

MOVIES



MERELY FRESHMEN A predecessor for classics like Buster Keaton's *College*, Harold Lloyd's *The Freshman* kicked off the college movie trend in 1925 with the tale of a freshman accepted to Tate University who tries to become the most popular boy on campus. He finds himself at odds with the resident football star and most of the school, save for his sweetheart Peggy, who supports him even when he defies logic and tries out for the team. Whether it's a successful move remains to be seen, but the football game that ends the film made history as one of the first onscreen portrayals of the sport, helping make room for gridiron films like *Remember the Titans* and *Rudy*. Catch the original with accompaniment by the Berklee Silent Film Orchestra, which will perform the world premiere of its original score at the Coolidge Corner Theatre on May 1. | *Katja Vujčić*

Reviews by Brett Michel

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST ★★ Taking a page from Disney's live-action remake of *Cinderella*—which starred *Downton Abbey*'s Lily James as the would-be princess in 2015's flesh-and-blood reconfiguration of the 1950 animated classic—Bill Condon's update of the Mouse House's 1991 smash stars the Masterpiece Theatre fave's Dan Stevens as the selfish prince-turned-titular Beast. Well, kind of. Rather than being outfitted in a hulking costume or covered in furry prosthetics, the British thespian has supplied his voice and a motion-captured performance to aid an army of visual-effects artists in bringing this tragic figure to computer-animated life. But unlike the awe-inspiring digital animals that populated Jon Favreau's 2016 retelling of *The Jungle Book*, this is a neutered Beast, one with little of the life of the hand-drawn counterpart that won audiences over a quarter century ago. Emma Watson (*Harry Potter*'s Hermione) was still an infant when that film revived Disney's stagnant animation division, and the actress fares a bit better as the living, breathing (if slightly auto-tuned) version of Belle. Condon and company have tried to expand an already-perfect tale with added prologue and backstory, yet they were obviously afraid to change too much of what was in place. As such, the film plays like a listless cover version of a song from your favorite band: The notes and lyrics are the same, but you'd rather be experiencing the original. After all, no one talks wistfully about the first time they saw Beatlemania. (At Assembly Row, Fenway, West Newton and in the suburbs.)

COLOSSAL ★★★½ I'm not quite sure why, but Anne Hathaway seems to rub some people the wrong way—which might just make her latest, atypically messy role as a drunk all the more endearing. Gloria is an out-of-work Manhattan journalist whose partying ways have destroyed her career and taken their toll on her relationship. Thrown out of her apartment by her boyfriend Tim (Dan Stevens), she moves back to her vacant small-town home, where she can't even successfully inflate an air mattress. She reconnects with her childhood friend Oscar (Jason Sudeikis) and soon finds herself working for him—in a bar. So far, so bad. And then it gets worse. Oscar is a quintessential nice guy, a man who's been carrying a torch for Gloria for years, and his sense of entitlement from being so “nice” manifests itself in some nasty ways, especially when he's been drinking. (I'll mention here that neither of these people should be working anywhere near a bar.) Meanwhile, Gloria's dark side manifests itself as...wait for it...a giant monster rampaging through the streets, buildings and terrified citizens of Seoul, South Korea. That's right: What could have been the setup for a redemptive romantic dramedy plumbs bizarre depths at the hands of Nacho Vigalondo, a writer/director who specializes in upending genre conventions, as fans of films like 2007's *Timecrimes* and 2011's *Extraterrestrial* can attest. But who's the real monster? The answers may surprise you... (At Kendall Square, Somerville and in the suburbs.)

THE FATE OF THE FURIOUS ★★ Now that this eighth installment of the *Fast & Furious* series has

Edited by Meghan Kavanaugh

pulled in more than a half-billion dollars worldwide on its opening weekend, we're all but assured to be viewing the continuing adventures of Dom Toretto (Vin Diesel) and his extended “family” until we're old and gray. And now that the last film's murderous villain, Deckard Shaw (Jason Statham), has become part of Dom's family, I guess all is forgiven. I mean, who cares if Shaw brutally targeted and killed the family's friend, series regular Han? Hell, this film's Big Bad, Cipher (a dreadlocked Charlize Theron), may execute yet another member of this merry band of lawbreakers who've been granted immunity by the shadowy government agent Mr. Nobody (Kurt Russell, chewing his expository dialogue with great glee), but I fully expect she'll be one of the good guys in *Fast & Furious 9* or 10, now that both films have officially been greenlit for release in 2019 and 2021, respectively. *Straight Outta Compton* director F. Gary Gray has taken over the wheel from *Furious 7*'s James Wan, and though not a complete car wreck, *The Fate of the Furious* still feels remarkably like one of the lesser Pierce Brosnan *Bond* pics, straight down to a climax featuring million-dollar vehicles racing across ice. One niggling question, though? How do you hire *Mad Max: Fury Road*'s Furiosa (Theron) and never once let her set foot in a car? (At Assembly Row, Boston Common, Fenway and in the suburbs.)

GET OUT ★★★ A biting satirical horror film that upends white viewers' images of predatory black men, the directing debut from Jordan Peele (of TV's *Key and Peele*, who also scripted) can be summed up as *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner* by way of *The Stepford Wives*. But that's barely scratching the surface of this uproarious thriller that deftly examines the modern state of race in America, made by a natural-born filmmaker who has a tremendous amount of fun toying with the audience's expectations, beginning with the prologue set in a suburban neighborhood that might remind you of John Carpenter's horror classic, *Halloween*. That's intentional, I'm sure, as are the uncomfortable laughs mined from the film's setup, which finds young black photographer Chris (*Sicario*'s Daniel Kaluuya) and his white girlfriend Rose (Allison Williams of HBO's *Girls*) reaching the stage of their relationship where she wants to introduce him to her well-heeled parents, neurosurgeon Dean (*The Cabin in the Woods*' Bradley Whitford) and therapist Missy (*The 40-Year-Old Virgin*'s Catherine Keener). So, off they go for a weekend visit at her parents' upstate abode, where Chris experiences racism, both subtle and overt...and even possibly sinister. What's with the oddly acting black staff in this rich white community? The conventional third act will supply some mildly disappointing answers (as well as some broad comic relief from *The Carmichael Show*'s LilRel Howery), but you may be having too much subversive fun to care. (At Assembly Row, Coolidge Corner, Fenway, Somerville and in the suburbs.)

GHOST IN THE SHELL ★★ By now, you've probably heard the much-publicized cries of “whitewashing” that greeted the announcement that Scarlett Johansson had been cast as protagonist Major Motoko

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