

CINEPILEX

MAGAZINE



MORE MAYHEM!

JOSS WHEDON TALKS
AVENGERS: AGE OF ULTRON

Inside
REESE
WITHERSPOON
ETHAN
HAWKE



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BEWARE THE BOTS

Last October, Elon Musk — the genius engineer and philanthropist behind the electric-car company Tesla — told a group at MIT's AeroAstro Symposium (a get-together of rocket scientists) that artificial intelligence is mankind's "biggest existential threat."

In December, theoretical physicist Stephen Hawking told the BBC, "I think the development of full artificial intelligence could spell the end of the human race. Once humans develop artificial intelligence it would take off on its own and redesign itself at an ever-increasing rate. Humans, who are limited by slow biological evolution, couldn't compete and would be superseded."

And in January, the Future of Life Institute issued an open letter titled "Research Priorities for Robust and Beneficial Artificial Intelligence" that acknowledged the incredible potential of AI, but asked that guidelines be put in place to ensure it is used for good, and remains within the control of those who make it. "Our AI systems must do what we want them to do," is how they put it. Hawking, Musk and hundreds of others have signed it.

Ahhh, Tony Stark, you arrogant genius. This isn't something you could have figured out on your own?

This month's massive Marvel pic *Avengers: Age of Ultron* sees Stark, a.k.a. Iron Man, installing a robot peacekeeper named Ultron, who turns on his maker by deciding the only way to keep peace on Earth is to destroy all humans.

Of course, the question of artificially intelligent machines — and whether they are friend or foe — is nothing new for movies, going back to films like 1951's *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, with its nine-foot-tall tin can named Gort who, at various times, was either trying to save or kill the residents of Earth.

But, just like those scientific discussions about the dangers of AI, movies about smart robots have been unusually plentiful in the past year.

There was *Transcendence*, in which Johnny Depp's dying character has his consciousness uploaded into a computer with frightening results for humanity. Director Neill Blomkamp delivered *Chappie*, about a sweet-natured robot who can think and feel, and is thus seen as a threat and must be destroyed. And last month's *Ex Machina* concerned a sexy female android who appears to have achieved free will and will do anything to keep from losing it.

A few decades ago the idea of an artificial life form outsmarting humans would have been dismissed as "the stuff of science fiction." Not so much anymore. In fact, as *Transcendence* was released our friend Hawking co-authored a story in *The Independent* that professed, "There are no fundamental limits to what can be achieved: there is no physical law precluding particles from being organized in ways that perform even more advanced computations than the arrangements of particles in the human brain." Scary.

But for now just relax, turn to page 36, and enjoy our chat with *Avengers: Age of Ultron*'s writer/director **Joss Whedon** about reuniting his team, adding some new members, and the "really unhinged robot" at the centre of it all.

Elsewhere in this issue, **Reese Witherspoon** talks about taking a break from serious films for the buddy comedy *Hot Pursuit* (page 28), **Ethan Hawke** discusses playing against type as *Good Kill*'s quiet military man (page 22), we take a pictorial peek at director **George Miller's** *Mad Max: Fury Road* (page 32), and trace the origins of Disney's *Tomorrowland* (page 24).

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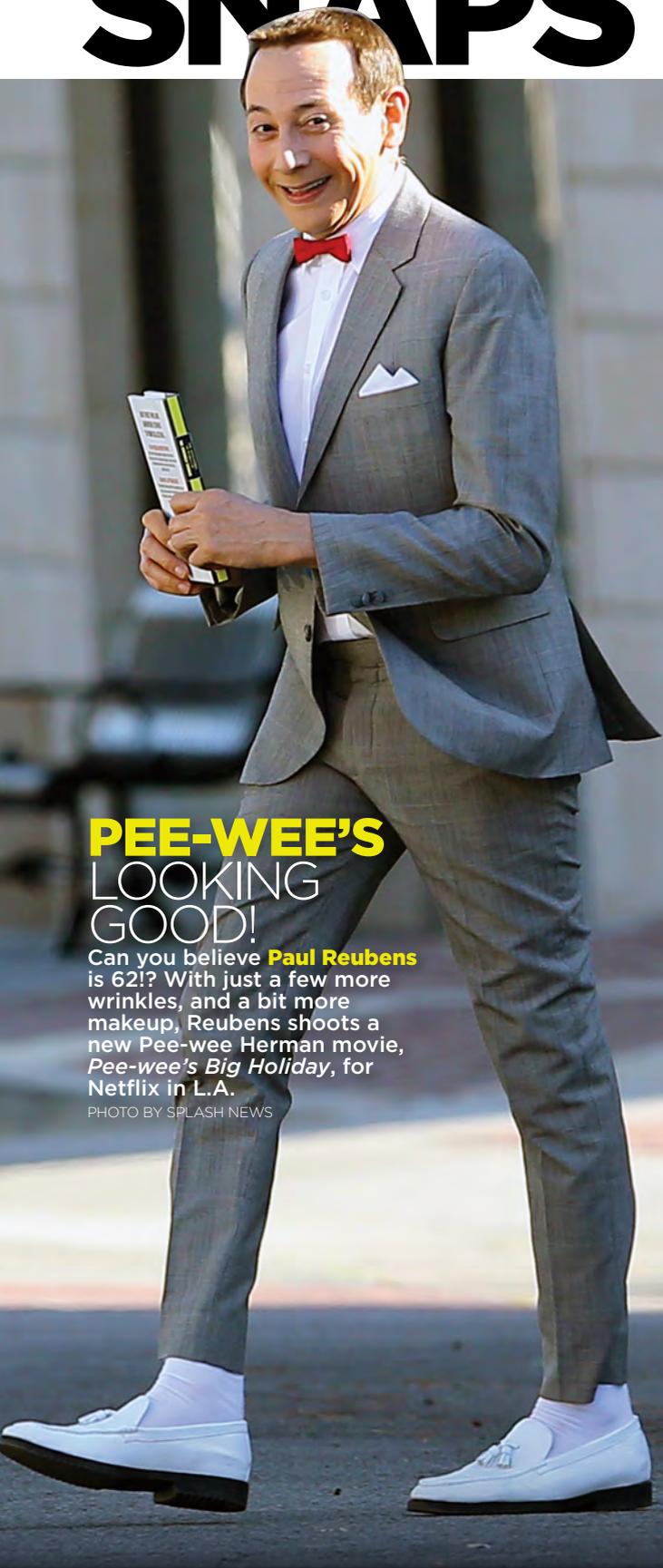
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SNAPS



PEE-WEE'S LOOKING GOOD!

Can you believe **Paul Reubens** is 62!? With just a few more wrinkles, and a bit more makeup, Reubens shoots a new Pee-wee Herman movie, *Pee-wee's Big Holiday*, for Netflix in L.A.

PHOTO BY SPLASH NEWS



EDDIE TRANSFORMS AGAIN

Eddie Redmayne — who last transformed into Stephen Hawking for *The Theory of Everything* — transforms once again, this time to play *The Danish Girl's* Lili Elbe, an early recipient of sex reassignment surgery.

PHOTO BY SPLASH NEWS



WIIG'S WIG

Yup, that's **Kristen Wiig** as some sort of frightening fashionista on the Rome set of *Zoolander 2*.

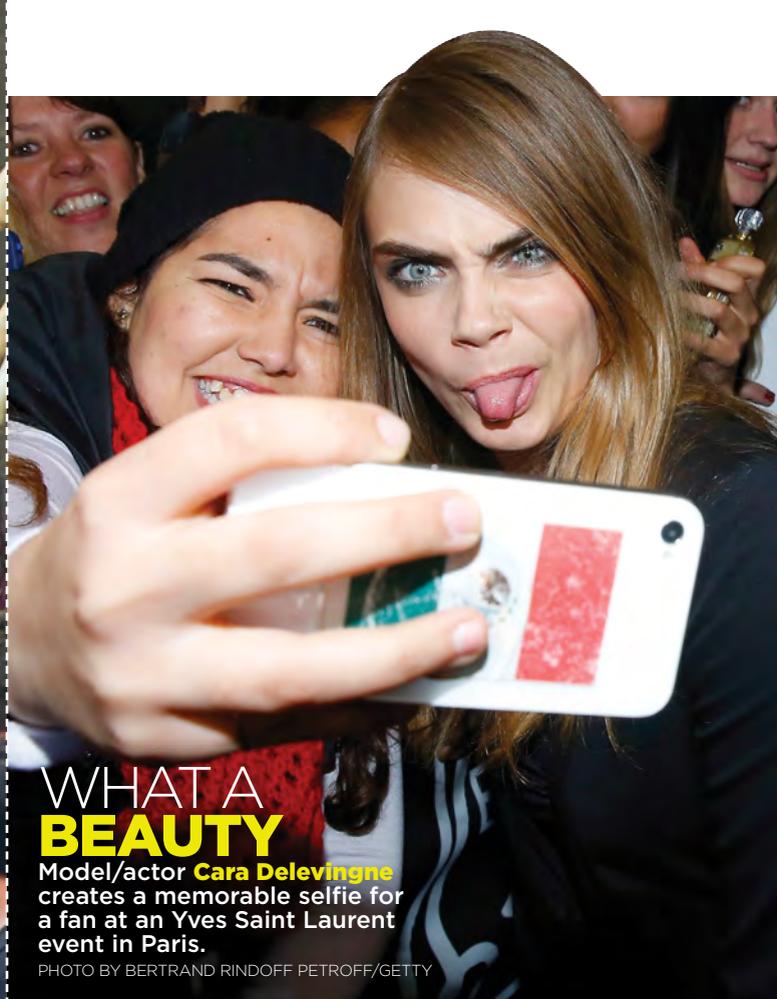
PHOTO BY KEYSTONE PRESS



GIVE HIM A HAND

Daniel Craig shoots a scene from the new James Bond movie, *Spectre*, in Mexico City.

