

# Gear up for November film releases

By [Daniel Derksen](#)

1 Nov 2023

There's some thrilling and captivating films, documentaries, live theatre, and opera for everyone to escape into during November in South African cinemas and streaming platforms.



## 3 November

This supernatural horror *Dear David* is based on a Twitter thread created by BuzzFeed comic artist Adam Ellis in which he describes his encounter with a ghost.

Shortly after comic artist Adam (Augustus Prew) responds to internet trolls, he begins experiencing sleep paralysis — while an empty rocking chair moves in the corner of his apartment. As he chronicles increasingly malevolent occurrences in a series of tweets, Adam begins to believe he is being haunted by the ghost of a dead child named David.

Encouraged by his boss to continue the “Dear David” thread, Adam starts to lose his grip on what is online...and what is real. The film is directed by Scottish writer-director John McPhail, with Mike Van Waes writing the screenplay.

Female friendship across generations in a community in the late 1960's in working class Dublin when the Catholic Church reign supreme in *The Miracle Club*. A bus trip to Lourdes becomes more than a pilgrimage as each of the women look for answers to very different questions.

Lourdes, a picturesque country town at the base of the magnificent French Pyrenees, and a place of miracles, is a magnet for 6 million visitors each year from across the globe. There's just one dream for the women of Ballygar to taste freedom: to win a pilgrimage to the sacred French town of Lourdes.

With a little benevolent interference from their local priest, a group of close friends get their ticket of a lifetime.

Directed by Irish director, cinematographer and screenwriter Thaddeus O'Sullivan, the screenplay was crafted by Irish filmmaker Jimmy Smallhorne, British TV and film writer Timothy Prager, and American film producer, actor, and writer Joshua D. Maurer. The film stars Laura Linney, Kathy Bates, Maggie Smith, and Stephen Rea

## **10 November**

An unlikely trio must team-up and learn to work in concert to save the universe in *The Marvels*.

Carol Danvers aka Captain Marvel has reclaimed her identity from the tyrannical Kree and taken revenge on the Supreme

Intelligence. But unintended consequences see Carol shouldering the burden of a destabilized universe. When her duties send her to an anomalous wormhole linked to a Kree revolutionary, her powers become entangled with that of Jersey City super-fan, Kamala Khan aka Ms. Marvel, and Carol's estranged niece, now S.A.B.E.R. astronaut Captain Monica Rambeau.

It stars Brie Larson, Teyonah Parris, Iman Vellani. Nia DaCosta directs from a screenplay screenplay is by Nia DaCosta and Megan McDonnell and Elissa Karasik.

The Canadian-German animated feature film *Butterfly Tale* is set along the diverse, picturesque, and ever-changing backdrop of the great Monarch butterfly migration.

A heartwarming tale of a gutsy and loveable yet inept, one-winged butterfly, named Patrick who stows away in a milkweed trailer in order to be part of the journey of a lifetime. With his best friend, a goofy caterpillar named Marty, and Jennifer, a butterfly who is afraid of heights, Patrick will become an unlikely hero. But first he must face his fear, embrace his uniqueness and triumph over adversity while battling changing weather patterns, humans and three evil birds bent on revenge.

It is a tale of adventure, self-realization and heroism told with humour whose message is that our differences are less important than the bonds we share, and it is in adversity, our true character shines through. Written by Heidi Foss and Lienne Sawatsky, directed by Sophie Roy.

A unique new entry into the collection of holiday classic movies, *Journey to Bethlehem* is an epic Christmas musical is unlike any before it.

A young woman carrying an unimaginable responsibility. A young man torn between love and honour. A jealous king who will stop at nothing to keep his crown. This live-action Christmas musical adventure for the entire family weaves classic Christmas melodies with humour, faith, and new pop songs in a retelling of the greatest story ever told—the story of Mary and Joseph and the birth of Jesus.

Directed by Adam Anders. Screenplay by Adam Anders & Peter Barsocchini

## 11 November

A witch hunt is beginning in Arthur Miller's captivating parable of power in the NT Live staging of *The Crucible* with Erin Doherty (*The Crown*) and Brendan Cowell (*Yerma*).

Raised to be seen but not heard, a group of young women in Salem suddenly find their words have an almighty power. As a climate of fear, vendetta, and accusation spreads through the community, no one is safe from trial.

Lyndsey Turner (*Hamlet*) directs this contemporary new staging, designed by Tony Award-winner Es Devlin (*The Lehman Trilogy*). Captured live from the Olivier stage at the National Theatre. Screenings on 11, 12, 15 and 16 November

Read more about the NT Live Theatre Screenings [here](#).

