

What to expect at the cinema this March

By  Daniel Derksen

27 Feb 2024

There are some thrilling and captivating films and opera for everyone to escape into during March in South African cinemas.



Image supplied

1 March

Exploring themes both timeless and timely, from romantic love and maternal love to globalism, loyalty, revenge and catharsis, *Dune: Part Two* furthers author Frank Herbert's ecological themes in this tale about humanity versus nature.

The sequel to *Dune*, it follows the mythic journey of Paul Atreides, a young man propelled by fate into an intergalactic power struggle. The son of the murdered ruler Duke Leto Atreides and mystical Bene Gesserit Lady Jessica, Paul was given the ultimate test in "Dune": to conquer his fears when fate—and powerful unseen forces—pull him into the sands of the remote planet Arrakis.

He unites with Chani and the Fremen while on a warpath of revenge against the conspirators who destroyed his family.

Facing a choice between the love of his life and the fate of the known universe, he endeavours to prevent a terrible future only he can foresee. It directed by Denis Villeneuve, who co-wrote the screenplay with Jon Spaihts.

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Acclaimed English director Carrie Cracknell brings a vital new production of *Carmen*, one of opera's most enduringly powerful works, reinvigorating the classic story with a staging that moves the action to the modern day and finds at the heart of the drama issues that could not be more relevant today: gendered violence, abusive labour structures, and the desire to break through societal boundaries.

There are exclusive screenings at Nouveau cinemas on 1, 2, 3, 5 March.

Read more about the [MET Opera's award-winning series](#) of live high-definition cinema simulcasts.

The Jungle Bunch 2: World Tour is a French computer-animated superhero comedy. A vicious beaver blankets the jungle with a dangerous pink substance that explodes when coming into contact with water. With the rainy season approaching, the miscellaneous team of animals must hurry to find the antidote.

Based on the animated series *The Jungle Bunch*, the film is a sequel to the 2017 film *The Jungle Bunch*.

8 March

In the *The Bricklayer*, someone is extorting the CIA – assassinating foreign journalists and making it look like the agency is responsible. As the world begins to unite against the US, the CIA must lure its most brilliant – and rebellious – operative out of retirement, forcing him to confront his checkered past while unravelling an international conspiracy. This action thriller is directed by Renny Harlin from the script by Hanna Weg and Matt Johnson, and stars Aaron Eckhart, Nina Dobrev, Tim Blake Nelson, Ilfenesh Hadera, and Clifton Collins Jr.

From Blumhouse, the genre-defining masterminds behind *Five Nights at Freddy's* and *M3GAN*, comes *Imaginary*, an original horror that taps into the innocence of imaginary friends – and begs the question: Are they really figments of childhood imagination or is something more terrifying lying just beneath?

When Jessica (DeWanda Wise) moves back into her childhood home with her family, her youngest stepdaughter Alice (Pyper Braun) develops an eerie attachment to a stuffed bear named Chauncey she finds in the basement. Alice starts playing games with Chauncey that begin playful and become increasingly sinister. As Alice's behaviour becomes more and more concerning, Jessica intervenes only to realize Chauncey is much more than the stuffed toy bear she believed him to be. Directed by Jeff Wadlow and written by Wadlow, Greg Erb and Jason Oremland.

Cabrini is a biopic of the Patron Saint of Immigrants and tells a story of resilience in the face of resistance. After an Italian nun moves to Five Points in New York City, Francesca Cabrini (Cristiana Dell'Anna) fights against the Archbishop (David Morse), mayor, and overt xenophobia to build an orphanage for impoverished Italian-Americans. With entrepreneurship, grit, and boldness, Cabrini creates a home full of compassion and a legacy that's everlasting. The film also stars John Lithgow as Mayor Gould

The comical and touching film *#LoveMySelfie* is about more than just a long-awaited holiday on a luxury cruise. Four women older than 60 undertake a journey inwards and discover that it's never too late to develop and change yourself for the better. But it's not always as easy as that.

Just like local TV-star, Adele Swan, very quickly finds out when she accepts an opportunity to pay off her debt, by agreeing to be the face of the real estate tycoon George's campaign: a competition on the luxury cruise ship, MSC Sinfonia, to win and sell exclusive units of the Silver Eike Retirement Estate. Not only does her ego get bruised when she realises that she will also have to take part in the Survivor of Seniors competition onboard, but when she recognises an old school friend, Winnifred, the doors of her long-forgotten past are opened.

