

s f t w MOVIES

TOP 5 FILMS

1. Zack Snyder's Justice League
 2. Wonder Woman 1984
 3. Willy's Wonderland
 4. Joker
 5. The Greatest Showman
- The Official Chart Company

IF you rate action capers using a shootout-per-scene ratio, this Amazon adaptation of a Tom Clancy bestseller, a spin-off from his long-running Jack Ryan series, should hit the spot.

Slamming straight in with a dramatic US Navy SEAL sting operation in Aleppo, Syria, there are gunfire battles from the off, which barely let up for the duration of this twisty thriller.

When Russian agents kill military operatives involved in that mission, Chief John Kelly (Michael B Jordan) survives an attempt on his life but then discovers his pregnant partner Pam murdered in her bed.

Determined to take revenge on the assassins, he joins forces with fellow SEAL Karen Greer (Jodie Turner-Smith) and CIA agent Robert Ritter (Jamie Bell) only to find himself caught in the crossfire (literally) of a shadowy US-



TOM CLANCY'S WITHOUT REMORSE
(15) 108mins ★★★

Russian conspiracy that runs deeper than he could ever have imagined.

There is all the suspense you could ask for. Jordan is a commanding presence as our hero who, when he isn't dodging bullets, strides through raging flames and escapes

plane crashes into choppy enemy waters in pursuit of the truth.

Guy Pearce adds shade as Secretary of Defence Thomas Clay and amid the non-stop combat, the plot will keep you guessing until the very end.

On Amazon Prime Video

THE rage of the machines is very real in this animated Technicolor riot.

We meet the Mitchell clan, whose nerdy teen daughter Katie (Abbi Jacobson) spends her time making online videos starring the family pug as "Dog Cop".

When she lands a place at film school, technophobe dad Rick (Danny McBride) decides to take Katie there via a family road trip.

But that turns into a robot apocalypse when all the world's smart devices suddenly come to life and stage a coup, spearheaded by avenging Alexa-gone-rogue virtual assistant "PAL" (Olivia Colman).

As appliances turn on humanity – shockingly, even turning off wifi around the globe – only the Mitchells can save the day.

Director Mike Rianda's script, co-written with Jeff Rowe, is fresh, warm and funny, filled with smart observations on how



THE MITCHELLS VS. THE MACHINES
(PG) 112mins ★★★

technology has changed the way we communicate.

Witty reflections on generational divides will have teens and parents alike nodding in agreement – though whether the use here of on-screen filters, viral videos and screen mash-ups feel garish or

groundbreaking probably depends on your age.

As Katie's Instagram-obsessed mother Linda (Maya Rudolph) ponders aloud: "Who would have thought a tech company wouldn't have our best interests at heart?"

On Netflix

Dulcie Pearce

ON THE SOFA WITH THE REMOTE

NOMADLAND
(12A) 110mins

★★★★

THERE are people who go unnoticed. Our eyes glaze over at their bland clothes, they move with a slow shuffle and they work in jobs hidden from most.

These are the people on whom Nomadland writer-director Chloe Zhao concentrates.

The beige-wearing, grey-haired baby boomers are a new tribe in America: Nomads, a generation whose financial security was blown to bits by the 2008 economic crash. They cannot afford to retire or run a home. So they travel the country in camper vans, picking up seasonal jobs.

We meet Fern (Frances McDormand) clocking in at a vast Amazon warehouse. She is a robust widow who used to work as a substitute teacher in Empire, Nevada, before the factory that employed most of the locals closed.

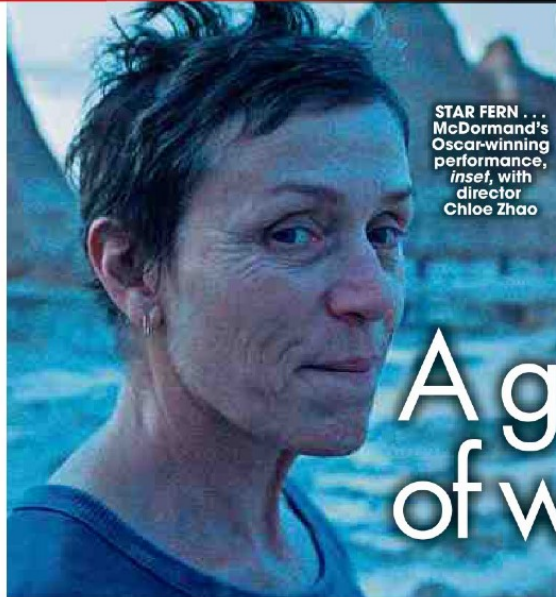
Sackful of emotions

Now alone, her home is a tiny, rundown van with a few cherished possessions and a bed too small to lie flat in. Fern seems to accept all this without self-pity.

