

The Crystal Ball - January 8 Releases

Written by {ga=mitch}

Thursday, January 07 2010 7:00 PM -

As of Wednesday, "Avatar" is now the second highest grossing movie ever, having just passed "LOTR: Return of the King" at \$1.13 Billion, and still going strong entering its fourth week. Is "Titanic's" record of \$1.8 billion in jeopardy? Could be. Mitch touches on that, all this week's new releases at the theaters and on DVD, all the latest film industry news and rumors, and which interesting future projects are in the works in this Friday night's edition of The Crystal Ball.

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News and Rumors

~ Speaking of Avatar... "Ain't It Cool" has stated James Cameron plans to make a sequel. Hmm...on one hand, I'm not too sure about that. On the other, Cameron's done OK with sequels before; "Aliens" and "Terminator 2: Judgment Day";

~ James McAvoy as Ian Fleming? That's the news I'm hearing as the "Wanted" star is set to play the famous Bond writer. Fleming was a very interesting man who had a life and personality that nearly mirrored his famous creation.

~ Speaking of Bond, Sam Mendes has been tabbed to direct the next Bond movie. Peter Morgan ("Frost/Nixon", "The Queen") will handle the writing duties with Mendes. A

At first glance, Mendes would not seem the logical choice for a Bond flick, as he's always specialized in character driven urban angst ("American Beauty", "Revolutionary Road").

But he has handled action before, in the underappreciated "Jarhead";

Additionally, I think someone with Mendes' talent for character development is the perfect thing needed to get Daniel Craig's Bond back to where he was in "Casino Royale", instead of the Roger Moore level action hero from the pedestrian "Quantum of Solace";

~ The Hobbit starts filming (finally) in June. McKellen, Sirkis, Weaving, and Blanchet to reprise their roles Although I'm not sure about why Blanchet is in this.

Galadriel didn't appear in the book "The Hobbit", and that would seem like a pretty

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big stretch to put her here...but I'll trust in Peter Jackson on this one.

~ A Dune Remake. Pierre Morel (Taken) will direct, replacing Peter Berg (a good move, in my opinion). So why isn't this in the next category? Because the 1984 David Lynch movie was quite often another David Lynch ego trip, and he totally changed things around whenever he wanted (the heartplugs installed by the Harkonnen's, the "weirding modules", the Baron floating because he was so fat that he needed an anti-gravity device...none of that was from the book).

So this one will be more faithful to Frank Herbert's 1965 book, which was a classic.

As long as we don't get a 2011 version of Sting in a diaper...

Stupid Remakes and Sequels

~ Uptown Saturday Night...produced by Will Smith, with Denzel Washington in the Sidney Poitier role and Smith in the Bill Cosby role. Why is this so bad? Because of rumors of Smith possibly wanting to go Oceans 11 on it and having Eddie Murphy and Martin Lawrence with major roles as well.

~ Bill Paxton is considering a 3D follow up to "Twister". Yeah, because the 1996 original was such a high point of brainy entertainment.

So will the twister stalk Bill and Helen Hunt like the crazed killer whale in the god-awful 70s film "Orca"?

One can only hope.

~ A sequel for "Ghost Rider"? I guess there is nothing Nic Cage won't do now to try to make a few bucks.

This week's new movie releases:

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First week of new releases in the new year...and it's shaping up to be an out-of-the-ordinary month of January...meaning that we aren't just getting pure crap dumped on us.

Daybreakers

Starring: Ethan Hawke, Willem Dafoe, Sam Neill

Plot: In the year 2019, a plague has transformed most every human into vampires. Faced with a dwindling blood supply, the fractured dominant race plots their survival; meanwhile, a researcher works with a covert band of vamps on a way to save humankind.

[View Trailer](#)

The BeerBuzz: I have never reviewed a movie classified as "horror" for TheClevelandFan. That's going to end this week, as I'm just hearing too much good buzz about this film. Granted, we are just getting way too flooded with vampires lately, but this is a completely different twist on the subject. Besides, it looks like the vampires here aren't [wusses](#)...so that's definitely in its favor.

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## Youth In Revolt

Starring: Michael Cera, Portia Doubleday, Ray Liotta

Plot: Like most teens, young Nick is ruled by his libido. And from the recesses of a trailer park in Northern California, he concocts a plan -- make that multiple schemes -- to lose his virginity to a hot local girl

[View Trailer](#)

The BeerBuzz: Very good buzz on this one as well. I'm not the biggest fan of this type of comedy, but I can certainly appreciate anything well made.

Of course, you have Michael Cera playing...Michael Cera.

It will be interesting to see what the kid can do once his voice drops.

In the meantime, this film has such co-stars as Steve Buscemi, Jean Smart, Zach Galifianakis, Justin Long, and Fred Ward...which ain't too shabby.

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Leap Year

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Starring: Amy Adams, Matthew Goode, Adam Scott

Plot: Having spent four years with her boyfriend without a wedding proposal, a young woman follows him on a business trip to Dublin to partake in an Irish tradition that encourages women to propose to men on the date February 29th. A re-routed plane trip, however, lands her at the door of a Welsh innkeeper, who might offer a diversion of his own.

[View Trailer](#)

The BeerBuzz: Ugh. When you have a romantic comedy that the studio chooses to release on January 8th, totally ignoring the potential audience of a Valentine's Day release...you know it's going to stink.

Which is a shame, as Amy Adams is right up there with Elizabeth Banks on the "so cute, I'd watch them in almost anything" category.

For this film?

I have the word "almost" in there for a reason.