PHOTO BY SPLASH NEWS



WHAT A BEAUTY

Model/actor **Cara Delevingne** creates a memorable selfie for a fan at an Yves Saint Laurent event in Paris.

PHOTO BY BERTRAND RINDOFF PETROFF/GETTY



J-LAW + B-COOP

Frequent co-stars **Jennifer Lawrence** and **Bradley Cooper** — who are definitely not dating — share a tender moment at a New York screening of *Serena*.

PHOTO BY DIMITRIOS KAMBOURIS/GETTY

IN BRIEF



Banks MACHINE

Elizabeth Banks is after every job in Hollywood.

The *Hunger Games* star makes her feature-film directing debut this month by stepping behind the camera for *Pitch Perfect 2*, the sequel to the 2012 hit about an all-girls a cappella group, the members of which are fond

of adding the prefix “aca” to various words — aca-gods, aca-awesome, aca-awkward.

Banks also acts in the film, playing competition announcer Gail, and co-produced.

But it’s as a celebrity interviewer that she may have the most potential. Her series “Ask a Badass,” which you can find on her YouTube

channel, [YouTube.com/user/ElizabethBanks](https://www.youtube.com/user/ElizabethBanks), features Banks quizzing her co-stars with the type of irreverent questions only friends can ask.

Like when she says to Lenny Kravitz, “You have a very rebellious spirit and you’re very true to yourself. I think everyone wants to know...what is the biggest thing that you’ve ever thrown at an assistant?”

Then there was the time she asked Julianne Moore, “Do you have a special photo [of yourself] that you love on MrSkin.com?” — in reference to the trashy website that posts, and rates, screen grabs of famous actors in big-screen nude scenes.

And when Chris Pratt told her he uses self-deprecating humour to disarm awkward situations she asked, “Is that how you got your hot wife?” in reference to Anna Faris. “Because, let’s be honest, she’s dating down.” —*MW*

 **When is it appropriate to quote *Pitch Perfect*?**

Aca-always! Send us your faves on Twitter and Facebook with #PitchIsBack



Jared Leto

On Home Turf: SUICIDE SQUAD

Star spotting will be a little easier in Toronto for the next few months as a large group of actors is in town to shoot DC Comics’ *Suicide Squad*.

Jared Leto (The Joker), **Will Smith** (Deadshot), **Margot Robbie** (Harley Quinn), **Cara Delevingne** (Enchantress), **Joel Kinnaman** (Rick Flagg) and **Viola Davis** (Amanda Waller) are all here for the dark pic that sees incarcerated supervillains offered clemency in return for going on secret, and very dangerous, government missions. What’s with the group’s morbid name? There’s no guarantee they’ll come back from those missions alive.

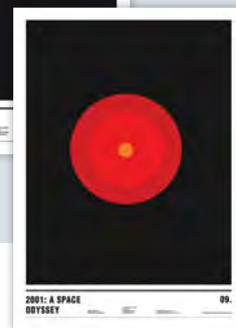
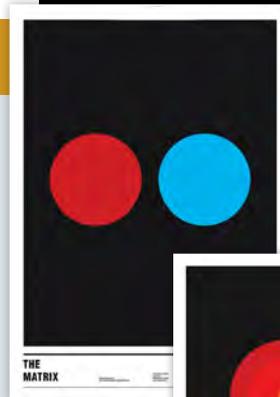
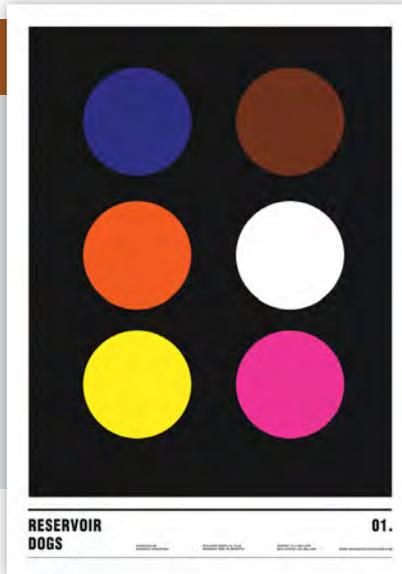
Writer-director **David Ayer** (*Fury*) oversees the action, which takes place largely at Pinewood Toronto Studios.

—*MW*

PHOTO BY MICHAEL DUFOR/GETTY

THE ART OF FILM

Australian graphic designer Nick Barclay was watching Christopher Nolan’s *Interstellar* when his mind started to wander. “It got me thinking about *2001: A Space Odyssey* and how a circle can be a main character, so I wanted to see if I could break other movies down into circles.” Here you see his round ode to *2001*’s antihero HAL 9000, his rendition of *Reservoir Dogs*’ cast of colourful characters, and *The Matrix*’s famous pills. The series also reflects Barclay’s overall aesthetic, which he describes as “clean, bold and bright, with an idea.” See more at nickbarclaydesigns.com. —*MW*



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Dwayne Johnson (left) and Brad Peyton on the *San Andreas* set

THE ROCK X 2

▶▶ Martin Scorsese and Leonardo DiCaprio. Tim Burton and Johnny Depp. Brad Peyton and Dwayne “The Rock” Johnson? Well, maybe not...yet. But Peyton, the young director from Gander, Newfoundland (the province nicknamed The Rock), releases his second film starring the former WWE wrestler this month. *San Andreas* features Johnson as a rescue-chopper pilot trying to find his daughter after a cataclysmic earthquake hits California. The pair first worked together on 2012’s *Journey 2: The Mysterious Island*, which happens to screen as part of Cineplex’s Family Favourites series on May 2nd. —*MW*



Go to CINEPLEX.COM/EVENTS/INTHEGALLERY for times and locations.

FEELING BLUE

We know how you feel, little one. (We’re talking to the dog.) American painter Mary Cassatt’s 1878 oil on canvas “Little Girl in a Blue Armchair” is just one of the masterpieces featured in this month’s *In the Gallery* presentation, *The Impressionists*, which screens on May 28th and 31st.



DOCTOR, DOCTOR

Get me a rocket pack, stat! A battle of the TV doctors plays out in this month’s *Tomorrowland* as *ER*’s likable emergency room hero Doug Ross (George Clooney, top left) goes up against *House*’s misanthropic diagnostician Gregory House (Hugh Laurie, right) in Disney’s theme park-inspired fantasy. From what we can tell, the actors stick fairly close to their doctor selves, with Clooney playing a sympathetic inventor and Laurie as the evil-ish leader of a futuristic world. —*MW*

Quote Unquote

You know, you try and tell yourself every day, ‘In 20 years you’re gonna look back and wish you could do this again.’ You try and embrace, you try and remind yourself of that, and really enjoy what’s happening. **But I don’t think that’s possible without those 20 years.**

—CHRIS EVANS on making *Avengers: Age of Ultron*



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A SCREENWRITER IS BORN

About four years ago Vancouver's Sonja Bennett had an epiphany while flinging herself around her living room, bouncing from end to end.

"I was auditioning to play a nurse that becomes possessed by a demon," she explains. "And so I'm in my living room practicing being pushed around by this power, pushed across the living room, slamming into the wall and convulsing."

That's when her two-year-old son asked, "Mom, whatcha *doin*?!"

"I was like, 'Hmmm, good question.' So I just decided to cut that all out," recalls Bennett. "It wasn't making me happy."

Instead, she sat down and started to write — ideally a screenplay in which she would star. "Around 30 I noticed that, let me put it this way, being an actress in your 30s is decidedly less fun than being an actress in your 20s, and the parts were just getting less interesting and smaller and I could feel myself getting that bitter actress-itis, and I didn't want that."

The result is *Preggoland*, an indie comedy that does star Bennett and earned strong reviews at the Toronto and Vancouver International Film Festivals before hitting theatres this month.

Bennett plays Ruth, a single, decidedly immature, childless thirtysomething who no longer fits in with her group of friends, all of whom have kids. When she's mistaken for being pregnant, Ruth notices people are nicer to her — so she doesn't correct them. Eventually the lie takes over her life.

In reality, Bennett has two little ones; that son is now five and her daughter is one.

