep these larger-than-life film sets going. A tip of the hat to all of those who have felt stressed, panicked and miserable.

Our debut issue opens with news from around the industry. There is no bigger story than the constant fight to keep cinemas alive, so we have created a list of the best independent cinemas from across the UK which you can support.

We are excited that we are able to bring the accounts of one of the best stuntmen in the UK, who talks about his journey into the flips and tricks on set and doubling for Hollywood greats.

We are not afraid to shine a light on the issues in the industry, and Sarah Leigh talks about how she is holding the industry accountable for the lack of disability representation on film sets.

Our cover story focuses on Bethany Weaver, who went from being a dance and pilates teacher to the set of *Wicked: For Good* as Dorothy. A great story for the fools who may dream.

Like a film set, this has taken countless hours, sleepless nights and enough no's to interviews which will keep me up a few nights longer. Don't fret, we still have enough self-dignity and ideas for a new edition. They can't get rid of us that easily.

You can read all of this and much more in our first issue.

We hope you enjoy it.

Carter

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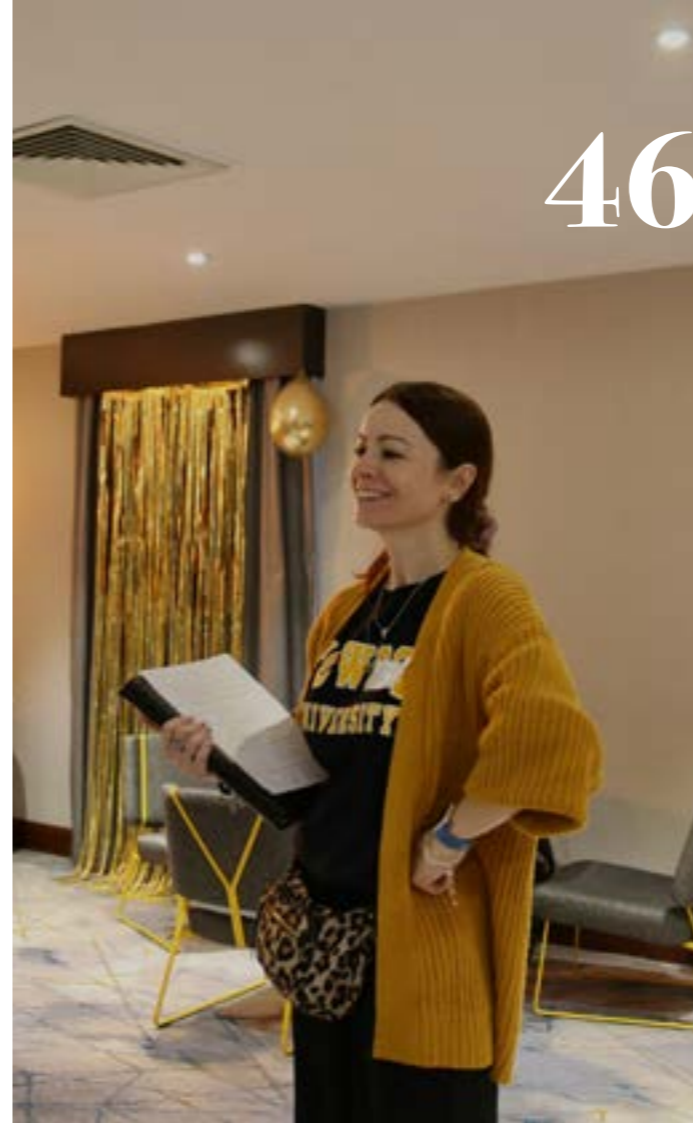
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FIRST SCENE

The biggest news and stories from the industry



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The 79th Cannes Film festival concludes

The curtain has been drawn, and the insanely long applause has finished at the 79th Cannes Film Festival, and it's Romanian director Cristian Mungiu who takes home the Palme d'Or for his new film *Fjord*. Sebastian Stan and Renate Reinsve star in Mungiu's first outing since 2024, which follows a family who travels to a remote village in Norway to start a new life before complications arise. Outside the winner, it was a controversial festival. The talk about AI in film ramped up thanks to Demi Moore and Daren Aronofsky, and there was a surprising absence from all big Hollywood studios. It wasn't all doom and gloom, however, as LGBTQ+ cinema thrived and smaller studios got a chance to shine in the absence of big corporations.



Disney go infinity, not beyond

Disney has announced a brand new certification program for Premium Large Theatres to help fans locate the best places for a fully immersive experience. Announced at CinemaCon, many speculated this comes off the back of *Avengers: Domsday* losing IMAX screens to *Dune: Part Three*. It's not confirmed, but it's quite likely. Ever the sore loser, our Disney. What does Infinity Vision mean for film fans? Well, Disney is not creating any new screens. Instead, they will be locating the pre-existing screens which comply with their standards — largest screens for maximum scale, laser projection and premium audio formats. Essentially, what Infinity Vision will do is be a label which indicates to fans which screenings will give them the best theatrical experience that are not IMAX. There are currently 75 domestic and 300 global Premium Large Formats, and Infinity Vision will help fans locate them. As for now, the only films announced for the formats are the *Avengers: Endgame* re-release and *Avengers: Domsday*. Whether non-Disney titles will be able to be branded under Infinity Vision is still unknown, but it at least shows a commitment from Disney to keep their fans turning up to the cinema.

Youtuber's horror takeover

If you asked someone ten years ago, the mere mention of a YouTuber in a Hollywood production would be a terrifying thought. So it seems fitting that the horror genre is now full of YouTubers who swapped the vlogging cameras for the director's chair. Since Danny and Michael Philippou's debut horror *Talk to Me* in 2022, many YouTubers have followed suit. Just this year alone, Markiplier has taken on acting and directing on *Ironlung*, along with Curry Baker directing *Obsession* and Kane Parson's bringing internet urban legend *Backrooms* to the big screen. Much to cinema purists' dissatisfaction, all three have had large box office success, meaning the era of YouTubers involved in films is not going anywhere. We can at least be thankful that it isn't Logan Paul making movies like they used to.



The Batman 2 filming gets underway

It's been four years of delays and uncertainty for Robert Pattinson's era of the caped crusader, but the signal has finally been cast in the air. Matt Reeves took to X to send fans into a frenzy with his casting announcement. Pattinson returns alongside Andy Serkis, Jeffery Wright and Collin Farrel along with newcomers Scarlth Johansson, Sebastian Stan and Brian Tyree Henry. It's time for vengeance to return once again.



Marilyn Monroe turns 100

June 1st marked 100 years since the birth of cinema icon Marilyn Monroe, and it'll be your chance to experience her iconic work on the big screen.



There is no AI in film

Remarks around AI used to be taboo in the film industry. It now feels like a week doesn't go by without someone endorsing it. This time, it's legendary director Martin Scorsese who has advocated for the use of AI and has joined the firm Black Forest Labs as an advisor. Does this negate all the good work he has created? No, but it's certainly a black mark on one of our great filmmakers.



That's all folks?

After an eight-month-long bidding war for the acquisition of Warner Brothers, it is David Ellison and Paramount who have beaten out Netflix for the historic company. It has been a developing situation, as originally Warner Brothers agreed to a takeover offer from Netflix in a deal worth \$82 billion. It seemed the existence of cinema was in balance. However, Paramount stepped in on February 26, 2026, with a deal worth \$110 billion, beating out their rivals. Though it may seem like a win for cinema fans, Ellison's ties to President Donald Trump have people worrying. Journalists may become silenced, as CNN will now be owned by Paramount. Director and president of the Directors Guild of America Christopher Nolan has expressed "very, very significant concerns" regarding the deal as it threatens theatrical distribution and industry jobs. This leaves fans in a precarious position, almost the equivalent of asking if you'd rather get punched in the face or the stomach. Paramount has said they will be keeping films in cinemas with a plan to extend the cinematic slate, but fans will have to wait and see if they keep to their word. As for now, the deal is expected to be finalised between July and September this year. Warner Brothers will owe Netflix a \$2 billion termination fee for pulling out the deal, a drop in the pond for the amount of money they could have received if the deal went through.

BFI announce a season of RIP IT UP

The BFI Film Audience Network has created a new UK-wide season, RIP IT UP. The new season has been introduced to celebrate and explore the transformative energy and changing face of youth rebellion culture and expression on screen. Travelling across the country to places such as Bath, Derry, Derby, and more, it will feature many events, such as Q&A screenings, live music, graffiti workshops, film tours, and more. It is aiming to focus on the youth, hoping to empower young voices and creative talent from not just the film industry, but music, fashion, spoken word, craft and more. It will take place from June to October, 2026 with more events to be announced in the coming weeks. If you want to go along to an event, you can visit Ripitup.org.uk to locate your closest event.



Moana takes to the live action seas

Dwayne Johnson returns to bring Moana to the live action

Moana is having its tenth birthday, and Disney are celebrating the big milestone by continuing their controversial but wildly profitable live-action remakes with the sea princess.

Samoan actress Catherine Laga'aia is taking on the role of Moana in her first-ever feature-length role, alongside Dwayne Johnson, who will be returning as cocky demigod Maui.

The film will follow the events of the animation closely — Moana will answer the Ocean's call to venture beyond the comforts of her home. She will convince Maui to go with her on the journey to mend the heart of Te Fiti.

It begs the question: why are they doing this again?

Since its announcement on April 3rd 2023, and the trailer release on March 23, 2026, many fans have dubbed the studio 'creatively bankrupt,' wondering why they decided to remake a story which only had its sequel two years ago.

According to director Thomas Kali, there are many reasons to bring this story away from animation. "One of the core reasons was the opportunity to preserve and try to take the culture of the Pacific Islands and put it in the photo-real world," he said.

Johnson, who is a producer on the film, agrees with the sentiment held by the director. "I wear this culture proudly on my skin and in my soul, and this is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to reunite with Maui, inspired by the mama and the spirit of my late grandfather, High Chief Peter Maivia, is one that runs very deep for me," he said.

The hope for the cast and crew is that they will reach a new audience of people who turn their nose up at animation.



TOP: Catherine Laga'aia as Moana

MIDDLE: The ocean calls to Moana

BOTTOM: Dwayne Johnson puts on the wig for Maui

"Hopefully you'll get all the people that watch the animated film, and also some folks that might say, 'Animation is not for me, but I'll step into this experience,'" Kali said.

At least in comparison, there is a clear love and passion from the people involved, which isn't them wanting a Scrooge McDuck pool full of gold.

It will be released in the UK on July 10, 2026 and be Disney's only live action remake until *Tangled* next year.



Pictures by: @chrisdockermmedia

90 seconds on the clock

Can you make a film with a 90 runtime? That's the question Espresso 90 film festival asks filmmakers

It's a Thursday evening, and the last remnants of the winter breeze gust through the streets of Birmingham. It's a chilly one, but it hasn't deterred film lovers from making their way to the city's creative quarter.

Inside Digbeth's Custard Factory creative hub, people of all ages have started arriving at the humble independent Mockingbird Cinema. However, they are not here to watch their very own Tommy Shelby's final outing on the big screen, but instead for Espresso 90, a film festival solely for 90-second-long films.

Created by lecturers Dan Finnemore and Matt Prentice, the festival was originally started for their students to see their work seen on the big screen. It worked to great effect as one of their former students, Tommy Read, decided to start it back up after the pandemic hit.

"Not only for me, but for a lot of students, it was building a lot of confidence and just seeing your film on the big screen was a boost for it," Tommy says. He is now the co-founder of the IMA festival based in the West Midlands. In his newfound role, the first thing he wanted to do was bring back Espresso 90.

"Top of the list was, 'let's bring back Espresso'. We wanted to try to share that opportunity again with other people. Luckily, we've got some very nice people who obviously support us as well. It wouldn't be possible on my own," he says.

He was right to do so. As more people arrive, the atmosphere increases. Past film-makers are here to support first-timers who nervously wait outside. It has grown from strength to strength since returning to the streets of Birmingham, now currently in its seventh year and returning to a sold-out crowd.

If you're thinking the 90-second run time is another way to

try to accommodate the younger generations' ever-decreasing attention span, don't worry. The run time was picked as it was the perfect mix of being challenging for veteran film-makers and digestible for first-time creatives.

"It was really achievable for students to be able to do, but it's also a challenge. Anyone who has made a film in 90 seconds that actually makes sense and is coherent will know it's really difficult to do," Tommy says.

"I always found I really liked the balance of it. It was open for people to have a go who had never made a film before in their lives. But if you've made loads of films, then it's something you can get together with a bit of a crew and go, 'all right, let's try and enter this thing and let's see what's possible.'"

It had been quite the start to the day for Tommy. The event consists of judges who award two winners at the end of the night and then have a talk with the people in the audience to help them at the start of their careers.

Usually that's the case. In the morning, three of the four judges had to drop out due to illness and prior engagements. Not ideal. Luckily, the remaining judge, Matt Taylor, the Creative Director and Co-Director of Method in Motion, was able to pull in a favour and get one more judge in.

Im sure no one was more glad than he was when an excited buzz started to fill the air, and people arrived in their numbers.

There were 22 films on display for the day, and none alike. Filmmaker Maria Audert Samudro took an animated route with their short *Friends With Pigs*. Lewis Hooper chose a comedy with his short *Butter Bunny's* — a film about killer bunny cookies — and Ismay Sanders decided to take a more vulnerable route with *The Queer Archive*.

Each film exuded individuality and a high level of quality. The range of shorts on display is what Tommy loves so much



THREE PHOTOS: The award, the winner and the audience at Espresso 90

about the event. "What I really love about this festival is that it gives you that freedom to say, 'I'm just going to have a go,'" he says.

One of the filmmakers giving it a go was Jason Kok. He is a student at Kingston University and had the festival recommended to him by one of his lecturers. His film was called *The Last Shot*, a short about someone trying to beat their friend at basketball.

"As we only have 90 seconds, there are limitations for us as to how we explain the plot of our story within a short time, and meanwhile still make it interesting. It's very fun and satisfying after we've made it," he says.

The festival awards a Best Young Filmmaker and an overall winner. Tommy's bad luck continued as the first winner, Clarissa Kumala, who won best young filmmaker for *Full of Sh*t*, was not in attendance. Luckily, the overall winner, Maxwell Cavenham for *The Nine Lives of Charlie Dickinson*, was in attendance to receive the award.

The minds behind Espresso 90 are excited to keep helping filmmakers get their start. That's what Sammy Ha, Co-Founder of IMA Festival, loves the most about it. "It's so nice seeing the reaction of the filmmakers. I look back at the photographs after each event, and it's nice seeing the smiling faces. Watching people meeting each other for the first time and being able to facilitate them seeing their film on the big screen for the first time is really special," she says.

Tommy hopes it keeps growing in the future, but for now, he just hopes next year is smoother sailing than this one.



Causing a Scene

The up and coming actors from the UK making their names known in the industry.

Owen Cooper

Since debuting in Netflix's record-breaking TV show *Adolescence*, 16-year-old Owen Cooper has been living the dream. He has swept up at award season, beating out Hollywood giants for his role as the troubled teenager Jamie. His talents led him to the set of Emerald Fennell's *Wuthering Heights*, in the role of a young Heathcliff. Since then, he has been busy, having a role in British thriller *Foxfinder* and Tom Ford's adaptation of the novel *Cry to Heaven*.

Mia McKenna-Bruce

After leaving the *Dumping Ground* for good, Mia McKenna-Bruce has started to find her footing in the film industry. Establishing herself in Molly Manning Walker's *How to Have Sex*, McKenna-Bruce has booked herself a role in the four-part *Beatles* biopic as Ringo's first wife, Maureen Starklet.

Jay Lycurgo

You don't get much better starts to your career than impressing Cillian Murphy, and that is the reality Lycurgo finds himself in. First showcasing his talent in *Steve*, he put on the flat cap and appeared alongside Barry Keoghan in *Peaky Blinders: The Immortal Man*. It's his talent which continues to see him rise through the industry. Most recently, he had role in Cannes, premiering *I See Buildings Fall Like Lightning*.



I'll see you at the **Movies**

As the war against streaming rages on, there is no better time to go support your independent cinema. Here are some of the best places across the UK where you can and help keep cinemas alive.

Before, before, if you wanted to go watch a film at the cinema 20 years ago, you would have had plenty of affordable options. You could have gone to a multiplex and not had to spend extortionate amounts on food and drink. Or, you could have gone independent and helped support your local community.

Now, not so much. According to statistics by the Independent Cinema Office, the future is grim. Thanks to the rising costs since COVID and the cost-of-living crisis, many audiences find themselves waiting for the newest films to hit streaming services.

It's not hard to see why. If you are planning to go on your own, buying a ticket as well as food and drink is going to cost you upwards of £25. If you're a family, it's a lot more out of your pocket, with prices sometimes rising upwards of £50.

It's unsustainable, and it is starting to show.

This leaves cinemas in a dangerous spot. According to the same statistics, only 41% of respondents are confident that they could survive in the next three years without capital support. Institutions which have stood for over 100 years now risk being closed down, and hubs for the community threaten to exist no more.

It's not all doom and gloom. The head of cinema at the Independent Cinema Office has been on record saying there has been a positive rise in young audiences engaging with independent cinema, but they won't be enough to keep them open.

