

EMMA

2hr 05min
Rated PG

03/27	Friday	6:00 pm	04/04	Saturday	TBA
03/28	Saturday	6:00 pm	04/05	Sunday	TBA
03/29	Sunday	6:00 pm	04/06	Monday	TBA
03/30	Monday	6:00 pm			

Take a break from our troubled times with this exquisite version of Jane Austen's 1815 novel of manners and romance. Doe-eyed Anya Taylor-Joy (*The Witch*) spins an enchanting web as Emma Woodhouse, the rich, spoiled and beautiful 21-year-old queen bee of her sleepy village, who lives with her hypochondriac father (*Love Actually's* Bill Nighy, 70). Having successfully played matchmaker between her governess and a wealthy widower, Emma believes she can find the perfect husband for sweet, naïve Harriet Smith (a refreshing Mia Goth). Johnny Flynn brings a scruffy charm as the moral (and sexy) Mr. Knightley, who constantly chides Emma — only to realize he is madly in love with her. Though it's a fresh take with gorgeous costumes, lush cinematography, colorful production design and a luminous score, first-time feature director Autumn de Wilde and writer Eleanor Catton — the youngest-ever winner of the prestigious Booker Prize — don't really reinvent the wheel with this version. It's won't

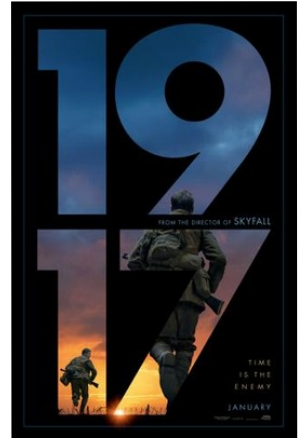
make you forget Amy Heckerling's inspired 1995 *Clueless* or the 1996 *Emma* with a pre-Goop Gwyneth Paltrow. But it's akin to a delicious crumpet smothered in lemon curd with the perfect cup of Earl Grey tea. *Susan King, AARP Movies for Grownups*



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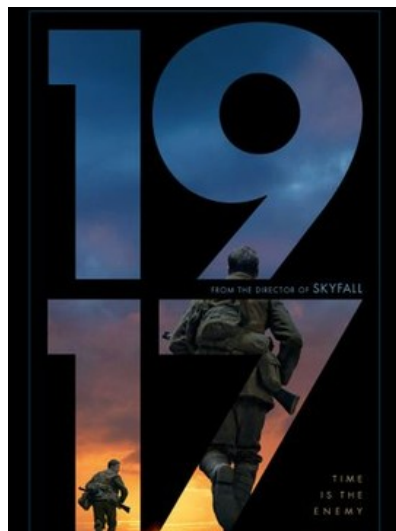
1917

1hr 59min
Rated R

02/28	Friday	6:00 pm	03/07	Saturday	2:45 pm
02/29	Saturday	6:00 pm	03/08	Sunday	2:45 pm
03/01	Sunday	6:00 pm	03/09	Monday	2:45 pm
03/02	Monday	6:00 pm			

Much like the young soldiers in the film, director Sam Mendes set out on a seemingly impossible mission: create a feature-length WWI film in a single take. That's 119 minutes of real-time conflict and non-stop adrenaline rush, in one take. Not only is *1917's* mere existence already a success, but it's also one of the most technically proficient, emotionally compelling, and jaw-dropping goliaths of a war film that I've ever seen. Set in the desolate trenches behind British lines, *1917* will undeniably rank side by side with some of the best war films of all time. Often, the individual faces of soldiers are lost amongst a sea of thousands of uniformed troops; *1917* puts a face to two brave young men who were willing to sacrifice all they had to save the lives of others. On April 6th, 1917, Privates Schofield (George MacKay) and Blake (Dean-Charles Chapman) are selected for a potentially deadly mission. They are to deliver a time-sensitive and life-saving message to their neighboring battalion troop of 1,600 men ordering them to cease their scheduled attack against the Germans. The attack, it turns out, would be an ambush, killing the British soldiers, including Private Blake's older brother. Schofield and Blake only have until dawn the next morning to relay the news, and so begins the race against the clock, the Germans, and the unpredictable roadblocks they'll encounter along the way. Fired up with wide-eyed optimism and stone-cold determination, Schofield and Blake need to cross a pan's labyrinth of battlefield death traps to make it to their destination in time. Overcoming physical and mental roadblocks push the young men to the depths of their grit and not without casualties along the way. It's said that 'to live is to make peace with death,' a poignant reminder that comes full circle as the young men confront their own mortality throughout their heroic efforts. Technically speaking, *1917* is no doubt a cinematic feat, and the same can be said on screen with much praise belonging to George MacKay. As the lead in what is likely one of the most challenging films of any actor's career, he carries *1917* with strength and a certain sweetness. His performance is astounding, both physically and emotionally. Dean-Charles Chapman equally commands the screen as a desperate young