It was while pregnant with her boy that the idea for *Preggoland* came to Bennett as she jaywalked across the street to her local coffee shop — just like every morning. For the first time, instead of eliciting angry glares, she was met by smiles as the cars slowed to allow her safe passage. She looked down and realized she was wearing a tight tank top and had just begun to show.

"I thought this was so interesting how society treats pregnant women," she says. "At this point all I've done is have sex, but for some reason, when you're pregnant people treat you as a goddess."

Thanks to *Preggoland*, Bennett now considers herself as much a screenwriter as an actor. As for struggling to land small, humiliating roles in whatever happens to be shooting in Vancouver...

"No more," she says. "No more zombies, no more nurses."
—MARNI WEISZ



PREGGOLAND
HITS THEATRES
MAY 1ST

WE'RE BACK PITCHES

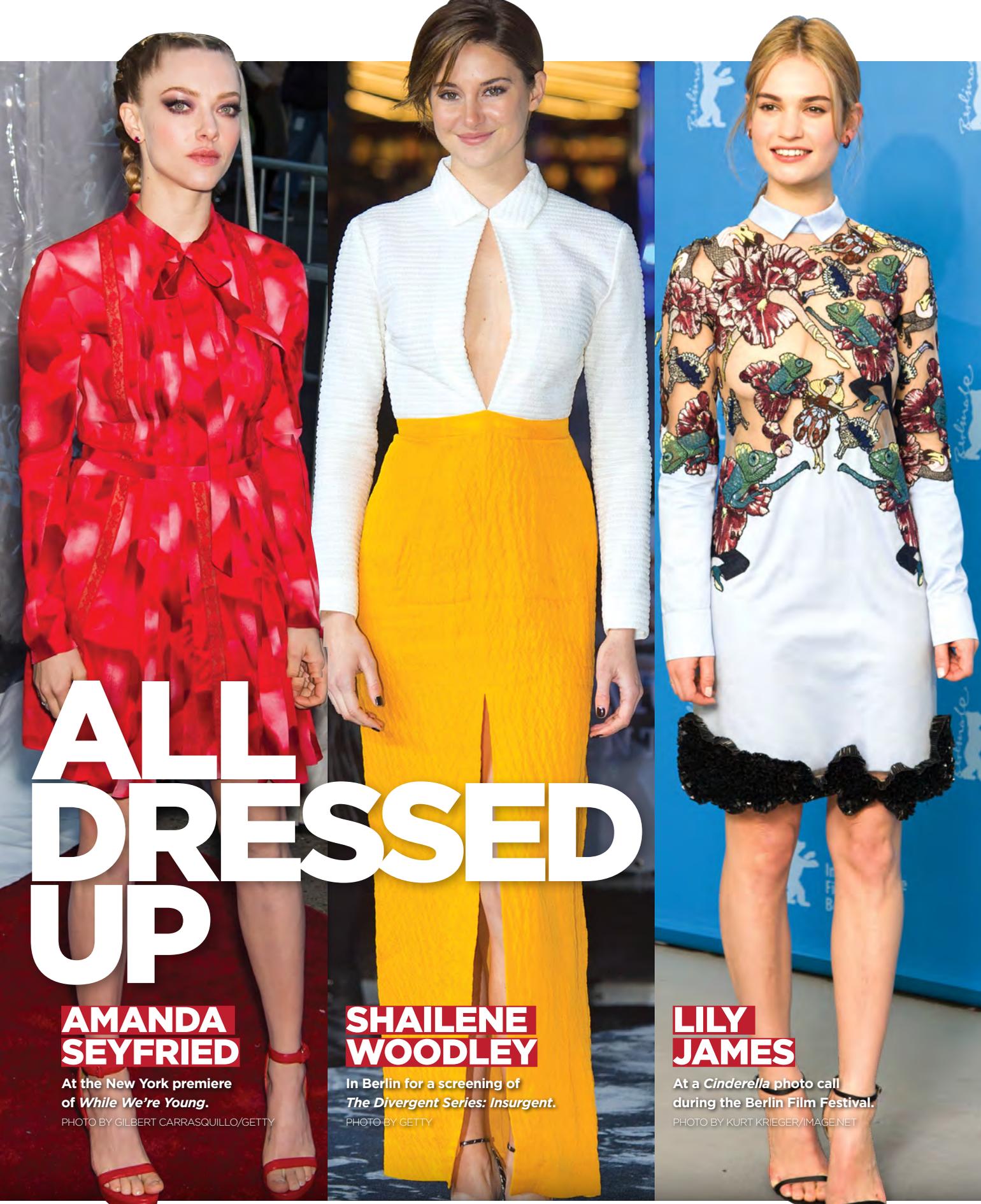


MAY 15



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ALL DRESSED UP

AMANDA SEYFRIED

At the New York premiere of *While We're Young*.

PHOTO BY GILBERT CARRASQUILLO/GETTY

SHAILENE WOODLEY

In Berlin for a screening of *The Divergent Series: Insurgent*.

PHOTO BY GETTY

LILY JAMES

At a *Cinderella* photo call during the Berlin Film Festival.

PHOTO BY KURT KRIEGER/IMAGENET



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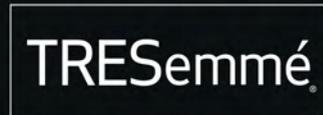


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IN THEATRES

MAY 1

AVENGERS: AGE OF ULTRON

Writer-director **Joss Whedon** deftly spread the love among his big-name cast in *The Avengers*, and now adds even more superheroes — Quicksilver (**Aaron Taylor-Johnson**), Scarlet Witch (**Elizabeth Olsen**) and The Vision (**Paul Bettany**) — into the mix for the sequel that sees the team battling villainous robot Ultron (voiced by **James Spader**). Ultron was originally created by Tony Stark (**Robert Downey Jr.**) to protect the world, but now wants to destroy it. See **Joss Whedon interview**, [page 36](#).



Preggoland's
Sonja Bennett
and James Caan

PREGGOLAND

Ruth (**Sonja Bennett**) is a single, 35-year-old woman who loves to party, lives with her dad (**James Caan**) and works a dead-end job as a cashier. Her friends (and her sister) are all moms or trying to get pregnant so, to fit in, Ruth lies about being with child. Bennett also wrote the script that's directed by Montreal filmmaker **Jacob Tierney**. See **Sonja Bennett interview**, [page 12](#).

FAR FROM THE MADDING CROWD

Thomas Hardy's classic Victorian novel comes to the screen with **Carey Mulligan** portraying the fiercely independent Bathsheba Everdene, who is attracted to three very different men — a farm labourer (**Matthias Schoenaerts**), a military officer (**Tom Sturridge**) and a wealthy landowner (**Michael Sheen**). [CONTINUED ▶](#)



Far From the Madding Crowd's
Matthias Schoenaerts and
Carey Mulligan



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MAY 8



HOT PURSUIT

Reese Witherspoon and Sofia Vergara team up for this female buddy comedy that sees a feisty police officer (Witherspoon) go on the run with a drug dealer's wife (Vergara) while being pursued by crooked cops and hired gunmen. See Reese Witherspoon interview, page 28.



Arnold Schwarzenegger and Abigail Breslin in *Maggie*

MAGGIE

It's about time Arnold Schwarzenegger made a zombie movie. In this moody genre pic, Arnie plays Wade, devoted father to Maggie (Abigail Breslin), who has been infected and is slowly turning into a zombie. She should be in quarantine, but Wade has other ideas.

ADULT BEGINNERS

After a monumental business failure, entrepreneur Jake (Nick Kroll) returns to live with his sister (Rose Byrne) and her husband (Bobby Cannavale). However, it's with the condition that he helps care for their three-year-old son, which leads to all kinds of trouble.



MAY 15

Pitch Perfect 2's Barden Bellas

PITCH PERFECT 2

Actor Elizabeth Banks makes her feature film directing debut with this sequel to the 2012 surprise hit musical *Pitch Perfect*. This time, the all-female a cappella group the Barden Bellas travel overseas for an international competition. Co-starring Anna Kendrick, Rebel Wilson, Hailee Steinfeld, Brittany Snow, and Skylar Astin.

GOOD KILL

Ethan Hawke plays an Air Force pilot who spends his days inside a dark Las Vegas portable where it's his job to operate — and fire — military drones flying missions thousands of miles away. While he's lauded for his "good kills," the job takes an emotional toll. See Ethan Hawke interview, page 22.



MAD MAX: FURY ROAD

Prepare for post-apocalyptic anarchy. Aussie director George Miller took a 30-year break between *Mad Max* films (the last was 1985's *Beyond Thunderdome*) but he's back with Tom Hardy as his new Max, a loner who joins with Furiosa (Charlize Theron) and her band of survivors to cross a desert wasteland while being chased by deranged lunatics. See *Mad Max* feature, page 32. CONTINUED ▶

Two young girls, Erika and Esmeralda, are standing in a classroom. They are wearing blue cardigans over light blue shirts and red skirts. They are both smiling and holding a robot arm that is built from cardboard and other materials. The robot arm has two grippers and is mounted on a wooden base. In the background, there is a green chalkboard with some writing on it, and a string of colorful papers hanging from the ceiling. There are also wooden desks and chairs in the classroom.