Independent cinemas across the UK hang in the balance and need help from all age groups to keep them alive. Here are some of the best independent cinemas across the UK which you can go and support



The Mockingbird Cinema, Birmingham

London Prince Charles Cinema

When it comes to cinemas in London, you don't get more popular than Prince Charles Cinema. Currently staring down the barrel of closure, there have been more than 150,000 signatures in favour of keeping the West End Cinema alive, and for good reason.

Its affordable prices and catering to film enthusiasts have made it a go-to spot for film fans across the country.

One of Prince Charles Cinema's regulars is film critic Aaminah Saleem, who appreciates the variety on display. "It's my favourite in London, because there is nowhere else with the diversity of programming which highlights and showcases gorgeous prints of films that deserve to be seen on the big screen," she says. "The experience of seeing the curtains open and being in a venue which stands out as an independent gem amongst the chains of Central London is unrivalled."

She isn't the only one who carries this sentiment. Journalist Danny Bremner agrees and also believes that this cinema offers an experience like no other. "You can go get a bit of everything. Pristine remasters of vintage classics, charming 35mm prints of action masterpieces, themed all-nighters, obscure and popular films. They really show everything," he says.

Birmingham Mockingbird Cinema

Located in the stylishly named Custard Factory cultural quarter, the Mockingbird Cinema is a small but mighty space for film fans to indulge in the medium. It holds frequent Q&As of emerging film-makers as well as event throughout the year



Tyneside Cinema, Newcastle

in its two cinema rooms. Its homely atmosphere is perfect for those looking to watch a film with a close-knit community.

Oxford The Ultimate Picture Palace

Standing as Oxford's oldest and only independent cinema, The Ultimate Picture Palace is currently campaigning to stay alive, as fears grow that its lease will not be renewed past 2037. The currently community-owned cinema has been recognised as a community asset by the city council, offering the people of Oxford a place to watch independent films, new releases and classics which you can't get anywhere else in the city.

Steven Endersby is the marketing & communications manager at the cinema, and

his love for the cinema is what led him to the job. "I'm a massive film fan, and I love going to the cinema, and I think that the UPP offers a sense of community, that ability to indulge in passion and experience art, and this is the most affordable way to do so," he says.

Newcastle Tyneside Cinema

"Working at Tyneside Cinema means championing the kind of cinema experience that brings people together — not just to watch films, but to connect, question, celebrate and feel part of something bigger," says Hannah, the head of marketing and engagement at Tyneside Cinema. Standing for nearly 100 years, the Geordie cinema's historic interior has captured the hearts of the community. It specialises in independent, arthouse and classic films, offering a unique perspective to multiplexes. You will be blasted with nostalgia and be surrounded by fellow passionate film fans, giving the films you are watching that extra bit of excitement.

Leeds Hyde Park Picture House

Standing strong for 112 years, Hyde Park Picture House has survived the evolution of cinema becoming a staple piece for film fans from the Yorkshire city. The cinema prides itself on delivering a more classic and vintage experience being the only cinema in the UK which still uses gas lighting and has a ticket stand. Who doesn't love a ticket stand? Watch a film here and it'll be like your back watching a film in the 1900s, but with the pristine picture quality of modern era cinema screens.



Hyde Park Picture House, Leeds

Bath The Little Theatre

Bath delivers on the city's rich aesthetic with The Little Theatre, located right next to the city's famous Spar. As the city's only independent cinema, it offers a cosy, intimate atmosphere in a more classic screening setting. Don't take my word for it; take Wes Anderson's, who says it is one of his favourite cinemas and even put it in his 2009 film *Fantastic Mr Fox*. It's for those reasons that film fan Alice Shaw loves watching new film releases at The Little Theatre.

"Since moving to Bath for University, I have loved going to The Little Theatre. It is unique in comparison to the other cinemas in the city and is affordable, which, when I was a student, was crucial. It really feels like you are all watching the film together," she says.

Manchester HOME

Opened by Danny Boyle, the aptly named cinema is Manchester's home for the best independent experience. Affordable for families and hosting over 6,500 screenings a year, it has become one of the most culturally significant spots in the UK.

Liverpool Plaza Community Centre

BAFTA award winner for The Love of Film award, the Plaza Community Cinema has captured the hearts of scousers to its community setting. After nearly being demolished in 1995, the cinema was saved by a campaign which was started by a 12-year-old boy. If nothing else go and visit it for its cool exterior.

Leicester Phoenix Cinema

If you're looking to be inspired by the arts, a trip to Leicester's Phoenix Cinema is a great place to do so. Surrounded by the arts in the city's cultural corner, the cinema has been able to stay afloat through uncertain times thanks to its core audience of film lovers and catering to its own fanbase. The staff handpick the films they show exclusively for the Leicester audience, leading to micro-budget indies and movie marathons. Noah Procter is an avid goer to the Phoenix, who values the cinema experience the phoenix offers in comparison to others. "The frequent events at the Phoenix is what makes me choose them instead of the other cinemas. I'd much rather go watch a film which is more community led than go to a chain cinema," he says.

London Regent Street Cinema

The Prince Charles Cinema may be a fan favourite in London, but the Regent Street Cinema still receives love from the city's film fans. It has been dubbed "The birthplace of British Cinema, opening its doors in 1848 and still standing strong over 100 years later. It has continued to thrive throughout the years as a piece of history, offering moviegoers a range of new releases as well as showing films which date back earlier than 1950s.

Sheffield Showroom Cinema

The people of Sheffield have Sir David Attenborough to thank for their independent cinema. He decided to launch an urban revitalisation project to transform what was a derelict 1930s car showroom into the thriving cultural centre and independent cinema. It acts as the home of Sheffield Doc Festival and offers a wide variety of screenings, sometimes partnering with the University of Sheffield to offer family-friendly screenings for parents with newborns. It also made an appearance in an Arctic Monkey's video, *Leave before the Lights Come On* from 2006.



The Ultimate Picture Palace, Oxford

Bristol

Watershed

Located next to the River Avon, Watershed has picked up an array of accolades since its opening. It has been featured on the 100 best movie places in the world by Time Out, and has been a pillar for inclusivity in the city. It has also garnered a reputation for some tasty nachos, which Edward Callow, a former Bristolian, agrees with. "They have no right being as good as they are," he says, but it's not the only reason he loves. "There are great options in London, but I do still miss going to the Watershed. Maybe it's nostalgia, but there was something magical about watching a film there next to the river. It's definitely somewhere I try to go when I'm back home."



the South Coast, and its bar is decorated with origami flowers which have been crafted from recycled film posters. It's all in the details.

Cardiff CHAPTER

Chapter stands as one of Europe's largest dynamic art complexes, and it hosts a range of film festivals. Most predominantly, it hosts Cardiff Animation Festival, Kotatsu (Japanese Animation Festival) and SAFAR. It is one of the many extracurricular events the cinema offers, as their first cinema room is used for film talks, premiers, and Q&As. Erin McKay, despite being from Neath, loved Chapter on the occasions she went to the cinema. "It just offered a close-knit experience which was hard to find anywhere else. It is also very comfy and cosy, which is an added bonus," she says.

Nottingham

Broadway Cinema

The breeding place for iconic UK filmmaker Shane Meadows, Nottingham's Broadway cinema is widely respected in the country. It featured in Total Film magazine's top 10 cinemas in the world. If you're going to go, make sure you go into screen four, as iconic Nottingham fashion designer Sir Paul Smith designed the inside, featuring a 35-distinctively coloured big strip design.

Norwich

Cinema City

You can watch a film steeped in history at Norwich's Cinema City. The building's origins date back all the way to the 16th century, lending itself to a cosy and mediaeval atmosphere. It's renovation in 2009 won an award for excellence from the Norwich Society

It's a great place for you to immerse yourself in a historical film.

Portsmouth

No.6 Cinema

If you have ever found yourself annoyed at waiting for the adverts to finish and you're on the South Coast, No.6 cinema is the place for you. They keep it classic. No adverts, no trailers. All you need to do is arrive on time and watch your film. It's not the only reason you should give it a go; it has one of the biggest screens on

Edinburgh

Dominion Cinema

It's a family affair in Dominion Cinema, Edinburgh, as it has been owned by the Cameron family since 1938. Greats such as Judi Dench have watched films in this cinema, and it's clear to see why: It offers in-seat table service with wine, pizza and nachos, which you can get delivered right to your seat, and screens have reclining armchairs and footstalls. It's good to know that if the film is bad, you'll be comfy enough to have a relaxing nap instead.

UK

Many, many more-

All cities across the country will have their own independent cinema with its own quirks. Whether its one we have listed or another, go and support your local independent cinema today.

Chapter, Cardiff

Photo by: Kirsten McTernan



Here comes the biopic

As we gear towards Sam Mendes four film epic about Britain's best ever band, here are the different tones we believe each separate film should pick

Behind the Scenes

The four lessons Anna McNutt has learnt from being a producer of films *The Bunker*, *Babythump*, *For Him* and the assistant producer on *Die My Love*.

Keeping progress

"The role of a producer is extremely dependent on the project, but the bottom line is to keep the project moving forward. This includes packaging the project, finding and securing funding, casting, and supporting the director's ensemble of the core team."

Support

"My greatest responsibility is to ensure that the director feels they have the support, team and resources to execute their vision - and ensuring that this vision is being delivered to the best of their ability in terms of quality, but also accessibility for an audience."

Adaptability

"No one day looks the same. You could be liaising with transport on pick-ups and drop-offs of your boss to set, booking flights for when your boss needs to go home/ come back on set, helping prep a room for a table read, gathering the casting list for auditions, etc."

Networking

"With each project, I've worked on a bigger budget and larger crew, which has been wonderful to connect with different talented people. Try to meet as many people as possible. The friends you make along the job feed into the work you continue to do. Treasure those relationships."

John Lennon

Not many celebrity relationships have captured the attention of the public more than John Lennon and Yoko Ono. It was a tumultuous 14 years for the couple. Breakups, substance abuse, miscarriages — you name it. They endured it all. So it would feel like a missed opportunity not to focus on the relationship which surrounded the band. Haris Dickinson and Anna Sawai as the couple will be up to the task of bringing the nuance that this relationship needs.

Paul McCartney

As the only standing member of the band, there are many avenues you could go with Paul McCartney, but none would be more enthralling than focusing on his relentless drive and perfectionism. You have the potential to go Damien Chazelle *Whiplash* but with a positive attitude instead of crippling anxiety.

Ringo Star

While all controversies and band difficulties grow larger in the other films, it would be a nice change of pace to have Ringo in a world of his own. Known for being a tension relief in the band, his film could offer such to the rest of the films and focus on the drug trip life that the 60s was.

George Harrison

There was a chip on the shoulder of George Harrison, and there is also one on Joseph Quinn. The pair both had to prove their talent and belonging in their own respective spaces, so you don't get much better casting. A film honing in on them pushing to prove their worth could be a good one for motivation.





LGBTQ+ as now seen on screen

Section 28 stopped visibility for the LGBTQ+ community for years, now Harry Faint is making sure they are seen and heard again

In Spring 1988, Margaret Thatcher's government passed a controversial law called Section 28 — an act which prohibited local authorities from promoting homosexuality by 'teaching or publishing material' and from teaching 'the acceptability of homosexuality as a pretend relationship'.

It was a highly contested act on arrival and one the LGBTQ+ community wasn't going to be quiet about. Thousands across the UK united in the streets to protest against the law as a demonstration of visibility. It was hard though and after 25 years, on 18 November 2003, the act was revoked. The dark cloud that had been cast above the LGBTQ+ community had finally started to have rays of sunshine push through.

Though the law was removed, the ramifications are still felt for LGBTQ+ across England in all walks of life and industries. The implications on the film industry were no different.

As of 2026, it is still harder for an LGBTQ+ person to break into the industry than it is for someone who is straight. LGBTQ+ filmmakers across England are working hard to make sure the opportunities are equal for everyone. One of these filmmakers is Harry Faint.

"I really want people to be able to tell their own stories. I think that kind of cuts across all humanity, not necessarily just queer individuals. We're interested in supporting storytellers telling their own story. We're trying to tell these space stories

from spaces which aren't kind of metropolises," says Harry.

Harry, 31, is a film director and teacher at Falmouth University. Based in the South-West of England he is working hard to make sure LGBTQ+ people in his community have the opportunity to work on all aspects of a film set.

The toxic legacy of Section 28 was prevalent in Harry's life growing up. Most predominantly, he felt it on his Prom night.

A few weeks before the event, Harry and his then-boyfriend had won the vote for Prom King and King. However, it wasn't a royal chariot that awaited them; it was a dethroning. Although the rightful heirs to the throne, his teachers stopped the vote from going ahead because they believed the vote was a result of the young couple being bullied.

Harry knew this wasn't the case. His classmates loved him and his then-boyfriend. "When it happened to me, I was so angry because I was like 'this is ridiculous', this is supposed to be something joyful," says Harry, who for a long time felt confused about why such a thing happened.

He spent many years angry and annoyed at that night. That was until he became a teacher himself, then he started to understand. "When I became a teacher, I was like 'oh, I get it' I get the angle, and I get the circumstance... I'm glad that I took the time to understand the other side," says Harry.

He wants to make sure conversations about gender and sexuality are happening in safe spaces so people can start to



LEFT AND RIGHT: Harry on set working on *The Boy* and *Lymp*

understand people's experiences.

"We're all human, we just have different experiences with who we love or the gender we identify as. I'm just interested in telling the right stories," says Harry.

Harry knows how it feels to think you don't have a voice. He himself spent many years thinking he couldn't make films. Until one day, his friend and writer Natayls Wilcox sent him a script. It was a dramatised story based on his prom night called *King Henry*.

"It was very cathartic to put that time to bed because I feel like I spent most of my early 20s being angry about what it felt like. It was a really nice kind of recognition," says Harry.

It was a long process to get the 12-minute short finished. It cost £16,000 to make and took a lengthy ten months to finish after receiving its first bit of funding. It was a long journey, but one Harry is thankful for.

"I had always wanted to make films while studying at Falmouth University, but it wasn't until I became a teacher that I realised I had a voice and was in a position to make something," Harry says. He has found his voice as a filmmaker. Now, he is making sure others have a chance.

"What I try to pass on to the students that I teach is that

you have a voice that is different to the person next to you. I'm interested in what that voice is. If you're able to help tell someone's story, that's the coolest thing," Harry says passionately. He wants to be the role model he wished he had growing up.

With that goal in mind, he has co-founded a film company called *fylmankoth*, which is intending to help LGBTQ+ people tell their stories.

Since its inception, Harry has created two other short films called *Jockstrap* and *Lymp*, both of which focus on experiences Harry countered as a gay man. Early this year, Harry produced a new short film called *The Boy*, a western about a transgender woman searching for a lost boy, created and written by Isla Ley, which is currently in post-production.

Authentic queer stories deserve to be told freely, and Harry's company has started taking strides in ensuring that these creatives are being heard both in front and behind the camera.

"We're all human, we just have different experiences with who we love or the gender we identify as. I'm just interested in telling the right stories," says Harry.

Section 28's impact may always be felt, but he hopes that with his work, there will be equal opportunities for everyone.

Scenes LGBTQ+ spotlight

The best films which focus on the LGBTQ+ community

All of Us Strangers

In a journey of acceptance, Adam Scott and Paul Mescal star in a showcase of the acceptance of your own sexual identity growing up in the 80s, and reclaiming the power of love. It's powerful, but it's beyond heartbreaking; make sure to have some tissues on standby.

Portrait of a Lady on Fire

If they are going to take the Set in 18th-century France, director Céline Sciamma pairs artistic expression with memory for the two lovers who can't be together. Dealing with the expectations of the patriarchy, *Portrait of a Lady on Fire* is devastating.

I Saw the TV Glow

Jane Schoenbrun's haunting coming-of-age story is a crushing visceral depiction of the trans experience. Going heavy on the 90s nostalgia and horror, Schoenbrun captures the feeling of suppression, but reassures trans viewers that there is always time to be the true you.

Moonlight

Barry Jenkins takes us on the journey of accepting your true self while being surrounded in masculine areas. By focusing on a marginalised area, Jenkins shows the struggles of acceptance many people have to face, thanks to the ridicule from these homophobic areas.

Back with the old, out with the new

Admire a low number of people going to the cinema, I believe they are sitting on a gold mine. Why are cinemas nationwide not re-releasing classic films in cinemas?

Anything that usually follows an older person saying 'back in my day' is, more often than not, the clearest indication that what they are about to say is complete drivel.

However, the rare occasion where it is not painful to the ears is when they recall stories of them going to the cinema as a child.

I'll often hear people reminisce about when they first saw a T-Rex wreak havoc in *Jurassic Park*. Or when *E.T.* made little Elliot fly into the sky as he and his friends were being chased by government agents. Or when they first saw Michael J. Fox's undeniably charming Marty McFly zip off into the past to escape the terrorists in the DeLorean.

That's not me saying I haven't been treated to my own fair share of iconic, jaw-dropping films in my time, but I can't help but feel jealous that I haven't been able to catch some of the classic masterpieces on the big screen.

