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MOVIES

TOP 5 FILMS

1. The Hitman's Wife's Bodyguard
2. Peter Rabbit 2
3. In The Heights

4. A Quiet Place Part II
 5. Cruella
- Source: Film Distributors' Associ

IT may not seem like a hot topic to get burns on seats in the cinema, but dementia is making waves on the big screen.

After Anthony Hopkins' beautiful performance dealing with the devastating illness in *The Father*, it's now Stanley Tucci's turn. And he really gives the Oscar winner a run for his money.

This gentle film is the story of married couple Sam (Colin Firth), a pianist, and Tusker (Tucci), an author, who have decided to bundle their life – and dog – into an old camper van to tour the Lake District.

With Tusker falling into the black hole that is dementia, Sam desperately tries to keep him present by taking him to places they visited in the first throes of romance – and encouraging him in his passion for astronomy.

While the pace is often a little too slow and delicate, the subject is dealt with exquisitely and there are

FILM OF THE WEEK



TOUCHING...
Tucci and Firth

SUPERNOVA
(15), 93mins

★★★★

several points where I was surprised to discover tears rolling down my face.

Writer-director Harry Macqueen brings this hopelessly devoted couple to life in such a considered and understanding way

that their heartbreaking decisions soon become your own.

Supernova is dealt with tenderly, and with flawless performances from Firth and Tucci it is full of soul without the sentiment.

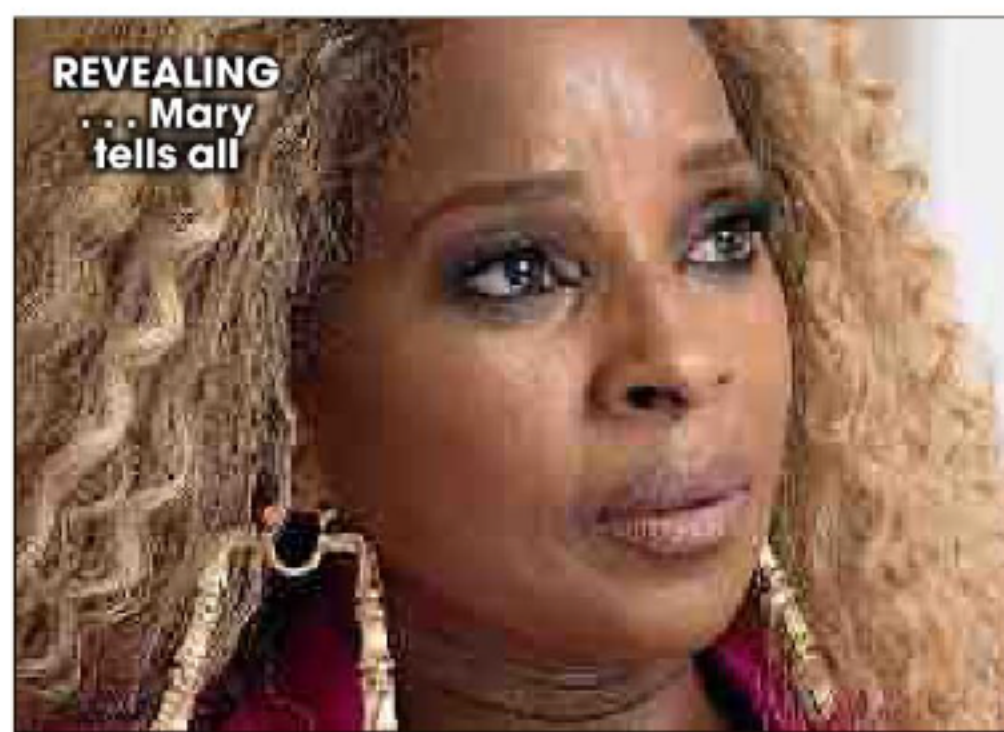
MARY J Blige is the original queen of hip-hop and R&B. Since the 90s, she has sold 50million records, won nine Grammy awards and starred in Hollywood films.

But Blige's life has not always been ghetto fabulous. In this documentary, directed by Oscar-winning filmmaker Vanessa Roth, she shares her "untold story" and reveals the demons that inspired her 1994 album, *My Life*.

Dressed in a designer suit and with crimped blonde hair cascading down her shoulders, she says: "My Life is probably my darkest album, at one of the darkest times I've had. Most of the time, I was depressed and didn't want to live."

In between talking about her tough New York childhood, abuse she's suffered and her struggles with addiction and depression, we see uplifting footage on stage and hear from her superstar pals, including

REVEALING... Mary tells all



MY LIFE
(15) 82mins

★★★

singer Alicia Keys and rapper Sean "P Diddy" Combs.

The redemptive power of music is a strong message. There are touching scenes with fans talking about how her songs have inspired them. For a star who is noto-

riously guarded in interviews, Blige gives fans just enough fodder to feel closer to her, without actually giving anything away. This is a fast-moving, glamorous doc that's drenched in stardust.

