

Thrills and spills

 By [Daniel Derksen](#)

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There are five titles releasing this week: in *Live By Night*, a fiery affair sets a policeman on a path of revenge, ambition, romance and betrayal in the roaring '20s; an interplanetary visitor races against time to unravel the mysteries of how he came to be, and where he belongs in the universe in *The Space Between Us*; a super soldier battles ravenous hordes of the undead in *Resident Evil: The Final Chapter*; the exploration of a dark supernatural subculture unleashes hell in *Rings*, the prequel to *The Ring*; and Giuseppe Verdi's *Nabucco* offers viewers an incredible operatic experience.

Live By Night

It is set in the roaring '20s when Prohibition hasn't stopped the flow of booze in an underground network of gangster-run speakeasies. The opportunity to gain power and money is there for any man with enough ambition and nerve and Joe Coughlin, the son of the Boston Police Superintendent, long ago turned his back on his strict upbringing for the spoils of being an outlaw. But even among criminals there are rules and Joe breaks a big one: crossing a powerful mob boss by stealing his money and his doll. The fiery affair ends in tragedy, setting Joe on a path of revenge, ambition, romance and betrayal that propels him out of Boston and up the ladder of Tampa's steamy rum-running underworld.

Oscar winner Ben Affleck (*Argo*), who directed, produced and stars in the dramatic crime thriller *Live by Night*, also wrote

the screenplay, based on the award-winning bestseller by Dennis Lehane, marking the second collaboration for the Boston natives, following the acclaimed drama *Gone Baby Gone* – the film was produced by Leonardo DiCaprio and Jennifer Davisson under the Appian Way banner; and Ben Affleck and Jennifer Todd for Pearl Street Films.

As a lifelong film buff, Affleck posits that the story has all the tropes that made him a fan of the gangster genre in particular: beautiful women, dangerous men, cops, the mob, shootouts, car chases... the whole fiery, combustible mix. “As soon as I read Dennis’s book I knew that there was something there for anyone who just really likes to have a great time at the movies.”

“As a filmmaker, this was a chance to pay homage to the classic Warner Bros. gangster movies of the 1930s through the ‘70s. I grew up watching them and they had an epic, sprawling feel that really took you into a different world, a different era.”

Rings

You’ve heard the legend: You watch the tape, the phone rings, and seven days later, you’re dead. Since 2002, the vengeful spirit of Samara Morgan has wreaked havoc on the curious souls unfortunate enough to stumble upon her cursed VHS tape.

In this new chapter in the beloved RING horror franchise, a young woman (Julia Matilda) becomes worried about her boyfriend (Alex Roe) when he explores a dark subculture surrounding a mysterious videotape said to kill the watcher seven days after he has viewed it. She sacrifices herself to save her boyfriend and in doing so makes a horrifying discovery: there is a “movie within the movie” that no one has ever seen before...

“The Ring was such a game changing movie that ushered in a completely different kind of horror film,” says Director F. Javier Gutiérrez. It wasn’t really gory or violent but every frame fills you with dread.”

“As a culture, we’re obsessed with videos, and the way we watch them has changed so dramatically since the first two Ring films,” Gutiérrez explains. “There used to be a ritual to watching VHS. You chose a tape off the shelf, sometimes you had to rewind it or adjust the tracking... it was all very time consuming, but today, you press a button on various possible devices, and a video instantly plays.”

“I wanted to explore how technology fundamentally changes how the curse works, and how it spreads,” Gutiérrez continues. “It’s not only easier to watch videos, it’s also much easier to make copies and pass the curse on. With two clicks, you’ve sent it to a dozen people and they’re watching it on their laptop or their phone. Today, screens are everywhere, so you’re

never really safe from Samara.”

The Space Between Us

A futuristic sci-fi love story that chronicles how Gardner (Asa Butterfield), a 16-year-old boy born and raised in the first human colony on Mars, decides to journey to Earth for the first time to meet a girl (Britt Robertson) he has a crush on and communicates with online. When Gardner makes it to Earth, he not only sees the planet from an "alien's" perspective, but he finally meets his girl. From there, they endeavour to find Gardner's mysterious father, whom he has never met.

This interspace romance will likely appeal to both teens and adults and was directed by Peter Chelsom, produced by Richard B. Lewis and written by Allan Loeb from a story by Stewart Schill, Lewis and Allan Loeb.

Resident Evil: The Final Chapter

The human race's last hope against apocalyptic obliteration is super soldier Alice (Milla Jovovich), but she's been stripped of her psychic powers. She must form alliances and rally survivors in Raccoon City for the climactic battle against the Umbrella Corporation and its ravenous hordes of the undead.

It is the sequel to Resident Evil: Retribution (2012) and the sixth and final instalment in the Resident Evil film series, which is loosely based on the \$1bn Capcom survival horror video game series Resident Evil.

Paul W.S. Anderson has been involved with the Resident Evil film franchise as a director and/or writer since the very beginning in 2002. With Resident Evil: The Final Chapter, he brings the story of to a close with the biggest action we've seen from the series to date.

Nabucco

Giuseppe Verdi's epic opera Nabucco, with baritone Plácido Domingo in his Met role debut as the title character, releases in cinema for limited screenings from Saturday, 4 February. The legendary Domingo plays the title king in Verdi's Nabucco, under the baton of his longtime collaborator and Met Music Director Emeritus James Levine. This duo has worked together many times over the past four decades, but this is the first time the pair are working together on Nabucco. Liudmyla Monastyrskaya sings Nabucco's alleged daughter, the ambitious Abigaille, who is determined to seize control of the Babylonian empire.

The cast also includes Jamie Barton as the heroic Fenena, Nabucco's heroic daughter; Russell Thomass as Ismaele, nephew to the King of Jerusalem; and Dmitry Belosselskiy is the stentorian voice of the high priest of the oppressed Hebrew people, Zaccaria. Nabucco established Verdi's reputation as a composer, and according to his writings, Verdi noted, "This is the opera with which my artistic career really begins. And though I had many difficulties to fight against, it is certain that Nabucco was born under a lucky star."

The cinema transmission of the Met's production of Verdi's Nabucco offers viewers exclusive backstage content and behind-the-scenes interviews, giving cinema audiences an unprecedented look at what goes into staging an opera at one of the world's greatest houses.

Hosted by bass-baritone Eric Owens, this opera's intermission features include Live backstage interview with the legendary Plácido Domingo, who stars as Nabucco, the Babylonian King who saved the Israelites. Moderated by Met General Manager Peter Gelb, an interview with Met Music Director Emeritus James Levine and Plácido Domingo on their legendary collaboration of nearly 350 performances together.

The running time of Nabucco is approximately two hours 44 minutes, and includes one intermission. Screening times at Nouveau and select Ster-Kinekor cinemas are as follows: 4 February at 17.00; 5 February at 14.30; 7 and 15 February at 11.30; and 14 February at 18.00.

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