soldier who will do whatever it takes to help his brother. Andrew "Hot Priest" Scott, Benedict Cumberbatch, and Richard Madden also contribute their talents, rounding out a powerhouse ensemble cast. What's equally as impressive as the film itself is the credits, which run almost 10 minutes. The thousands of names that scroll across the screen are a sharp reminder of the amount of work, time, money, and passion that goes into making a film, especially one of this size and caliber. Highlighted in the thousands of names are frequent Mendes-collaborators, including cinematographer Richard Deakins (*Skyfall*) and composer Thomas Newman (*American Beauty*). Their contributions to *1917* make the film what it is: unforgettable. There have been a handful of war films this year., *A Hidden Life*, *Jojo Rabbit*, and *Midway*, all telling specific stories of life on the outskirts or battlefields of their respective wars. While powerful in their own way, nothing holds a candle to the brute force imagery that *1917* pulls off. Based on the audible "wows" from the audience and minutes-long applause as the credits rolled during my press screening, it looks like Mendes and company will be a frontrunner in the battle for Best Picture this awards season. *Morgan Rojas, Cinemaacy*



MARONA'S FANTASTIC TALE

1hr 32min
Rated PG



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French language/English subtitles

03/21 Saturday

12:00 Noon

Her name isn't really Marona. It isn't Sara or Ana either, despite what her past masters chose to call her. It's Neuf. She was the last puppy in a large litter produced by a very respectable bichon impregnated during an impulsive affair with an Argentinian mastiff; and though her mother loved her, her mother's human dumped her promptly at her father's door. She spent just 12 minutes with him before his owner picked her up, carried her into town and dumped her in a rubbish bin. *Marona's Fantastic Tale* is not a film for the faint of heart. Let's cut straight to the chase: the dog dies at the start. She's no more than a smear on the tarmac when we meet her. As she spends the last moments of her life flashing back through everything that has happened to her, we get to accompany her through this gorgeously animated adventure. Mother and son team Anca and Anghel Damian have created something special here by telling the story wholly from the dog's perspective. Not only the narrative keeps faith with this commitment - the camera angle is always at Neuf's height and we explore a world where smells are every bit as important as what we can see and hear. Given the squalid life that our heroine is at times forced to leave, as well as the general proclivities of dogs, you'll be relieved to hear that this is not another exercise in scratch 'n' sniff - rather, Anca's marvellously embellished visual plunge up into a landscape where key people and objects are signalled in advance by flickering images or flashes of colour, solidify as we get close and then trail away, little hints of them lingering like Neuf's enduring love. There's a Dickensian aspect to this tale where a little dog bred for loyalty is passed

from one master to another, often adored but inevitably disappointed. She finds her pleasure in doing her duty with surpassing faithfulness, devoting herself to each human despite her awareness that they're unreliable and not always very bright. there are some salient observations on the way that all too many humans treat animals in her bittersweet account - alongside reflections on the sheer joy of jumping up after a ball, the sense of fulfilment that comes from guarding rubble sacks and the delight of having a soft bed and a bone to call one's own. Beautifully realised, this should be your film of choice if you want to persuade someone to adopt a puppy. It will make you want to take home every dog you meet for at least the next week. It's a little bit of magic. *Jennie Kermode, Eye For Film*



JUST MERCY

2hr 17min
Rated PG13

03/20	Friday	6:00 pm
03/21	Saturday	6:00 pm
03/22	Sunday	6:00 pm
03/23	Monday	6:00 pm

