

What to expect at the cinema this April

By  Daniel Derksen

3 Apr 2023

Movie buffs are in for a real treat in cinemas this April with biopics, sport dramas, romance, horror, animated adventures, and live opera.



Image supplied

7 April

Inspired by the actual files of Father Gabriele Amorth, Chief Exorcist of the Vatican, *The Pope's Exorcist* follows Amorth as he investigates a young boy's terrifying possession and seeks to cast out one of the most intransigent demonic possessions of his storied career, the priest will uncover the truth behind a centuries-buried secret and bring to light a much larger conspiracy, despite warnings from the Vatican.

"Without question, he is a man of deep faith, but also very definitely, his own man," says Russell Crowe, who takes on the role of Amorth. "He is determined to be open and upfront; he is not afraid of the failings of humanity. He accepts all of the foibles and quirks of people. That simple level of gut-based honesty helps him do his job."

The film also stars Daniel Zovatto, Alex Essoe and Franco Nero. It is based on Amorth's memoirs *An Exorcist Tells His Story* and *An Exorcist: More Stories*.

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In *One True Loves*, Emma and Jesse are living the perfect life together, until Jesse disappears in a tragic helicopter crash on their first wedding anniversary. Four years later, Emma finds happiness again as she's about to marry her best friend. However, when Jesse miraculously resurfaces, Emma soon finds herself torn between two great loves. It is based on the 2016 novel of the same name by Taylor Jenkins Reid and stars Phillipa Soo, Simu Liu and Luke Bracey.

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Based on the world of Nintendo's Mario games, *The Super Mario Bros.* Movie invites audiences into a vibrant, thrilling new universe unlike any created before in an action-packed, exuberant cinematic comedy event.

A computer-animated fantasy film based on Nintendo's Mario video game franchise. Produced by Illumination, Universal Pictures, and Nintendo, and distributed by Universal, it was directed by Aaron Horvath and Michael Jelenic from a screenplay by Matthew Fogel. The ensemble voice cast includes Chris Pratt, Anya Taylor-Joy, Charlie Day, Jack Black, Keegan-Michael Key, Seth Rogen, Fred Armisen, Sebastian Maniscalco, Charles Martinet, and Kevin Michael Richardson.

Air reveals the unbelievable game-changing partnership between a then-rookie Michael Jordan and Nike's fledgling basketball division which revolutionised the world of sports and contemporary culture with the Air Jordan brand. This inspirational story follows the career-defining gamble of an unconventional team with everything on the line, the uncompromising vision of a mother who knows the worth of her son's immense talent, and the basketball phenom who would become the greatest of all time.

Directed by Ben Affleck, the film stars Matt Damon as Nike's basketball expert, Sonny Vaccaro; Ben Affleck as Nike founder and CEO, Phil Knight; Jason Bateman (*Ozark*) as Rob Strasser and Viola Davis as Michael's mother, Deloris Jordan.

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The Thorn tells the epic story of God's love for the world and the spiritual battle for all humanity. Often described as cirque meets the passion of Jesus, *The Thorn* combines dance, martial arts, aerial acrobatics, and emotionally powerful performances witnessed live by 1M+ people for 25 years. This unique blend of theatrical performing arts and live-action cinema will engage audiences in the ultimate story of love, sacrifice, and redemption like never before.

14 April

The Japanese animated fantasy adventure *Suzume* depicts a high school girl and a mysterious young man trying to prevent a series of disasters across Japan. As the skies turn red and the planet trembles, Japan stands on the brink of disaster. However, a determined teenager named Suzume sets out on a mission to save her country. Able to see supernatural forces that others cannot, it's up to her to close the mysterious doors that are spreading chaos across the land. A perilous journey awaits as the fate of Japan rests on her shoulders.

In the drama *A Good Person*, Allison is a young woman with a wonderful fiancé, a blossoming career, and supportive family and friends. However, her world crumbles in the blink of an eye when she survives an unimaginable tragedy, emerging from recovery with an opioid addiction and unresolved grief. In the following years, she forms an unlikely friendship with her would-be father-in-law that gives her a fighting chance to put her life back together and move forward. Written, directed, and produced by Zach Braff, it stars Florence Pugh, Molly Shannon, Chinaza Uche, Celeste O'Connor, and Morgan Freeman.

Nicholas Cage plays Count Dracula in the horror-comedy *Renfield*. Renfield, the tortured aide to his narcissistic boss, Dracula, is forced to procure his master's prey and do his every bidding. However, after centuries of servitude, he's ready to see if there's a life outside the shadow of the Prince of Darkness. When he falls in love with Rebecca Quincy, a traffic cop, and decides to finally stand up to his creator in hopes of finally breaking free of his servitude.

Directed by Chris McKay, the film stars Nicholas Hoult as the title character, alongside with Awkwafina, Ben Schwartz, and Adrian Martinez in supporting roles.

