

PERFUMES ★★★★★
(12A, 101mins. In cinemas and on Curzon Home Cinema now)

THE BUDDY comedy is given a Gallic twist with a charming drama from Grégory Magne. In the driving seat is Guillaume (Grégory Montel), a disorganised, short-tempered, sharp-witted chauffeur who is one driving infringement away from losing his licence.

Sitting alongside him is the prissy, diva-ish Anne Walberg (Emmanuelle Devos) whose cultured hooter has made her a star perfume designer.

Anne is so demanding her previous drivers have all quit. But Guillaume can't turn his nose up at any job. He has applied for joint custody of his 10-year-old daughter Lea (Zelie Rixhon) and the judge has granted it on condition he moves into a bigger flat. If he loses this gig, he loses his daughter.

But as Anne's demands become increasingly unusual, Guillaume must keep his mouth shut,



TWIST: Devos and Montel star in charming drama

making do with the occasional Gallic shrug. As he drives across France to take on an array of bizarre jobs, secrets are aired and a friendship is formed. There are no belly laughs but the likeable leads and the witty script provide plenty of wry smiles.

Weekend Films

Edited by Charlotte Heathcote
www.express.co.uk/films

STAR RATINGS ★ Don't bother ★★ Poor
★★★ Worth a look ★★★★ Good ★★★★★ Excellent

THE ONE AND ONLY IVAN

★★★★
(Cert U, 93mins. Exclusively on Disney+)

LIKE Artemis Fowl1, this is another Disney film rerouted from cinemas to home streaming due to the coronavirus. And on reflection, the small screen feels like the natural habitat for its menagerie of chatty circus animals.

It's not that it looks cheap. The CGI critters aren't quite as photo-realistic as those in last year's The Lion King but their fuzzy hair and sparkly eyes put them in roughly the same safari park.

It's a strange beast, though. There's a mournfulness and half-heartedness about the script, adapted from Katherine Applegate's hit children's book by School Of Rock writer Mike White. The characters (both human and CGI) feel underdeveloped, the jokes tame and, until the final act, its point is confusingly elusive.

Ivan (voiced by Sam Rockwell) is a big-hearted silverback gorilla who lives in a cage in the Big Top Mall, an American shopping centre that features an animal circus. The enterprise is clearly an affront to modern notions of animal welfare but, alarmingly, it is introduced as something of a lark.

Ivan is the star turn, taking the stage at the finale to beat his chest



HEAD TO HEAD: Bryan Cranston with Ivan

By Andy Lea

and roar at the children. But, as his opening voiceover reveals, to him this is just showbusiness.

Backstage, he's best friends with Danny DeVito's stray dog, and Angelina Jolie's elderly elephant is a wrinkly mother figure. Their pals offer comic relief – snarky chicken (Chaka Khan), a rabbit fireman (Ron Funches), a neurotic seal Frankie (the film's screenwriter Mike White) and a pointless poodle (Helen Mirren).

The circus master and owner Mack

(Bryan Cranston) is harder to get a handle on, seeming cruel and avuncular in equal measure. But it's not Cranston's fault. Screenwriter White feels as indecisive about his characters as the art department is about the setting. Mack's attitudes and car suggest this is the mid-to-late 20th century but the audience and street scenes look contemporary.