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## January 12<sup>th</sup> DVD Releases:

***The Hurt Locker* - Why I didn't catch this one at the theatre, I have no idea. □ This tale of a bomb disposal unit in Iraq at the start of the second Iraqi War is being touted as a sure thing for an Oscar Best Picture nomination...and possibly a contender with "Up in the Air" and "Avatar";.**

**So I'm sure you'll be reading my review of it in the days leading up to the Oscars.**

***I Can Do Bad All by Myself* - Another Tyler Perry movie.**

**Which means you know exactly what you are going to get, and therefore if you liked his other movies, you'll want to see this.**

**If you didn't like them, there is no way you should rent this one (for the record, I fall in the latter category).**

***Halloween II* - I understand "rebooting" a franchise and renaming it from the original, which is what director Ron Zombie did in 2007 when he re-imaged the Jamie Lee Curtis classic slasher film.**

**But to make a second Halloween II, when it was already**

**named that in the 1981 remake?**

**I don't know.**

***Fame* - Totally lame remake of the campy classic, starring a bunch of out-of-work sitcom actors. □ T  
his film should only be viewed by those who thought "High School Musical" should have won Best Picture.**

***Pandorum* - Dennis Quaid normally doesn't end up in movies that tank this bad at the box office...even if they do stink (see also; GI Joe)...but he did here in the space/horror flick that tries to be a cross between "Alien" and "Event Horizon";.**

## **Calendar Watch**

Next Week [\*The Lovely Bones\*](#) , [\*The Book of Eli\*](#)

Upcoming Biggies (click on the hyperlink to view the available trailers).

[\*The Imaginarium of Doctor Parnassus\*](#) - January expansion TBD - A story-telling doctor's deal with the devil sends him scrambling to save his daughter on the eve of her 16th birthday.

Terry Gilliam's wild tale is the last movie from Heath Ledger, who passed during shooting.

In his place, Colin Farrel, Jude Law, and Johnny Depp all play the same character as Ledger, in a &quot;Doctor Who&quot; type manner.

[\*Legion\*](#) - January 22 - Paul Bettany and Dennis Quaid in a story about the archangel helping to defend the mother of the messiah against the apocalypse.

[Edge of Darkness](#) - January 29 - Mel Gibson returns to acting as a Boston detective investigating a cover-up in the murder of his daughter.

[The Wolfman](#) - February 12 - Lots of date changes for this remake of the classic horror tale, starring Benicio Del Torro and Anthony Hopkins. Let's hope that doesn't mean that this is a stinker.

[Percy Jackson and the Olympians: Lightning Thief](#) - February 12 - The next attempt at establishing a franchise to take over the audience once Harry Potter concludes.

This is about teenage children of the Olympic gods and their adventures.

[Shutter Island](#) - February 19 - Martin Scorsese working once again with Leonardo DiCaprio in this mystery set in 1954. Pushed back

from 2009 due to marketing concerns...this still looks like an incredible movie.

[\*Alice in Wonderland\*](#) - March 5 - Tim Burton and Johnny Depp in a film that seems meant for them.

A 3D acid-trip about Alice's return to Wonderland at age 19 to fight the Red Queen.

[\*Green Zone\*](#) - March 12 - Paul Greengrass and Matt Damon team up again in a Bourne-like film about an Army officer going rouge in Iraq while looking for weapons of mass destruction.

[\*Clash of the Titans\*](#) - March 26 - Re-imaging of the campy Harry Hamlin sword-and-sandals film from the 80s. The trailer looks intriguing, at least

*Wall Street 2: Money Never Sleeps* - April 23 - Oliver Stone brings Michael Douglass back as Gordon Gecko, teaming him with Shia LaBeouf in a film that looks to be quite different in tone than the last one.

*Nightmare on Elm Street* - April 30 - Jack Earle Haley (&quot;Watchmen&quot;) takes over the Freddy Krueger role.

[Iron Man 2](#) - May 7 - Downey Jr. is back, this time dealing with Whiplash (Mickey Rourke) and Black Widow (Scarlet Johansson).

[Robin Hood](#) - May 14 - Ridley Scott and Russell Crowe in what is supposed to be a more &quot;historic&quot; account of the legendary hero.

[Shrek Forever After](#) - May 21 - 3D entry into the

series that is seemingly the only way Michael Myers or Eddie Murphy can make any money

[Prince of Persia: The Sands of Time](#) - May 28 - Might this finally be the first video game that translates to a huge hit at the box office?

Depends on whether or not you can buy Jake Gyllenhaal as an action hero.

Why not?

It worked for Tobey Maguire, Matt Damon, and Robert Downey Jr.

*The A-Team* - June 11 - Based on the campy TV series...but the makers of this film are trying to sell it more as an action film with no camp. With Liam Neeson playing Hannibal Smith as their leader, they may have a chance.

[Toy Story 3D](#) - June 18 - It looks like a big year for 3D films in 2010. In this one, Buzz, Woody, and the rest of the toys are dumped into a day care after Andy grows up and goes to college.

*The Twilight Sage: Eclipse* - July 2 - More Wussy Vampires! I can't wait! (sorry...sarcasmectomy isn't scheduled for a few months yet).

[Inception](#) - July 16 - Leonardo DiCaprio and Ellen Page in a Christopher Nolan sci-fi mind bender that looks to be in the mode of "Memento";

*The Sorcerer's Apprentice* - July 16 - Live action remake of the Disney classic short, starring Nicolas Cage.

*Salt* - July 18 - Angelina Jolie as a CIA operative accused of being a Russian spy.