

Winnie the Pooh, the mother of science fiction, and a new YA novel adaptation

 By [Daniel Derksen](#)

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In the live action *Christopher Robin*, Winnie the Pooh and friends reunite with old pal Christopher Robin; the hauntingly provocative *Mary Shelley* tells the story of Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin and her fiery, tempestuous relationship with Percy Bysshe Shelley; rioting rocks Los Angeles in the year 2028 in *Hotel Artemis*; there are no rules in the drug war in *Sicario: Day of the Soldado*; kids start catching an incurable, mysterious virus in the sci-fi thriller *The Darkest Minds*; a group of prisoners in the '80s as they think back on their pasts and the events leading to their arrest in the South African musical *Asinamali*, and ballet lovers can indulge in the Bolshoi's *Coppélia*.

Christopher Robin

In the heartwarming live action adventure, Disney's *Christopher Robin*, the young boy who embarked on countless adventures in the Hundred Acre Wood with his band of spirited and lovable stuffed animals has grown up and lost his way. Now it is up to his childhood friends to venture into our world and help Christopher Robin remember the loving and playful boy who is still inside.

The film is directed by Marc Forster from a screenplay by Alex Ross Perry and Allison Schroeder and a story by Perry based on characters created by AA Milne and EH Shepard.

Mary Shelley

The hauntingly provocative *Mary Shelley* tells the story of Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin – author of one of the world's most famous Gothic novels *Frankenstein* – and her fiery, tempestuous relationship with renowned romantic poet Percy Bysshe Shelley.

The pair of outsiders are constrained by polite society, but bound together by a natural chemistry and progressive ideas that are beyond the boundaries of their age and time. Mary and Percy declare their love for each other and much to her family's horror they run away together. In the midst of growing tension within their relationship during their stay at Lord Byron's house at Lake Geneva, the idea of *Frankenstein* is conceived when a challenge is put to all houseguests to write a ghost story. An incredible character is created, which will loom large in popular culture for centuries to come, but society at the time puts little value in female authors.

The screenplay for *Mary Shelley* was written by Emma Jensen, with additional writing by director Haifaa Al Mansour.

Asinamali

Some three decades after *Asinamali!* first appeared on stage at The Market Theatre, Mbongeni Ngema's play about the lives and suffering of black inmates in an apartheid-era prison has been adapted into a film that is as beautiful as it is still heartbreakingly resonant.

Ngema, who also wrote the much acclaimed musical *Sarafina!*, not only directed and produced *Asinamali*, but also stars as Comrade Washington, a black struggle activist who returns to South Africa to work with convicts through drama and dance; eventually they stage a musical play in the prison that takes the audience through how they each of them ended up in that unforgiving place. He also wrote an original score for the film.

Hotel Artemis

Writer-director Drew Pearce, best-known for his work as a screenwriter, makes his feature film directorial debut with *Hotel Artemis*, a secret hospital for criminals in riot-torn, near-future Los Angeles.

Back in the 1920s, penthouse suites at the fictitious Hotel Artemis were named after popular vacation spots. A century later, all guests are codenamed using the names of those suites, reflecting the Artemis's commitment to anonymity, along with its state-of-the-art emergency care.

The 13-story art deco structure lost its cachet with the travelling public long ago, but thanks to funding from Malibu mobster The Wolfking (Jeff Goldblum), the hotel's worn exterior cloaks a state-of-the-art hospital on the penthouse level. This is a members-only ER exclusive to one group – criminals. Dues are paid in advance and all house rules must be followed.

A no-nonsense woman everyone calls The Nurse (Jodie Foster) has run the place for 22 years. The Nurse is a high-tech healer who can handle almost anything – except the outside world.

When an injured cop (Jenny Slate) begs to be let in, The Nurse to break her own rules; she must confront everything she's worked so hard to avoid for 22 years.

Sicario: Day of the Soldado

In *Sicario: Day of the Soldado*, the series begins a new chapter. In the drug war, there are no rules—and as the cartels have begun trafficking terrorists across the US border, federal agent Matt Graver (Josh Brolin) calls on the mysterious Alejandro (Benicio Del Toro), whose family was murdered by a cartel kingpin, to escalate the war in nefarious ways. Alejandro kidnaps the kingpin's daughter to inflame the conflict—but when the girl is seen as collateral damage, her fate will come between the two men as they question everything they are fighting for.

Directed by Stefano Sollima and written by Taylor Sheridan.

The Darkest Minds

Based on the popular young adult (YA) novel, *The Darkest Minds* starts in a turbulent America where 98% of the children's population has died of a mysterious disease, deeming the 2% of the surviving children enemies of the state and forcing them on the run.

With over 90% of the kids now wiped out, these remaining kids with special powers are taken to government-run camps where they are studied, controlled, and feared. A group of teenagers escape and embark on a road trip to find a rumoured safe haven created and run by other kids like them. But once they find it, everything isn't what it seems.

It is the first live-action film for director Jennifer Yuh Nelson, best known for her work on the *Kung Fu Panda* franchise. The movie is an adaptation of the best-selling book by Alexandra Bracken, the first in a YA trilogy.

Coppélia

Dancers will take their final bow when the comic ballet *Coppélia* ends the magic of Bolshoi Ballet season 2017-2018, which

will show exclusively at Ster-Kinekor Nouveau Theatres from 4 August 2018.

The Bolshoi's unique version of *Coppélia* is the most charming comedic love story. It shows a fascinating reconstruction of the original 19th Century choreography of this cheerful comedy involving a Swanhilda, a feisty heroine who decides to teach her fiancée, Franz, a lesson because of his wandering eye. Franz is infatuated with the beautiful Coppélia, who sits reading on her balcony each day. But the mysterious and charming Coppelia is not what she appears to be, and almost breaks up the two sweethearts.

If you're a hopeless romantic, then *Coppélia* is a must-see at Cinema Nouveau Rosebank, Cinema Nouveau Brooklyn, Cinema Nouveau Gateway Commercial, and Cinema Nouveau V&A Waterfront.

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