THE MORE ROBOTICS ENGINEERS WE CONNECT, THE BETTER IT GETS.

Meet Erika and Esmeralda. Best friends who built a robot arm, without any help from the internet. And it would have helped, big time. Think about it. The internet is full of ideas, inspiration and other 11-year-old robot builders. Imagine what they could have done with all that. What else would they build? Don't try to guess, you can't. None of us can. And that's why we need to connect them. Because the world needs their energy, creativity, and resourcefulness. The more we connect, the better it gets.

MAY 22



▶ TOMORROWLAND

The cloak of secrecy surrounding Disney's sci-fi adventure film is finally lifted this month. **George Clooney** stars as an inventor, **Britt Robinson** is a troubled teenager, and together they travel to an alternate universe known as Tomorrowland. See *Tomorrowland* feature, [page 24](#).

POLTERGEIST

This remake of the scary 1982 pic stars **Sam Rockwell** and **Rosemarie DeWitt** as the parents who unknowingly move their brood into a house built on top of a cemetery. A lot of really angry spirits want them gone, and to make their point they abduct the family's youngest daughter (**Kennedi Clements**).

I'LL SEE YOU IN MY DREAMS

Blythe Danner (Gwyneth Paltrow's mom) stars as a widowed senior who realizes life is too short not to take romantic chances and reaches out to very different men, the established Bill (**Sam Elliott**) and the much younger Lloyd (**Martin Starr**).



Saint Laurent's
Gaspard Ulliel

SAINT LAURENT

This is the second bio-pic about French fashion icon Yves Saint Laurent to hit theatres within the last year. This one stars **Gaspard Ulliel** as the bespectacled designer and focuses on the period between 1967 and 1976, his most productive, and personally destructive, period.

SAN ANDREAS

Blockbuster season begins with city blocks being busted, in this case it's Los Angeles, San Francisco and hundreds of other California towns that are destroyed when a mega-quake hits. **Dwayne Johnson** plays a chopper pilot who goes looking for his daughter (**Alexandra Daddario**) amid the mayhem.

ALOHA

Bradley Cooper stars as a defense contractor who returns to Hawaii to complete a job. He finds himself attracted to the Air Force officer (**Emma Stone**) assigned to help him, while also trying to make things right with his still-hurting former lover (**Rachel McAdams**).



Carla Gugino and
Dwayne Johnson
in *San Andreas*

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GOOD KILL
HITS THEATRES
MAY 15TH

Hawke GROUNDED

Good Kill stars **Ethan Hawke** as an American Air Force pilot who wages war in Afghanistan without ever leaving home ■ BY MARNI WEISZ

If Ethan Hawke is known for one thing, it's talking. Whether as the chatty Gen X-er in *Reality Bites*, the monologue-spouting romantic in the *Before Sunrise* movies or the opinionated dad in *Boyhood*, the guy can deliver dialogue.

So, at first, it's a bit of a mystery why he was cast as Tom Egan, the quiet, emotionally shut down American military drone pilot at the centre of director Andrew Niccol's *Good Kill*. Hawke agrees.

"Andrew called me up and said, 'One of your greatest skills as an actor is how verbal you are. And I'm not going to need that,'" Hawke recalls during an interview at the Toronto International Film Festival.

Good Kill is the pair's third movie together after *Gattaca* and *Lord of War*. They made the film to show how drone pilots — in this case, carrying out missions in Afghanistan — operate, and the psychological repercussions their missions have on them.

As the film opens, we see Egan, up close, wearing a flight suit in what appears to be a cockpit. He drops a bomb on an enemy target. But as the mission ends, he gets up, walks out of that cockpit, and we realize that he is, in fact, sitting in a metal box somewhere in the Nevada desert just outside Las Vegas and dropping bombs on Afghanistan from a desert half a world away.

"George Orwell couldn't make that up," says Hawke, dressed in black from head to toe, as he leans forward. "The irony of the City of Sin

being this base from which we cast judgment on the rest of the globe and decide who lives and dies in this very similar terrain of people who are living in poverty."

But the film is not particularly anti-U.S., anti-drone or anti-military. Instead it concentrates on Egan's moral struggle with killing people — both good and bad — while having "no skin in the game." He'd rather return to Afghanistan as a fighter pilot, where he wouldn't feel like such a coward.

"My grandfather was a pilot in World War II and he fought these missions," says Hawke, whose brother is also in the military. "But he didn't have to do what these men and women are doing now, which is do a strike, then [virtually] float above it, watch rescuers [stream in], and then kill them, and then count the dead. This is a very macabre thing for the brain to have to do."

Hawke's character responds by getting quieter and quieter and angrier and angrier as the film progresses. "It's an odd thing to be engaged in a scene where, like, some of my most important scenes in the movie, I don't speak," he says.

However, the benefits of playing against type are something Hawke's understood since one of his first roles, the shy kid in *Dead Poets Society*. Back then, he asked director Peter Weir why he was cast in that role when, in real life, he was probably the most gregarious kid in the cast. "He said that if you cast somebody who is shy to play a shy person it's cake on cake, they actually will retreat into the role, getting worse," recalls Hawke. "It's actually more interesting to watch someone who's shy act gregarious because you can sense there's something wrong there." ☐

Marni Weisz is the editor of Cineplex Magazine.



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TOMORROW

Tracing Disney's retro concept of the future from sketch to theme park to the big screen

“I do feel like there's this word, Tomorrowland, whenever I've gone into a Disney theme park, it evokes this feeling in me. And that feeling is connected to the way people thought about the future in the space age. And I kind of feel like I missed that. You know, my generation missed that. As much as I love the Terminator movies or The Hunger Games or Blade Runner, our vision of the future is much more dominated by dystopia. But Tomorrowland represents something different.”

—Damon Lindelof, co-writer and producer of *Tomorrowland*

THEME PARK CONCEPT ART

This 1954 original concept art of Disneyland's Tomorrowland theme park is by legendary Imagineer Bruce Bushman. It was created for a TV show in which Walt Disney introduced his upcoming Disneyland to the world. Construction was still underway, so there were no photos. Disneyland opened a year later, in July 1955. This 23- x 30-inch drawing recently sold at auction for \$55,460 (US).



1966 POSTER

One of six posters designed to hang throughout Disneyland in 1966, this beauty was also sold at the Main Street Emporium amid the mouse ears and giant lollipops.

WORLD



Go to CINEPLEX.COM/TOMORROWLAND for our video interview with the prop master behind the film's futuristic gadgets



TOMORROWLAND
HITS THEATRES MAY 22ND

PHOTO BY GETTY



THE PEOPLEMOVER

This 1969 photograph shows one of Tomorrowland's most famous rides, the PeopleMover, which travelled through several of the park's other attractions, including Submarine Lagoon and Autopia, before returning to the station.

THE MOVIE'S CONCEPT ART

Visual futurist Syd Mead created this concept art for the new *Tomorrowland* movie. The 81-year-old has had a hand in creating the looks for some of the most influential sci-fi films, including *Blade Runner*, *Tron* and *Aliens*.

THE MOVIE

A reclusive inventor (George Clooney) allows a teenaged girl (Britt Robertson) to visit a secret, futuristic world created by humanity's best and brightest. But — unlike a theme park — you can't have a movie without conflict, so that utopian world is facing a huge threat.