On Amazon Prime

Dulcie Pearce

AT THE MOVIES

THERE'S no fool like an old fool – which is why the ninth instalment in this 20-year-old franchise is now more ludicrous than ever before.

It's not just the usual insane car chases, spectacular stunts and nonsensical one-liners that make this latest *Fast & Furious* such a crazy ride.

There is suddenly a new, previously unmentioned long-lost brother to Dom (Vin Diesel) and Mia (Jordana Brewster).

Jakob (John Cena) is quickly shown to be a baddie in search of a device that will change the world for ever. And not in a good way.

It is a "weapon so dangerous it shouldn't exist for another half-century". Whatever that means.

Shock and amaze

We first meet Dom living a very quiet life – while wearing a selection of vest tops – with wife Letty (Michelle Rodriguez) and his son.

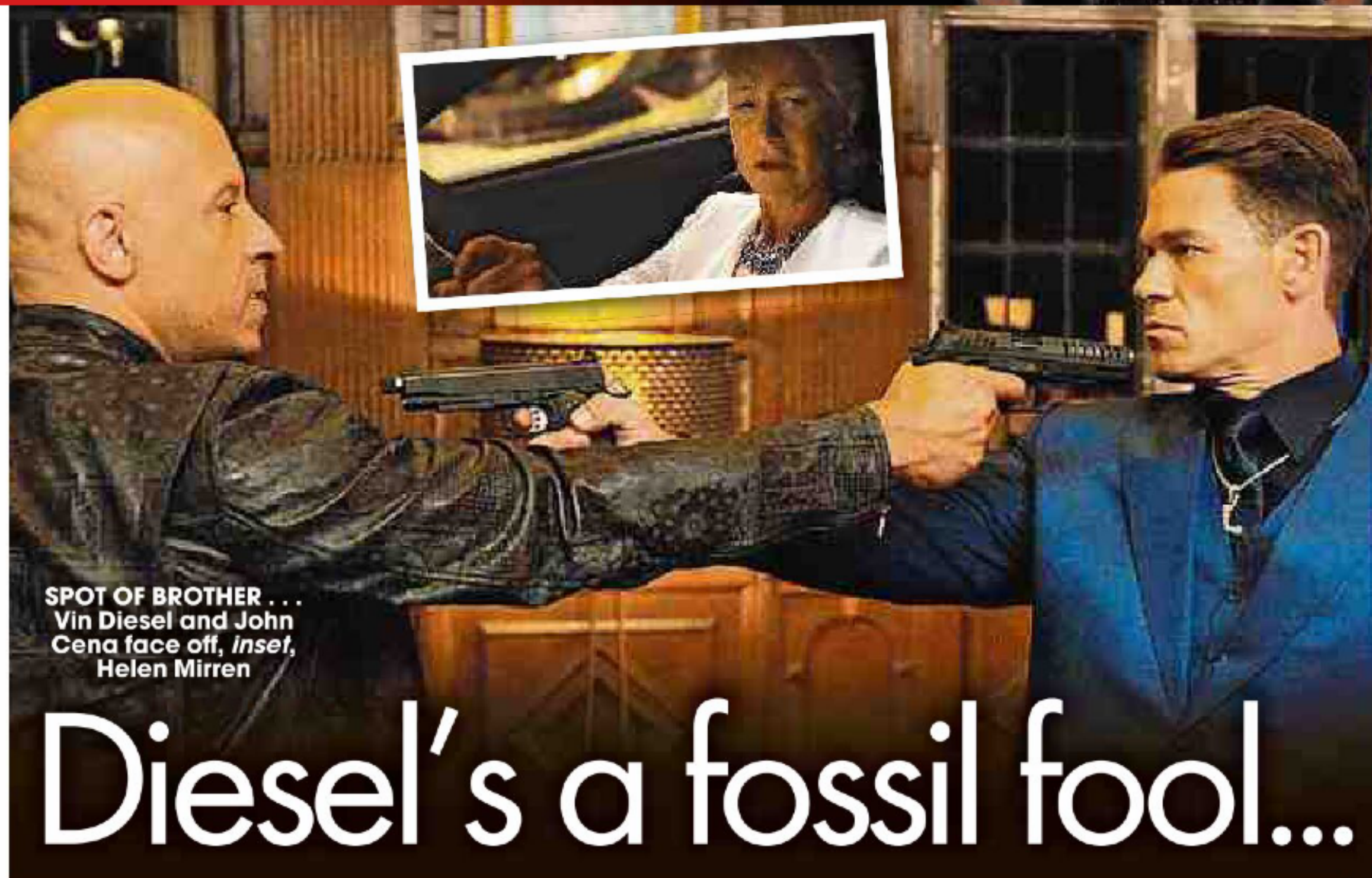
Their peace is disturbed by the arrival of former crew Roman (Tyrese Gibson), Tej (Ludacris) and Megan (Nathalie Emmanuel). The gang then go out to save the world from Cipher (Charlize Theron) and the deadly device.

