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## MOVIES

## TOP 5 FILMS

1. Black Widow
2. Space Jam: A New Legacy
3. The Croods 2: A New Age

4. Old
  5. The Forever Purge
- Chart from bfi.org.uk

PREPARE to set your face to surprised throughout this colourful and crass movie that gives the original film a combat-style kicking.

Written and directed by the Guardians Of The Galaxy's James Gunn, it serves as a cooler sibling to the 2016 movie *Suicide Squad*, which was panned by critics.

This reboot is drastically different, with a foul-mouthed and ultra-violent crew of wrong'uns making you laugh and gasp in equal measure.

US intelligence officer Amanda Waller (Viola Davis) is on a mission to build a team of crazy criminals with superpowers to send on a dangerous, almost suicidal mad mission.

They include the little-known DC character Bloodsport (Idris Elba), who once wounded Superman with a kryptonite bullet but now cleans prison floors.

There's also Peacemaker



### THE SUICIDE SQUAD

(15) 132mins ★★★★★

(John Cena), Blackguard (Pete Davidson) Polka-Dot Man (David Dastmalchian) and the return of Harley Quinn (Margot Robbie).

To increase the level of motley in the crew, there's

also a very hungry shark, a wild weasel and a cute rat.

While the madcap mission soon becomes obsolete, the colourful chemistry and gloriously insane levels of violence are dialled up.

It's difficult to look away – even though there are times you have little idea what you're actually looking at.

YEE-HAW – a family film of unbridled fun is galloping its way to the big screen.

And it brings all the action and adventure of a Western along with the heartfelt, joyous moments of a DreamWorks picture at its best.

It tells the story of Lucky Prescott (Isabela Merced), a feisty 12-year-old who has been cared for by her Aunt Cora (Julianne Moore) since her mum – a famous horse-riding stunt performer – was killed on the job.

The pair are forced to go to the small town of Miradero to spend the summer with Lucky's dad, Jim (Jake Gyllenhaal).

On the train journey, Lucky crosses railway paths with a wild horse, Spirit, and is drawn to her untamed nature.

Once at the town, she meets two equally lively and headstrong friends, Pru and



### FILM OF THE WEEK

### SPIRIT UNTAMED

(U) 88mins ★★★★★

Abigail. The trio soon take to the saddle when the safety of Spirit and his fellow wild horses is threatened – and they go on a trip like no other.

The animation is crisp, the songs catchy and the bond

between the girls so heart-warming my seven-year-old niece Genevieve nearly squealed with joy in a sweet scene where they exchange friendship bracelets.

A fun ride for all the family.

# Dulcie Pearce

AT THE MOVIES

**SADLY, Disney's latest attempt to turn one of its theme park rides into a cinematic attraction does not have enough steam to keep this boat chugging along.**

Set in Brazil during World War One, the plot sees roguish riverboat skipper Frank (Dwayne Johnson) hired by British scientist Dr Lily Houghton (Emily Blunt) to take her and her brother MacGregor (Jack Whitehall) as they journey into the Amazon jungle to find the mysterious Tree Of Life.

Lily wants to harness its healing powers for use in modern medicine. However, she's not the only one with her sights set on the tree.

A German expedition led by Prince Joachim (Jesse Plemons) is also intent on finding it – and using its powers to win the war.

### Obvious green screen

From Frank's many animal puns to the fake hippos and the famous "backside of water" (where the boat passes through a torrent of water), there are an abundance of Jungle Cruise references for fans of the Disneyland ride to enjoy.

Johnson and Blunt are competent enough action stars with good comic timing. But their chemistry has gone AWOL when it comes to the romantic subplot.

And the attempts to update the period-set film with contemporary, progressive ideas make it increasingly convoluted.

Lily is fearless while MacGregor is an effeminate gay stereotype.

Then there's Plemons, who at first delivers his German royal with entertaining aplomb, but soon descends into a Christoph Waltz impression. Paul Giamatti's (Italian? Spanish? Portuguese?) harbour-

RIVER SNOOZE... Emily with Jack and Dwayne

# Boat hits a Rock

### JUNGLE CRUISE

(12A) 158mins ★★

master is totally over the top and Edgar Ramirez is frustratingly underused as one of the only South American actors in a film set in South America.

Director Jaume Collet-Serra relies so heavily on CGI effects that there's never a moment where you

can be captivated the vibrant beauty of the jungle.

Instead, the fakery of certain digital animals and obvious green screen moments contribute to a hard-to-believe world fashioned from a melting pot of cultures.