Last year was the 40th anniversary of Robert Zemeckis's sci-fi masterpiece *Back to the Future*, and it had a wide re-release in the UK. As someone who hadn't watched it before — scandalous, I went 21 years without watching it, but that's another ridiculous story for another day — I was determined not to miss it.

I wasn't the only person enticed by the prospect of seeing Christopher Lloyd's undeniable portrayal of Doc Brown in all its glory. It had attracted a wide range of film lovers.

There were older people, people my age, and, more wholesomely, parents bringing their kids to have them watch what was most likely a formative film growing up for them filled the rest of the seats.

It was a fantastic atmosphere. To my surprise, even the kids were enjoying it. I don't want to assume on behalf of these families, but I'd guess if they were watching at home, these kids would have been scrolling TikTok before Marty's band even had their audition.

Which lies in the beauty of having

'We shouldn't be punishing people for not being alive when these films were being released'



this film released back into cinemas. Not only do parents get to share the experience they once had with their kids, but younger people in general are able to appreciate the spectacle of these films and how they were supposed to be seen.

Amidst cinema attendance being at an all-time low, I believe they are sitting on a gold mine. Why are multiplexes across the UK not re-releasing old films all year round, which are not tied to a film's anniversary? It seems like a no-brainer.

I'm sure countless people would love the chance to re-live their childhood and watch these films on the big screen again. At the very least, I know people like me would love the chance to experience a wide range of classics at the cinema.

After all, *Back to the Future* made \$5.2 million on its return to the cinema internationally.

It's no surprise that Prince Charles Cinema in London has kept up its revenue throughout the uncertainty. The model of having old films clearly has an opportunity to work.

The thinking behind Prince Charles Cinema should be adopted across the country.

I'm not asking for much. It could be as simple as starting off as one weekend a month you dedicate to old releases. Or, just have them constantly available throughout the week. It doesn't have to be a complicated ordeal. I'm not expecting a *Mission: Impossible*-type mission to get this to work.

We shouldn't be punishing people for not being alive when these films were being released. They should not be missing out on seeing actors and directors at the peak of their powers on the big screen just because, at the time, their parents were only just undergoing puberty.

Let younger people be able to see the films the way they were intended, and I'm sure cinema's pockets will start to fill out more.

Let's do as the film says and bring these classics back to the future.



You've got a friend in tech

Woody, Buzz and Jessie return in **Toy Story 5** for their biggest threat to playtime yet

Woody and the gang have had to face many toys in the thirty years since they debuted, but in their new outing, *Toy Story 5*, they will have to face the newest craze that is threatening the existence of toys — technology.

Following the events of *Toy Story 4*, Woody (Tom Hanks) is back to help Buzz (Tim Allen), Jessie (Joan Cusack), and the rest of the gang face off against Lilypad (Greta Lee), a brand-new tablet with new ideas on what is best for Bonnie.

It's a big reunion as all the original cast are returning, as well as Randy Newman, who is back to do the score for a fifth time. This time, Andrew Stanton, the writer of all four *Toy Story* movies and the mind behind many of Pixar's most iconic films, is stepping into the director's chair for this film.

When asked why he decided to take the reins this time around, he said: "Somebody might fuck it up... I've always been a writer or involved in the writing of the other *Toy Story* movies. I said, 'Let me just write our first draft of what I would like to see.'"

It's no surprise his mind went to taking on technology. Staring at the screen has become the new craze for kids across the globe and the latest headache for their parents. Although Lilypad may be the next thing disrupting playtime, Stanton doesn't see the iPad as a villain.

"We're not getting rid of these devices, no matter how hard

we try. I'm always going to have my phone. I'm always going to be partially addicted to it. So it felt right for the toys to have to grapple with that nuance."

Tom Hanks nearly didn't return to the franchise after the first draft didn't include Woody. "I do admit that I didn't know how to bring him back first, and so... I just wrote the first draft without him just to see if I missed him."

There was clearly a cowboy-shaped void in Stanton's heart as he did decide to bring Hanks and Woody back, but he is supporting a new bald patch. In response to his new look, Hanks said: "You put a rubber hat on top of a rubber head again and again and again and again, something's gonna chafe."

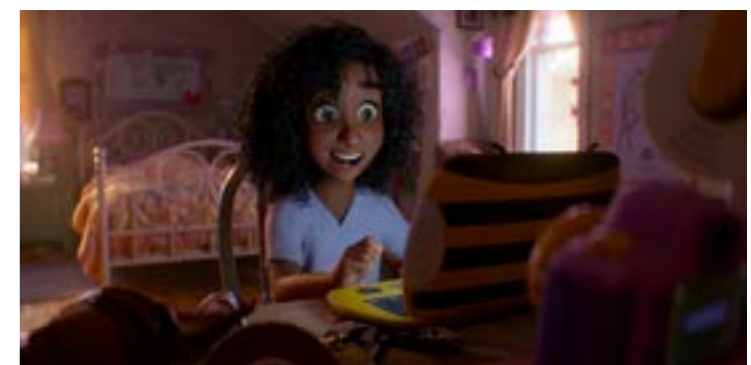
Toy Story 5 will hit theatres on June 19th in the UK, for the next iteration of Pixar's most famous franchise.



ABOVE: Woody and Buzz take matters into their own hands

ABOVE RIGHT: Newly introduced Blaze, described as a spunky, funky, equestrian horse girl

BOTTOM RIGHT: Jessie talks to other technology in the house



Will it be the last? I wouldn't count on it. If they weren't going to stop at three, I don't see it stopping now, and neither does Stanton.

"There would be two movies' worth of *Toy Story* material to explore next. Maybe not with Bonnie, but a different character as a focal point."

Let's look forward to a fully bald Woody or Jessie with a walking stick.

The name's ...

Under the new agency of Denis Villeneuve, the 007 needs a new face, and here are our picks for the suave agent.

5.

Jacob Elordi

If they are going to take the trip over the Atlantic Ocean, it feels as though Jacob Elordi would be a clear favourite. He has soared to new heights since his performance in *Euphoria* and his Oscar nomination in *Guillermo del Toro*, so he definitely has the skills. But standing at 6 ft 5 in, his stature may prove too big for the agent.

4.

Riz Ahmed

If the manifestation is to be believed, we should see Riz Ahmed suiting up anytime now. His hit show *Bait* may be set in fiction, but seeing him as the new 007 shouldn't be out of the realm of possibility. After all, it could be a nice change of pace after Daniel Craig for Britain's most famous spy to come from Pakistani descent.

3.

Callum Turner

Currently bookies' favourite. Callum Turner will be looking to ride the high he is on from marrying Dua Lipa to stepping into the role of Bond. He has the charisma and has proved to be a good yearner for a girl in *Eternity*. He ticks the boxes, but he may still be on the older side if Amazon is looking for a long stint of movies

2.

Aaron Taylor-Johnson

Sometimes the safest option is correct. Aaron Taylor-Johnson would be a perfect Bond. He has been a spy before, and his long career in British cult classics lends itself perfectly to the role. Make no mistake: if it is to be Taylor-Johnson for the role, it would be more than deserved, but it feels as though we need a new change of pace for the agent.

1.

Damson Idris

"This ain't Gucci, this is Prada darlin,'" Damson Idris smoothly uttered to a *Met Gala* reporter in 2024, spoken like a true Bond. He is the full package: a cheeky smile, a strong English accent, and he wears a suit like he is a model. Added bonus: he has the acting chops to pull it off. If it isn't Idris holding a Martini glass, we have missed a trick.

Reviews

Our opinions about the biggest film releases from the last few months



13 Feb - May 26



Peaky Blinders: The immortal Man

Director: Tom Harper

Cast: Cillian Murphy, Barry Keoghan, Tim Roth

Release Date: 6th March, 2026

IT'S BEEN FOUR years since the conclusion of Peaky Blinders six-season run, and it was hard to know whether anyone still cared about the show. After all, Cillian Murphy has gone on to win an Academy Award for Oppenheimer, and the number of lads dressing up like the razor blade gang has thankfully decreased.

Director Tom Harper would answer this question in the Shelby family's first movie outing, Peaky Blinders: The Immortal Man.

Six years on from when Thomas Shelby galloped away on his horse, things have gone from bad to worse in Birmingham. The destruction of World War 2 is in full swing, and his gypsy son Duke (A surprisingly great Barry Keoghan) has brought the Peaky Blinders back to their thuggish ways.

Where does that leave Tommy? Well, he is writing an autobiography far away from the gritty streets of Birmingham. He resides in an empty mansion with only his loyal friend Johnny Dogs (Packy Lee) and the figures of his past that haunt him.

It's a familiar script. There is a bad guy, this time in the form of Tim Roth's Beckett, a Nazi ally who plans to betray England with Duke's help. Reluctantly, Tommy has to leave the quiet life behind and go save the day one last time. It's not dissimilar to what we have seen in the TV show.

The issue, however, is that this isn't a TV show. You don't have six hours to build up these new characters. You have 112 minutes. This leads the film's narrative to feel a little uneven throughout.

You can get away with Tommy not arriving in Birmingham until the end of episode two. But you can't get away with waiting until over half of the movie is done for him to set foot on the hallowed turf of Small Heath - especially considering it is one of the best moments of the show when he does.

There are great character moments throughout, namely with Sophie Rundle's Ada and Duke's eccentric aunt, played by Rebecca Ferguson. But it's Murphy who obviously steals the show. He wears that three-piece suit and tweed flap cap like a suit of armour, commanding your attention every time he graces the screen.

Although it lacks the tension synonymous with the series, it remains a serviceable ending to one of the all-time great TV shows. It's time to retire the shoddy haircuts and put the show in a wagon and watch as it burns in all its glory.

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Rating



Disremember

Director: Matthew Simpson
Cast: Matthew Simpson
Release Date: 27th January



WHEN MATTHEW SIMPSON first started his solo venture, *Disremember* - a film that was made with zero budget and no crew outside of Matthew himself - he wasn't even sure he would finish it. Which is understandable; the mere thought of having to go through the whole creative process on your own caused me obscene amounts of stress just thinking about it.

However, after a long 20-day shoot and a post-production process which took longer than a year, *Disremember* had finally been finished.

It follows Rob, an ex-military man who often sees himself at the bottom of a bottle, who has started experiencing unexplained blackouts. After waking up in his friend's flat with no recollection of how he got there, Rob is forced to face his unexplained blackouts to try to uncover the mystery of his own psyche.

It's a seemingly simple premise on paper, but there is a certain level of unpredictability which leaves you uncomfortable throughout. Even when I had guessed some of what was going to happen, there was always an extra layer to the mystery that would keep me guessing until the last minute.

I was sceptical going in. After all, knowing we are going to be alone with the same character in the same Hackney flat for the 85-minute run time doesn't feel as though it lends itself to an enthralling time.

However, I am happy to say I stand here corrected. Simpson takes this challenge head-on and expertly crafts a psychological

thriller which would have fooled me into thinking he was a seasoned professional in front of and behind the camera.

There's a worry that the one-person selling point would come off as gimmicky, but you never feel as though that is the case. Outside of the narrative following one singular person, it lives and breathes as any other movie would.

If anything, it acts as a strength. You feel a level of intimacy with the way he uses the camera that I'm not sure you would have been able to replicate as well with a whole crew.

It was always going to be an incredible achievement in filmmaking, but the story equally demands your attention. Despite a few moments which feel repetitive throughout, Simpson's performance is as sincere as it is unsettling and never grows tiresome. For all intents and purposes, *Disremember* is a film that feels as though none of it should work, but still manages to excel in most circumstances.

I can't help but feel as though I've seen something that will struggle to be replicated. Mainly because I'm not sure who else would be crazy enough to take on such a massive task, but also because of the care which was put into making this as much of a triumph as it is.

I'm excited to see where Simpson goes next, whether that is acting or carrying on his efforts behind the camera. He has a clear knack for both.

I do hope this is one and done and that next time he has a few people alongside him for the ride. I'm sure for his own mental state he will not be attempting anything similar again.

Rating: ★★★★★

The Super Mario Galaxy Movie

Director: Aaron Horvath, Michael Jelenic
Cast: Chris Pratt, Anya Taylor-Joy, Charlie Day
Release Date: 1st April 2026



THE AVERAGE TIME it takes someone to decide whether they want to watch a TikTok is within the first 0.001 to 0.03 seconds of seeing the video. It's a worrying fact, and one which directors Aaron Horvath and Michael Jelenic must have lived by while making the awaited sequel *The Super Mario Galaxy Movie*.

This film is not intended to be a spectacle on the big screen, but instead a movie which will keep people searching for part 15 while having a doomscroll at night.

It's a simple plot. Following the events of the first, Bowser's obnoxious son Bowser Jr (Benny Safdie) is out for revenge on the Brooklyn plumbers who bested his dad. He nabs Princess Rosalina (A criminally underused Brie Larson) leaving both Princess Peach (Anya Taylor-Joy) and Toad (Keegan-Michael Key) as well as Mario (Chris Pratt), Luigi (Charlie Day) and newcomer Yoshi (A unnecessarily great Donald Glover) to go on their separate journeys to put an end to his dastardly plans.

Nothing extravagant, but a more than serviceable script for what is a kids film. That isn't lost on me.

However, that doesn't mean which should except mediocrity when it comes to the media kids are consuming.

Though it's not as bad as people say it is — it's not quite worse than AI or worthy of jabbing a pen in your hand for relief like some reviews have said — this is merely nothing more than an abnormally fast paced key jingling exercise for Nintendo.

This didn't have to be a bad thing. This can work. I'd be lying if I wasn't smiling when there was reference to the games or

Nintendo's stacked catalogue of characters (Glen Powell's Fox McCloud was a high point). But once the smile fades away after a few seconds, what are you left with?

I'm not sure that the creators knew the answer to that question. That could be the only explanation for the million miles an hour pace for the 98 minute run time.

Oh look! It's a reference to the game; over there, action scenes with exploding colours; don't forget about these other references. Rinse and repeat this for the 98 minute run time and you have *The Super Mario Galaxy Movie*.

I understand it's a kids film, I'm hardly expecting in-depth and emotional breakdown, but even a smidge of reflection or attempt at emotion wouldn't go amiss. It is outstanding the lack of trust this film has in the audience. It's almost as if they think if they slow the film down for longer than a minute kids are going to be bored and stop watching.

It's particularly strange considering in the first they tried to have moments of reflection, namely with Mario and Donkey Kong, but here there is nothing.

The Super Mario Galaxy Movie is painfully fine in moments and tedious in others. Any resemblance of something good is few and far between. The poor attempt at a story is squandered by excessive product placement.

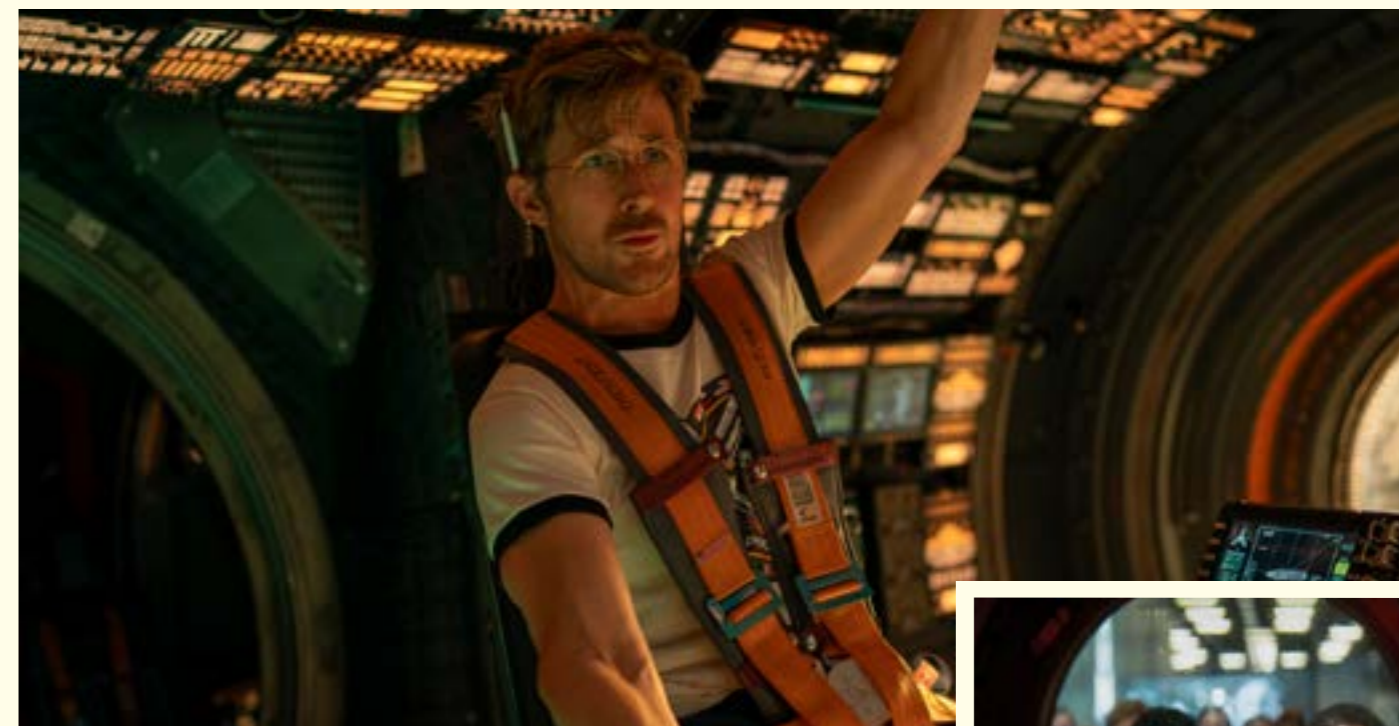
These Mario films will not be going anywhere, but lets hope that they at least try up the quality in future films.