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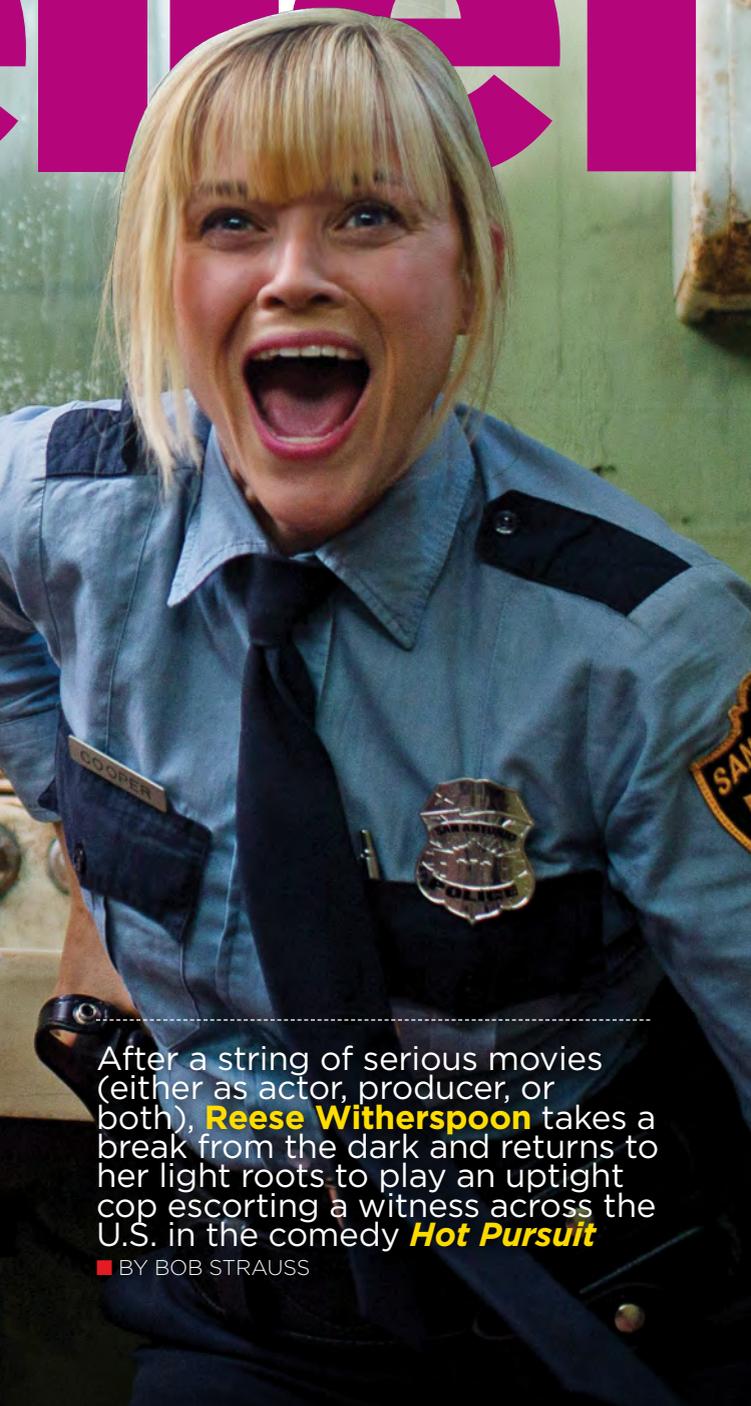
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Re



Sofia Vergara (left) and Reese Witherspoon go for laughs in *Hot Pursuit*

C Lief



You've no doubt heard about how Reese Witherspoon has re-engineered herself.

Last year, the actor known for her bubbly screen presence produced two decidedly sober dramas based on the bestsellers *Gone Girl* and *Wild*. The former was a hit that tapped into the angst surrounding modern relationships, and the latter not only earned Witherspoon a Best Actress Oscar nomination (she played the lead), but let her do things on screen that America's former sweetheart had never done before, like appearing nude and taking drugs.

Combine those producing efforts with serious turns in recent films like *Mud*, *Devil's Knot*, *The Good Lie* and *Inherent Vice*, and it looks like, at 39, Witherspoon is determined to do away with the funny blonde persona that made her a star.

Well, looks can be deceiving.

This month, Witherspoon's Pacific Standard production company brings us *Hot Pursuit*, a movie in which Witherspoon, the actor, is goofier than ever.

"It's sort of like a *Midnight Run*," explains Witherspoon, her petite frame poured into a seafoam blue dress, during an L.A. interview. "My character, Officer Cooper, she's a terrible cop from Texas. There's a husband and wife who are going to be going into witness protection in San Antonio, and she gets called in to be the female escort. As I walk in with my partner everybody gets killed except Sofía Vergara's and my characters. So I have 48 hours to get her from San Antonio to Dallas. And she's infinitely smarter than I am, so it's really a fun thing."

Go to
[CINEPLEX.COM/
HOTPURSUIT](http://CINEPLEX.COM/HOTPURSUIT)
to watch the trailer

Directed by Anne Fletcher (*The Proposal*, *27 Dresses*, *Step Up*), the picaresque adventure certainly fills a void in the big-screen female comedy department. Officer Cooper is such a humourless pill she's inadvertently funny, sort of like Witherspoon's classic overachiever Tracy Flick from *Election*, the sharp 1999 high school comedy that was an early indicator of Witherspoon's formidable screen presence.

Still, like most of what she's done in the last several years, *Hot Pursuit* began with serious intent.

"I sort of looked around the marketplace and kept reading these articles that said Latinos were 25 percent of the [U.S.] audience attending films, but nobody was developing movies for those leading actresses," says Witherspoon. "So I had a meeting with Sofía and I pitched her a bunch of movies, and this was the one she liked. We had a great time making it."

Similar motivation lies behind everything Pacific Standard makes. With her producing partner Bruna Papandrea, Witherspoon is on a mission to bring quality, female-focused stories to the screen. A voracious reader, she bought the rights to *Gone Girl* (about a frustrated wife's diabolical revenge scheme) and *Wild* (about a

CONTINUED ►

After a string of serious movies (either as actor, producer, or both), **Reese Witherspoon** takes a break from the dark and returns to her light roots to play an uptight cop escorting a witness across the U.S. in the comedy *Hot Pursuit*

■ BY BOB STRAUSS



IN STORE FOR REESE

Reese Witherspoon's lofty ambitions extend beyond the film world. The 39-year-old Nashville, Tennessee, native is launching a line of lifestyle products available in her online store, Draper James (named after two of her grandparents).

Draper James is scheduled to launch this month, and its product range includes furniture, bed and bath items, handbags, lingerie, swimwear and cosmetics. In a recent interview with the website Cricket's Corner, Witherspoon said her inventory is a reflection of her background.

"I love all the Southern traditions that I grew up with. My grandmother instilled in me a love for dressing up and hosting family. She surrounded herself with colourful flowers and beautiful things. I wanted to bring all these ideas to a retail experience — it's my way of giving back to the place I love the most. We will sell products made in the South by local artisans who are sharing their own traditions." —IR

PHOTO BY SPLASH NEWS

► promiscuous drug addict's quest for self-discovery) before they were published. She was turned on by their darker aspects.

"Primarily, it's identifying material from, y'know, years and years of reading other material," says Witherspoon. "It's been great, given me a sense of purpose. It actually just propels me forward to want to do more."

Producing has also reinforced the fact that, even though she's a star, filmmaking is a team sport.

"It's not about just what I want a film to be, it's about collaborating to create the best result," says Witherspoon, who, for example, had planned to star in *Gone Girl*, but yielded to director David Fincher's preference for Rosamund Pike. Pike went on to earn an Oscar nomination for the performance. "We are only good if we feel connected to what we're trying to accomplish. Hopefully, everybody does, and their life experiences enhance the work."

Witherspoon certainly brings a lot of life experience to her projects. She was still a Tennessee adolescent when she starred in her first movie, the critically acclaimed drama *The Man in the Moon* (1991). Fast-forward 24 years and she has been married twice, has two children with her first husband, fellow actor Ryan Phillippe, and one with her current husband, agent Jim Toth.

She won an Academy Award for her portrayal of country music legend June Carter Cash in the

2005 bio-pic *Walk the Line*, but most films she's made since have failed to match the popularity of her early hits.

Witherspoon recognizes she's been taking a lot of risks lately, but feels compelled to follow her current path. *Hot Pursuit* may turn out to be a pleasant, momentary comic diversion, as she's still committing to the tough stuff. Earlier this year Pacific Standard won the movie rights to the new book *Ashley's War: The Untold Story of a Team of Women Soldiers on the Special Ops Battlefield*.

Yet Witherspoon has confidence the girls who loved her as perky, blond overachievers will continue down new roads with her.

"My fans have gotten older and changed like I have," she says. "The young women who liked *Election* or *Legally Blonde* are 35 now, have kids and have lived through things like divorces or career difficulties. You deal with real things and you evolve. I have evolved as a human being and, also, as an actor.

"But when you take chances, you never know if it's going to be accepted," Witherspoon admits. "So far, I've been lucky, and it's felt great when people have responded so well to the different things I'm doing." ☐

Bob Strauss lives in L.A. where he writes about movies and filmmakers.

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HOT PURSUIT

After a 30-year hiatus, Australian director **George Miller** reboots his famed *Mad Max* franchise with *Mad Max: Fury Road* starring Tom Hardy and Charlize Theron. Seventy-year-old Miller hit Comic-Con to share insights on the making of the post-apocalyptic action pic



ON WHY HE DECIDED TO REBOOT THE MAD MAX FRANCHISE

"I definitely did not intend to make another *Mad Max*. Having done three, I didn't want to do any more. But one day about 14 years ago, this idea came to me as I was walking across a pedestrian crossing and I thought, 'That was a *Mad Max* idea!' I put it aside, but once the seed was there, I found it would pop up from time to time like an imaginary friend. Then a couple of years later I caught a long overnight flight from L.A. to Sydney and I couldn't sleep, and I found a form of the story playing out in my mind and I thought, 'Oh my, this is really interesting.'" CONTINUED ▶



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▶ ON CASTING TOM HARDY AS MAD MAX

"I felt the same thing with Tom that I'd felt with Mel [Gibson] when I first auditioned him: that paradoxical tremendous accessibility and danger as an actor, where you just don't know what they're going to do. I spent some time working with a tiger when I worked on the *Babe* films, and I just wanted to touch the tiger — the patterns of its face and those beguiling eyes — but you have to be careful. It's almost like that in a metaphorical way."