## 17 November

Experience the story of *The Hunger Games* — 64 years before Katniss Everdeen volunteered as Tribute, and decades before Coriolanus Snow became the tyrannical President of Panem in *Hunger Games: The Ballad Of Songbirds & Snakes*.

The new big-screen adventure follows a young Coriolanus (Tom Blyth), the last hope for the once-proud Snow family, whose failing lineage has spelled a fall from grace in a postwar Capitol.

With his livelihood threatened, Snow reluctantly accepts the assignment to mentor Lucy Gray Baird (Rachel Zegler) — a Tribute from the impoverished District 12 — in the 10th Hunger Games.

But after Lucy Gray's charm captivates the audience of Panem, Snow sees an opportunity to shift both their fates. With everything he has worked for hanging in the balance, Snow unites with Lucy Gray to turn the odds in their favor.

Battling his instincts for both good and evil, Snow sets out on a race against time to survive and reveal whether he will ultimately become a songbird...or a snake. It offers an original landscape that takes the series into uncharted territory while remaining thematically connected to the other films in the franchise.

The fifth instalment in the franchise, it is directed by Francis Lawrence, who returns to, and expands upon, this incredible world after directing *The Hunger Games: Catching Fire* and *The Hunger Games: Mockingjay* — Part 1 and 2. Screenplay by Michael Lesslie and Michael Arndt based on Suzanne Collins' bestseller.

*Joika* is inspired by the true story of Joy Womack, an American prima ballerina who became one of the few Western women to be accepted to – and graduate from – Russia's punishing Bolshoi Academy school of ballet.

A fifteen-year-old aspiring American ballerina (Talia Ryder) leaves her Texan family home and is thrust into the world of Russian ballet as one of the very few Americans to ever be accepted into the Moscow Bolshoi Academy. Under legendary teacher Tatiyana Volkova (Diane Kruger), Joy Womack trains with the goal of becoming a Prima Ballerina at the Bolshoi Company.

But, behind the beauty of dance is a world of pain and brutal competitiveness, and Joy is forced to push her body, her

mind, and her choices further than she ever thought possible. Finding unlikely support from Volkova, she risks her health, relationships and potentially her life in her journey to determine what it means to be great. James Napier Robertson (*The Dark Horse*) wrote and directs the film.

## 24 November

The opera *Dead Man Walking* is American composer Jake Heggie's compelling masterpiece, the most widely performed new opera of the last 20 years, arrives in cinemas in a haunting new production by Ivo van Hove.

Based on Sister Helen Prejean's memoir about her fight for the soul of a condemned murderer, *Dead Man Walking* matches the high drama of its subject with Heggie's beautiful and poignant music and a brilliant libretto by Tony and Emmy Award-winner Terrence McNally.

Met Music Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin takes the podium, with mezzo-soprano Joyce DiDonato starring as Sister Helen. The outstanding cast also features bass-baritone Ryan McKinny as the death-row inmate Joseph De Rocher, soprano Latonia Moore as Sister Rose, and legendary mezzo-soprano Susan Graham—who sang Helen Prejean in the opera's 2000 premiere—as De Rocher's mother.

The Met: Live in HD, the Metropolitan Opera's award-winning series of live high-definition cinema simulcasts, launches its new season at Cinema Nouveau cinemas. 24,25,26,28 November / 195 minutes

Read more about the Met Opera Season [here](#).

## 24 November

Walt Disney Animation Studios' all-new musical-comedy *Wish* is set in the magical kingdom of Rosas, where Asha, a sharp-witted idealist, makes a wish so powerful that it is answered by a cosmic force—a little ball of boundless energy called Star.

Together, Asha and Star confront a most formidable foe—the ruler of Rosas, King Magnifico—to save her community and prove that when the will of one courageous human connects with the magic of the stars, wondrous things can happen.

Helmed by Oscar-winning director Chris Buck (*Frozen*, *Frozen 2*) and Fawn Veerasunthorn (*Raya and the Last Dragon*), from a screenplay by Jennifer Lee (*Frozen*, *Frozen 2*) and Allison Moore (*Night Sky*, *Manhunt*), with original songs by Grammy-nominated singer/songwriter Julia Michaels and Grammy-winning producer/songwriter/musician Benjamin Rice, plus original score by composer Dave Metzger.

*Napoleon* is a spectacle-filled action epic that details the checkered rise of the iconic Napoleon Bonaparte.