It's not quite game over for this series, but another film like this and it'll be in its last life.

Rating: ★★

Project Hail Mary

Director: Phil Lord, Christopher Miller
Cast: Ryan Gosling, James Ortiz, Sandra Hüller
Release Date: 19th March



I WASN'T ALIVE in 1968 to see Stanley Kubrick redefine the Sci-Fi genre with *2001: A Space Odyssey*. I wasn't old enough in 2014 to watch Christopher Nolan's magnum opus, *Interstellar*. But I was right on time to watch the latest Sci-Fi epic, *Project Hail Mary*.

Like the other two films, we will look back at Christopher Miller and Phil Lord's newest venture as a film that redefined the space genre.

Though different tonally to the other two – there are more jokes in the first 10 minutes than both films combined – its levels of grandeur are equal to the previous space epics.

Based on Andy Weir's book by the same name, it follows a primary school teacher, Ryland Grace (Ryan Gosling), who wakes up alone on a spaceship with no memory of how he got there.

He soon starts to put together what is happening through flashbacks. His crew is dead, the sun is dying, and the whole of humanity rests on Gosling's goofy shoulders. Not ideal in the slightest.

Don't worry, he is not completely alone. There is an alien. It is a rock. His name is Rocky (James Ortiz). It's a big twist in the book, but not here. Any promotion for this film put this lovable alien front and centre.

The decision came with a lot of flak, but it was the correct one for this movie. If you started with such an existential crisis, and then an alien appeared without you knowing, then its existence would have felt very jarring. As Gosling said, it's like saying *ET* is about a kid's parents' divorce. There is an alien, and

you are going to love him.

There was a worry that this film would take a nose dive in quality once Rocky arrived. It had struck a good balance of seriousness, panic and humour thanks to the triplet of fantastic performances from Gosling, Lionel Boyce and Sandra Hüller's cold performance as Eva Stratton, the person putting the Hail Mary together.

But it didn't. Of course, there are great comedic moments with the two, but the jokes always feel like a front for the impending doom and sadness Grace is feeling and not just for the kicks. They never undercut a serious moment to have Rocky do something silly. They commit equally to both tones.

I'm glad I can classify Rocky and Grace as one of the better buddy relationships in film. Who knew a relationship between a rock and science teacher could be so impactful?

Their relationship, and any scene with great visuals, are infinitely more impactful thanks to Daniel Pemberton's score. There is a scene in particular when Grace is floating in space where his score booming in the background brought a tear to my eye.

What sets it apart from its predecessors is the sense of hope throughout the film's narrative. It doesn't try to emulate what the previous space films succeed at; it creates a new identity of optimism which feels more than necessary in this current era we are living in.

Ryan Gosling has given people something to believe in. Believe the hype. Believe in the Hail Mary.



Rating:



Wuthering Heights

Director: Emerald Fennell

Cast: Margot Robbie, Jacob Elordi, Hong Chau

Release Date: 14th February



EMERALD FENNELLS *WUTHERING Heights* starts with moaning. Of course it does. Here we go again, I thought. However, I was wrong. You know what they say about assuming. It turns out the moaning isn't sex, but instead a man being hanged. He struggles. People watch. His body goes limp. He dies. It's quite an unsettling start. Consider my expectations subverted.

The uneasiness you feel lasts for a few good seconds until the man hanging gets hard. Then, in a fast-paced sequence, we see the crowd erupt into celebration, shouting and kissing.

It's a weird start, but it sets the tone straight away. Fennell is not interested in a faithful re-telling of Emily Brontë's novel. Instead, she is going to give it her own horny twist. Those little speech marks around her title are not just there for decoration. They signify that yes, things will be changed from the book.

That's ok. I can live with that.

But what has changed? Well, Heathcliff is now white and played by a dashing Jacob Elordi. He is a definite heartthrob, but a far cry from the "dark-skinned gypsy-looking orphan" described in the original novel.

It then largely follows suit to the original. What ensues is an obnoxious will they, won't they? act between Cathy (Margot Robbie) and Heathcliff as they both try to one-up each other to make the other jealous.

He's not bad in this role. No one is. Everyone is doing solid work. Margot Robbie is at her usual level, and Hong Chau shines in moments. It's nothing groundbreaking, but solid.

The main issue of Fennell's adaptation isn't the unfaithful adaptation of the book or the white Heathcliff – although it is quite egregious – but the uninteresting presentation of her new ideas. No amount of sexual tension or pretty visuals can stop how underdeveloped some scenes play out in this movie.

Her version follows a simple formula. Sex, Charli xcx, Jacob Elordi. In that order. It's not too dissimilar to her last outing, *Saltburn*, which followed the bathtub, Sophie Ellis-Baxter, Jacob Elordi formula.

It may seem an oversimplified description, but it's got as much weight to it as these characters do. They are given no more than the most basic of stereotypes to work with, and the central relationships are about as deep as a kids' inflatable pool.

It all makes for a whiny 136-minute run time which fails to make you care about anything that happens to these characters. Scenes that are supposed to have emotion behind them feel hollow, and scenes of love flatter to deceive thanks to the one-dimensional setup.

I can't help but feel *Wuthering Heights* would be best enjoyed on mute. Cinematographer Linus Sandgren knows how to create a stunning image, and several scenes deserve to be marvelled at. Maybe it would be more interesting in a video art exhibition instead.

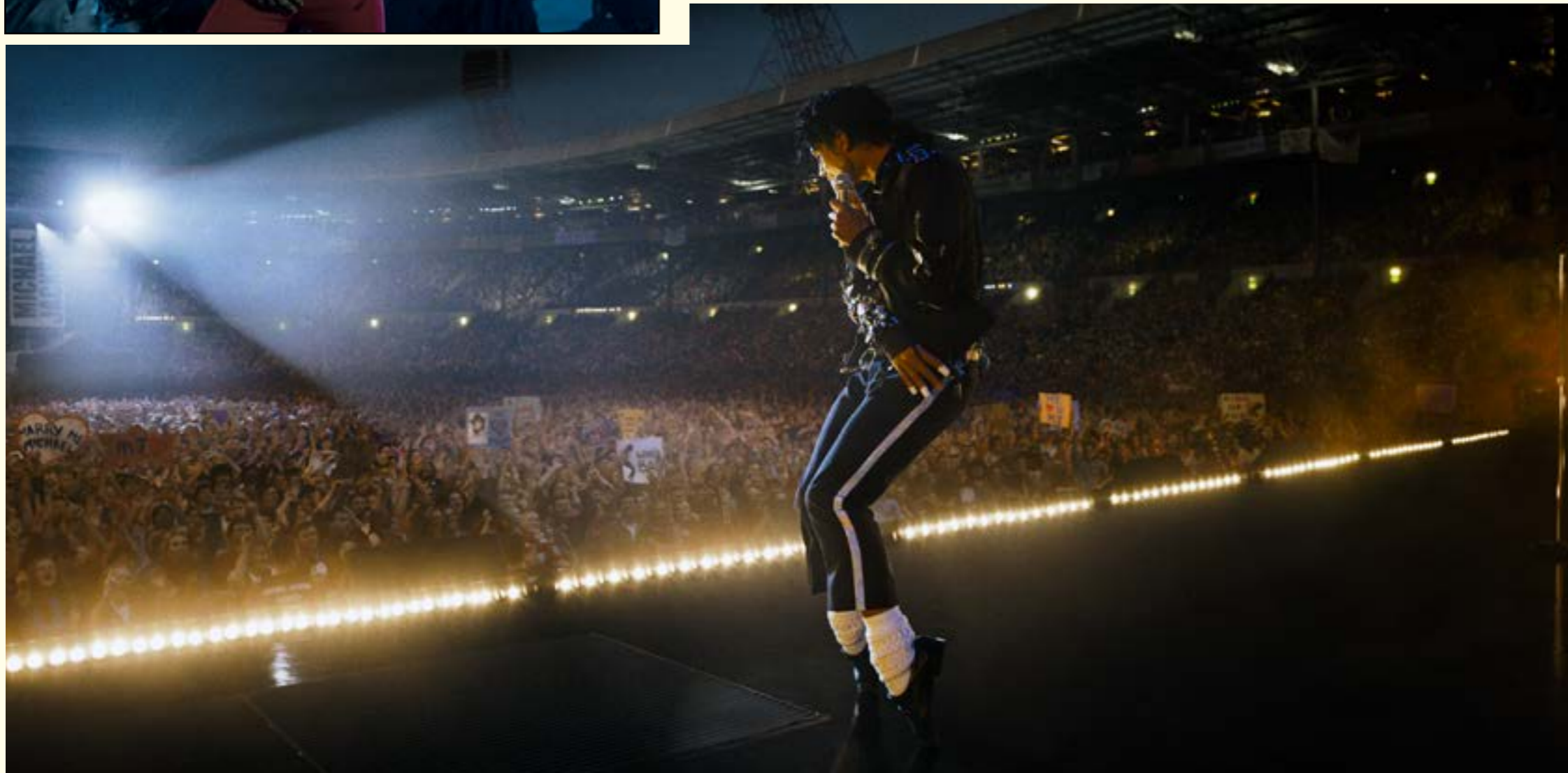
Or, better yet, it should have been left as a book. If Fennell wanted her version of events to be out in the world, she should have just posted the script as a Reddit fanfic. It's all this film deserves.

Rating: ★★



Michael

Director: Antoine Fuqua
Cast: Jaafar Jackson, Colman Domingo, Nia Long
Release Date: April 24th



IT'S TIME FOR this year's attempt at a musical biopic to release. If Bruce Springsteen, Bob Dylan, Robbie Williams and Elvis weren't enough, we have one more to throw into the mix before the gargantuan four-Beatles film release.

It's a big one. It may be the biggest one possible. It is none other than the King of Pop himself.

Antoine Fuqua's *Michael* has been the source of controversy and discourse since its announcement — much like Jackson was himself. It's understandable; the Jackson brand has been under murky waters since his death, and the release of the 2019 documentary *Leaving Neverland* — accounts of two boys who allegedly were sexually abused by Jackson when they were kids — did no favours.

His influence and passionate fanbase hasn't diminished, but there is a certain black mark on his iconic status he gained for himself.

All the uncertainty towards his name and legal battles makes creating a film about his life quite the challenge. The wrestle between what you include and don't must have been quite the headache.

So what do they focus on? Well, they delve into his struggles, namely with his father Joe Jackson, played by a menacing Coleman Domingo, and the longing for a childhood which had been stripped away from him.

More so than I thought. I expected the exploitation between Joseph and Michael, but they really hone in on the quiet tragedy of Michael's life. Hidden between his discography, which demands at least a tap of the feet, is a saddening story of a boy who just wanted to be just that, a boy.

Not so much to bog down the story, but I did appreciate their attempt at showcasing the less flashy parts of his persona. I found myself wanting more of that.

Ultimately, they know that they aren't going to get bums in seats. Fans of the late great are not going to be travelling to the cinema for a deep dive into his troubling and complex psychology.

What fans will turn up for in their masses is the chance to relive his greatness one last time, and this film gives them that in abundance.

Jaafar Jackson almost looks like he has been possessed by his Uncle at moments, embodying his spirit and greatness in ways no one else could have. The dance moves are on point, the vocals are inch-perfect, and the overall demeanour is captured perfectly.

Jackson was undeniably a God-given talent. He created music, dance moves and music videos which will stand the test of time, and this film shows these very things in abundance. You will leave the cinema humming to the beat of one of his songs, and resisting every urge you have to embarrass yourself by moonwalking out.

So in that sense, this is a success. But I can't help but feel there is a missed opportunity to really delve into the mind of one of the most complex characters to grace the planet.

Which is where the issue with a biopic comes. There are no second chances. You get one chance to get it right, and you better hope that you do. When it works out, it is glorious. When it doesn't, it's a bitter disappointment.

So where does that leave *Michael*? Somewhere in the middle. It will appease the fans, but its refusal to stop playing it safe stops it from ever reaching the heights of other musical biopics.

It is a solid Jackson 3/5 star.

Rating



Swapped

Director: Nathan Greno
Cast: Michael B. Jordan, Juno Temple, Tracy Morgan
Release Date: 1st May



WHEN MICHAEL B. JORDAN narrowly beat Timothée Chalamet for Best Actor in a Leading Role at this year's Oscar ceremony, I don't think anyone would have expected his next role to be a Netflix original animated film.

I can't help but find it funny that the *Dune 3* trailer was held back in hopes of putting Academy Award Winner next to Chalamet's name, and instead that honour went to *Swapped*.

Like most Netflix originals, their animated films are quite hit and miss. You can get genuine masterpieces such as *The Mitchells vs. the Machines*, or you can get the usual dross like Adam Sandler's *Leo*.

I was not under any illusion that *Swapped* would be anything more than a generic kids movie, but *Tangled* director Nathan Greno being attached was enough to give me hope that this could be worth the steep 102-minute runtime.

It follows Ollie (Michael B. Jordan), a curious and trusting pookoo who doesn't agree with his father's worrisome attitude.

After a misunderstanding with food between Ollie and mystical bird Javed's, the Pookoos are looking at starvation if something doesn't change.

While attempting to save the Pookoos from starvation, Ollie accidentally turns himself into a Javed after falling into a magic orchard. After being helped by a fellow bird, Ivy (Juno Temple), a mix-up between the two turns her into a Pookoo.

If the plot wasn't already giving you a sense of Déjà vu, this ought to do the trick. Both Ollie and Ivy have to put their differences aside to help the Valley from devastation.

So it's not the most original plot in the world. That's ok, I expected as much. What I didn't expect, however, is the presentation of these generic themes of belonging.

Much of my distaste for modern kids' movies is their lack of respect for the children watching them. Just this year, *The Super Mario Galaxy Movie* showed an astounding lack of trust in modern children by shoving a new action scene in every five minutes with no downtime.

Swapped fights back against this. Many times throughout the film, there were passages of no dialogue. Despite an impressive voice cast full of big names, they don't let that take centre stage. Instead, they let the stellar animation and Siddhartha Khosla's fantastic score guide you through what's happening.

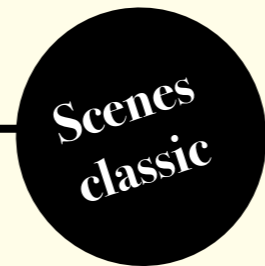
It works to great effect. It helps the scenes breathe and deliver on some striking images, which don't feel the need to be undercut by an obnoxious celebrity.

There is a clear show of effort. There's a scene after Ollie gets swapped into a Javan which is in first person, which is a creative way to showcase the change.

Where the story may suffer, they make up for it with some great visual storytelling. It's the type of sequences which Pixar used to specialise in, and it's something which has been incredibly missed in recent kids movies.

It may not have been the trajectory imagined for Jordan, but it's a welcome one. His soothing voice lends itself perfectly to a kids movie, and hopefully more people gave this a watch thanks to his newfound glory.

Rating: ★★★★★



Rye Lane

Director: Raine Allen-Miller
Cast: David Jonsson, Vivian Oparah, Karene Peter
Release Date: 17th March, 2023



MODERN ROM-COMS HAVE become stale. They have treated the audience like the lazy partner does to the protagonist at the start of their movies. They are just going through the motions and have a clear lack of interest in us, their partner.

Rye Lane, on the other hand, is the charming love interest we have been yearning for. A partner who is beaming with life and reminds you what true love feels like. It is our knight in shining armour, or Prince Charming.

As directorial debuts go, you don't get much more impressive than Raine Allen Miller's *Rye Lane*. She has breathed life into a genre that seemed to have run out of true love's kisses to save it.

Like any good love story, it starts with a breakup. In this case, it's Dom. But this isn't just any breakup. This is true betrayal. His girlfriend of six years has cheated on him with his best friend Eric (Benjamin Sarpong-Broni). Ouch.

No worries though, because after crying in a bathroom stall at his friend's art exhibition, he meets Yas (Vivian Oparah) – infectious, carefree and unapologetically herself.

Set in a sunny London – yes, sunny; it's not always doom and gloom in the UK – Yas and Dom moped through the streets of Croydon, give a shoddy attempt at signing Salt-N-Pepa's *Shoop* at karaoke and get a burrito from the astutely named 'Love Guac'tualu served by none other than UK royalty, Colin Firth. As they both connect on an action-packed day in South London, they help each other process their recent

heartbreaks and rebuild the broken faith they have in love.

It goes into familiar territory at times with its script, but it executes these usual tropes and clichés in such creative ways that you can forgive it.

There is an unwillingness to play it safe visually. Scenes which would usually be basic are instead given a quirky makeover. It's infectious. It expresses itself with an explosion of colour which never comes off as gimmicky.