Go to CINEPLEX.COM/MADMAX for our list of Tom Hardy's best movies



Mel Gibson as the original Mad Max

Charlize Theron works with director George Miller on set

ON CHARLIZE THERON'S CHARACTER

"[Charlize Theron] plays the Imperator Furiosa. She's the boss of a War Rig, in which the people flee across the Wasteland. I can't really think of another character in cinema quite like her. I'm sure that other people might find connections, but just the way the character was conceived, and how Charlize took it on and transformed herself and played it, she did it with such authority. There have been great female action characters, but there's just been nothing quite like this."



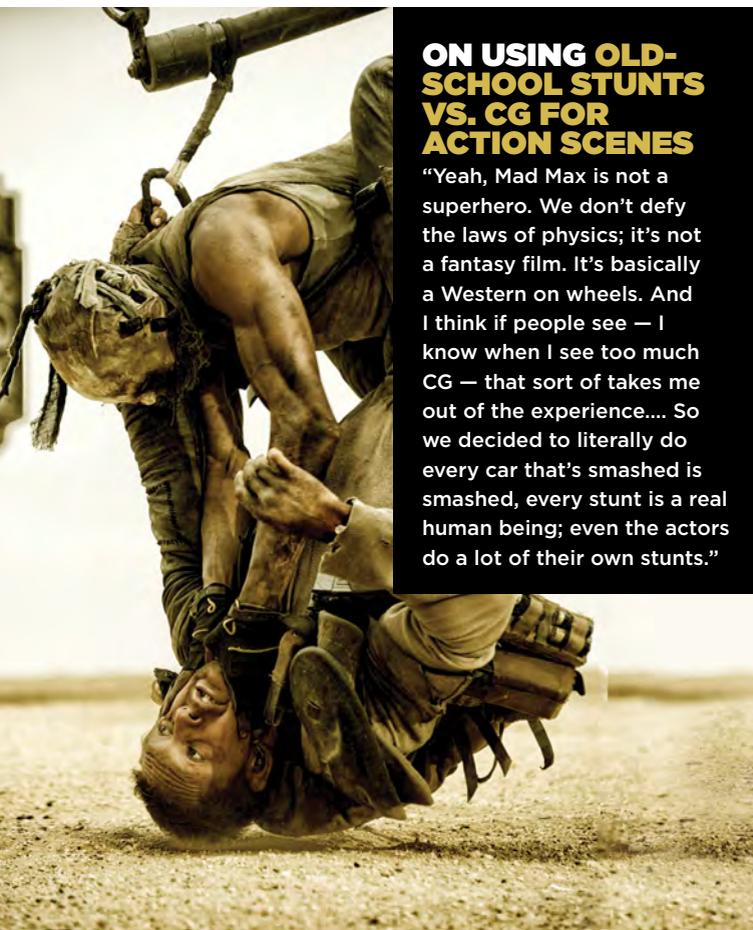


ON WHY CHARLIZE THERON'S FURIOSA IS MISSING AN ARM

"[This world], it's much more medieval. People don't have hospitals, there's no government to speak of, there's a dominance hierarchy basically run by tyrants and war lords, so you can't go anywhere to get fixed up."



MAD MAX: FURY ROAD
HITS THEATRES MAY 15TH



ON USING OLD-SCHOOL STUNTS VS. CG FOR ACTION SCENES

"Yeah, Mad Max is not a superhero. We don't defy the laws of physics; it's not a fantasy film. It's basically a Western on wheels. And I think if people see — I know when I see too much CG — that sort of takes me out of the experience.... So we decided to literally do every car that's smashed is smashed, every stunt is a real human being; even the actors do a lot of their own stunts."



Buster Keaton in *The General*

ON WHAT INSPIRED HIS MAD MAX FILMMAKING STYLE

"The silent movies, the Buster Keaton movies, the Harold Lloyd [movies] really started to make the action movie. And if you look at those movies, they basically define, you know, the Westerns, the car chases, the whatever, they were kind of a pure film syntax and I was always caught up with that.... Believe it or not, I learned to make *Mad Max* by watching films like *The General*."

A photograph of Jeremy Renner as Hawkeye from the movie Avengers: Age of Ultron. He is wearing his tactical suit and is standing in a rubble-strewn street. In the background, there is a yellow sign with Cyrillic text and a green metal structure. A person's arm and hand are visible on the right side of the frame, reaching towards Hawkeye.

TELLING SUPERHEROES WHAT TO DO

Iron Man? Captain America? The real leader of the Avengers is neither. It's this redheaded fanboy. Here **Joss Whedon**, the franchise's exceptional writer/director, talks about pulling the gang back together for **Avengers: Age of Ultron**

■ BY MICHAEL KENNEDY

Joss Whedon shows Hawkeye (Jeremy Renner) how to shoot an arrow

PROFES



The big question before 2012's *The Avengers* hit theatres was, how could such an enormous cast of superheroes — each capable of headlining his or her own franchise — come together to create a coherent and watchable movie?

The answer? Great writing and directing, both provided by Joss Whedon (TV's *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* and *Firefly*).

The film was a huge hit with critics and fans and became the third highest-grossing release in history after *Avatar* and *Titanic*.

Now, three years later, Whedon is back with the follow-up, *Avengers: Age of Ultron*, a story that takes the first film's unwieldy cast — including Iron Man (Robert Downey Jr.), Black Widow (Scarlett Johansson), Captain America (Chris Evans), Thor (Chris Hemsworth), Hawkeye (Jeremy Renner) and Loki (Tom Hiddleston) — and only adds to it with three new super-powered characters, Scarlet Witch (Elizabeth Olsen), the Vision (Paul Bettany) and Quicksilver (Aaron Taylor-Johnson).

Oh yeah, then there's the villain Ultron (voiced by James Spader), a robot built to protect Earth, but who decides humans are our planet's biggest threat, so must be destroyed.

So...can Whedon do it again?

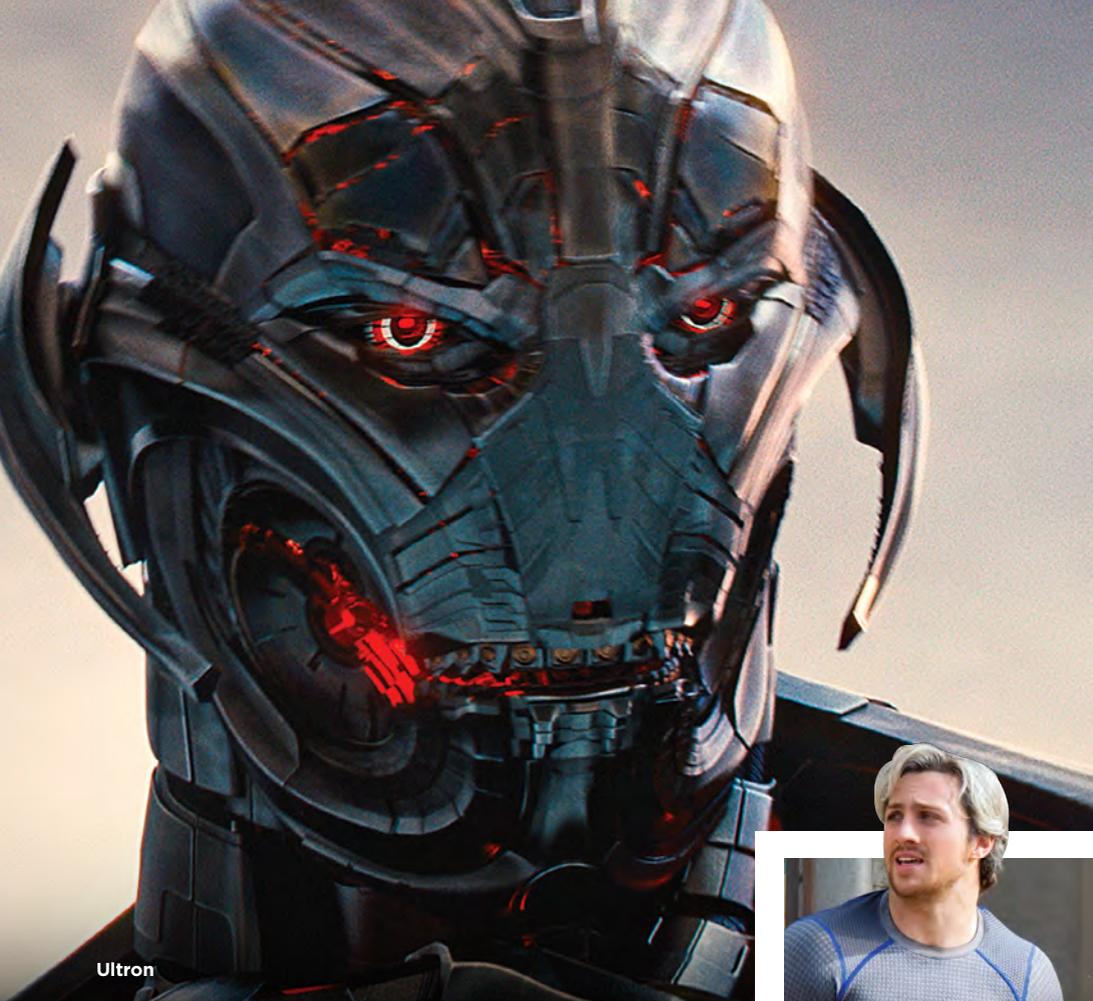
We travelled to the U.K.'s Shepperton Studios to find out how the man at the centre of the chaos was managing.