The story becomes a little clearer



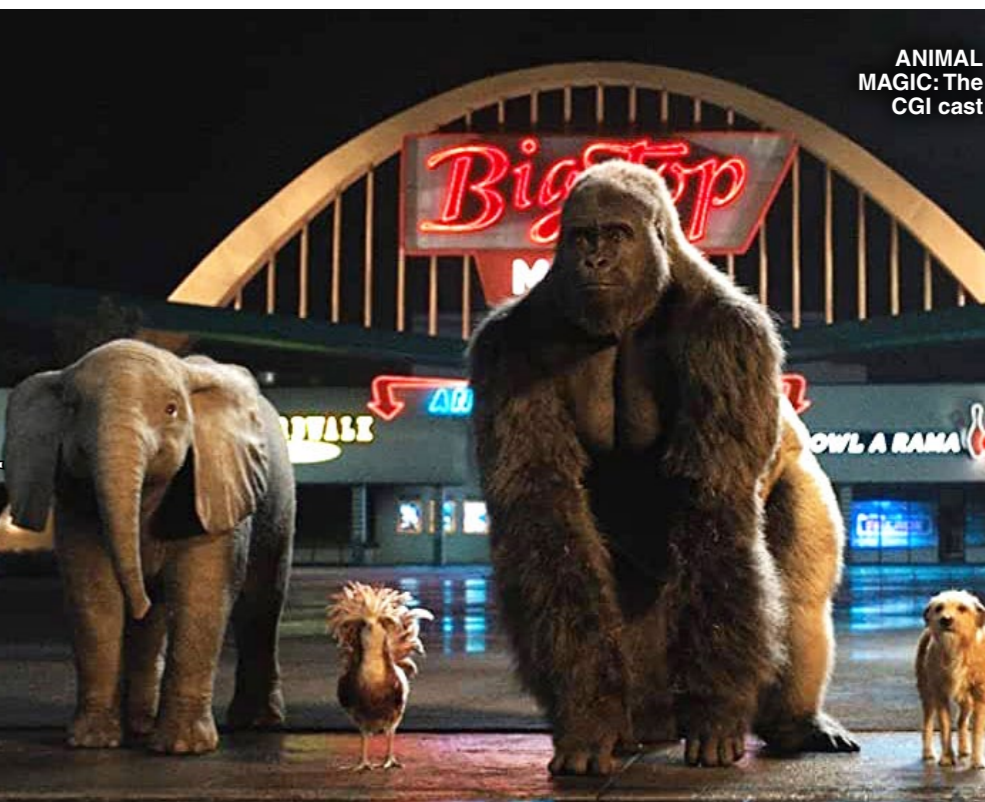
EXPLOSIVE: Fiennes as British spy

COUP 53 ★★★★★
(Cert 15, 120mins. See coup53.com/screenings)

HISTORY buffs and John le Carré fans should love this explosive documentary about Britain's shameful involvement in a 1953 Iranian coup.

Affable British-Iranian director Taghi Amirani spent 10 years uncovering the details of a joint MI6 and CIA operation to unseat the democratically elected leader of Iran, Mohammad Mosaddegh, and

Urban gorilla's a Disney delight



ANIMAL MAGIC: The CGI cast

CHEMICAL HEARTS

★★★★
(Cert 15, 93mins. On Amazon Prime now)

TWO charismatic performances power this overwrought adaptation of Krystal Sutherland's novel. Aspiring writer Henry Page (Austin Abrams) fancies himself as a romantic but, as he's never been in love, he has no material.

However, the floppy-fringed 17-year-old strikes gold when transfer student Grace Town (Lili Reinhart) limps into his life. Her injury suggests a mysterious accident and her moody demeanour hints at a dark past.

Grown-ups have no business streaming this sort of nonsense but it should strike a chord with fans of the novel.

MESSAGE MAN ★★★★★

(Cert 18, 91mins. On digital platforms including Amazon, Google, Sky)

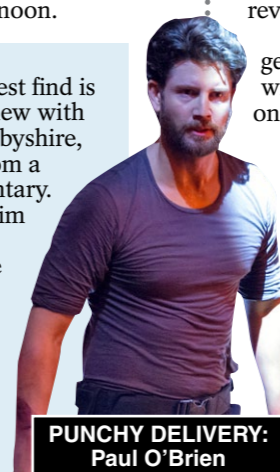
IT seems the week before the first post-lockdown blockbuster isn't the time to put out a big or even mid-budget action movie. But if you can't wait for Christopher Nolan's thrice-delayed Tenet, this straight-to-digital revenge thriller should fill a hole.

Indonesia-set Message Man takes its time getting to the scraps and shootouts but its wildly inventive set-piece, an explosive raid on a Jakarta strip club, is worth the wait.

Home & Away star Paul O'Brien is Ryan, a mysterious stranger with a dark past who rolls up on an Indonesian island to have his yacht repaired. After befriendng cheeky street kid Doni (Aji Santosa), Ryan crosses paths with a kidnap gang trafficking them as sex slaves.

After seeing them off, Ryan discovers they are working for his nemesis and heads to Jakarta to take on the manic Mr Lee (Verdi Solaiman).

A revenge thriller is only as good as its villain and Lee is a belter.



PUNCHY DELIVERY: Paul O'Brien

when Mack buys a baby elephant (Brooklynn Prince) who has clearly been plucked from her mother too early.

At first, the animals hope that she can turn the fortunes of the circus around but she reawakens a sense of yearning in Ivan who begins to remember his own childhood in Africa.

When a little girl gives him a set of

paints, he starts to daub jungle scenes. From here, Dumbo turns into Free Willy, as the animals dream of forging a new relationship with their human masters.

The drama finally comes alive in the final act, with the mournful tone finally giving way to something more rousing. It's no family classic, more something to keep an eye on during a rainy Sunday afternoon.

he shows the method and the madness this entailed.

The PM had been named Time magazine's Man Of The Year in 1951 but nationalising the Iranian assets of a BP-controlled oil company put him in the cross-hairs of the British establishment.