It makes even a staunch London hater like me enamoured by the cityscape.

I get the UK is normally grey and miserable, but it is a breath of fresh air to see the streets with the sun beaming down. When the sun is out, there are not many more enjoyable places to be than the UK or London, specifically.

It truly is a feast for the eyes. However, like any feast, it's nothing without a good chef behind it. Luckily for us, Jonsson and Oparah are Michelin Star level. You'd struggle to find a more charismatic and charming couple than these two. I could watch these two waltz through the streets of London for hours longer.

Allen-Miller shows that it is still possible to create an engaging, fresh rom-com. Even when the story beats are similar, it is still possible to give these stories a new identity.

Rye Lane is a sign to never settle for less than you deserve. A reminder that if they wanted to, they would, both in a film and in a relationship. Or maybe it is another in a long line of films which set unrealistic standards for a relationship.

Rating: ★★★★★

Apex

Director: Baltasar Kormákur
Cast: Charlize Theron, Taron Egerton
Release Date: 24th April



APEX IS AS original as a middle-aged mum having a live, laugh, love painting on the wall. Two people go on a dangerous expedition to start the movie — this time in the form of Sasha (Charlize Theron) and husband Tommy (Eric Bana) climbing up in the uncanny CGI Norwegian mountains — and something goes wrong. Terribly wrong. What was originally a thrill-seeking exercise turns into an early grave for poor Aussie Tommy.

Never has a death been so guaranteed since the last *Final Destination* franchise. As soon as he remarks about how his love for climbing is deteriorating, the coroner would have already been on his way to these mountains.

It doesn't get much better from that point either. Each scene that follows is as predictable as the last.

Apex is a bore. It's 96 minutes of supposed thrill and exhilaration which barely grabs your attention, let alone making the hairs on your neck stand up.

We are not the only ones who are going through the motions. Sasha, who I can only imagine is completely unfazed by it all based on her facial expressions, travels to the Australian woods for some solo adventure. No more mountains though. They have been retired until it is convenient again.

If the dead husband wasn't enough, a run-in with freaky local Ben (A unhinged Taron Egerton) makes matters worse, luring her into a twisted cat and mouse game where her life is at stake.

This is where the heart should start beating quickly, but it doesn't. There is no element of surprise. It all just feels tame. Whether that's the janky camera work or the pacing, it doesn't live up to what promises to be a nail-biting run time.

There are a few mildly ok twists and turns, but none of it is enough to make it remotely worth your time.

Rating:



The Devil Wears Prada 2

Director: David Frankel
Cast: Meryl Streep, Anne Hathaway, Emily Blunt
Release Date: 1st May



IT'S BEEN 20 years since *The Devil Wears Prada* first hit cinemas, and a lot has happened in the world since. In-universe, Anne Hathaway's Andy Sachs has become a hard-hitting journalist, taking on stories of importance. She isn't the only one who has left; Emily Blunt's Emily is now a fashion executive at Dior, moving away from Miranda's grasp.

As for Miranda (Meryl Streep), she is still shaping the fashion industry at Runway along with Nigel (Stanley Tucci). Though she is struggling to come to terms with the new PG world she finds herself in.

As for in real life, there has been a seismic shift in both film and journalism. Editors have new priorities which lean heavily on clicks more than actual worthwhile stories. Directors have adopted a familiar philosophy, as more and more big studios focus on legacy sequels and reboots more than original ideas.

That leaves *The Devil Wears Prada 2* in a tricky position, standing both as a legacy sequel and a film which was built on the importance of journalism. There were two ways for them to go — fully embrace the cash grab or have a genuine attempt at focusing on the change in industry.

To my surprise, they chose the latter. Andy joins Miranda back at Runway following a sacking at her job. From that point, it is business as usual — savvy comebacks, jokes about fashion and condescending attitudes. The devil may not have slipped on a pair of Prada heels in the last twenty years, but they still fit a charm. Streep hasn't missed a beat, and neither have the rest of the ensemble.

However, woven throughout is a sincere attempt at critiquing itself and the new world we find ourselves in. It can be seen as a little hypocritical, but at least it is self-aware. As long as the devil is still around, there is hope for print journalism.

Rating:



How to Have Sex

Director: Molly Manning Walker
Cast: Mia McKenna-Bruce, Lara Peake, Enva Lewis
Release Date: 3rd November, 2023



THERE ARE MANY rites of passage while growing up in the UK. Getting to sit on the benches in year six is your first. Getting your shirt signed after finishing your GCSE's is another. One which everyone looks forward to is your first friend's holiday once you finish college.

It's a big milestone. You turn 18, and you start drinking. With each sip of a pint, you are one day closer to your eventual trip to either Ibiza, Magaluf or, for Tara (Mia McKenna-Bruce) and her friends, it is Malia.

In Molly Manning Walker's debut coming-of-age feature, she takes us on what should be the holiday of their lives, full of drinking, partying and hooking up with people.

The key word there being 'should be'. Walker instead uncovers the quiet horrors which can happen on these holidays for girls and the intricacies in the culture which UK teenagers are a part of.

Tara and her two friends, Em (Enva Lewis) and Skye (Lara Peake), befriend a group of older lads. One drink turns to many, one party turns to several, and over comfortability turns sinister.

Walker isn't shying away from the reality that many young girls across the UK have experienced. It explores the dangers of peer pressure, consent and fear viscerally. It is an uncomfortable watch for large parts, and it should be.

This film isn't trying to make you reminisce over your own trips; it is trying to make you look in a mirror. She excellently puts you in the shoes of our protagonist and makes us squirm.

How to Have Sex is going to make you feel uneasy, and then some. It isn't going to be a fun 91 minutes, but it is going to be crucial. If we are going to consider *Adolescence* as required viewing, this should be right there with it.

Rating:



Coming out



The Odyssey

Directed by: Christopher Nolan
Release Date: July 17th

Spiderman: Brand New Day

Directed by: Destin Daniel Cretton
Release Date: July 31st

Dislousure Day

Directed by: Steven Spielberg
Release Date: June 12th

Toy Story 5

Directed by: Andrew Stanton
Release Date: June 19th

Supergirl

Directed by: Craig Gillespie
Release Date: June 26th

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THE
FALL
GUY

Andy Pilgrim has spent his career jumping off buildings, being set on fire and doubling for the biggest actors in the world --- and he loves every second of it



SUITED AND BOOTED: Andy looking suave in his suit



Andy Pilgrim is staring down a 100 ft drop. All that separates him from a potentially fatal injury is an inflated airbag and the concrete building he stands on. One wrong step could alter Andy's life forever. Safety precautions have been put into place, but there is only so much you can prevent when jumping off a building.

It's all up to him. There's no one left to help him. No turning back. The only thing he can rely on is his years of training and the trust of his team.

He gets into position, takes a deep breath and leaps off the side of the building.

It's a nightmare for some. For Andy? It's just Tuesday.

Considering Andy faces the chance of catastrophic accidents day to day on set as a stuntman, he doesn't seem overly fazed. Sure, there is always fear attached to each stunt he completes, but it is quickly overpowered by his supreme confidence in his own ability.

Crazy? Maybe. Calm and composed? Unquestionably.

"If you're doing a 100ft high fall into an airbag, you've got to be crazy, but you've always got to have a very level head and control that adrenaline... I love it," he explains.

TAKING FLIGHT: Andy wing walking for a commercial



'Once you get me talking about stunts, I'll be here all week. I try not to talk about it, but once you open that can, I can go on forever and ever'

Andy, 47, after an illustrious career as a stuntman, has now decided it's time to give his body a rest and be a stunt coordinator instead.

Chances are, if you have watched a movie in the last 30 years, you have seen him in some sort of bother. There's a possibility you might have seen flames engulfing his body. Or maybe you have watched him launch himself off a building. You may have even seen him get a smack in the face.

That's been his life for the last 30 years, and he loves it. There is nothing he looks forward to more than his next job.

"Once you get me talking about stunts, I'll be here all week. I try not to talk about it, but once you open that can, I can go on forever and ever," he says passionately.

It was at a young age that his love for stunts would start. Ever since he started doing gymnastics at the age of five, he found he had a knack for flips and tricks. Luckily for Andy, his gym coach was a stunt coordinator, so he had insight into the career from an early age.

"I started gymnastics when I was five, and I had a few little stunts on TV, such as Blue Peter. When I was young, I also did high diving and Judo, so I grew up doing the right sports initially," he says. He had built a strong foundation, and he went full steam ahead into it.

"I was big into sports, and in college I got involved in some theatre. After I did my A-Levels, I did some shows in Europe," Andy says before adding, "It's the best job for me. I tried other things, but this was the best way for me to earn a crust."

From that point onwards, Andy didn't look back. It was full steam ahead with flips, tricks and hits. "After doing stunt shows and various theatre stunts in the West End, I decided to join the British Stunt Register in 2005," he says.

I'M BATMAN: Andy on set in The Dark Knight



The British Stunt Registry is the *crème de la crème* for a stunt worker. Founded in 1973, it has established safety and performance standards for the industry. For stunt workers looking for a way into the industry, it's the place to be.

Andy quickly rose through the ranks, training in new skills and upping the difficulty as he went along. Being a part of the Stunt Registry helped him gain pathways into the industry, but it was his own dedication and love for it which propelled him to where he is now.

"Even though it takes the average fit person to become a stunt man as long as it does to get a law degree, you can't go to University and get a qualification to be one. You have to do it on your own training," he says.

"The qualifications are seen on the job; that's where you get your next job. Sometimes you have to take a knock and do it again and again, so there are different characteristics that are involved in that. The reality is, until you actually do it and you're under that pressure and you're on fire and you've got your guys next to you ... you need to have that experience."

The further Andy fell, the higher he rose in the industry, and it wasn't too long until he was working on some of the biggest film sets in the world. "My first film was *Children of Men*.

The Dark Knight was also one of my first. I actually got a tourist award for that, which is the equivalent of the stunt man's Oscar," he says, humbly.

"My fight was where the SWAT team went up the building, and Batman was wrapping guys up in cable, and then he kicked me off the building... That was pretty cool," Andy says.

'I've never been chasing awards, I do my job because I love it'

I'm not sure he quite fathoms the gravitas of what he has done over his career. I'm sure if you ask most people, getting kicked by Christian Bale's Batman would qualify as more than pretty cool.

But that's not who Andy is. Despite being a regular on Marvel and DC projects, it's the work itself which he loves the most. Not even the big Hollywood actors he has doubled for — such as Tom Hardy in *Inception*, Robert Downey Jr in *Sherlock Holmes*, Jake Gyllenhaal in *Life* — or working with Christopher Nolan and Tom Cruise gets him going. He believes what they do is amazing, but the allure of big-name celebrities isn't what gets Andy up in the morning.

"The stunts are what definitely get me going and everything around them," he says.

It's his cool and calm demeanour which has driven his success in his career. Andy doesn't come with any theatrics. There are no pre-stunt rituals. Arriving early, staying calm and visualising the job is all he needs to prepare. Nothing more, nothing less.

"I don't do any crosses on my head, and I've not got to wear three pairs of socks. ... I've got no weird things," he jokes.

Despite a belief that stunt workers are crazy individuals, Andy maintains that his composure in the face of danger is his most important quality. Naturally, there are risks involved when doing some of the set pieces Andy and others do. No matter how much a film set tries to keep them safe, there is always the chance for injury.

Especially in a career as long as Andy's, a few bruises and breaks are to be expected. But it is his cool nature which helps him get through the setback both physically and mentally.

"I've picked up a few bits and pieces. I've broken my leg as well as my ankle, which was quite a bad one," he says blasé, as if he is retelling a story of him stubbing his toe.

"Ultimately, it's a risky job, so mentally you have to get past those things. These things come along, and you just have to manage them when they do."

More often than not, it's not the physical pain that is the biggest issue; it's the lying around resting. Stunt workers, by nature, are active people, so having to stay at home and keeping in the right frame of mind mentally is more of a challenge. Especially if you love it as much as Andy does.

"You have to have a very strong mental health.... The time in between when you are managing the injuries and you're kind of wearing out the carpet in your front room, that's where you need to be strong mentally."

The throughline to Andy's job is just that. Keeping your mind right, managing the adrenaline and training.

Yet, there is something he dislikes. There is one thing that no amount of training can prepare him for. A sign of weakness that proves that he is human.

"It's the words for me. It's just when there's any amount of dialogue... When you've got to learn that and put it together with the physical stuff, it gets tricky," he says, like a true stunt man.

"Which is why I think just leave the stunts to the stunt people and leave the acting for the actors; that's what I say."

Luckily for Andy, his transition into a stunt coordinator doesn't come with any lines. However, it does come with a set

of new challenges.

"It's like starting again, really. I never really made contact with the producers before, and now I'm working for different productions instead of working for different stunt performers," he says.

He has spent his whole career in the hands of some of the best stunt coordinators in the world. He takes on board what he learnt in each set he goes to. He uses his own lived experience to make sure the sets he works on are as safe as he would want them to be.

"I'm more than happy to step back and give the younger guys the work. They have a long career ahead of them, and you want to keep them safe because when I was in their shoes, I had people looking out for me, so it's the same principle," he says.

Stunt workers can be the unsung heroes of a film set, and now they are finally getting their chance to shine. The Oscars will be bringing in a stunt category to recognise the work of individuals such as Andy starting from 2027, a long overdue inclusion.

"It's very odd that stunts haven't been recognised for so many years, but finally they are being recognised as a category, so that could only be a good thing," he says.

Not that he is overly bothered. An empty spot on his shelf for an Oscar hasn't kept Andy awake at night. He does this for the love of it. "I've never been chasing awards; I do my job because I love it," he reiterates.

I'm sure everyone wishes they loved their job as much as Andy. Though, I'm not sure everyone wishes they had to throw themselves off buildings. He really is cut from a different cloth.



TOPLEFT: Andy doing a stunt involving a motorbike

ABOVE: Andy jumping out of a helicopter

BOTTOM LEFT: Andy on the set of *Uncharted*

BELOW RIGHT: Andy on set with Sam Claflin for *The Corrupted*



FIGHT

THE

POWER

Sarah Leigh has heard every reason as to why people who are disabled, deaf and neurodivergent can't be on film sets. That stops here. It stops with her.

Photos by: Hannah Fishwick



Change in the film industry started with a mother's love for her son. Filmmaker Sarah Leigh had heard it all before — every excuse, every explanation and every derogatory word. As a long-time advocate for the rights and inclusion of people with disabilities, she has sat through every reasoning as to why they can't be on film sets.

Growing up neurodivergent and with ADHD, she has experienced a lack of support towards her own disability. It's not uncommon. But that stops now. She has had enough.

Sarah has always been an activist. Throughout her career as a journalist and filmmaker, she has always gravitated towards telling stories to help fight the injustices in the world for people with disabilities.

Her own experiences had always been a driving force, but the arrival of her second son became her biggest motivator.

Sarah, in her 40s, is a proud mother of two. Her youngest was born with high support needs and uses a wheelchair. She had always known how difficult it is for people with disabilities to live day by day, but only now did she realise the severity of it.

"It's how isolating that can become because of how inaccessible the world is. It fueled me to try and make things better for him, but also for other people,"

she says.

"It really opened my eyes to how inaccessible just getting out of the house is. People parking across dropped curbs or blocking entrances or leaving their bin across the path, and how difficult it is to manoeuvre this stuff."

What a mother would do for her children knows no bounds. That gave Sarah the push she needed to start helping people with disabilities get onto film sets.

Since his birth, Sarah has worked closely with the NHS to help provide better healthcare for her son and people who face similar struggles. Alongside that, she started her own talent agency, Inclusivity Talent, and film company, Inclusivity Films, where, at a bare minimum, their sets are split 50/50 with people who are neurodivergent, disabled or deaf.

It's the start to what Sarah hopes is a massive change in the industry. That's her goal as a filmmaker — telling stories about people with disabilities, made by the people who experience them.

"Cinema has the power to make this change because if people don't see it and don't have representation on screen, and these stories aren't being told, they won't know it's a thing," she says.

Her story is one of action. Many people can talk a big game, but Sarah acts on it.

"It's just the way people are with him and the way they speak to him. The things they say in front of him are disgusting... There is such a long way to go. How he is treated so differently from



typical children his age and in a really derogatory way, and his life isn't as valued as much as a typical child. It fuels my writing," she says.

A lack of support for the disabled isn't something new for Sarah. Growing up, she felt similar feelings. When at school, she was nicknamed "Dolly Daydream" and was left to stare out of the windows instead of being kept engaged.

School was tough for Sarah. She would often feel exhausted by the end of the day due to her masking, a conscious or subconscious trait to try and blend in with people around her.

Once she got home, it was different. She lived in a single-parent household with her mother, who understood her and created a perfect environment to accommodate her needs. "My mum was brilliant. She knew that for me, I needed my own space. I'd come home from school, and I'd go straight up to my room, and then that would be me for the rest of my night," she says.

Those nights spent in her room in Stevenage, she would dream of being an actress. But that's all it was to her — a dream. The industry isn't forgiving for people growing up working class or living with disabilities. "It always felt a bit too far away and not in my reality," she explains.