"I like work," she replies when a recruiter asks why she hasn't retired. And she does. Never moaning or stressed, we see Fern methodically flip burgers, pack boxes, shovel rocks and scrub loos.

McDormand plays this resourceful woman with a perfect balance of sterness and vulnerability and has deservedly won another Oscar.

Like her parts in Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri and Olive Kitteridge, she deals masterfully with the complex role of a strong,



STAR FERN ... McDormand's Oscar-winning performance, inset, with director Chloe Zhao

modest, secretive woman who hides a sack full of emotions behind her furrowed brow.

Her performance is stunning but so too are those from an eclectic mix of people she meets on the road, mostly played by real nomads. They too are hardworking folk who have stoically accepted their new way of life, which at times seems strangely enviable.

With few belongings, they care deeply about what they have. These are kind, careful, good people who

come together to share food, surround themselves with nature and make sense of the life into which they were thrown.

Fern almost becomes addicted to the lifestyle and the solitude it brings, choosing her own company over being with others.

It might sound bleak but Nomadland shines a warm glow on those otherwise unnoticed people so often left in the dark.

● On Star on Disney+ from today and in cinemas on May 17.



A gritty tale of wheel life

MOVIE NEWS

● **BOOKSMART'S** Kaitlyn Dever is joining George Clooney and Julia Roberts in comedy Ticket To Paradise.

● **LEONARDO DiCAPRIO, below,** has bought the rights for an English version of Oscar-winning Danish film Another Round.

● **AFTER** the success of Godzilla Vs Kong, Adam Wingard is in talks to direct the next MonsterVerse flick.



GAMES

By STUART CULLEN

IF you rushed out to get a PS5 then you will be chomping at the bit for new games. Sony have answered the call with Returnal from Finnish studio Housemarque.

This is the first game since the PS5 launch to embrace the next-gen tech – sorry Destruction AllStars. However, this goodness comes at a £70 cost.

That makes it a make-or-break title for the tech giant as an exclusive new IP to their hardware because it will show whether people are willing to fork out such amounts for first party games.

Returnal
PS5 £69.99

First impressions suggest this is a third-person shooter with roguelike elements all wrapped in a psychological sci-fi horror tale – but it is way more than that. This is the first real contender for GOTY 2021.

You play as astronaut Selene who is tracking down a signal called the White Shadow which causes her to crash on an alien planet. As you explore your surroundings you quickly realise

everything is trapped in a time loop so you face an interstellar take on Groundhog Day as you hunt for answers to what's going on.

This is a blast of different gaming elements which combine to provide an outstanding combat system with real depth.

There is a great selection of alien foes – all needing a mix of tactics before you add in movement, reloading system and adrenaline.

And then there are the epic boss battles.

The game looks stunning, runs smoothly and makes outstanding use of the PS5 DualSense features and all with an epic sci-fi sound track.

Returnal has a lot to live up to but Housemarque have nailed it in every way. This is a must for ALL PS5 owners.

★★★★



NEW MUSIC

By **JIM GELLATLY**

SAMUEL ALEXANDER BARRON

WHERE: Ayrshire/Hong Kong
FOR FANS OF: Gerry Rafferty, James Taylor, Jason Mraz

JIM SAYS: Singer-songwriter Sam is originally from West Kilbride in Ayrshire, but has been based in Hong Kong since 2007.

Working as a primary school English teacher he uses music as an educational resource. His YouTube channel, Teacher Ham, has clocked up over 1.5million views.

His tunes have also been a big hit in the classroom. He said: "Kids are very honest sounding boards for new ideas."

His own inspiration came at early age. He explained: "When I was seven or eight I remember sitting next to my parents' record player trying to memorise the words for Gerry Rafferty's Baker



Street and badly scratching the LP in the process."

A major breakthrough came in late 2019 with the release of the single Streetsleeper, raising money for homeless charities Social Bite in Scotland and ImpactHK in Hong Kong.

He released his debut album with Stevie Bull from Ayrshire band The Mojo Cams producing. The result is Let's Join Hands with an enthralling collection encompassing folk, country and rock.

Sam said: "The songs explore the broad theme of relationships both before and during Covid."

He's working on a follow-up, has launched the podcast A Light In The Dark: My Songwriting Journey and will self-publish a children's book, The Litter Bug, later this year. Busy chap!

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

BOOKS

Edited by **NATASHA HARDING**

THE WILD GIRLS
Phoebe Morgan, £7.99

PICK OF THE WEEK

FELICITY, Hannah, Grace and Alice were the best of friends. But when Flick moved to New York the others' friendships fell apart and each got on with life – with varying degrees of success.

When Felicity has a birthday celebration in Botswana, it seems natural to invite her mates for four days of luxury.

But after arriving in Africa, it becomes evident something is not right. Could a fateful night out two years before hold the key to everything that is going wrong?

A superbly executed tale with just the right amount of tension and intrigue.

★★★★

