

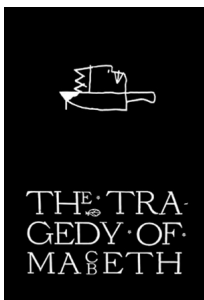
Our movie critic takes a look at holiday offerings

Written by By Glenn Kay For the Sun
Friday, 07 January 2022 05:00



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The end of the year is here, which means that the movie studios will be opening the floodgates and offering a wide variety of entertainment options to choose from. There are plenty of features to go though, so we'll take a brief chronological look at what is on the way. Please remember that release dates do change at the last minute and unexpected additions often occur. Occasionally, award-caliber films are released around the country slowly and may take a couple of extra weeks to arrive in your town or appear on streaming outlets.

If you're looking for something to watch after eating a large holiday dinner, you have lots of choices. Besides the new Disney animated feature, "Encanto," there is the fashion biopic "House of Gucci" with Lady Gaga, Adam Driver, Al Pacino, and Jeremy Irons. The high-profile film is directed by Ridley Scott (who recently made "The Last Duel" and was responsible for the 2000 Best Picture winner, "Gladiator").

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Speaking of award winners, P.T. Anderson is a writer/director with a large fan following thanks to movies like “Boogie Nights,” “There Will Be Blood,” and “The Master.” His latest picture is “Licorice Pizza,” a coming-of-age tale dealing with the messiness surrounding first love.

“The Power of the Dog” from Academy-Award winning writer/director Jane Campion (“The Piano”) is a western that is currently earning a lot of buzz. It is already in limited release for awards consideration. The movie stars Benedict Cumberbatch, Kirsten Dunst and Jesse Plemons.

If you’re looking for family entertainment, Disney+ is presenting a new, animated take based on the hugely popular kid’s book, “Diary of a Wimpy Kid.” On a more adult note, “Encounter” is on Amazon Prime as well as in theaters. Oscar-nominee Riz Ahmed plays a Marine who goes on a mysterious and dangerous mission to save his sons.

You can check out “Being the Ricardos,” a biopic of “I Love Lucy” stars and married entertainers Lucille Ball and Desi Arnaz. Nicole Kidman and Javier Bardem play the performers and viewers will see a behind-the-scenes dramatization of their lives. It’s being given a limited release at theaters and will also be available to view on Amazon Prime.

“Don’t Look Up” is an all-star comedy about a comet hurtling toward Earth and the efforts taken by the two astronomers who discovered it to convince everyone that the planet is in great danger. Leonardo DiCaprio, Jennifer Lawrence and Timothée Chalamet headline the title. This movie will appear on Netflix Dec. 24.

You can head out to the theater and see “National Champions” from STX Films. The story follows a college basketball player who learns how much universities profit off student talent. He sets up a player strike, hoping to earn fair pay for young athletes. It stars [Stephan James](#), J. K. Simmons,

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[Alexander Ludwig](#)

,
[Lil Rel Howery](#)

,
[Tim Blake Nelson](#)

and many more familiar faces.

“Red Rocket” from A24 is also arriving at theaters. It’s the latest movie from independent filmmaker Sean Baker, who was behind the eccentric features “Tangerine” and “The Florida Project.” The story involves a washed-up adult film star returning home to find that none of his old acquaintances want anything to do with him.

After a limited theatrical run in Los Angeles, New York, and other big markets, “The Unforgivable” will be available on Netflix. This drama stars Sandra Bullock as an ex-con trying to make a fresh start in society after serving time for a violent murder.

Famed director Steven Spielberg is presenting his remake of the musical “West Side Story” with Ansel Elgort. Twentieth Century Studios will be bringing it to theaters. Who knows how it will compare to the 1961 original that won numerous Oscars, but people are no doubt interested in seeing what Spielberg can bring to the familiar story.

“The Lost Daughter” is another drama currently gaining awards-buzz. It stars Olivia Colman as an obsessed woman at a resort who follows a young mother around. This movie will be given a limited release before premiering on Netflix on Dec. 31. If you enjoy thrillers, “Nightmare Alley” from Searchlight Pictures arrived in cinemas on the 17th. This movie is from Oscar-winning writer/director Guillermo del Toro (“The Shape of Water”). It’s a thriller that involves a carnival worker played by Bradley Cooper. He teams with a psychiatrist to manipulate and steal money from unsuspecting marks.

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Dec. 22 sees the high-profile sequel “The Matrix Resurrections” from Warner Bros. Keanu Reeves returns as the lead from the original film. One day, he realizes that he is back in the matrix and must determine exactly why this has happened and what is going on. You will also be able to stream it for a month if you subscribe to HBO Max.

Disney’s Marvel superhero feature “Spider-Man: No Way Home” opens at cinemas the same weekend and features the popular teen webslinger accidentally opening up a multiverse in which villains from alternate universes appear to do battle.

On the same date, families can check out the animated musical from Universal Pictures, “Sing 2.” Those looking for some more adult-themed material may find “The Tender Bar” to their liking. It’s about a young fatherless figure who grows up in the company of his bar-owning uncle (Ben Affleck). The boy is guided by his relative and some quirky customers. It’s from Amazon and if you can’t check it out in theaters, it will also be available globally on Prime Video Jan. 7.

“The Tragedy of MacBeth” is the first solo directing effort from Joel Coen of the noted Coen Brothers (“Fargo,” “No Country for Old Men,” and many more) filmmaking team. Denzel Washington and Frances McDormand headline the feature, which offers a fresh take on the famous Shakespearean tale.

“Cyrano” is also opening on Dec. 31 in limited release. This movie is a new adaptation of the Cyrano de Bergerac story. It stars Peter Dinklage as the title character. The film has been described as a musical/romantic drama. And those looking for some international flavor can try to locate the controversial movie “Benedeta” from Dutch director Paul Verhoeven (“Robocop,” “Showgirls,” “Starship Troopers,” “Elle”) about a love affair between two nuns. The Italian drama “The Hand of God” is also being released from the same filmmaker who won the 2014 Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Feature, “The Great Beauty.”

Of course, there will be many more titles coming your way, but this should provide plenty of early options to consider before heading out to the movies!

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