They are soon driving through the desert, flying over landmines, overcoming broken bridges and avoiding near-death experiences without a scratch – or seat belt – on them.

The mind-boggling storyline sees the adrenaline junkie gang travel all over the world, from Tokyo to Edinburgh, and bump into quite a few A-listers en route.

Vin Diesel has the acting range of a corpse, with his flat lines being delivered through lips so pursed they look like a cat's bum. Fans have come to warm to his

SPOT OF BROTHER...
Vin Diesel and John Cena face off, inset, Helen Mirren



Diesel's a fossil fool...

FAST & FURIOUS 9
(12A), 143mins

★★★★

bad delivery. I'm not sure the same forgiveness can be extended to Dame Helen Mirren, whose performance cuts more corners than a joyrider in a hurry.

Hearing the Oscar winner say "ain't" and "guv'nor" in an affected Cockney accent while speeding

through London made me wince more than the car crashes. But, hey, a girl's gotta eat.

As the story gets sillier – with a couple of the gang even driving INTO SPACE – and the fear of death even more remote, the stunts continue to shock and amaze.

The story may be nonsense – and mortuaries have seen better acting – but *Fast & Furious 9* is entertaining enough not to drive you mad.

FILM NEWS

- JAKE Gyllenhaal and Vanessa Kirby will star in survival thriller *Suddenly*.
- BRIT actress Julia Davis will join Elijah Wood in the new *Toxic Avenger* movie.
- EWAN McGregor, Mark Strong and Sam Heughan have signed up for adventure film *Everest*.

GAMES

By STUART CULLEN

BANDAI Namco know how to push boundaries and create new experiences.

But they have blended the studio's history with a stunning new action role-playing thriller.

This is a fast-paced and weighty tale with outstanding combat to create an anime fan's dream title.

You play as Yuito Sumeragi or Kasane Randall – the newest members of the Other Suppression Force who have to defend New Himuka from the marauding Others. The tale is just off-the-wall enough

Scarlet Nexus

Xbox One, Series X/S, PS4 and PS5 £49.99

to be an anime masterpiece. You'll bond with a sizeable cast that shine a light on their past when not fighting.

On top of that Yuito and Kasane have different tales so you'll need to complete both for the full 50-hour adventure.

The combat is the star. The battle system puts you on the ground level but backs you up with a health RPG upgrading system.

Yuito and Kasane also have differ-

ent fighting styles – one is melee focus while the other is mid to long-range – but both have psychokinesis, giving you the ability to open up battles as you throw everything and the kitchen sink at the baddies.

The bonds you make pay off in battle as they help to unlock new attacks for your team – and you'll need them because this is no walk in the park. It will challenge and frustrate as it

keeps raising the bar – but it never feels cheap and deaths are often down to you.

It has a stunning anime style as you battle through a dystopian future, although you may have a sense of déjà vu over some re-used areas. This is a new IP with an outstanding combat system in an intriguing world. It feels like the first step on a whole new adventure.

★★★★★



NEW MUSIC

By JIM GELLATLY

CATHAL MURPHY

WHERE: Edinburgh.
FOR FANS OF: John Mayer, Tom Misch, Coldplay.

JIM SAYS: Cathal has swapped Newry for Gorgie as he releases his debut solo EP.

The singer-songwriter was raised on Irish traditional music and grew up around concerts and festivals.

He told me: "I just thought of these trad musicians as like superheroes so naturally I was dying to pick up every instrument I could find and learn as much as I could."

As a member of award-winning Northern Irish contemporary folk five-piece Cúig he's already toured Europe and the USA, also appearing at Celtic Connections in Glasgow.

Cathal's EP has elements of folk, but that's only a small part of the sound. When pushed, he



describes it as "jazz pop". His EP is called 'I'm writing to you, it can be lonely and beautiful at the edges of print'. A bit of a mouthful! Cathal, 22, explained: "I wanted a title that was a sentence instead of just a word or a phrase. I find it more striking. The title comes from the second track Writing To The One I Always Will."

The five songs are a delightful listen, and further brought to life with some stunning visuals. Cathal said: "The whole EP has been shot as a short film. It is about 20 minutes' long and follows the EP track by track with live performances in different settings. I wanted to have the colours and energy that I had been picturing when writing them."

MORE: facebook.com/cathalmurphy

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

BOOKS

Edited by NATASHA HARDING

HOSTAGE

Clare Mackintosh, £14.99

PICK OF THE WEEK

FLIGHT attendant Mina should be focusing on her job, but she's distracted by the state of her marriage and worrying about her daughter.

As the non-stop London to Sydney flight takes off, she receives a note explaining that if she doesn't comply with the demands from the hijackers on board her child will die.

Faced with an impossible choice, she does what any other parent in her situation would do, surely?

Tightly plotted, tense and with an unexpected twist, it's the book of the summer.

★★★★★