A powerful, emotional film. Based on a true story, 'Just Mercy' follows civil rights defense attorney Bryan Stevenson (Michael B. Jordan) as he dedicates his career to defending prisoners on death row. His greatest challenge yet proves to be representing Walter McMillian (Jamie Foxx), who is sentenced to death after being wrongfully convicted for the murder of a white woman in Alabama. Stevenson will not only have to prove his case but challenge the justice system and prejudices that led to McMillian's arrest. The very title of this legal drama, based on the memoir of the same name by Bryan Stevenson, provokes questions of the viewer in and of itself. Can we have a justice system, so often associated with punishment, that is merciful, a word that indicates compassion and forgiveness? From there it launches into a harrowing exploration of systemic racism in a setting, the 1980s, not all that far from the present day, highlighting most particularly the injustices prisoners face if they are poor as well as black. Some injustices are small, others great, and they all pile together to form a system and society that is neither just nor merciful. Foxx is exquisite as McMillan but Jordan, as the gentle, self-assured, and well-manned Stevenson, can definitely hold a candle to him. Jordan has proven in the likes of 'Creed' and 'Black Panther' that he is a superstar, pure and simple, and part of his charm is the way that he acts like he doesn't even realise how good he is. There's a solid supporting cast too between Brie Larson, Rafé Spall, scene-stealer Tim Blake Nelson and Rob Morgan among others. A wide range of emotions run through 'Just Mercy', spanning heartache, despair, anger, frustration and fear. There are so many sad true stories interwoven, such as a church singer who learns he won't be sentenced to death in the next year, a veteran suffering from PTSD, and a man on death row but whose friend murdered someone, but did nothing wrong himself. It has a strong anti-death sentence agenda, and you'd be hard pressed

not to feel the same after the movie. When it gets into the courtroom drama territory, it plays out at an even pace, balancing the investigation and trial, with key revelations in between. Hopeful and heart-breaking moments punctuate the movie but the emotional peak of the film – a scene that sees an inmate approach the electric chair – comes a bit too early. Still, the ending is uplifting and satisfying with a forceful but important message for all. Thus, while the beats aren't always right on cue, 'Just Mercy' makes for a powerful film and exemplary to all on how we need to and can do better.

Diedre Molunby, Entertainment.le

Just Mercy works beautifully as both an examination of a vital issue and as a gripping legal story. Michael B. Jordan once again proves why he is one of our brightest, most exciting young actors. Mike Granaghan, Aisle Seat



OSCAR NOMINATED SHORTS

1hr 25min
Rated PG13

02/29	Saturday	3:15 pm
03/06	Friday	6:00 pm
03/15	Sunday	3:15 pm

ANIMATION

Memorable (France - 12 minutes) Shorts on Alzheimer's disease have become an annual staple. And in this year's version, the lack of originality is compensated by fascinating stop-motion aesthetics. In it, an aging artist attempts to make sense of his fading memory, as his loving wife becomes more of a stranger each day. The changing textures of the puppets' faces are telling in a wrenching tale of time and recollections rapidly growing short.

Hair Love (USA - 7 minutes) A bad-hair day is a wonderful-hair day for anyone observing this tearjerker about a young black girl flustered by her inability to arrange her unruly Afro into an appropriate do for her dance recital. That leaves it to her dad, who apprehensively attempts to work his magic. Where's Mom in all this? Ah, that's the secret to this film's ironic, heart-tugging reveal. It will knock you for a loop. And so will the discovery that the trio of writer-directors includes former NFL wide receiver Matthew Cherry.

Kitbull (USA - 9 minutes) From the magicians at Pixar, a feral cat and an abused pit bull become unlikely companions in a takeoff on the old Aesop fable about the lion with a thorn in his paw. If you love pets, this one is going to unleash all kinds of blubbering tears. Don't say I didn't warn you.

Dcera (Daughter) (Czech Republic - 15 minutes) As her father lies dying, a woman's thoughts drift back to the day when she was a little girl. Grieving over a dead bird, the child seeks an affectionate

hug from her harried single dad, too occupied by his parental duties to provide the comfort she craves. Is atonement possible? Duh! Performed with stop-motion puppets, the film is visually striking, but its story is slight and somewhat uninvolved.

Sister (China-USA - 8 minutes) The stop-motion puppets may be crudely constructed from cotton, but they add a quiriness to Song's deft criticism of China's now-defunct one-child policy. In presenting us with a young boy imagining what might have been had his baby sister been allowed to be born, Song leaves you appropriately ticked and devastated. *At Alexander/For The Patriot Ledger*



OSCAR NOMINATED SHORTS

LIVE ACTION

1hr 44min Rated R

03/01	Sunday	3:00 pm
03/07	Saturday	6:00 pm
03/09	Monday	6:00 pm
03/14	Saturday	3:00 pm
03/16	Monday	3:00 pm

A Sister (Belgium - 16 minutes) In a story much too similar to last year's outstanding "The Guilty," an emergency dispatcher receives a strange call she soon realizes is from a woman being held against her will. Shot almost entirely in tight close-up at the call center and inside the car, Gerard gets too caught up in the action aspects of her tale to deliver any of the chills found in "The Guilty." You'll definitely feel "taken."