It wasn't through lack of trying. Many nights were spent pouring drinks or

serving tables to earn enough money to get to an audition. Sometimes she would have enough; other times the expenses travelling to London would be too much to manage.

The passion to tell stories hadn't disappeared, but after a talk with a careers counsellor, she decided to pivot to journalism. Sarah went on to study journalism at college and then again at Nottingham Trent for TV Journalism. For a few years, she worked for Sky News, CNN, 5 News and even at the US Embassy in London during

says.

"I've always followed what I wanted to do. You might not be here tomorrow. So do what you want to do."

Sarah had been auditioning and performing in films throughout her time as a journalist, but after impressing people with her writing, Sarah decided to start her talent agency and film company. The goal? To be the answer to all the excuses she had ever heard.

"If I can do 50%, then you can at least do 18%. You can make sets accessible; it doesn't have to cost a fortune," she says,

"It's triggering for people, and you see how it affects people when it's not portrayed authentically. There are plenty of actors out there that do have this lived experience; they're just not trying to even give them the chance to audition. I think it's pretty disgusting, actually."

Equally, it is just as crucial that disabled people get to play usual roles where their disability isn't the only part of their character. "We'll submit our actors regardless because we need to; it's our job as agents to open up casting directors' minds," she says.

"It's really important that it's someone's lived experience. But where we're going to see real change is when it's incidental to the plot."

Sarah often wonders why people with disabilities are not given the opportunities. She has a few theories. "Maybe it's to do with a bit of fear and not understanding. So many assumptions are made around disability in general, but autism, where it's like, 'they won't be able to do this,' and they are not even being given the chance to be seen. It's scandalous, really," she says.

The road to progress is a long one. Sarah is under no illusion that it will be a quick fix, and it especially won't be one she can do on her own. But that doesn't mean it's not worth doing.

"Judith Hunman used to say, 'Change is so slow. Bit by bit, you just have to keep doing it and keep pushing, and then one day everything will just tip in your favour, and it will work out. But, you know, bit by bit we can build on it, and I think it's so important for me,'" Sarah explains.

Every setback and every injustice has been used to fuel a working environment

'We're just people that want to make films and want to do our jobs'

Obama's term. Suffice it to say, she quickly left after a certain president took power.

It paid the bills, but the reason she joined was to tell the right stories, and she wasn't being allowed to do that. "I was hoping to tell people's stories and fight for injustices, but I was so controlled over what we were allowed to say and not allowed to say. I don't want to be a part of that. So I thought, 'Why don't I follow my acting dream?'" she

before adding. "A lot of the time it's like, 'oh, where is the talent?' and that's why I started a crew database as well, to show people the talent. They're here; it's you not recruiting," Sarah says.

When non disabled people play roles which involve disability, it's a big issue for her. "It has to be from lived experience, and we're seeing things just move backwards slightly in casting. They're just not reaching out to agencies, because we are here, we have the talent," she says.

which thrives and is inclusive. "We're just people that want to make films and want to do our jobs and just want that opportunity to do so," she says.

The hope is that one day she won't have to advertise that her company is 50/50 and that it will become the norm.

Sarah won't stop creating. Not just because she loves it, but because it's crucial she does so. She is helping break down the barriers of inclusion one film at a time.

ON SET: Sarah working as a director on set





Send me the **LOCATION**

For years film fans across the country have travelled far and wide to get pictures from locations on their favorite film, without knowing the process behind it. Location manager Sue Quinn and Harvey Edgington tells Scenes the grueling process behind it.



Behind every iconic scene is a hard-working, tired location manager. If you have ever taken a photo next to the *Notting Hill* blue door, or pretended to run into the wall at Kings Cross Station, or confessed your love with cue cards for someone on the *Love Actually* street, that is because of the work of a location manager.

If any of those apply to you specifically, it is down to the hard work of Sue Quinn.

There is nothing Sue can't do. There is no budget too small, no location too tricky to get. If there is a location a director wants, Sue will get it. It doesn't matter if it is the busy streets of Notting Hill or landing a helicopter in Trafalgar Square, she will find a way.

"I have never not filmed somewhere we wanted to... I'd never say no. There is always a way to do it. Always. But it's never easy," Sue says. "Nothing is insurmountable."

Even if it is only a five-second scene, there have been countless phone calls, traffic plans and logistics needed to sort out to get it done.

That's without considering all the added baggage which comes with a film set on location. In her 30 years on the job, Sue has had to manoeuvre all sorts of challenges to achieve a director's goal, but none more so than landing a helicopter in

Trafalgar Square for *Edge of Tomorrow*.

"I think there were about 60 different bus routes that had to be diverted. The traffic plan was immense. I had more security on that day than on any other day to stop people from going into certain places. That was a massive day," she says.

But it almost didn't happen. As with most things in England, it was almost derailed thanks to some weather. "We were waiting for the helicopter to come, and I had a phone call saying, 'There's fog, and I don't think we are going to be able to get there.' You think, oh my god, but it did arrive, and that was some relief. That was probably one of the most stressful times," she says.

It's stressful, but that's the job. No matter how many weeks or months of planning have gone into a scene, all it takes is a usual grey sky in England to disrupt the plans. It's the little things you have to prepare for. It may seem tedious, and it can be, but Sue loves it all the same.

"It's not glamorous, it's hard work. I'm lucky, I really enjoy what I'm doing. At my age, I really should be retired, but I actually enjoy what I do," she says.

Ever since she accidentally started location work when she was 17, she has been responsible for immortalising locations through her work. "There was a Ken Loach film being filmed nearby where I lived, and I went there and got

a job as an extra. When I was at school, you either went into medicine, law or the main subjects like English or History. I realised there was a whole other world out there," she says.

"I was lucky enough to talk to somebody who asked if I could find something for them, because it was an area I lived in. After that, I never really looked back."

She worked as an Assistant Director on other projects and built her connections, but none captured her heart more than the world of locations. Though Sue would soon realise there was more to the job than just scouting out areas.

"You read the script, and then you discuss the script with the director and also the production designer, and they will say, 'This is sort of what we want. We're not sure, can you go out and have a look?' So as a location team, you go out, and you take 100s of photographs and present them, and then you hopefully spark the imagination of a designer or a director," she says.

After that? Phone calls. Research. It has become easier for Sue. The introduction of the internet has helped things. At the very least, it has saved her a few paper cuts.

"Nowadays it's so easy because you can look online. In the old days, I just had 100s of books I looked through.

'When you get a lifetime achievement award, you realise you've done this for a whole lifetime. Then I probably think it's because I'm the oldest person out there and they can't think of anyone else'

There used to be just three of us in a department; now the team is enormous," she says.

It is a teething process to sort out a location. You may find the most perfect, picturesque place, but if the logistics are unviable, you have to find somewhere else. "Even though you might be able to find a wonderful location in the North of Scotland, you can't go there because, financially, it's not viable. So then you have to circle back and find what you can around where you are. It all comes down to economics," she says.

"In the old days, if you wanted something to do, you just had a pile of cash, and you'd pay people; you can't do that now.

Money is the root of all things difficult for Sue. It always comes down to money. But it doesn't stop her. Whether the budget is big or small, she can achieve a director's vision and never spend a penny more. "Darling, I'm never over budget. We find a way, don't we?" she says defiantly, almost insulated by the notion. Lesson learned, there truly is nothing stopping her.

Once the location is chosen, Sue, along with different departments on set, will go and start planning the area. "We will all go, and then they will say, 'I need this here. I need to put a crane there. I'm going to need to close the road there, and we want this here.' So then you get all that information fed back to you, and then you process it, and then you start to put that in action," she says.

"Then we call a movement order, which is basically telling everyone where to go, how to get there, where they park, and how they get to the location. We would then put up signs, and then we are also in charge of security," she says.

"You set up a whole structure before they even come to film."

When it comes down to it, Sue is a facilitator. Her job is to give the other departments the best possible chance to

do theirs. It comes with the pressure, but Sue turns that into diamonds.

"We are enablers. It's very important that we give the creatives what they want. All you can say to somebody is, 'I'll go away and see what I can do.' I've always found that if you just tell the truth... All you can do is your best," she says. More often than not, Sue's best is more than enough.

"On a project I was doing last year, a childhood dream of this director was to film in this particular place. When we saw it, we thought, 'Oh my god, this location is a nightmare, but we did it,'" she says.

You don't get the label of dream maker without some serious notches in your career. Which Sue has aplenty. She has worked on *Harry Potter*, *Pirates of the Caribbean*, *Love Actually*, and *Billy Elliot*, to name a few. She has had her hand on some of England's most iconic films.

There is no such thing as an easy job for a location manager, but she — along with some great directors — finds a way.

"I worked closely with Stuart Craig, who was probably one of the best production designers ever. I had the fortune of working with lots of people. David Yates, Stephen Frears, Richard Curtis, they were all wonderful directors, and you love all of them," she says.

There are a select few who have managed to get on the wrong side of Sue. "Most of them are good, some of them are naughty," she says.

Irrespective of whether the directors have gotten in her bad books, Sue helps to create a great final product. None more so than her work with Roger Michell on Notting Hill. "Everybody loved doing that film, but for the location department, it was quite hard because there are a lot of people to talk to, and there are businesses and everything else that you have to take care of as well," she says.

Before Sue arrives, it is a place, but

once she leaves, it is a landmark. "I used to walk through Notting Hill, because people always stand by the blue door, you know? They're all still there, and you just sort of think, Oh my god," she says, amazed by the impact left.

That's why, no matter how difficult it gets, she loves it. "It's great fun. It's one of the only departments that deals with every single other department. You have that freedom, and you are never tied down. You are always on the road, or you're doing this or going somewhere. Truly and honestly, I can say you never know what is going to happen on that day," Sue explains.

It's a lot less physical work for Sue in recent years, but she misses when she used to get her hands dirty. "I always used to be quite hands-on. I'd get in the van, and I'd move a tower light. They wouldn't let me near that now. You did all those things, putting up signs and things like that, but it is a lot more delegated now than it used to be. I miss getting stuck in a bit," she says.

After her distinguished career, Sue was recognised for her work in 2024 when she won a Lifetime Achievement Award in August 2024, voted for by her peers.

"I've been very lucky. You do need a bit of luck at the end of the day.

The thing is, when you get a lifetime achievement award, you realise I've done this for a whole lifetime. You feel very humbled by it," she says.

"Then I always probably think it's because I'm the oldest person out there and they can't think of anyone else," she jokes.

She didn't take it as a sign to settle down. She still loves it and has a great team, so she sees no reason to stop. There are still locations out there to find. "Why give up while you still can? I have a great team, they look after me and, you know, I just do the bits that I know that I'm good at. If you enjoy it, there's no reason to stop, is there?"

ILIVEINNOTTINGHILL: The Notting Hill bookshop





If Sue is an enabler for a director, then Harvey Eddington is the enabler for the location manager. He works in the film office for the National Trust and helps the location manager on any set which uses their property.

Harvey started at the marketing department in Greenwich Council. At the same time, *The Krays* were filming in the area, and after a few complaints, Harvey was sent down to the set.

"I was sent down to be shouted at, basically, by the residents. I went to the location manager, and he said 'I've been trying to talk to the council about this for weeks, and no one will take the call,'" he says.

But after a few tough conversations, Harvey realised that there was no easy way for film crews to speak to local authorities to help with filming. Not just in Greenwich, but all boroughs across London.

So Harvey took it on. After six months, Harvey's full-time job became liaising with local authorities to help with filming. A few years later, Film London was set up, and they attached Harvey to help with locations. His reputation had clearly preceded him, as in the year 2000, the National Trust approached Harvey to do the same job for National Trust locations.

Harvey now acts as a link between the properties and the location managers, trying to use them. Anytime someone wants to use any property in the National Trust, whether that be a music video or a film, they have to speak to him. "It could be anything from a fashion shoot for Adidas or *Bridgerton* and *Peaky Blinders*," he says.

A lot of the job consists of separating the ridiculous requests from the worthwhile ones. "We have one where they wanted to ride a motorbike through the house and out onto a balcony, and we said, no, we're not, we're not doing that," he says, still seemingly bewildered by the request.

The ones which are not a waste of his time will then be granted the opportunity to go to the property to take hundreds of photos to see if it is in line with the director's vision.

Then the chaos starts.

Most of the film crew will progressively turn up with requests for the location, leaving Harvey to roll up his sleeves and get into the nitty-gritty. "They'll say, you know, can we ring 300 candles? And I'll say you can bring 10. It's like a kid's wish list. You have to go 'no, you can't have

that' and take it from there," he says.

"You get into all sorts of strange conversations. 'What kind of snow are you bringing?' 'Someone's being shot, do you think the blood is going this way or is it going that way?' So we drill down to the real nitty-gritty stuff. Even the smallest things that you might not think need speaking about need speaking about."

Harvey's has two conservators who advise him on which paintings can come down in a building or which are being protected.

Sometimes it may be as simple as candles, but other requests may take a lot more work. As was the case for 2004's *Pride and Prejudice*. "It was a huge one for us because the property they picked was in the wrong period, so Sarah Greenwood, the designer, basically had to redesign the whole of the interior, which meant everything had to come out," he says.

"Consequently, we've got to protect this, we've got to move that. So it's endless meetings. They had about 200 extras at one point as well. It shut the house for the best part of 6 weeks. So that was a big one, but to the industry it proved a point that we can do it."

Just like Sue, no matter how much planning is done, there are a whole host of things which could go wrong, especially on a night shoot.

"If they've done about 3 or 4 days of night shoots, when they come to you, they're knackered, and tempers get short. Or they've forgotten a piece of kit that they need, all that kind of stuff. Quite often, it comes down to one person, and no one is prepared to call them up on it. Now, if that's the director and the producer, then you are in big trouble," he says, speaking from experience.

If it's not the film crew being divas, it could be as simple as an actor's schedule. "Quite often in the planning stage, we'll be given 2 or 3 alternatives. Plan A, plan B, plan C, and we might turn around and say, 'You can't do plan C because we can't do those dates.' So for the poor old location manager, it's a massive jigsaw putting the schedule together with the production manager," he says.

Or the weather. It always comes down to English weather. "The main element for us is often the weather. Particularly if it's outdoors. If there's a storm coming and there's a threat to life and we are legally obliged to shut them down," he says.

It's hard work. Tedious even, at times. But Harvey loves it. He loves every



FROM THE SCREEN: The Downton Abbey house, The Notting Hill blue door and the busy streets of Trafalgar Square



weird request, and he loves seeing the films he helped make, even if only for a few seconds. "Sometimes you blink, and you miss your bit. Or sometimes you get completely edited out of the film because they have shot too much. Those are the sort of best bits when you actually see it on screen, and you think, yeah, okay, we did a good job there, and we got what the director wanted. They've made it look good," he says.

Of course, there is the time when all the hard work goes into a film, which is, to put it nicely, subpar. "We've done a couple of films which I will guarantee I was probably the only person that ever saw them... Like anything, you can't ever really predict even the ones that seem like a short shirt. Yeah, it's a complete lottery," he jokes.

It's a flip of a coin whether the film Harvey helps is going to be any good. Sometimes one which looks like a banker will flop, and one which everyone has resigned to failing will be a hit. That was the case for *Four Weddings and a Funeral*.

"The guys on the set of *Four Weddings* and a *Funeral* were asking 'what's this', and they would just say 'it's just some Channel 4 thing, don't worry about it. You probably won't see it, don't worry about it'. Everyone thought because the budget was crap and some of the cast were unknown, but the next thing you know, it's a massive hit," he explains.

Which is a part of the job. You can never foresee which film will succeed and which will fail. But they do the job all the same.

Despite it being unknown, the work both Harvey and Sue do in their careers is vital not just for the films but for the areas as a whole.

"It's like an economic generation. Because if you've got a big crew to hang in the area, their hotel bill could be about £40,000 a night. If they're building something, they'll get all the materials locally. The caterers will get the food locally. So you get this massive injection of cash. into the place for about a three-week period," he says.

"When it's gone, everything's the way it was. You know, you're not having to worry about building a factory or opening a shop. You just have this massive injection of money in."

Even the smallest of films could have a massive impact on an area. Months after filming has stopped, if the film becomes iconic, it will have people visiting for years, helping provide money to the area. It immortalises them.

"We have a similar thing with Freshwater Bay down in South Wales because that's where Dobby died. So they have lots of people coming to photograph Dolby. Unfortunately, they start leaving socks. So, you know, so we've kind of reached out to Harry Potter fans and said, you know, leave no trace," he says.

So next time you take a visit to a location from a famous film scene so you can post it on social media, just remember it would have taken poor Sue or Harvey countless weeks to get it worthy for your feed.



No place like Oz

Bethany Weaver was working as a pilates and dance teacher until one day a click of the heels and an audition took her to Oz as she became unseen face from the blockbuster hit *Wicked: For Good*

Photo by: Jake Stevens

Bethany Weaver went to see the wizard, and he made her dreams come true.

She was like a lot of girls. In her younger years, she would watch the story of Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz*. She loved the film. She loved Dorothy. It was her dream role.

Little did she know that she would have a chance to take over the mantle from greats such as Judy Garland and Diana Ross. Only for her, it didn't start with a tornado and following the yellow brick road; it started with an audition and a trip down the M25.

