

## New release reviews

### Gravity



★★★★★

**(PG13) USA/UK, 2013. Sandra Bullock, George Clooney**

'You gotta admit one thing,' draws George Clooney's hardened astronaut, floating some 600km above the surface of the Earth. 'You can't beat the view'.

The same could be said of Alfonso Cuarón's engaging, exceptional and inimitable masterpiece *Gravity*. Taking place entirely in the depths of outer space, the cosmic vistas of Earth and the final frontier are rendered in painstaking beauty, while the weightlessness of space – floating objects, a world lacking in up/down orientation – offers perhaps the best use of 3D we've seen yet.

But this picture is far more than eye candy. It's a gripping, emotive and original thriller rendered in a rich and immersive environment. Essentially a disaster movie in space, a routine satellite upgrade mission goes awry when a cloud of debris strikes the craft and crew. Thus begins an incredible half-hour of real time, white-knuckle action, as soul survivors Matt Kowalski (Clooney) and Ryan Stone (an incredible Sandra Bullock) spin off into the great unknown, their hopes of survival as limited as their oxygen tanks. It's frantic, gripping and immediate,

the claustrophobia of space acutely rendered with a balance of silence, shock, heart and technique.

Mexican writer-director Cuarón is best known to cinemagoers for helming 2004's *Harry Potter and the Prisoner of Azkaban*, and to movie geeks for his coming-of-age, Spanish language road movie *Y Tu Mamá También* (2001). But Cuarón's only prior work to hint at his talents for this kind of conceptually engrossing affair is dystopian novel adaptation *Children of Men* (2006). Like that movie, *Gravity* should be commended for making the implausible feel not just realistic, but viscerally, heart-pounding real.

Don't let the space put you off; while we're forced to reluctantly label this a sci-fi, it's one of those rare, once-in-a-decade moments where a genre flick transcends its label, and simply demands viewing, like *Alien* or *The Shining*. A brief detour into Bullock's backstory might frustrate some viewers, chiming an emotionally manipulative bell, but ultimately this film needs to be commended for not conforming to the Hollywood ending many movie buffs may be expecting (we'll say no more). An absolute triumph utterly deserving in all the Oscar hype it's already attracting. *Rob Garratt*

### Metallica Through The Never



★★★★★

**18+, USA, 2013. Dane DeHaan, James Hetfield, Lars Ulrich**

Helplessly, fans of metal's still-reigning kings will tune up their air guitars for this poundingly loud 3D IMAX concert film, easily the best of its kind. Captured over five Canadian shows from its 2012 tour, Metallica can be seen in peak form, thrashing out a set heavy on selections from the classic first four albums (including the recently revived title track from *...And Justice for All*, a complex ten-minute shredder). Arguably, the band has never been as tight as it is with lurking bassist Robert Trujillo;

director Nimród Antal knows exactly where to place his roving camera to sop up every double-pedal drum flurry and wailing solo.

Maybe because the band enjoyed rave reviews for its daring 2004 psychodrama, *Some Kind of Monster*, an experimental narrative is shoehorned in, involving a roadie (Dane DeHaan) doing bloody battle in a deserted city. Your heart sinks with every cutaway. But the intrusions are few, and there's creativity within the concert itself: A mike shorts out, a bank of lights crashes down on technicians, and a huge statue is toppled. Block those Spinal Tap allusions. *Joshua Rothkopf*

Film

### Previews



### Hatchet III

**(18+) USA, 2013. Danielle Harris, Kane Hodder, Zach Galligan**

The unsavoury character Victor Crowley returns for the third instalment of haunting and brutal bloodshed. A voodoo curse has seen Honey Island Swamp terrorised for

decades. Initially a bumbling sheriff suspects that one of Crowley's victims, Marybeth (Danielle Harris), is responsible for the crimes, yet it soon starts to dawn on him that someone else could be behind the crimes. Expect plenty of gore in this gruesome slasher flick. *TO*