Brotherhood (Canada-Tunisia-Qatar-Sweden - 25 minutes) This nicely shot drama takes a timely look at a Tunisian family torn asunder when a strict, unyielding father shuns the oldest of his three sons, who has just returned after running away to join ISIS. The story deals in issues of forgiveness, remorse and particularly racism, represented via Dad's unfounded hatred for his new daughter-in-law, a Syrian teenager in traditional garb covering her from head to toe. Joobeur's thoughtful story is on the verge of fascinating, but it leaves you wanting, slowed by characters requiring a fleshing out more suitable to a feature-length film. Still, the ending packs a wallop.

Nefta Football Club (France-Tunisia - 17 minutes) Reminiscent of Danny Boyle's delightful "Millions," Piat's clever character study follows two young Tunisian brothers stumbling across a mule roaming the desert on the Algeria-Tunisia border. The beast is wearing headphones of all things. He's also carrying a lucrative load of heroin, which the older bro instantly recognizes as a cash cow. The little one, though, thinks the white powder is "laundry detergent," which leads to a hilarious misunderstanding the enterprising older boy isn't going to find very funny. Nor will the ass's owners.

The Neighbors' Window (USA - 20 minutes) With his third nomination, Curry (last year's underwhelming nominee, "A Night at the Garden") taps into the universal ennui of parents (Maria Dizzia and Greg Keller) so overwhelmed by child-rearing that they've not only lost their sex drives, they've lost their identity. Amid the drudgery, the couple become obsessed with peeping into the windows of their new, sexually active twenty-something neighbors in the apartment across the way. Soon, the leering becomes addictive, deepening their depression. Then, a cruel twist enters the picture in this fact-based ode to Hitchcock's "Rear Window," and it's quite sobering and oddly moving, as you're left to wonder who's envying whom.

Saria (USA - 22 minutes) By far the grimmest of this batch is the fact-based tale of two orphaned sisters in Guatemala dreaming of boys and life away from the Virgen de La Asuncion Safe Home. The facility's name is ironic since the place is more like a prison, where many of the teenagers are subjected to rape and sold into prostitution. In March 2017, the "inmates" rise up and fight back, but their cries end in an unspeakable tragedy that could have easily been prevented. What Buckley (a veteran of dozens of acclaim Super Bowl ads and a previous nominee for 2013's "Asad") lacks in his thinly drawn story, is more than compensated for by the attention he draws to one of the reasons so many Central Americans are seeking refuge in the United States, only to be cruelly denied entry by Trump. It also makes you wonder if similar abuses are happening in those cloistered cages down on our southern border. *Al Alexander/For The Patriot Ledger*

DOCUMENTARY

2hr 40min Rated R

03/02	Monday	2:15 pm
03/08	Sunday	6:00 pm

In the Absence (USA-South Korea - 29 minutes) Nothing more newsworthy at the moment than government corruption and incompetence. And Yi drives home the point with his infuriating recount of Korea's 2014 Sewol disaster. In case you've forgotten, the Sewol was a ferry running between Incheon to Jeju Island when the overloaded ship suddenly tipped on its side. Instead of rescuing the 476 aboard, the Coast Guard just stood by and watched as 304 of the passengers, most of them teenagers on holiday, were swallowed by the deep. The ensuing blame game wound up casting anger and impeachment upon President Park Guen-Hye, who was more concerned about creating heroes than saving lives.

Learning to Skateboard in a Warzone (If You're a Girl) (UK-USA-Afghanistan - 40 minutes) I rate this charmer as my favorite of all the shorts. And with good reason. It's funny, insightful and ultimately moving - and this from a guy who hates skateboarding. Not here. Here it's transporting in more ways than one, as Dysinger shows us a group of young girls in Kabul fearlessly learning to not just skateboard but to defy the all-controlling Taliban in daring to go to school to read, write and think for themselves. Three cheers!

Life Overtakes Me (USA - 37 minutes) Credit to the directors for enlightening me on the existence of "resignation syndrome," the mysterious, coma-like illness affecting child refugees in Sweden. Traumatized by the thought that their families will be deported back to their nations of origin, the afflicted kids simply curl up in the fetal position and completely withdraw from life. It's sad to be sure, and I was fascinated, but strangely unmoved.

St. Louis Superman (USA - 28 minutes) His son was born on the same day (Aug. 9, 2014) Michael Brown was gunned down by police in Ferguson, Mo. And ever since, activist-turned-politician Bruce Franks has devoted his life to making sure his now 5-year-old boy doesn't meet the same fate as Brown and Franks' brother, also a victim of gun violence when he was murdered at age 9 in 1991. I can't think of a better call for peace and understanding, and it's every bit as inspiring as you'd expect.

