

Judy, Underwater and Dolittle

Films opening at South African cinemas, this week, include Renée Zellweger's Golden Globe-winning performance as Judy Garland in *Judy*; Kristen Stewart's deep-sea thriller, *Underwater*; and Robert Downey Jr as *Dolittle*.

 By [Daniel Dercksen](#) 10 Jan 2020

Judy

In this not-to-be-missed biopic, showbiz legend Judy Garland (Renée Zellweger) arrives in Swinging London in 1968 to perform in a sell-out run at The Talk of the Town. It is 30 years since she shot to global stardom in *The Wizard Of Oz*, but if her voice has weakened, its dramatic intensity has only grown.

As she prepares for the show, battles with management, charms musicians and reminisces with friends and adoring fans, her wit and warmth shine through. Even her dreams of romance seem undimmed as she embarks on a courtship with Mickey Deans (Finn Wittrock), her soon-to-be fifth husband. And yet Judy is fragile. After working for 45 of her 47 years, she is exhausted – haunted by memories of a childhood lost in Hollywood; gripped by a desire to be back home with her kids. Will she have the strength to go on?

Based on Peter Quilter stage play *End of the Rainbow*, the screenplay was adapted by award-winning writer Tom Edge and directed by distinguished theatre and film director Rupert Goold.

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Underwater

Sci-fi and horror fans will delight in this compelling, visceral adventure set seven miles beneath the surface of the ocean and anchored by a fearless central performance from critically-acclaimed actress Kristen Stewart.

Stewart plays Norah Price, a gifted electrical engineer who becomes the de facto leader of a band of

survivors after disaster strikes beneath the waves, forcing them to evacuate the mining rig where they've been living. Five thousand miles from land, they struggle to find a way to make contact with the surface in the hopes of calling for a rescue, soon realising that a harrowing march across the bottom of the ocean might be their only path to safety.

Slowly, and with growing horror, Norah and the group begin to understand that they're also facing a very different kind of threat: a biological threat that's existed for ages undetected in the murkiest depths. Suddenly, the possibilities of escape seem that much more remote.

It is directed by William Eubank and written by Brian Duffield and Adam Cozad.

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Dolittle

After losing his wife seven years earlier, the eccentric Dr John Dolittle (Robert Downey Jr), famed doctor and veterinarian of Victorian England, hermits himself away behind the high walls of Dolittle Manor with only his menagerie of animals for company. But when Queen Victoria (Jessie Buckley) falls gravely ill, a reluctant Dolittle is forced to set sail on an epic adventure to a mythical island in search of a cure, regaining his wit and courage as he crosses old adversaries and encounters wondrous creatures.

This fantasy adventure comedy is directed by Stephen Gaghan, from a screenplay by Gaghan and John Whittington and a story by Thomas Shepherd. It is based on the character Doctor Dolittle created by Hugh Lofting, primarily *The Voyages of Doctor Dolittle*.

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ABOUT DANIEL DERCKSEN

Daniel Derksen 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 the 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 View my profile and articles...

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