

s f t w MOVIES

TOP 5 FILMS

1. Wonder Woman 1984
 2. Wonder Woman/Wonder Woman 1984
 3. Batman
 4. Spider-Man – Far From Home
 5. Dawn Of The Dead
- From officialcharts.com

TRUTH is stranger than fiction and, as Antebellum shows, it is more terrifying as well.

This horror film makes slavery its scary monster, which is far more violent and chilling than any individual serial killer.

It opens in a spectacular one-take scene, sweeping through the march of Confederate soldiers into a Southern cotton field plantation where a horrifying murder of a black worker takes place, with cameras capturing it in slow motion.

As a viewer, you think you know where you are with this film – a horror set in the Civil War.

But then you're soon pulled into the present and the story of sassy author Veronica Henley.

She is on a book tour of America and, because of her powerful position as a black woman, becomes the victim of a despicable plan. To say more of the plot



ANTEBELLUM
(15) 105mins

★★★

would give away this film's twist that will have you murmuring: 'Oh, I see now...'

While the idea is clever enough, it is often handled clumsily. There's so much information to pack into conversations that dialogue

becomes clunky and the character of Veronica is not explored deeply enough.

While not full of jumps, Antebellum shines the light on a true horror that is still all too real.

● On Sky Cinema

IT'S easy to feel empathy for innocent people who are wrongly jailed. The injustice of it resonates with most of us, as the feeling is: 'It could have been me.'

With this on the film's side, I was expecting to feel more emotion during the dramatized true story of Mohamedou Ould Slahi (Tahar Rahim), who was detained at Guantanamo Bay for being an Al Qaeda recruiter, without a shred of evidence.

Lawyer Nancy Hollander (Jodie Foster) flies to the Cuba jail camp in a bid to fight for Slahi's release and finds a cover-up in place to secure his incarceration.

Meanwhile, Lt Col Couch (Benedict Cumberbatch, with a deep Southern accent like Buffalo Bill in Silence Of The Lambs) is in charge of the US government's case against Slahi.

He soon proves to be the good guy after seeing the huge problems with Slahi's case. Slahi, who wrote an



THE MAURITANIAN
(15) 129mins

★★

international bestseller about his 14 years in the detention camp, was tortured for 70 days straight.

But these scenes of waterboarding and sexual humiliations are presented in a bizarre, hallucinogenic

way, making them have far less impact. While the true story is both shocking and touching, this instantly forgettable film wastes its top cast and dodges the true hell Slahi had to endure.

● On Amazon Prime

Dulcie Pearce

ON THE SOFA WITH THE REMOTE

GODZILLA Vs KONG
(12A) 113mins

★★★★

GIANT gorilla King Kong and lizard-on-steroids Godzilla are back for another epic amphibian versus primate bonanza.

But nearly 60 years on from when they squared up for their first B-movie fray (1962's King Kong Vs Godzilla), our combatting creatures now have an A-list budget.

The result is a gleefully OTT monster melee that really delivers.

The fourth film in the MonsterVerse series (and a sequel to both 2017's Kong: Skull Island and 2019's Godzilla: King Of The Monsters), we meet Kong in downtime mode enjoying a relaxing waterfall shower.

Joyous CGI carnage

Living in leisurely captivity on Skull Island, he is watched over by anthropologist Dr Ilene Andrews (Rebecca Hall) and her adopted, hearing-impaired daughter Jia, who has secretly taught the oversized ape to communicate via sign language – and with shades of E.T., he wants to go home.

Back in Florida, for reasons that remain hazy, rampaging reptile Godzilla has reappeared after a three-year hiatus to attack the HQ of a shady conglomerate called Apex Industries.

Dr Nathan Lind (Alexander Skarsgård) is convinced the only way to stop him destroying the world is by utilising an energy source located in the earth's core.

His team need to get there fast, and they need Kong to take them. If all that sounds tenuous and



Monster ruck

daft, well of course it is. But how else do you set up two mythical monsters for the joyous CGI carnage we're all waiting for?

Somehow we ultimately end up in Hong Kong, via an impressive sci-fi deep-dive, lots of fisticuffs and a sub-plot that sees Godzilla geek Madison Russell (Millie Bobby Brown) determined to reveal the truth about what evil Apex Industries is up to.