Before she knew it, Bethany walked from her own Surrey house and into the vibrant world of Munchkinland. She was

standing in Dorothy's classic blue and white checkered gingham dress, slippers placed on the yellow brick road and a shaggy Cairn Terrier at her ankles.

Oh, Toto, I have a feeling we're not in Surrey anymore.

"I remember watching the movie at my great aunt's house at five years old. I've always loved *The Wizard of Oz* and Dorothy, so when I got this role, it was almost like the little five-year-old girl inside me was giving a hug," Bethany says. "I had that kind of bewildered look. This is going to really change my life."

Which it has. Since she announced

that she was playing Dorothy in *W* on Instagram — a post which has gained 827K likes — her life has taken a whole new trajectory.

Bethany, 30, is a dance and pilates teacher. She has done many interviews since her embargo lifted in February, and she is still brimming with enthusiasm. She recounts her days on set with such excitement and an infectious grin, reaching from ear to ear. "It's just nice to share my story in lots of different ways," she explains. "It's like a childhood dream come true for lots of young girls, and I'm just so lucky I got to live it."

Bethany's love for performing began at a young age, but it wasn't until she was 16 years old that she started to take it seriously. She had to play catch-up to her peers, but that's how she likes it. "I love starting at the bottom because you have somewhere to go and build towards. I hate going into a class or a room and being the best. I always like to work alongside somebody or aspire to be as good as somebody," she says.

Bethany learnt her craft for four years at Laine Theatre Arts and The Urdang Academy before booking her first West End gig in *Broken Wings*. Since then, she hasn't looked back. Notable notches on her career are *Oklahoma!*, *A Night at the Theatre* in Abu Dhabi and *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, which was performed in Monaco.

"I always believe I've got a next job because I've done really well in another room previously. So I've been really lucky to work with a lot of the same directors and actors," explains Bethany.

Her confident attitude would soon pay dividends. One night, she received a phone call that would change her life forever. It was her agent asking if she wanted to audition for the role of Dorothy. She said yes without hesitation.

However, her audition would be less than ideal. The room was full of girls

who had embodied Dorothy. They had their high heels and skirts on and were reading through their briefs in preparation. Bethany, on the other hand, was wearing a blue jumper, had no brief and as she describes, "a horrendously botched pigtail".

Suffice to say, she was very surprised when her agent called, saying she got the role.

Things quickly accelerated from then on. There were costume fittings, NDAs and hair and make-up fittings. She was catapulted into the tornado and transported to Oz.

"It's my first day on set at the wizard's lair, and I was acting with Jonathan Bailey and Ethan Slater. I've grown up watching *Step Up*, and John M. Shu is sitting in the chair. Ariana Grande has come to watch. I've got my own tent and I've got a stand-in," she says, but the best was still yet to come.

"I loved the day on set when I was with the munchkins walking along the yellow brick road, waving after Ariana. It was just really surreal and extraordinary to be on a real-life, yellow brick road."

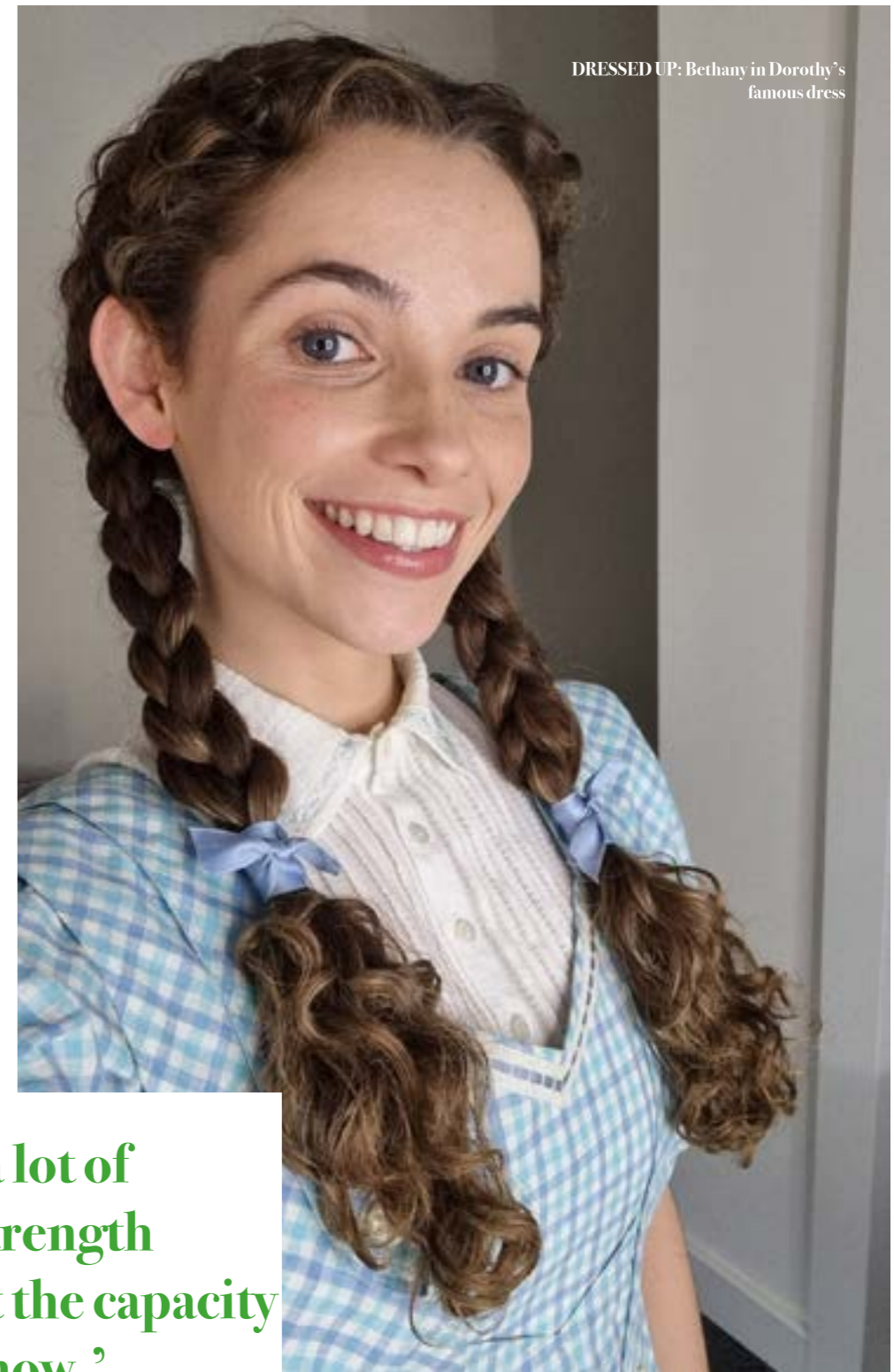
Her dream had come true. She was experiencing something many girls like her had dreamed of. This wasn't lost on her. Bethany was going to savour every last second. She was not going to let her five-year-old self down. "There was a general wave of kindness, which I think really transformed the set and made it probably one of the best experiences of

'It has given me a lot of confidence and strength mentally. I've got the capacity to dream bigger now.'

my life," she reminisces.

Bethany dreamed, as everyone does. She was just lucky enough to have the chance to capitalise on it. "Once you're presented with the opportunity to make that dream happen, it's incredibly scary in the most surreal, wonderful way ever. It's something I never thought I would do, and now it's all I want to do," Bethany says, with excitement.

"It's opened up this world of possibility that I can do much more. It's given me a lot of confidence and strength mentally



DRESSED UP: Bethany in Dorothy's famous dress



FOLLOW THE YELLOW BRICK ROAD: Bethany on set as Dorothy in *Wicked: For Good*

I've got that capacity to dream bigger now."

The magic dust has settled for Bethany. The red carpets have finished. Her time in Oz is over. For the people close to her, it still comes as a shock. "My relatives were in shock. I've got a lot of young kids in my family, so they think it's really cool that I'm a Barbie doll. They say at school, 'I'm related to Dorothy. It is their flex. I love it,'" Bethany says, with a smile.

She is eager to get working, but not

until she has revelled in her recent success. "You don't often sit back and actually recognise the good work you've done. So it's nice that the journey's been stretched out as such. It's allowed me to enjoy each moment and not rush through it because, you know, time flies," she says, with gratitude.

Bethany doesn't know where she will go next, but she will never forget her time in Oz. No matter what happens, she will always miss her time as Dorothy most of all.

LAST SCENE

Exhibitions and experiences you can have in the UK



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Fantastic Mr Anderson

The London Design Museum has brought the catalogue of Wes Anderson to life

“I have a way of filming things and staging them and designing sets. There were times when I thought I should change my approach, but in fact, this is what I like to do,” Wes Anderson remarked, “It’s sort of like my handwriting as a movie director... I’m going to write in my own handwriting.”

It’s interesting to think where Anderson may have been if he decided to change his “handwriting”. Would he still be relevant? Would he be just another face in a sea of generic white directors?

Anderson’s handwriting goes a bit like this — symmetrical framing, pastel colours, deadpan storytelling and a use of props and a similar ensemble as if it’s a theatre play.

It’s unique. In an era of over-reliance on CGI and green screens, Anderson is beyond committed to pushing his films to the limits, even if it is sometimes hit or miss.

It’s the reason he has followed in the steps of legendary filmmakers Stanley Kubrick and Tim Burton in having an exhibition in the London Design Museum. This isn’t like the Russo brothers, whose exhibition would be in one room and consist of a green screen and two contracts from Netflix and Disney.

Nearing the end of its stay, Wes Anderson: The Archives went deep into his catalogue, taking over 700 objects, including sculptures, costumes, sheet music, polaroids, scripts, paintings, sketches, and much more. It starts from his first short, 1996’s *Bottle Rocket*, to his most recent venture, *The Phoenician Scheme*.

Despite fans’ claims that Anderson has always made the same movie over and over, his career started much more in reality. You can really see the stark



LEFT: The Alien sculpture from *Astroid City*

ABOVE: The model for the fan favourite *The Grand Budapest Hotel*

TOP: Some of the carefully curated hand puppets from *Fantastic Mr Fox*

BELOW: Some of the fake knock up covers from *The French Dispatch*

TOP RIGHT: The costumes from *The Royal Tenenbaums*



contrast between his works while walking through. His first few years up to *The Royal Tenenbaums* is very much greyer and closer to a natural feel.

It isn’t until you get to said film that you start to see attention to detail and props which now dominate his movies. The fake magazine covers, composer sheets and Gwyneth Paltrow’s Margot Tenenbaum’s FENDI coat show how he meticulously builds his world and personality.

It’s for that reason you don’t need to read the plaques to figure out which film you’ve walked into; the costumes and props will tell you immediately. You can also pinpoint the exact moment he started to fully embrace his own style at *Moonrise Kingdom*.

What makes Anderson worthy of this exhibition more than others is his delves into stop motion. It was *Fantastic Mr Fox* which cemented Anderson as one of our most creative minds, and *Isle of Dogs* which proved it was no fluke. This is by far the most impressive of the exhibition. Seeing each bit of fur which would have been stuck down really gives you a sense of the time each scene in the films would have needed.

In the words of Mr Fox, it is cussing brilliant. It’s a hard place to move away from. You find yourself taking extra care while looking to make sure you have really taken in everything it has to offer.

Perhaps the only thing that would equal the excitement

to *Fantastic Mr Fox* would be *The Grand Budapest Hotel*. It was around this point I found myself audibly gasping and saying wow in the same way long-time collaborator Owen Wilson does.

This is a master at work. It is beyond impressive seeing the hotel and the paintings from Benicio del Toro’s Moses Rosenthaler. They bring these films to life in front of you. The fake magazine covers from *The French Dispatch* are cool, but you are here for the big set pieces like the train from *The Darjeeling Limited* and the rocket and crater from *Astroid City*, and this exhibition more than delivers on your expectations.

Not to say this is a pompous, ego-inflating showcase for Anderson; if anything, this shows how well his collaborators do turning his faint ideas into these grandiose sets. It gives the people who would have spent hours bringing his films to life their chance in the spotlight, which you get an admiration for.

The best directors adapt with the times and their own ideas, and although Anderson may have pigeon-holed himself into a symmetrical box, this exhibition shows he is a master at giving the box a fresh and unique look.

The showcase disappears on July 26 and would be a great way to breathe some life into your hope for the future of film.

If nothing else, it is a great showcase of persevering with your own ideas. Or as Anderson puts it, your own handwriting.

BFI London Film Festival

How to get the most out of London's biggest film festival

You never forget your first, so you better make sure you do it right. It may not be Cannes or Toronto, but the BFI London Film Festival is still a highlight in the film calendar, especially for us Brits.

For 12 days, actors, directors and fans from across the world come to the capital to showcase their new release. It's your chance to see Oscar contenders early, and to get ahead of the dreaded UK release schedule.

It's a must-do if you're a film fan, but crucially, it's a must-do right.

For as good as it is, there is a possibility for you to cause yourself trouble before you even start. To help you avoid the simple mistakes, here are the tips and tricks to doing the London Film Festival right.

Plan, and then plan again some more. If you're going for one day, plan. If you're going for all 12, definitely plan. No matter how big or small the volume of films you will be watching, make sure you have planned ahead. There will be around 20 to 30 screenings daily, so you need to make sure you have timing down to a T. You don't want to get excited and book yourself in for four films with no breaks. There's no point seeing so many films in the day if by the end you're starving, thirsty and trying to keep your eyes open.

Each film will have three main different types of screenings. There are press screenings for press, naturally. There are the usual screenings where you turn up and watch the film. The big one is the Gala screenings. These consist of the glitz and glamour: celebrities, red carpets and fan frenzies. The best part? You can attend. If you get yourself a Gala ticket, you will be able to walk the red carpet and potentially get a selfie with your favourite actor. If you want to see the celebrities but don't have a Gala ticket, next to the Red carpet is a bridge which you can perch yourself on to have a look.

It should go without saying, but being early is key. It's especially important if you're going to a gala screening. The front of those barriers fill up quickly, so if you want to get to the front, you best make sure you are there with enough time. The screenings are strict on punctuality, so you don't want to miss your film by being a bit late. Plan your travel the night before, and be ready in case there are delays. You know what London can be like.

Most importantly, enjoy it. Enjoy the films, but make sure to do it correctly.



ABOVE: The UK premiere of *Christy*

LEFT Sydney Sweeney introducing *Christy*

BOTTOM: Fan frenzy for Sweeney



Good things come in small packages

Paul O'Conner talks about the idea behind Sol Cinema, the smallest cinema in the UK

What made you start Sol Cinema?

I used to make documentaries... When you're doing festivals in rain and mud, we thought we needed something that would contain our projection blocks. We were discussing, and we thought, 'wouldn't it be funny if we put the audience inside the projection box?' We got an old caravan, and we thought it would be funny to make the world's smallest cinema.

What was the thinking behind it being solar powered?

It was so we could rock up anywhere. We are completely self-sufficient. So it meant we could perform in a forest, on a beach, city centre, wherever it was. It was a huge headache back in 2010. The technology was still in its early days, so we found a guy who knew more than we did, and was confident enough to try it. He pulled it off. So that was the rest of it; sort of fell into place really. It was a good mix.

What are some of the films you have screened?

There was a group called Movie

Maniacs, and they made parodies of major blockbusters, but they acted it out themselves. So they made *Avatar*, but they call it *Chavatar*. It was brilliant.

What's been your favourite event over the years?

We've done 12 Glastonbury's now. It's a lot of hard work, but it's always been a laugh. It's been the right mix. Madness, the band, hired us to do the world premiere of their new film during lockdown. They thought it'd be funny to hire us, so we drove down to London in front of the Odeon in Leicester Square in their foyer and did the whole launch screening there. That was hilarious."

Being a mainstay at Glastonbury is impressive. I imagine it wasn't easy.

Glastonbury takes a lot of convincing. It's hard, it's hard work, but we've kind of become a favourite now. People come up to us every year and just say, 'my favourite thing in the whole festival'

So what makes people love it so much?

I realised a lot of it is, but theatre.

It's about the performance outside the cinema... It's all this language that people understand straight away. But cinema, people understand what cinema is, and you understand and get your ticket, get your ticket clipped, the popcorn, all these kind of, um, uh, moments in the show, we get brilliant. So it was good, it was like straight away. It was a success really.

I guess it helps people who are still craving an experience at the cinema which you can't get anywhere else.

Exactly. It doesn't have to just be regimented either in the cinema, in your room, like, why not watch it out with the moon? Why not do these other things? That's what people are looking for. They're looking for something different rather than just going to the Vue.

It's all cinema fans are looking for. They want a full experience.

I think as much as streaming and other stuff will come into play, I just don't think anything will replicate that experience. If you're gonna watch a film, it's a communal experience. It's so much more powerful.



Film lovers' guide to Edinburgh

Here are the best sights to see for film fans when you are visiting Scotland's capital

A lot of people who visit Edinburgh, are going for medieval architecture. Or maybe the castle which dominates the skyline. Some people might even be energetic enough to come here and hike up Arthur's seat.

Me? I travelled five and a half hours on a delayed London North Western Railway to the Scottish capital so my girlfriend could visit some stairs. Yep, you read that correctly. Regrettably, that's not a typo.

