

Pinocchio, Dreamland, Soul and The Personal History of David Copperfield

 By [Daniel Dercksen](#)

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This week's film releases includes a live-action adaptation of *Pinocchio*; *Dreamland*; a new Pixar computer-animated fantasy adventure comedy *Soul*; and *The Personal History of David Copperfield*.

Pinocchio

This live-action adaptation of the classic story of a wooden puppet named Pinocchio was written and directed by Italian filmmaker Matteo Garrone, based on the 1883 book *The Adventures of Pinocchio* by Italian author Carlo Collodi. Though it features one of the world's most beloved characters (or so we're always told), *Pinocchio* is at its heart a disturbing morality fable in which a child insensible to personal attachments repeatedly flouts the wisdom of those who care about him and suffers accordingly in a world full of traps laid by bunglers, bullies, braggarts, and blackguards.

When an old woodcarver named Geppetto (Roberto Benigni) creates a puppet out of wood, something magical allows Pinocchio (Federico Ielapi) to talk and walk, leading him to one misadventure after another on his way to becoming a real boy.

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Dreamland

Set in the 1930s in Texas during the Dust Bowl, *Dreamland* follows Eugene Evans (Finn Cole) as his family's farm is close to foreclosure. Evans dreams of capturing a fugitive bank robber, Allison Wells (Margot Robbie), and collecting the 10,000 dollars bounty on her to save his family's farm. Eugene is soon to discover that Wells is far more than what the authorities claim her to be; an injured Wells is holed up in his family's barn.

Soul

This computer-animated fantasy adventure comedy is produced by Pixar Animation Studios for Walt Disney Pictures and centres on Joe Gardner (voiced by Jamie Foxx) in a midlife crisis teaching jazz music to 12-year-olds while perpetually trying to get his own career off the ground. Whether he's a failure or not is up to debate, although his mother (Phylicia Rashad) seems to think it's time to move on from chasing dreams and accept the incoming offer from the middle school to go from part-time to full-time, benefits and all. However, an accident causes Gardner's soul to be separated from his body and transported to the You Seminar, a centre in which souls develop and gain passions before being transported to a newborn child, and Gardner must work with souls in training, such as 22, a soul with a dim view on life after being trapped for years at the You Seminar, in order to return to Earth before it's too late.

It is directed by Pete Docter, co-directed by Kemp Powers, from a screenplay by Docter, Mike Jones, Kemp Powers and Tina Fey, from a story by Docter.

The Personal History of David Copperfield

A re-imagining of Charles Dickens' classic ode to grit and perseverance through the comedic lens of its award-winning filmmakers— giving the Dickensian tale new life for a cosmopolitan age.

After his mother (Morfydd Clark) gets married to the cruel Mr Murdstone (Darren Boyd), kind-hearted David Copperfield (Dev Patel) is sent from pillar to post — until his wealthy aunt, Betsey (Tilda Swinton), bankrolls David's journey to becoming a gentleman.

Directed by Armando Iannucci (*In the Loop*, *The Death of Stalin*, HBO's *Veep*) from a screenplay by Iannucci and Simon Blackwell (*In the Loop*, HBO's *Succession*). At every turn, Iannucci challenges the 'hideously white' period drama status quo and reminds us that that default is as outdated as it is historical. *Veep* creator Armando Iannucci repays one of his comedic influences with this offbeat yet delightfully modern Charles Dickens adaptation.

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ABOUT DANIEL DERCKSEN

Daniel Dercksen has been a contributor for Lifestyle since 2012. As the driving force behind the successful independent training initiative The Writing Studio and a published film and theatre journalist of 40 years, teaching workshops in creative writing, playwriting and screenwriting throughout South Africa and internationally the past 22 years. Visit www.writingstudio.co.za

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