

Deadly secrets and thrilling adventure



By [Daniel Derksen](#)

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An ambitious young executive uncovers the terrifying secrets of a mysterious “wellness spa ”and fights to save his life – and sanity in the mind-bending psychological thriller *A Cure For Wellness*; a man finds himself on the run from a ruthless gang when a heist goes wrong in *Collide*; a man struggles with race relations in the United States while trying to raise his family in the 1950s in the Oscar contender *Fences*; Matt Damon leads humanity's greatest fight for survival in *The Great Wall*; and a Prince falls in love with the bewitched swan-woman in the Russia's Bolshoi Ballet's *Swan Lake*.

A Cure for Wellness

From visionary director, Gore Verbinski, comes this chilling and mind-bending psychological thriller. Dane DeHaan stars as Lockhart, a driven Wall Street stockbroker who is sent by his firm to a remote alpine medical spa. Lockhart is on a mission to retrieve the company's CEO, Pembroke (Harry Groener), a patient at the spa, who has told his staff that he has no intention of returning to New York. Lockhart arrives at the tranquil sanitarium where the residents are supposedly receiving a miracle cure. In fact though, they seem to be getting sicker. As he investigates the dark and baffling secrets behind the spa, he meets a young woman, the hauntingly beautiful Hannah (Mia Goth), a patient herself. He also gets to know another patient, the eccentric Mrs. Watkins, played by Celia Imrie, who has done some detective work of her own. Soon, Lockhart is diagnosed with the same condition as the other patients by the institution's director, the ominous Dr. Volmer (Jason Isaacs), and finds that he is trapped in the alpine retreat. Lockhart begins to lose his grip on reality and has to endure unimaginable ordeals during the course of his own ‘treatment’.

Atmospheric and visually breathtaking, the film is compelling and thought-provoking, exploring the true meaning of wellness and the trappings of avarice and power, while asking what fulfillment really means.

Gore creates an unsettling, ominous atmosphere throughout the film, immersing the audience in the world of the spa, where nothing is clear or straightforward.

“Well it is interesting, because I think the more enigmatic you make something, particularly in this genre, the more you can employ a sort of dream logic,” says Verbinski. “Things can remain enigmatic because you sense there’s some other force, something inevitable happening. To me, that’s the big tease—to try to make everything feel like there’s this sickness that’s not going away; it is pulling you. You are pointing the camera down the corridor and leading the protagonist towards his ultimate epiphany. Once you have that working, you don’t need to have so much exposition, explaining how things work. You just feel like this is all happening for a reason.”

Collide

Casey (Nicholas Hoult), a young American backpacker in Germany has fallen in love with Juliette (Felicity Jones), a fellow American travelling through Europe. When she is diagnosed with a fatal disease, Casey decides to steal from German gangster Hagen (Anthony Hopkins) in order to pay for the medical treatment, which could save Juliette's life. Casey's heist, however, doesn't go to plan and Hagen catches him. Against all odds he manages to escape Hagen's men, steal one of Hagen's cars and flee onto the autobahn. Pursued across Germany, he races to save his own life and get to Juliette before Hagen's men get to her first.

Says director Eran Creevy: “Blending the high energy club scene of Berlin with the visceral action of high speed cars, I aim for Collide to be one of the coolest films of the year. What will set us apart will be the authenticity of our action scenes coupled with the emotional investment of these two star-crossed lovers fighting to save their lives. The film will have nuanced and authentic performances from British leads with strong European sensibilities.”

Fences

Theatre buffs will delight in the potent adaptation of August Wilson’s Pulitzer Prize-winning play, directed by Denzel Washington, who starred in the Broadway production. Although it feels more like a play than a movie, driven by dialogue and strong characters, it allows us to take an emotional journey into the lives of bruised souls seeking ultimate redemption.

It tells the story of Troy Maxson (Denzel Washington), a mid-century Pittsburgh sanitation worker who once dreamed of a baseball career, but was too old when the major leagues began admitting black players. He tries to be a good husband and father, but his lost dream of glory eats at him, and causes him to make a decision that threatens to tear his family apart. His wife Rose (Viola Davis), is the anchor that grounds his despair, as she tries her best to heal his anger and deal with his tormented soul.

“What makes *Fences* universal is that, as a black person, I’m still very human,” says Viola Davis. “I don’t feel so different from anyone else except for how society has informed my life and my past. The themes in *Fences* are about marriage, about identity, about parenthood, about father-son relationships. *Fences* is also about lost dreams. August created exactly what Arthur Miller did in *Death of a Salesman*.”

The Great Wall

When a mercenary warrior (Matt Damon) is imprisoned within The Great Wall, he discovers the mystery behind one of the greatest wonders of our world. As wave after wave of marauding beasts, intent on devouring the world, besiege the massive structure, his quest for fortune turns into a journey toward heroism as he joins a huge army of elite warriors to confront this unimaginable and seemingly unstoppable force.

Directed by one of the most breathtaking visual stylists of our time, Zhang Yimou (*Raise the Red Lantern*, *Hero*, *House of Flying Daggers*), the action-fantasy marks his first English-language production and the largest film ever shot entirely in China.

“The Great Wall is in the lyrics of our National Anthem, so it symbolises the same thing in the heart of all Chinese, which is our people, our country and our history,” reflects Zhang Yimou. “We use it to express many things spiritual. To all of us in China, The Great Wall is a symbol of China’s national spirit. It resonates in every Chinese person, as a symbol of our traditions and our flesh-and-blood.”

The filmmaker believes that applies to this story as well. “In the movie, The Great Wall symbolises the safeguard of peace and national spirit,” he continues. “I thought the screenplay was a special story, especially when you look at The Wall from a different angle. The Wall was built to protect our homeland from invaders. From this perspective, it makes little difference whether the enemy is people or monsters.”

Swan Lake

The next ballet to be enjoyed from Russia’s Bolshoi Ballet company on the big screen is one of the classical ballets of all time, Tchaikovsky’s timeless Swan Lake, which releases on Saturday 18 February for limited shows. Swan Lake opens at moonlight on the banks of a mysterious lake, where Prince Siegfried (Denis Rodkin) meets the bewitched swan-woman, Odette (Svetlana Zakharova). Completely spellbound by her beauty, he swears his faithfulness to her. However, the Prince realises too late that Fate has another plan for him... In this quintessential ballet, lovers of dance will be treated to the ethereal magic of prima ballerina Svetlana Zakharova as Odette / Odile – roles that she has made her own at the Bolshoi Ballet and the world over. Swan Lake is a ballet of ultimate beauty with a score of unparalleled perfection, which was born at the Bolshoi in 1877. In the dual roles of the white swan Odette, and her rival black swan Odile, Svetlana Zakharova exudes both vulnerability and cunning through superb technical mastery, alongside the powerful and emotional Siegfried, Denis Rodkin. Including breathtaking scenes with the Bolshoi’s corps de ballet, this is classical ballet at its finest. Choreographed by Russian ballet master Yuri Grigorovich to the hauntingly beautiful musical composed by Pyotr (Peter) Ilyich Tchaikovsky, and also starring Artemy Belyakov as the Evil Genius and Igor Tsvirko as the Fool, Swan Lake promises to transport viewers into the magical world of the swans. This production was filmed live at the Bolshoi Ballet on 25 January 2015, for broadcast into cinemas globally.

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