Memories bring self-doubt, regret and suppression of certain emotions for Adele as the pressure to sell more retirement units grows, with George becoming increasingly unreasonable. By entering their best "selfie", 12 lucky seniors win a weekend onboard the luxury cruise with the television personality, Adele, where women compete in survival-style games and quizzes to win the exclusive prize of a retirement unit to the value of R7 million. Directed by Lika Berning from a script

by Hélène Truter.

15 March

This superb biographical sports drama *Iron Claw* tells the true story of the inseparable Von Erich brothers, who made history in the intensely competitive world of professional wrestling in the early 1980s. Through tragedy and triumph, under the shadow of their domineering father and coach, the brothers seek larger-than-life immortality on the biggest stage in sports. Written and directed by Sean Durkin.

In *Arthur the King* the captain of an adventure racing team befriends a wounded stray dog named Arthur, who accompanies the team on a gruelling 435 mile (700km) endurance race through the Dominican Republic. Directed by Simon Cellan Jones, written by Michael Brandt, and starring Mark Wahlberg, Simu Liu, and Juliet Rylance. It is based on the 2016 non-fiction book *Arthur – The Dog Who Crossed the Jungle to Find a Home* by Mikael Lindnord.

In the South African Film *The Bush Knife*, William Singh is an average family man, but when he inadvertently crosses the local mafia boss, who goes under the name of, 'The Skull,' retribution is swift. The Skull murders William's wife and sets the house on fire, with his daughters entombed within.

William is thrown into the depths of despair and bent on revenge, but Detective Rome, the local police chief, who befriends William, urges caution, as he strongly suspects that the Skull still has kept William's daughters alive for reasons as yet unknown. Now with a renewed resolve, William recklessly sets about getting them back. Alas he is beaten, and left for dead, but when he is saved by a local martial arts expert who offers to train him in the ancient art of knife combat, William's luck changes. Written and directed by Renaldo Kell.

Read more about [South African filmmaking](#).

22 March

In *Kung Fu Panda 4*, Po is set to become the Spiritual Leader of the Valley of Peace. He searches for his successor as the new Dragon Warrior while fighting a new foe called "The Chameleon".

This animated martial arts comedy is the fourth instalment in the Kung Fu Panda franchise, and the sequel to *Kung Fu Panda 3* (2016). The film is directed by Mike Mitchell and co-directed by Stephanie Ma Stine, and features Jack Black, Dustin Hoffman, James Hong, Bryan Cranston, and Ian McShane reprising their roles from the previous films, with Awkwafina, Viola Davis, and Ke Huy Quan joining the cast.

29 March

In preparation for medical school, Ollie Cross joins veteran paramedic Gene Rutkovsky on a drive through New York City in *Asphalt City*. The two are forced to face extreme violence during their shifts, from blood-soaked gunshot wounds to disturbing scenes of domestic violence and life-threatening pregnancies, forcing Ollie to confront his beliefs about life and death.

Directed by Jean-Stéphane Sauvaire and written by Ryan King and Ben Mac Brown, based on the 2008 novel of the same name by Shannon Burke. It stars Sean Penn, Tye Sheridan, Katherine Waterston, Michael Pitt, Mike Tyson, and Raquel Nave

Witness the rise of a new empire in *Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire*. The epic battle continues! Legendary Pictures' cinematic Monsterverse follows up the explosive showdown of "Godzilla vs. Kong" with an all-new adventure that pits the almighty Kong and the fearsome Godzilla against a colossal undiscovered threat hidden within our world, challenging their very existence—and our own.

Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire delves further into the histories of these Titans and their origins, as well as the mysteries of Skull Island and beyond, while uncovering the mythic battle that helped forge these extraordinary beings and tied them to humankind forever.

In *Immaculate*, a woman of devout faith, is warmly welcomed to the picture-perfect Italian countryside where she is offered a new role at an illustrious convent. But it becomes clear to Cecilia that her new home harbours dark and horrifying secrets. A psychological horror directed by Michael Mohan and written by Andrew Lobel. It stars Sydney Sweeney, Álvaro Morte, Benedetta Porcaroli, Dora Romano, Giorgio Colangeli and Simona Tabasco.

Clashing kingdoms. Rival rulers in *The Chosen*. The enemies of Jesus close in while his followers struggle to keep up, leaving him to carry the burden alone. Threatened by the reality of Jesus' growing influence, religious leaders do the unthinkable—ally with their Roman oppressors. As the seeds of betrayal are planted and opposition to Jesus' message turns violent, he's left with no alternative but demand his followers rise up. It stars Jonathan Roumie, Shahar Isaac, Noah James, Paras Patel, Jordan Walker Ross, Elizabeth Tabish, Joey Vahedi and directed by Dallas Jenkins.

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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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