Not just any stairs, mind you, the stairs which featured and were popularised by the Netflix series *One Day*. We are not clinically insane, don't worry.

Where most people will see Edinburgh for its rich history, I see a city littered with film scenes. It's easy to see why, its lack of modern sky scrapers and picturesque streets has made it a film maker's dream for a fantastical setting.

So although the big reason was to visit the newly iconic steps, it was a perfect opportunity to get some film sights in.

Located at the Vennel, the seemingly normal staircase has become a popular spot for tourists, much to the lively market's pleasure which sits at the bottom of them. There isn't much to it, just you walking up and down these steps trying to get the perfect photo recreation of the scene.

It's definitely a good idea to get it ticked off early, because it prepares you perfectly for the sheer

amount of hills and steps you are going to have to walk up. For every iconic film scene from the city, there is an unfathomably long staircase next to it which could only be intended as a sick joke to see the lengths a tourist will go to get to their next destination. My legs still quiver a little when looking at a long staircase.

If you're someone who enjoys the incline and hiking, a trip up Arthur's Seat will have you overlooking the city like Renton in *Trainspotting 2*.

Alternatively, you can go to Regent Bridge. It's only a short walk from the train station and there is no heavy walking needed.

If you're a fan of monsters, many scenes from last year's *Frankenstein* were filmed here. The majority of the golden mile in the film as well as the surrounding area of St Giles' Cathedral. Less iconic, but cool nevertheless. You can even go have a drink at the Frankenstein pub, which is full of memorabilia about the monster.

It's not just scientists who have walked the streets but superheroes as well. *Avengers: Infinity War* battled on the streets of Grassmarket as well as at the train station. Sadly you will only find delayed trains there and not Captain America.

It may not be as vast as other cities' film history, but it's still worth checking a few of the boxes if you find yourself in the city at any point.

Opinion

What would your mother say?

I never used to understand when people said to me 'what would your mother say?' as a child. After seeing the increasingly bad etiquette in cinemas, I'm starting to understand.

I never used to understand what people meant when they would ask, 'What would your mother say if she saw you doing that?' Namely because I always thought I was in the right, and whatever disturbance I was causing was being blown out of proportion. She wouldn't be bothered; I'm just having a laugh.

Almost definitely not true. Nine out of ten times, I was being a pain in the arse. We will put it down to childhood naivety.

It's only now, as a 21-year-old man, that I understand what they meant. I never thought I'd find myself thinking that same question to the younger generation, but I do. Very frequently.

I love going to the cinema. I'm sure the magazine you are reading is enough of an indication of that, but if not, let me tell you now I really love it.

There are not many better pastimes than driving to my local cinema, getting some overpriced popcorn and watching the lights dim as I watch whatever new release has come out. It is great fun.

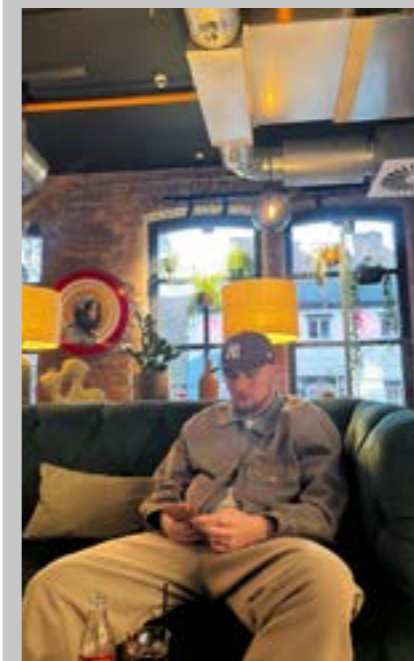
At least it is most of the time. I don't want to sit here and be an old man waving a fist at a cloud, but my patience has been tested. My last button has been pushed. I have been tipped over the edge.

When did we forget how to act at the cinema? Why have we let standards slip so badly? It feels like one in every three times I go there is a group of people who think they are hysterical and don't stop making loud, obnoxious jokes. If not, it's people chatting among themselves as if they are at a bar. Or someone on their phone, scrolling Instagram like they haven't had all day to do that.

Unless your whole family is dying, I don't want to see you on your phone.

There is even the occasion where there are just people vaping or smoking weed. Yes, that has happened before. Several times, actually. I only have to look back to *The Long Walk* last year. Although at that time I didn't quite notice the sound

'I'm not saying we go full Ricky Gevais in Afterlife and start throwing bricks at people, but we need to think of something'



of my sniffing nose and the drying of my eyes on my hoodie sleeve.

However, judging by the reactions of nearly everyone in the room, it was quite bad.

As this happens around me, I can't help but think what would your mother say if she saw you doing this?

Maybe I am getting old.

Why people feel the need, after spending so much money to watch this film, to talk, chat and shout at things happening in the film is beyond me. You are not in your bedroom. This is a cinema. People have paid good money to be here. You do not deserve to ruin it for other people. I promise, you are not that important.

It's infuriating. Something needs to be done about it. I'm not saying we go full Ricky Gevais in *Afterlife* and start throwing bricks at people — as tempting as that may be — but we need to think of something.

I don't have an answer. As much as it's their job, I'm not expecting teenage cinema workers who are not paid enough to deal with the fallout that will come with reporting it.

I'd say we have over 18 screenings, but I'd be ignorant to think that the problem is exclusively with kids. If anything, it's more the adults.

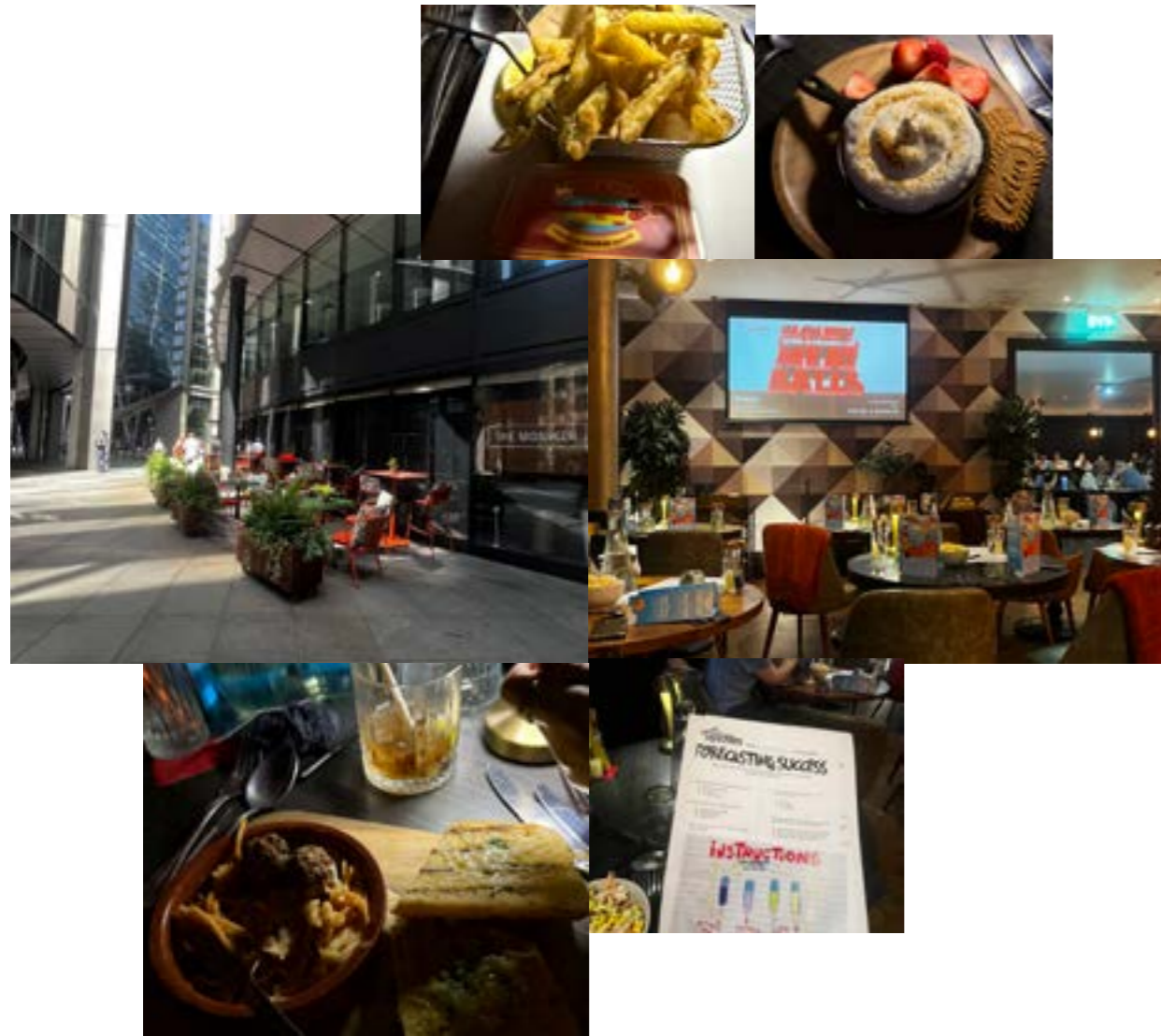
Naturally, telling them to be quiet is a good way, but there isn't a guarantee they will even listen to you.

I'm out of ideas. I'm leaning towards public shame and booing people, but I'm not sure that will catch on.

I get it. COVID happened, and we all forgot how to act at the cinema. That's ok. Streaming ruined things. I get it. But you are not at home. Even if you were, just watch the movie? It is incredibly easy.

As soon as you leave that room, shout until your heart's content. But while you're there, just shut up. It's that simple. Just do that before I lose my mind.

Let me be angry or happy about a bad film in peace.



I'll have what they are having

Does eating the food on screen enhance your experience? We went to put it to the test at Taste Cinema

Among all the emotions you experience when watching a movie, an underanalyzed effect it has on you is hunger. We all laugh together, cry together, but we never talk about the collective belly rumble when seeing mouth-watering food on screen.

Which is strange, because directors and animators have created standards for foods I don't think many chefs could replicate. Even as a picky eater, I watch some of these films and have an insatiable craving for a cuisine which I know I'd never like.

They may be our great storytellers, but they are also great chefs.

Someone who did decide to delve deeper into this was Amy Fernando.

After watching the cooking scene in *The Godfather*, she had a question. Could food bring us closer to the characters and the stories we love on screen? She decided to put it to the test.

It's called Taste Cinema, a dining and viewing experience where fans are treated to a five-course meal based on the film they are watching. They go to different restaurants across the country offering different films and dishes for you to enjoy.

It was started in 2017, so it's fair to say the test was a resounding success. I wouldn't be on a train to London on the hottest day of the year after spending £85 on a ticket otherwise.

It's a large sum, but not ridiculous when you take into consideration the price of cinema tickets and five-course meals on their own. You could do a lot worse.

Despite being a notorious picky eater, I was still enamoured by the idea. I knew it would be tricky for me to find some food I liked, but if you put a meal which was designed to please an eight-year-old boy who only wants chips for dinner, I will be happy.

So naturally, we picked *Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs*. It's a weird experience watching a kids' film in an establishment as fancy as the Moniker, but a welcome one.

It comes with five courses — a mocktail or cocktail, skinny courgette bait fries, a cheeseburger, tomato spaghetti and meatballs with garlic bread, and melted chocolate topped with toasted piped meringue with biscuits and strawberries.

It's a substantial amount. Luckily for them, I was starving. As much as you go for the dining experience, this is very much

a feast for the senses. They nail the aesthetic straight away. As you walk into the restaurant, which is split into two different rooms, parts of the score play as you get accustomed to your surprisingly comfy seat for the next couple of hours.

Our menu was presented like a weather report and accompanied by a quiz, which I unashamedly got 10/10 on. I knew spending my childhood years watching animated films would pay off eventually. I did eventually lose on the tiebreaker. It happens to the best of us.

What particularly impressed me was the presentation of the drinks. Each component of the drinks was in test tubes, and there was a science test sheet instructing you on how to pour your drink correctly.

It's the little things which amplify the experience. Even something as small as the sauce for the fries coming in a sardine tin goes a long way in immersing you into the film.

Something which I thought would decrease my immersion would be the waiters who bring the food over. I was wrong. They are as inconspicuous as possible. There isn't much of a

wait between the meals, so you'd think they would get in the way, but they are as invisible as they could be.

As for the food they were serving, it was a mixed bag. Which is to be expected, considering I don't like half of the menu. The fries, burger and meringue were manageable, but not good enough for me to change my childish taste buds.

It's at this point you might wonder why I decided to do this, considering I haven't liked a single thing on the menu. It's a fair query, but the reasoning was for the main course.

It may have been devastating for the people in Swallow Falls as their town was hit with a spaghetti tornado, but it was a delight for me.

So was Amy correct? I think she was. Considering the majority of the menu wasn't to my liking, I felt myself enjoying it more thanks to seeing the food on screen. In the least psychotic way possible, the spaghetti did taste that little bit better seeing it whip up the townsfolk on screen.

In the words of Anton Ego I'll be returning to Taste Cinema, hungry for more.

The perfect movie night for..

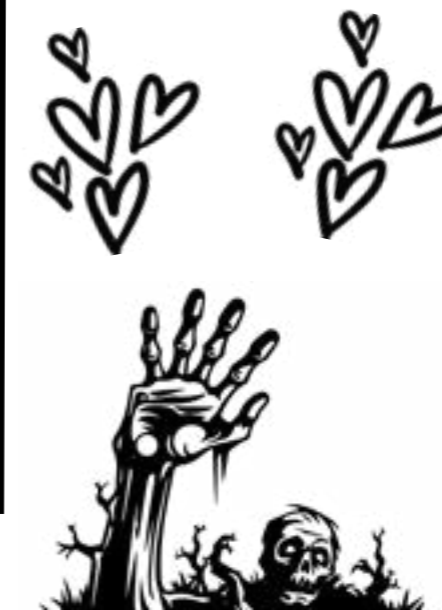
Friends

There are many ways you can go with your friends. Horror films are always a good bet. Action movies are as well. Putting on one of your friend group's favourite films and not enjoying it as much as they would have hoped is also good fun. As it goes, you can get away with just about anything. Where I think you can all have the best time is with a mystery film. Or, better yet, a murder mystery. You can all place your bets on who you think will be the culprit, and wait to find out who gets the bragging rights at the end. It will add that extra level of focus to your movie night, as let's face it, trying to keep everyone engaged on one film can be an absolute nightmare.



Couples

It would be easy to default to saying you should watch a romance film with your partner. A little bit of romance, which can get you teary-eyed, is a good way to go. Do you want to know what's better? A horror film. Especially if you are at the start of your relationship, there is no better way to break down each other's walls than watching you both squeal at a jump scare. Set the tone by blacking out as much light as possible, sit back and laugh at each other at how scared you both are getting. Remember to have a pillow on standby, because sometimes hiding behind your bravado won't be enough to keep you composed.



Family

Crucial advice: do your research. It is imperative that you make sure the film you decide to put on is family-friendly. There is nothing worse than awkwardly looking around the room while a sex scene takes place. Even the strongest of bonds with your family can't survive how awkward this can be. A safe bet is putting on a comedy. Not only are the chances of awkward scenes low, but it is also an easy way to get everyone on side. Especially if your family are not film buffs. Everyone loves a lighthearted comedy, even your overly cynical dad. If you want to really impress him, make sure there is some shooting involved or some fighting. If he is anything like mine, he will love that.





The ultimate Scenes quiz

20 questions about the UK film industry

1. Edgar Wright created a trilogy of films involving Simon Pegg and Nick Frost known as what?
2. The hit TV show The Inbetweeners had two movies. Where did the boys travel to in the second movie?
3. Where is This England set?
4. What band is the 1979 film Quadrophenia about?
5. What team does Danny Dyer's character Tommy Jones support in 2004's The Football Factory?
6. In the cult football classic Goal! who does Santiago Muñez score his first professional goal against?
7. What brand of phone cannot be used by a villain in a movie?
8. Who has the most live-action appearances as James Bond?
9. What part of the UK does Kate Winslet's Iris live in in The Holiday?
10. Danny Boyle's 2019 film Yesterday, the world has forgotten about what band?
11. In which biopic about a UK artist is the main character portrayed as a monkey?
12. How does Bridget Jones get imprisoned in the second movie?
13. Where was Alfred Hitchcock born?
14. Which former British footballer played Juggernaut in X-Men: The Last Stand?
15. Which UK rapper has become a mainstay in Guy Ritchie movies?
16. Gary Oldman won the Oscar for playing which real-life UK figure?
17. What was Christopher Nolan's first movie called?
18. What county is Wallace and Gromit set in?
19. Who does Michael Caine play in The Dark Knight trilogy?
20. What family adopts Paddington?

Answers below

1. The Cornetto Trilogy 2. Australia 3. East Midlands 4. The Who 5. West Ham
 6. Liverpool FC 7. Iphone 8. Roger Moore 9. Surrey 10. The Beatles 11. Better man, Robbie Williams
 12. Smuggling cocaine 13. Essex 14. Vinnie Jones 15. Bugzy Malone 16. Winston Churchill
 17. Following 18. Lancashire 19. Alfred 20. The Brown Family



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