The biographical drama *Spinning Gold* depicts the life and career of record producer and Casablanca Records founder Neil Bogart, who was credited with discovering many iconic musical acts such as Donna Summer, Kiss, Village People; and signing and pushing acts including Gladys Knight and the Pips and the Isley Brothers to greater heights. Bogart launched Casablanca Records in the 1970s, and with a rag-tag team of young music lovers, he rewrote history and changed the industry forever. Written and directed by Timothy Scott Bogart. It stars Jeremy Jordan as Neil Bogart.

The Met: Live in HD, the Metropolitan Opera's award-winning series of live high-definition cinema simulcasts, Wagner's *Lohengrin* returns after an absence of 17 years with this atmospheric new staging by François Girard. Yannick Nézet-Séguin conducts a cast led by tenor Piotr Beczala in the title role of the mysterious swan knight. Soprano Tamara Wilson is the virtuous duchess Elsa, falsely accused of murder, going head-to-head with soprano Christine Goerke as the cunning sorceress Ortrud. Bass-baritone Evgeny Nikitin is Ortrud's power-hungry husband, Telramund, and bass Günther Groissböck is King Heinrich.

It screens exclusively on 14, 15, 16, 18 April at select Ster-Kinekor and Cinema Nouveau cinemas.

Read more about [The Met Opera Season](#)

21 April

In *Beautiful Disaster*, bad-boy Travis Maddox (Dylan Sprouse) is exactly what college freshman Abby Abernathy (Virginia Gardner) needs and wants -to avoid. He spends his nights fighting in underground boxing matches, and his days as the ultimate college campus charmer. But Abby wants nothing to do with Travis. Intrigued by Abby's resistance to his appeal, Travis offers her a simple bet: if he loses his next fight, he must remain sex-free for a month. If he wins, Abby must live in his apartment for the same amount of time. Either way, Travis has no idea that Abby's dark past is about to emerge, and he may have finally met his match.

The surrealist black comedy-horror *Beau Is Afraid* stars Joaquin Phoenix as the titular character, an anxiety-ridden man who embarks on a surreal odyssey home after his mother suddenly dies, confronting his greatest fears along the way. The film also includes a supporting ensemble cast that includes Nathan Lane, Patti LuPone, Amy Ryan, Kylie Rogers, Parker Posey, Stephen McKinley Henderson, Hayley Squires, Michael Gandolfini, Zoe Lister-Jones, and Richard Kind. It is written, directed, and co-produced by Ari Aster who induced nightmares with his films *Hereditary* and *Midsommar*.

28 April

From Olympic Gold medalist to World Heavyweight champion, boxer George Foreman leads a remarkable life in *Big George Foreman*. He finds his faith, retires and becomes a preacher. When financial hardship hits his family and church, George steps back in the ring and regains the championship at age 45, becoming the oldest heavyweight champion in boxing history. This biographical sports drama is directed by George Tillman Jr. and features Khris Davis as Foreman. It also stars Jasmine Mathews, John Magaro, Sullivan Jones, Lawrence Gilliard Jr., Sonja Sohn, and Forest Whitaker.

Stranded on a crumbling rig in Baja, a family faces off against a vengeful megalodon shark in *Black Demon*. When oilman Paul Sturges (Josh Lucas) takes his family to Bahia Negra, the crown jewel of Baja their boat is ferociously attacked by a massive black shark. This shark is unlike any other creature; a shark of legend, known as The Black Demon. Under constant attack by the giant monster and with the time literally ticking away, Paul must find a way to somehow get his family back to shore alive.

The animated adventure *Epic Tails* is set in a port city of ancient Greece where the population is threatened by the wrath of Poseidon. A brave young mouse Pattie and the cat who adopted her will help old Jason and his Argonauts to save the city by facing mythical creatures. When Poseidon, god of the sea, steals the golden fleece and threatens mayhem and destruction, it's plucky pipsqueak Pattie to the rescue.

A martial artist-in-training believes she must save her older sister from her impending marriage in *Polite Society*. After enlisting the help of her friends, she tries to pull off the most ambitious of all wedding heists in the name of independence and sisterhood. This British action comedy is written and directed by Nida Manzoor and stars Priya Kansara and Ritu Arya.

To Catch a Killer is thriller centered on a modern-day Clarice Starling. Eleanor (Shailene Woodley) is a young police investigator wrestling with the demons of her past when she is recruited by the FBI's chief investigator (Ben Mendelsohn) to help profile and track the work of a disturbed individual. As the police and FBI launch a nationwide manhunt, they are thwarted at every turn by the individual's unprecedented behaviour. Given her tortured psyche, Eleanor may be the only person who can understand the mind of their assailant and bring him to justice.

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ABOUT DANIEL DERCKSEN

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