

# Men, Minions: The Rise of Gru and Hamlet



By [Daniel Dercksen](#)

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Fear simmers in the unconventional shocker *Men*, icons of mischief, mayhem and joy return for more fun in *Minions: The Rise of Gru*, and opera buffs can indulge in the sumptuous opera *Hamlet*.



## *Men*

What begins as simmering dread becomes a fully-formed nightmare, inhabited by a woman's darkest memories and fears in visionary filmmaker Alex Garland's feverish, shape-shifting new shocker.

Writer-director Garland's superb exploration of fear is bound to shock you to its core with its mind-bending climax but equally delivers an exceptional journey into the mindscape of a woman trying to make sense of a tragedy that had uprooted her marriage. Exquisitely crafted, it features top-notch performances from Jessie Buckley and Rory Kinnear.

In the aftermath of a personal tragedy, Harper retreats alone to the beautiful English countryside, hoping to find a place to heal. However, someone or something from the surrounding woods appears to be stalking her. What begins as simmering dread soon becomes a fully formed nightmare, inhabited by her darkest memories and fears.

At its core, it is a story about a central crisis of our times— about masculinity and its manifestations; about aggressions great and small; about regret; about pernicious cycles, ancient, unchecked ideas, and cultural expectations. It's a film uniquely interested in the foundational myths that animate our culture and what audiences bring with them to the cinema.

"It's about things I've been thinking about for a long time and some that have been touched upon in my earlier films," says writer-director Alex Garland. "But what I wanted to do with it is to make a film that people can project onto as much as possible, where the viewer is a participant in the narrative. The film works in a way as a strange sort of mirror—and people will have their own ideas about what it's about, or not about, that mean something to them."

"*Men* takes away the one thing that, in pure genre terms, makes a horror film scary, which is the power of the monster to be invulnerable to attacks and the power to harm. What happens here diminishes that power massively as that force becomes increasingly pathetic, so it perhaps invites a different kind of response," Garland concludes.

Read more [here](#).

### ***Minions: The Rise of Gru***

Packed with Illumination franchise's signature subversive humour, *Minions: The Rise of Gru* brings fans the origin story of how the world's greatest supervillain first met his iconic Minions, forged cinema's most despicable crew and faced off against the most unstoppable criminal force ever assembled.

Over four films, beginning with 2010's *Despicable Me*, *Minions: The Rise of Gru* is the fifth film in a franchise that continues to thrill and delight audiences in every country and, consequently, has become the biggest animated global franchise in history, earning more than \$3.7bn worldwide.

Long before he becomes the master of evil, Gru is just an 11-¾-year-old boy in 1970s suburbia, plotting to take over the world from his basement. It's not going particularly well. When Gru crosses paths with the Minions, including Kevin, Stuart, Bob, and Otto—a new Minion sporting braces and a desperate need to please—this unexpected family joins forces.

Steered by the franchise's original creators, *Minions: The Rise of Gru* is directed by returning franchise filmmaker Kyle Balda, co-directed by Brad Ableson and Jonathan Del Val, from a screenplay by Matthew Fogel.

Read more [here](#).

### ***Hamlet***

Like the original play, which unfolds in an imprecise period in Elsinore Castle in medieval Denmark, Australian composer Brett Dean's opera *Hamlet* is set in an imagined Elsinore at an indeterminate date.

This production, by Neil Armfield, draws upon visual motifs of the 18th and 20th centuries to create a simultaneously modern and timeless feel for the action. Allan Clayton plays the title role. Nicholas Carter makes his Met debut conducting a remarkable ensemble, which also features soprano Brenda Rae as Ophelia, mezzo-soprano Sarah Connolly as Gertrude, baritone Rod Gilfry as Claudius, and bass-baritone John Relyea as the ghost of Hamlet's father.

On 1-3 and 5 July exclusively at Cinema Nouveau.

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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](http://www.writingstudio.co.za)

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