

MOVIES

Edited by Meghan Kavanaugh



PARDON MY FRENCH Poetry comes alive in Philippe Faucon's *Fatima*, which premiered at Cannes in 2015 and boasts three Cèsar Awards. Based on Fatima Elayoubi's collection of poetry and other writings *Prière à la Lune*, the film stars Soria Zeroul in her debut role as Fatima, an immigrant single mother struggling to move past her elementary proficiency in French, which her two daughters speak fluently. The three encounter individual challenges that intersect at home, but by writing poetry in Arabic, Fatima finds she is able to connect with her daughters more fully—the use of her native tongue allows for a depth of expression that she can't reach in French. Head to the MFA to catch the indie flick, which kicks off a migration-themed film series on April 13. | *Katja Vujic*

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, Boston Common, Fenway 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 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*'s 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, Boston Common, Coolidge Corner, Fenway and in the suburbs.)

GIFTED ★★★ Who knew that, after teaming up with the likes of Iron Man, Thor and the Hulk, *Captain America*'s Chris Evans would finally meet his match playing opposite a 7-year-old girl? Boston-bred Evans plays Frank Adler, who may be just the hero that feisty young Mary (delightful newcomer McKenna Grace) needs in her life: her uncle, guardian and fiercest protector. Mary's mother committed suicide when her daughter was an infant, and Frank and Mary have lived together in a modest home in coastal Florida ever since. The boat repairman has decided it's time to put his niece into school, where she can find friends her own age, unlike her best friend Roberta (Octavia Spencer), the middle-aged woman who looks after her when Frank needs a night off. Roberta thinks school may be a terrible idea—and Frank's not entirely sure she's wrong—but he believes his brilliant sister would have wanted her daughter to have a “normal life,” something she was robbed of when their mother Evelyn (Lindsay Duncan) pressured her into premature adulthood as a math prodigy. It's obvious that Frank thinks this led to his sister's death, and he doesn't want Mary going down the same path. His fears have some basis: Mary has inherited her mother's genius for numbers, a fact that the young girl's new teacher, Bonnie (Milton-born Jenny Slate), soon discovers—as does Evelyn. A custody battle ensues, along with numerous clichés. But in the end, the winning performances in Marc Webb's drama easily divert from the bald emotional manipulation. (At Boston Common, Coolidge Corner and Kendall Square.)

GOING IN STYLE ★★½ You'll be forgiven if you mistake actor Zach Braff's third directorial effort (after 2004's *Garden State* and 2014's *Wish I Was Here*) for a sequel to Fisher Stevens' 2012 crime comedy, *Stand Up Guys*, or Jon Turteltaub's 2013 bachelor party comedy, *Last Vegas*. The former featured Alan Arkin in its cast

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