Walk, Run, Cha-Cha (USA - 20 minutes) They met in Vietnam in the 1960s, married and were then separated for years by war. They later reunited in America and Paul and Millie Cao have been dancing with joy ever since. Yes, dancing! And what an adorable couple. You'll instantly fall in love and marvel at their prowess in tripping the lights fantastic. It's the epitome of the American dream and one that fills you with pride. *Al Alexander/For The Patriot Ledger*

LITTLE WOMEN

2hr 15min
Rated PG

03/13	Friday	6:00 pm	03/21	Saturday	2:30 pm
03/14	Saturday	6:00 pm	03/22	Sunday	2:30 pm
03/15	Sunday	6:00 pm	03/22	Monday	2:30 pm
03/16	Monday	6:00 pm			

It's the Louisa May Alcott novel that most women cherish and some guys approach like Kryptonite. Thankfully, writer-director Greta Gerwig has not betrayed the feminine gaze that made the two-volume 1860s novel a literary landmark. Far from it. Instead, she shows why this story of four sisters and their mother, living in a house without men (their chaplain father is off serving in the Civil War), is both surprisingly timely and enduringly timeless. Isn't Alcott's warhorse novel milked dry, you ask? Not with Gerwig, who scored a hit with her own coming-of-age story in *Lady Bird*, in charge. Plus, the last film version, directed by Gillian Armstrong, was 25 years ago. Mixing the tale of the four March sisters of Concord, Massachusetts (the film was exquisitely shot on location by Yorick Le Saux) with her research into Alcott's life — and cutting back and forth from the sisters as they cope with the pressures of art, commerce, marriage, identity and independence — the writer-director invigorates the material for a new generation. The actors could not be better, including Laura Dern as Marmee, the mother of a brood their father (Bob Odenkirk) calls "little women." Marmee knows better. The sublime Saoirse Ronan is a force of nature as the defiant, tomboyish Jo, the Alcott stand-in as a fledgling writer bucking the system. It's not hard to see Jo in Gerwig, whose performances in *Frances Ha* and *Mistress America* — both directed by her partner Noah Baumbach — reflect an irresistible can-do vivacity that Ronan captures perfectly. In one scene, the grownup Jo faces off with her editor, Mr. Dashwood (a terrific Tracy Letts), who instructs her on the manuscript that will become *Little Women*: "Make it short and spicy. And if the main character's a girl, make sure she's married by the end. Or dead, either way." Jo rebels, of course, but only up to a point, slyly giving in on some areas in exchange for financial compensation and copyright ownership. (Alcott, who never married, did the same.) The other March sisters pursue futures hardly favored by their wealthy Aunt March (Meryl Streep enjoying the hell out of playing a sharp-tongued old biddy). Aunt March's dictum to "marry rich" is ignored by Meg (Emma Watson), the beauty who weds penniless schoolteacher John Brooke (James Norton). And Beth (*Sharp Objects* discovery Eliza Scanlen), the sickly musical prodigy who brings out the generous heart of Mr. Laurence (Chris Cooper), the aggrieved widower next door. It's Laurence's heartthrob grandson, Laurie (Timothée Chalamet), who figures most strongly in the lives of the March sisters, who see him at various times as a romantic ideal. It's an impossible role that Chalamet invests with innate charm and poignant vulnerability.

His scenes with Ronan catch fire as independent Jo rejects this lovesick suitor with a certainty even she knows she's faking. It's Amy, the youngest March sister brought to life by a revelatory Florence Pugh, who sets the plot into motion. Over the years, Amy has been vilified on page and screen for burning Jo's manuscript and seducing Laurie. But Pugh is brilliant at finding the bruised heart of this wannabe painter whose ambition matches Jo's but whose talent falls short. And there's the matter of the economics of being a woman unable to make her own money in a man's world: As Amy lashes out at Laurie: "If I had my own money, which I don't, that money would belong to my husband the moment we got married. And if we had children, they would be his, not mine. They would be his property." This rousing speech might inspire some to accuse Gerwig of attempting to inject feminist doctrine into a period piece. Except the words come from Alcott, as does the usually repressed Marmee's confession to Jo: "I'm angry every day of my life." The marvelous Dern builds to that moment with rending sincerity. All praise to Gerwig for bringing out the roiling passions in a book that has often been mined for sentiment, and for honoring the author without clipping the wings of her own wit and soaring imagination. *Peter Travers, Rolling Stone*