A couple of years ago you said you wanted *Avengers 2* to be smaller, more personal, more painful.

"Uh, well, I won on two fronts. It is not smaller. I failed at small."

You have a dream cast. What's it like working with them?

"It's actually a dream, you know? People are so angry at me because I have no dish, but they get along, they work" **CONTINUED ▶**



Ultron

“It’s exciting, it feels bigger than just two movies coming together, or **three movies, or a bunch of franchises or a bunch of characters. It feels like something — an event**”



Quicksilver (Aaron Taylor-Johnson) and Scarlet Witch (Elizabeth Olsen)

▶ hard, they’re very trusting. You know, we have a wonderful collaboration. It’s really just — nothing stands between us and getting the best performances and shots that we can.”

So the Avengers. Where are they now? What’s going on?

“They’re all over the place, actually, but they’re together. They’re all over the world trying to sort of control the chaos that the Marvel universe has sort of become.”

There are a lot of characters in this movie. Ultron — who is this guy?

“Ultron is a robot. He’s a classic Marvel character, the Avengers — one of their biggest villains for decades. He’s artificial intelligence created by the Avengers, [and he] hates them madly. It’s funny, because you don’t often get to write a really unhinged robot. But when you have somebody that has that all-powerful, that logical ‘Man must...’ you know it’s trouble.... Then they say you can have James Spader, and everything works.”

Scarlet Witch, Quicksilver, the Vision, can you tell us a bit about them?

“Um, well, all three of them are mainstays. Scarlet Witch and Quicksilver in particular have been with the Avengers since I’ve been reading it. And they’re interesting because they have this kind of villainous past, which allows me to bring them to the Avengers not to help them, but to make their lives unbearable. And so watching them play really terrifying, and yet also kind of sympathetic, is really fun. Watching them thread the needle between villain and hero, and that grey area in between.”

What do you think it is about the Avengers universe that audiences find so appealing? Not just comic book fans, but moviegoers as a whole?

“Well, people love these desperate heroes, but there’s no way that this should work. There’s no way these people should be together. When you put these things together, and watch how they should clash, and they mesh, and the unexpected ways in which they get along, and the hilarious ways in which they don’t, not just as characters, but stylistically.... All these things have to come together in the service of something much stranger. It’s exciting, it feels bigger than just two movies coming together, or three movies, or a bunch of franchises or a bunch of characters. It feels like something — an event.” CONTINUED ▶

GET OUT, GET DOWN.



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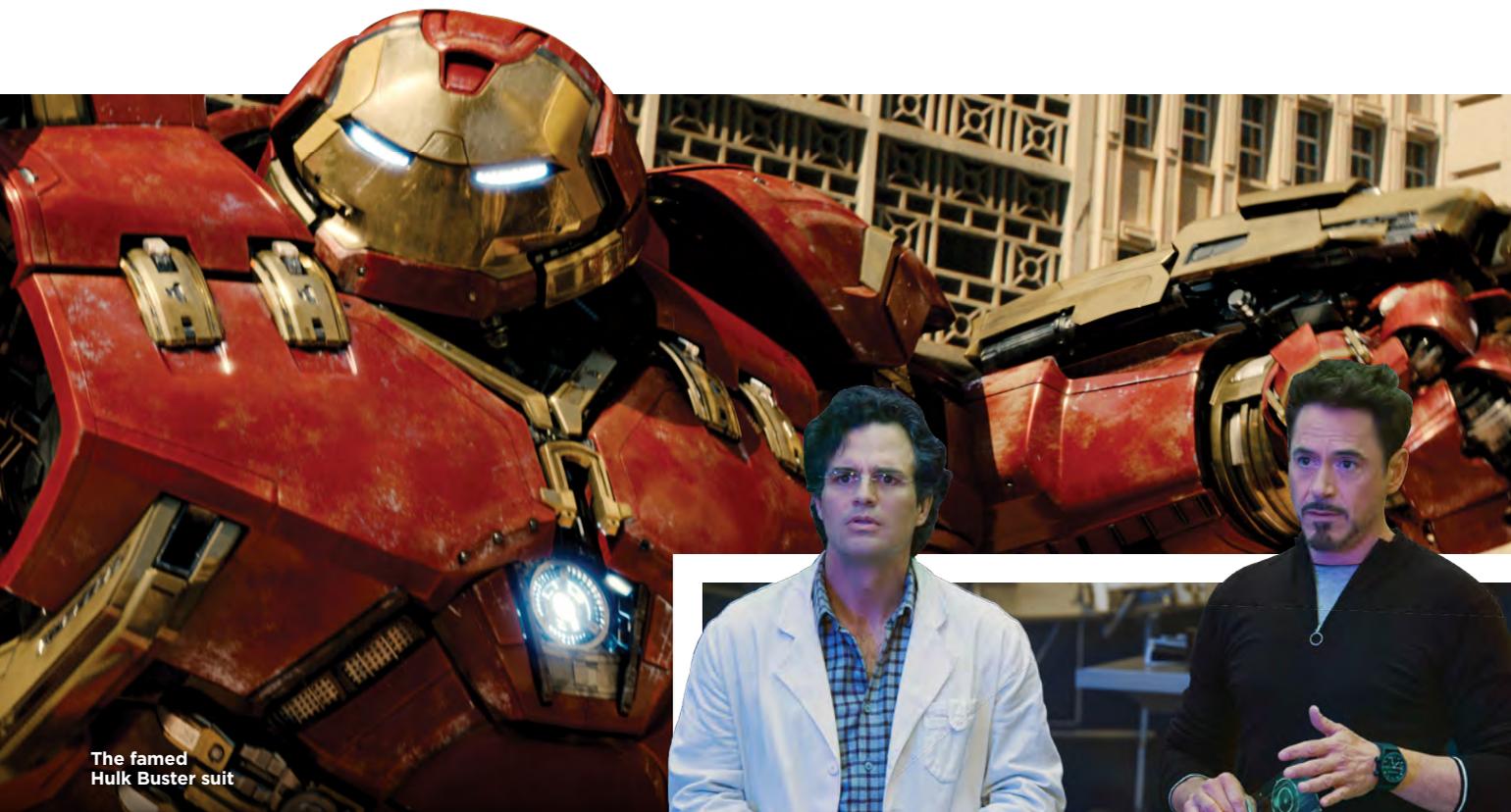


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The famed Hulk Buster suit

► **We've heard about something called the Hulk Buster. What can you tell us about that?**

"That's another mainstay of the comics. The Hulk Buster is armour designed by Iron Man — in this case designed by Iron Man and Banner — just in case the Hulk becomes a problem. It's basically Iron Man over an Iron Man suit. It's enormous. It's from...probably after I was reading the comics, but even I was always aware that it was something that really excited people because nobody can really work on the Hulk's level. Inside of that is the weakest member of the Avengers, it's Tony Stark, who's just smart. It looks really cool, but it's also really funny because when these guys go at each other, they're best friends, and they've also become two giant monsters. One metal, one green."

You started in television with *Firefly* and *Buffy*. Did you picture yourself so involved in something like this?

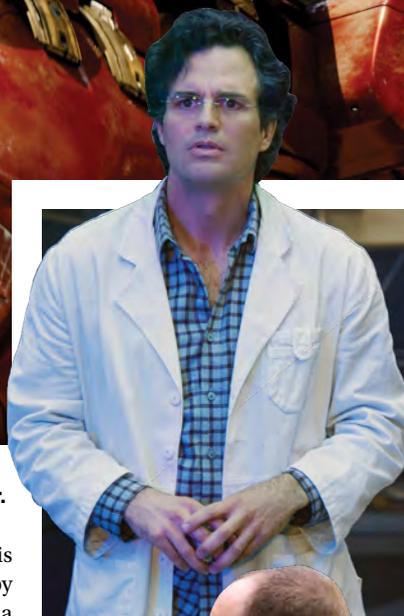
"Yes! [Laughs.] I've always wanted to do everything except work. But, you know, the big summer movies, the Indiana Joneses, you know, I was 11 when *Star Wars* came out, that stuff stays with you."

If you could sum up *Avengers: Age of Ultron* in one sentence, what would it be?

"Dear God, let me finish shooting this.' No. In one, I would say, 'This party just got weird!'"

So, "Dear God, let me finish shooting this" — this seems like controlled chaos. What's a day on the set like for you?