Against a stunning backdrop of large-scale filmmaking orchestrated by legendary director Ridley Scott, the film captures Bonaparte's relentless journey to power through the prism of his addictive, volatile relationship with his one true love, Josephine, showcasing his visionary military and political tactics against some of the most dynamic practical battle sequences ever filmed.

For director Ridley Scott (*Gladiator*, *Thelma and Louise*, *Black Hawk Down*), that story – the meteoric rise of a military genius, the chance to show his duality and psychology on an epic scale as few other filmmakers could attempt – is one that he has wanted to bring to the screen for many years. “I have a preference for historical drama, because history is so interesting,” he says. “Napoleonic history is the beginning of modern history. He changed the world; he rewrote the rulebook.”

## Recommended viewing on streaming platforms

### Netflix

On the filmfront you can watch an assassin (Michael Fassbender) battling his employers — and himself — on an international hunt for retribution he insists isn't personal in David Fincher's *The Killer* (10/11). A writer's career — and entire life — suddenly goes off script when he falls prey to a dangerous web of criminals right before moving to Barcelona in *I Don't Expect Anyone to Believe Me* (24/11). Exciting documentaries include *Sly* (2/11), with Sylvester Stallone telling his story from underdog to Hollywood legend, and in *Temple of Film: 100 Years of the Egyptian Theatre* (9/11) Guillermo del Toro, Rian Johnson and other film luminaries look back at LA's historic Egyptian Theatre as it returns to its former movie palace glory. In the Netflix series *All the Light We Cannot See* (2/11) the paths of a blind French girl and a German soldier collide during the final days of WWII, a washed-up soccer star returns to rural Queenstown and struggles to connect with his son, a promising player with big dreams in *The Queenstown Kings* (16/11), *The Crown: Season 6 Part 1* (16/ 11) Diana dazzles the public in the final weeks of her life, and the global phenomenon comes to life with games inspired by the original series and all new challenges in *Squid Game: The Challenge* (22/11).

### Showmax

New films include *80 for Brady* (6/11) inspired by the true story of four best friends living life to the fullest when they take a wild trip to the 2017 Super Bowl to meet their hero, NFL superstar and seven-time Super Bowl Champion Tom Brady. *In Knock At The Cabin* (13/11), a gay couple, Eric (Jonathan Groff) and Andrew (Ben Aldridge) and their adopted daughter Wen (Kristen Cui), who are vacationing at a remote cabin in the woods, when their house is surrounded by four armed strangers. *Bank of Dave* (16/11) is based on the true-life experiences of self-made millionaire Dave Fishwick, *Bank of Dave* follows a working-class van salesman battling London's elitist finance authorities. The supernatural sci-fi road movie *Next Exit* (20/11) follows two people in a hurry to get to the afterlife. *In Gringa* (23/11) an unpopular teen tracks down her estranged father: an ex-soccer star living in rural Mexico as a "tequila aficionado", surfer and coach to the local women's fútbol team. *In Renfield* (30/11) Nicholas Hoult (Mad Max: Fury Road) stars as the tortured aide to history's most narcissistic boss, Dracula, played by Nicolas Cage.

### Disney Plus

*In Quiz Lady* (3/11) a brilliant but tightly wound, game show-obsessed young woman must reunite with her estranged, trainwreck of a sister when they're forced to come up with the money to cover their mother's gambling debts. The series *Culprits* (8/11) follows a group of reformed elite criminals who are being hunted by a ruthless assassin, forcing them to confront their pasts and fight for survival. Five generations of women navigate life and love in the small-town community where everyone knows everyone else, no one knows where romantic dreams, passion and inspiration will lead in the series *Love In Fairhope* (9/11). *A Murder at the End of the World* (14/11) is a mystery series with a new kind of detective at the helm – a Gen Z amateur sleuth and tech-savvy hacker named "Darby Hart" (Emma Corrin). *Brawn: The Impossible Formula 1 Story* (15/11) is an original Documentary Series. The superb 3rd Season of FX's *American Horror Stories* launches on 29 November.

Read more about the [latest and upcoming films](#).

## ABOUT DANIEL DERCKSEN

Daniel Dercksen has been a contributor for Lifestyle since 2012. As the driving force behind the successful independent training initiative The Writing Studio and a published film and theatre journalist of 40 years, teaching workshops in creative writing, playwriting and screenwriting throughout South Africa and internationally the past 22 years. Visit [www.writingstudio.co.za](http://www.writingstudio.co.za)

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