His successor, the corrupt Shah, was more friendly to British interests, until he was deposed in 1979 by the Islamic Revolution.

Amirani brings his research to the fore, structuring the film around his often surreal search for

secret documents. His best find is a transcript of an interview with British spy Norman Darbyshire, mysteriously excised from a 1980s BBC TV documentary.

Ralph Fiennes plays him in a reconstruction, expertly channelling the arrogance and the cultured amorality of these ruthless gentlemen assassins.

It's like an out-take from Tinker, Tailor, Soldier Spy.

Music

THE LOFT CLUB: Dreaming The Impossible ★★★★★

(Lightyear)

A quintet from Exeter who appear to have the same musical influences as Scouse scallywags The Coral. This debut album has jangling guitars, great harmony vocals from front man Daniel Schamroth beside Jamie Whyte and Josie Stoneman, and more than a sense of the late 60s. Bands like Buffalo Springfield and The Hollies spring to mind on the opening title track, the fabulous Heard Her Say and I'm Just A Man, while Grammy winner Lisa

Loeb co-wrote and joins in on closer Flicker.

BUSTY & THE BASS: Eddie ★★★★★

(Arts & Crafts)

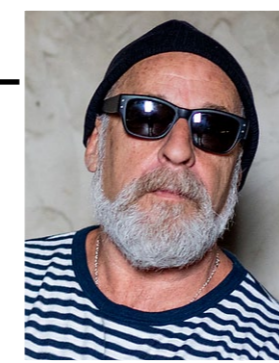
Awful band name, funky album. These eight guys met at McGill University in Montreal, and initially mucked about as a covers band before starting to take their music more seriously. It's now a mighty melange of soul, funk and jazz and this album was given the seal of approval by none other than Earth, Wind & Fire bassist Verdine White, who had an executive production role. There are also guest

appearances from Macy Gray on Out Of Love and the mighty George Clinton on Baggy-eyed Dope Man.

STEVEN ADAMS & THE FRENCH DROPS: Keep It Light ★★★★★

(Fika)

The album title is very much the mantra for the former leader of groups like The Broken Family Band and Singing Adams. Desperate to keep it upbeat, there are times when the music backs dark humour, like My Brother The Racist or just joyous fun, like Bring On The Naps, a salute to the art of having a sly snooze. A



EMOTION: Jerry Joseph

summery mix of indie, pop and folk, from delicate opener Soft Landings to the closing Mr Sunshine.

JERRY JOSEPH: The Beautiful Madness ★★★★★

(Decor)

Jerry, who have you been all my life? This first European release of

his material comes with flattering liner notes from album producer Patterson Hood of the Drive-By Truckers. The Truckers back him up on 10 astonishing songs, and Jason Isbell also teams up with his old band to help out.

Imagine an alt-country amalgamation of the best bits of Bruce Springsteen, John Hiatt, The Hold Steady and The Rolling Stones. Joseph's raw emotion pours out as he rails against bigotry on Dead Confederate, Good sees corruption struck down and Sugar Smacks bemoans a selfish society.

CREEDENCE CLEARWATER REVIVAL: Cosmo's Factory ★★★★★

(Craft)

The 50th Anniversary reissue of CCR's classic album is given the half-speed mastered 180-gram vinyl do-over. Thus you get the astonishing sound of John Fogerty and his buddies trawling the finest rock'n'roll and soulful songs previously made famous by the likes of Elvis Presley (My Baby Left Me), Roy Orbison (Ooby Dooby) and Marvin Gaye (the staggering 11-minute swamp-rock take of I Heard It Through The Grapevine), and

dropping in their own material like the classic Run Through The Jungle.

PILOT: The Albums ★★★★★

(77's)

Formed in Edinburgh, Pilot had two massive hits in 1974. Magic was top 5 in the US and 11 in the UK, while January topped the UK charts a few months later. Various combinations of David Paton, the late Billy Lyall, Stuart Tosh and Ian Bairnson were involved in four albums collected here, that show a set of talented pop songwriters and musicians. That's proved by members eventually working with the likes of

the Alan Parsons Project, 10CC and Kate Bush.

VARIOUS: Shellshock Rock ★★★★★

(Cherry Red)

A vibrant 3CD rattle through the punk and post-punk music in Northern Ireland at the height of The Troubles, providing backing for the DVD of John T Davis' documentary chronicling the times. Most recognisable are The Undertones and Stiff Little Fingers, but there is a high degree of musicianship on show in 74 tracks from bands that rarely managed to reveal their music across the Irish Sea. Starjets, Rudi and Big Self shine.

Barney Higgins

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