Jungle Cruise feels like a movie based on a 1955 theme park ride, with too many cooks in the writers' room yet not enough tar to plug its many plot holes.

HANNA FLINT

### FILM NEWS

- DENZEL WASHINGTON and Frances McDormand will star in *The Tragedy Of Macbeth*.
- I May Destroy You star Michaela Coel has been cast in *Black Panther* sequel *Wakanda Forever*.
- Dwayne "The Rock" Johnson has ruled out appearing in *Fast & Furious 10* or 11.

## GAMES

By STUART CULLEN

**WATCH Dogs: Legion** was good but it lacked a main protagonist and let you recruit anyone to become the hero.

Ubisoft have put that right with the first big DLC. *Bloodline* teams up original hero Aiden Pearce with the sequel's cheeky rogue Wrench. Aiden is still running jobs for fixers and has to head to London to do a job but an easy smash-and-grab goes south as Wrench throws a, well, wrench in the works.

The unlikely duo must team up to save the day in a solid tale that will thrill fans, although it does feel like Aiden's final

### Watch Dogs: Legion - Bloodline

Xbox One, Series X/S, PS4, PS5 and PC £11.99

ride into the sunset. The gameplay is more-focused affair on a very tight mission over 10 hours. There are few distractions beyond a few upgrade side missions. Aiden comes fully armed while Wrench is a super-hacker and you can be either one in the multiplayer game.

This feels like a step back from the core game, but it delivers an action-packed romp with good friends.

★★★★



**STREETS Of Rage 4** was our game of the year in 2020 so a DLC has to be a winner, right?

Mr X Nightmare adds a feast of goodies like three new playable characters, Mania+ difficulty, new weapons and a Survival mode.

Fans will know the new characters as bosses from the main game – cop Estel

Aguirre, martial arts specialist Shiva and wrestler Max Thunder. Each brings their own set of skills to the party and mixing their styles will force you to learn new ways to play the game.

Survival mode is the main

### Streets Of Rage 4 - Mr. X Nightmare

Xbox One, PS4, Switch and PC £5.21

meat – you simply have to battle your way through waves of ever-tougher enemies and each run is randomly generated.

When you clear a wave you pick a perk as a reward which can help or make the game even harder.

There's a real high-risk, high-reward system which adds a real edge. And you can unlock new power moves. This is the business.

★★★★



## NEW MUSIC

By JIM GELLATLY

### BLUE VIOLET

**WHO:** Sarah Gotley (vocals), Sam Gotley (guitar/vocals).

**WHERE:** Argyll/Bath.

**FOR FANS OF:** Fleetwood Mac, Civil Wars, Mazzy Starr.

**JIM SAYS:** Sam and Sarah are based in London, but Scotland is close to their hearts.

Sarah told me: "I'm half-Scottish, half-French and grew up between London and Argyll, which is funnily enough how we spread our time now."

"Scotland is where I feel most at home so we decided to live between the two. Sam is a West Country boy, but he goes where I tell him."

The husband-and-wife duo first met as 14-year-olds at school in Bath, but it wasn't until they were in their early 20s that they formed a musical partnership. Blending folk, indie and Americana, Blue Violet create a



wonderful soundscape. They debuted earlier this year with a memorising cover of the Everly Brothers hit *All I Have To Do Is Dream*. They put their own spin on it, also reflecting Sarah's background. A reworking of a 90s song gave them further traction. A stunning take on Edwyn Collins' *A Girl Like You*.

Sam added: "To be honest it was a risk. That fuzz solo is so iconic, but once we got going in the studio it was so much fun."

Blue Violet are no covers band though. Their first original single *Undercover* has a glorious retro vibe recalling The Velvet Underground and Jefferson Airplane. It has been followed by the beautiful *White Beaches*.

**MORE:** facebook.com/weareblueviolet

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

## BOOKS

Edited by NATASHA HARDING

### ALL THE FUN OF THE FAIR

Caroline Hulse, £16.99

**PICK OF THE WEEK** FIONA LARSON has never fitted in, but as her 12th birthday approaches, she's got a plan to make friends, be normal and, above all, go to the fair.

Each year the fair comes to town and each year her parents refuse to let her go, but this time she's going to prove she's grown up enough to go.

All it takes is a bit of spying, making some money and watching the news – what's the worst that can happen? A nostalgic trip down 90s memory lane with a heroine it's impossible not to love.

★★★★★