Director Adam Wingard keeps all this confusing human silliness just plausible enough to facilitate the

all-important big-beast duels. And he also pulls off the tricky feat of exercising enough restraint to not overindulge the action, judging the perfect length for an adventure feature.

The raging finale, with skyscrapers tumbling, spectacular beasts brawling and baddies succumbing, is a blockbuster climax to celebrate.

Proper entertainment and a monster munch treat to feast on.

● Streaming on digital platforms

MOVIE NEWS

- **DIRECTOR** Adam Wingard will make an animated film version of 1980s cartoon ThunderCats.
- **GUY RITCHIE** and Jason Statham have joined forces again in Wrath Of Man, which is also written by Ritchie.
- **CHRIS ROCK**, right, and Samuel L Jackson will star in a reboot of the Saw franchise called Spiral: From The Book Of Saw.



GAMES

By STUART CULLEN



A GOOD co-op game is a work of art – and few have mastered it like Swedish studio Hazelight.

The firm is led by Lebanese master Josef Fares and he and his team have been working their magic again with It Takes Two.

This is a tour de force of co-op fun, wrapped inside a really touching emotional tale. At the base level, this is a 3D platformer, but it throws a bit of everything into the mix and, amazingly, makes it all work brilliantly.

You play as Cody and May, a married couple who plan to divorce. They break

It Takes Two

Xbox One, Series X/S, PS4 and PS5 £34.99

the news to their daughter Rose, who goes into the shed with hand-made dolls and plays a game that tries to repair their relationship.

The crying girl's tears land on the dolls, and May and Cody are suddenly transported into the toys. From there – with the help of over-the-top talking book Dr Hakim – the couple must work together to get back to normal and possibly mend their



relationship. The gameplay is varied and wonderful as you work your way through a land of giants all sprinkled with magic.

You honestly will never see what's coming next – from Streetfighter brawling with a squirrel to creating a path as a plant for your partner to climb. The game uses the same split-screen system as their last offering, A Way Out. Both off and online it runs really well.

This is a blast of charm and wit across its 10-hour journey. It raises the bar for co-op gaming.

★★★★

NEW MUSIC

By **JIM GELLATLY**

HECTOR SHAW
WHERE: Glasgow/Edinburgh

FOR FANS OF: Hozier, Ben Howard, Laura Marling.

JIM SAYS: Hector first came on my radar a few years back as one of the acts in the Hit The Road project for young musicians. It offers a great opportunity to train and get real touring experience.

Hector said: 'I got to do a mini-tour through Dumfries, Edinburgh and Glasgow with Sophie Penman and Kate Kyle. We headlined our hometowns, so for me that was Webster's Theatre in Glasgow. I would recommend any teens who are looking for some great live experience to apply.'

Hector was no stranger to the gigging environment – he's the son of Capercallie stars Karen Matheson and Donald Shaw so travelled the world with Mum and Dad.

Despite them being well-respected musicians, he reckons any pressure is of his own making. He said: 'It



was a very different time when my parents were in music, and they were a band, so there are quite a few variables which make our experiences incompatible.'

Now 21, Hector has released his first singles. He debuted with majestic Gravity in February. The title track of his upcoming EP explores the desperation of witnessing the suffering of someone you care about. His equally compelling follow-up Paying The Price is also very personal.

He explained: 'It was written during a period of spiralling self-destruction. I was drinking too much, staring at my phone too much. The song is a gentle warning to lift your head out of the sand.'

The full EP is set for release next month.

MORE: facebook.com/hectshawmusic

● Jim presents a weekly showcase of New Music on Amazing Radio. Sundays 2-4pm. amazingradio.com/jimgellatly.com

BOOKS

Edited by **NATASHA HARDING**

END OF THE LINE

Robert Scragg, £19.99

ALL the hallmarks of classic British noir are here – a compelling plot and characters that jump off the page to meet you, shake your hand and sometimes punch you in the face. Four years after his wife died in a hit-and-run, Jake Porter is given a lead that might help him catch the killer.

As if that isn't enough, the flagging cop must tackle the volatile case of an influential blogger murdered during a live broadcast.

★★★★
JONATHAN WHITELAW



PICK OF THE WEEK