"Um, controlled chaos without so much of that pesky control. You



Best buds Bruce Banner (Mark Ruffalo, left) and Tony Stark (Robert Downey Jr.)



Scarlett Johansson on set with Whedon

Go to CINEPLEX.COM/AVENGERSPAYLIST for exclusive on-set interviews with the cast



know, every day I come in, and there's so much going on, there's so many characters, there's so many countries. There are so many concepts and visual styles, it's almost like I'm shooting a different movie. I come in, and I'm basically like, 'What am I doing today?' But I'm surrounded by the most talented people I know, this entire crew is phenomenal. So if I ever drop the ball, they're right there, 'Here's the ball.' "Thank you, sorry."

Twenty years from now, when you look back on this experience, what will be the first image that comes to mind?

"When I look back, the image... um, it will probably be an old, beat-up church. More I will not say right now." ☑

Michael Kennedy is Cineplex Entertainment's Executive Vice President of Filmed Entertainment.



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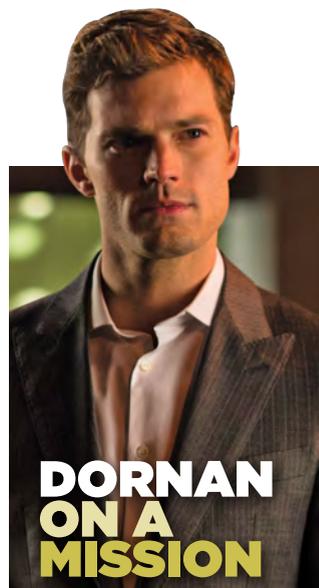
CASTING CALL

BY INGRID RANDOJA



WILLIAMS AND REICHARDT MAKE IT THREE

Michelle Williams and **Kelly Reichardt** are a rarity: a female actor/director duo. The pair has made two low-budget, critically acclaimed films together — *Wendy & Lucy* and *Meek's Cutoff* — and is re-teaming for a third film tentatively titled *Helena and Montana Story*, which focuses on the residents of a small Montana town. **Laura Dern**, **Jared Harris** and **Kristen Stewart** are also on board.



DORNAN ON A MISSION

Jamie Dornan leaves "The Red Room" behind and heads to Prague this July to shoot the fact-based, World War II thriller *Anthropoid*. Dornan and **Cillian Murphy** play Czech paratroopers sent to assassinate Reinhard Heydrich, an SS officer and one of the main architects of the Holocaust. British filmmaker **Sean Ellis** directs.



CAVILL LANDS STRATTON

Henry Cavill refuses to take it easy. He plays a spy in this summer's *The Man from U.N.C.L.E.*, Superman in next year's *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice*, and now word comes he'll portray a British Special Forces agent in *Stratton: First Into Action*. Based on the first novel in Duncan Falconer's book series, Stratton (Cavill) is called upon to rescue a colleague kidnapped by the IRA. Production starts this summer.



LIVELY SEES THE LIGHT

All I See is You casts **Blake Lively** as a blind woman who regains her sight and begins to see that life with her husband (**Jason Clarke**) isn't what it seems. **Marc Forster** (*Quantum of Solace*, *World War Z*) directs.

PHOTO BY VALERIO PENNINO/GETTY FOR IMAGENET



WHAT'S GOING ON WITH...

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

Disney's live-action version of their animated tale hits screens in 2017 with **Emma Watson** playing the human version of Belle. Former *Downton Abbey* star **Dan Stevens** will play the Beast/Prince, while *Dracula Untold*'s **Luke Evans** brings conceited villain Gaston to life. **Bill Condon** (*The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn - Part 1* and *Part 2*) directs the pic that starts shooting later this year.



PHOTO BY JEFF VESPA/GETTY

FRESH FACE MICHAEL CHERNUS

You may recognize **Michael Chernus** as Piper's (Taylor Schilling) laze-about brother Cal in *Orange Is the New Black*, but the Ohio native is a Juilliard-trained actor who's been slowly climbing the ladder, moving from stage to TV to films. This month he appears alongside **Bradley Cooper** and **Emma Stone** in *Aloha*, and he'll be seen later this year in director **Jason Bateman**'s *The Family Fang*.



PHOTO BY NANCY KASZEMAN/KEYSTONE PRESS

DiCAPRIO ENTERS THE ROOM

Leonardo DiCaprio has finally landed the role of Billy Milligan in *The Crowded Room*. Milligan was arrested on three counts of rape in 1977, but said he suffered from Multiple Personality Disorder (24 personalities in total) and wasn't culpable. He was the first person to use MPD as a defense and was acquitted but sent to a mental hospital. DiCaprio, who first lobbied to play Milligan in 1997, is also producing the film based on the book *The Minds of Billy Milligan*.

ALSO IN THE WORKS

- ▶ **Rosamund Pike** will play **Christian Bale**'s love interest in the crime thriller *The Deep Blue Good-bye*.
- ▶ *The House* stars **Will Ferrell** as a gambler who turns his suburban home into a casino.
- ▶ **Liam Hemsworth** has landed the lead role in the *Independence Day* sequel.
- ▶ **Adam Scott** and **Toni Collette** play parents whose kids are attacked by an evil entity in the Christmas-themed horror pic *Krampus*.

OH, WHAT A Beautiful MOVIE



When it comes to opening numbers in movie musicals nothing beats *Oklahoma!*'s "Oh, What A Beautiful Morning." Cowboy Curly (Gordon MacRae) rides his

horse across the plains, a huge blue sky behind him, singing Rodgers and Hammerstein's rousing ode to nature and hope.

Filed in breathtaking widescreen, 1955's *Oklahoma!* was the first Rodgers and Hammerstein stage musical to be made into a movie, and the first musical to use song and

dance to help explore the inner lives of its characters rather than as a mere diversion.

The story takes place in 1907 in the Oklahoma territory and finds cowboy Curly wooing the beautiful Laurey (played by a 20-year-old Shirley Jones in her film debut). Laurey, meanwhile, uses brutish farmhand Jud (Rod Steiger) to make Curly jealous.

And then there's the flirtatious Ado Annie (Gloria Grahame) who drives her cowboy beau Will Parker (Gene Nelson) to distraction. The romantic storylines are set against foot-stomping dance numbers and a memorable ballet sequence that demand to be seen on the big screen. —INGRID RANDOJA

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STILL ALICE

MAY 12

Julianne Moore won her first Oscar for her portrayal of Alice Howland, a linguistics professor diagnosed with early-onset Alzheimer's, in this devastating drama co-written and directed by **Richard Glatzer**, who was struggling with ALS while shooting the film and passed away in March.

SELMA

MAY 5

British actor **David Oyelowo** transforms into one of American history's most important figures, Martin Luther King Jr., for this recounting of Selma, Alabama's bloody events of 1965. That's when a group of brave African-Americans tried to march from Selma to Montgomery to protest their lack of voting rights, and were met with batons and beatings.



MR. TURNER

MAY 5

Director **Mike Leigh's** latest is a period bio-pic which explores the final 25 years in the life of English painter J.M.W. Turner. **Timothy Spall** delivers an exquisite performance as the titular artist, capturing a complex man increasingly at odds with the world around him.

MORTDECAI

MAY 12

This slapstick comedy stars **Johnny Depp** as Charlie Mortdecai, a British Lord and art dealer who is enlisted by MI5 to recover a stolen painting that has the code to access a secret bank account containing Nazi gold scrawled on the back.

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THE SPONGEBOB MOVIE: SPONGE OUT OF WATER

MAY 19

Tragedy hits the animated, undersea town of Bikini Bottom like a ton of squid when Mr. Krabs' recipe for Krabby Patties is stolen. Who dunnit? Surprisingly, not Plankton. Instead it's a hairy pirate (**Antonio Banderas**) who lives in our world. So SpongeBob and the gang transform from animated to, well, what looks like rubber, to get it back.

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House of HORRORS?

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COMES A TERRIFYING NEW VISION

Would you want your house to be used in a *Poltergeist* remake?

The 1982 original told of a family — including mom (JoBeth Williams), dad (Craig T. Nelson) and adorable daughter Carol Anne (Heather O'Rourke) — that moves into a nondescript suburban home that happens to be built over a burial ground. Their arrival doesn't sit well with the evil spirits who reside below; so those ghosts suck Carol Anne into another dimension.

"I personally don't believe in that, it's a movie. So it didn't bother me," says Dwight Bennett, chuckling. Bennett, a furniture restorer by trade, is the owner of the Hamilton, Ontario, home (above) that the new *Poltergeist* used as its exterior.

"I put my hand on the TV all the time and I'm okay," he jokes, referring to the famous scene where little Carol Anne communicates with spirits through a fuzzy TV screen.

The update stars Sam Rockwell and Rosemarie DeWitt as the heads of the household and Jared Harris as a spook hunter.

"I watched the trailer and I just can't wait," says Bennett. "The whole neighbourhood is buzzing to go watch this movie." —*MW*



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