

Film & TV Picks

John Lui Film Correspondent and Alison de Souza recommend



**THE PERSONAL HISTORY OF DAVID COPPERFIELD (PG)**  
120 minutes / ★★★★★

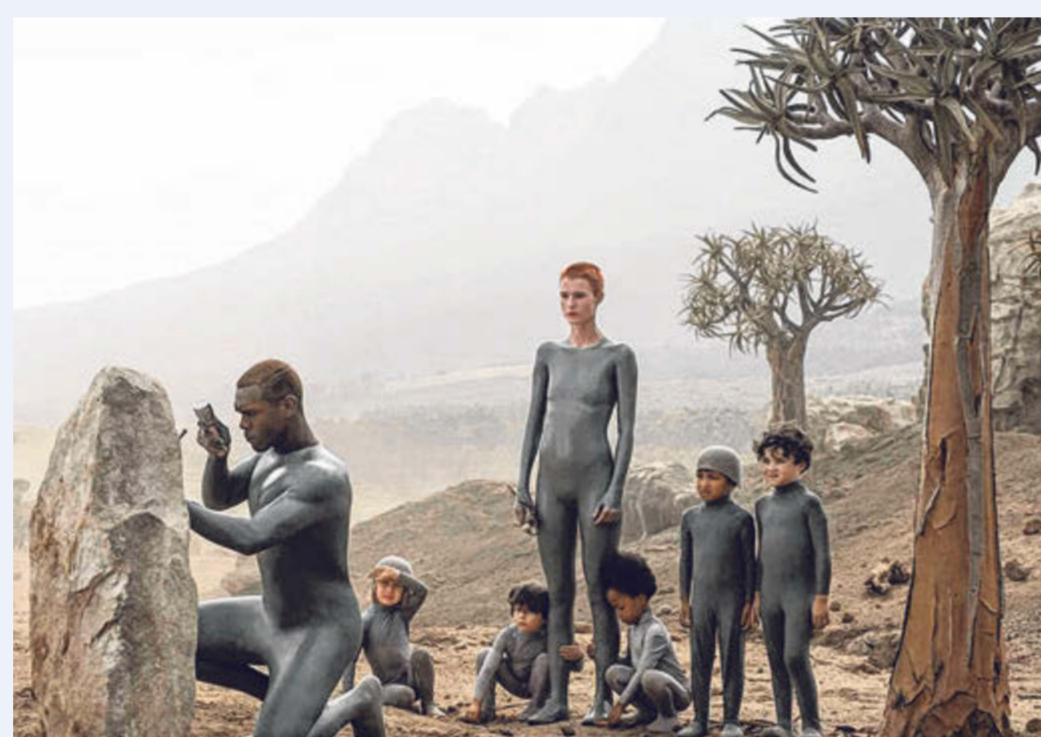
This infectiously cheerful adaptation of one of Charles Dickens' most beloved works offers a rare combination of factors: It has beautiful dialogue spoken by good actors, editing that makes the two-hour film feel like 60 minutes and a storytelling style that feels modern and meta while staying true to – and sincerely in love with – its source material.

When its director, British film-maker Armando Iannucci, is not making parodies of politics (BBC series *The Thick Of It*, 2005 to 2012; HBO series *Veep*, 2012 to 2015), he is also a Dickensophile, having written and presented a documentary on the English writer in 2012, *Armando's Tale Of Charles Dickens*.

The story begins with the title character as a child (Jairaj Varsani) and, in a series of vignettes, follows the older David (Dev Patel, left) as he grows from neglected child to an abused one, to his meeting with his saviour, rich aunt Betsey Trotwood (Tilda Swinton), her eccentric lodger Mr Dick (Hugh Laurie), her lawyer Mr Wickfield (Benedict Wong) and the peevish but peppy Mr Micawber (Peter Capaldi).

Ben Whishaw as the unctuous Uriah Heep delivers a masterful performance.

John Lui



**RAISED BY WOLVES**  
HBO Go

The series is a science-fiction take on the Adam and Eve tale – except the couple in question are two androids named Mother (Amanda Collin) and Father (Abubakar Salim, both above). Put on a spaceship with a dozen human embryos and sent to a dusty planet, they have to somehow raise a group of children there – a task they carry out with utmost diligence and care.

But the first wrinkle is that the planet is barely liveable; the second is that they are eventually joined by

another band of colonists fleeing Earth, which has been engulfed by a war between a group of atheists – the ones who sent their children away with Mother and Father – and a religious faction known as the Mithraics.

But what distinguishes the series is its thoughtful look at using beliefs and fairy tales as the building blocks of society – something the atheists end up doing as much as the Mithraics, with even Mother and Father spinning fables to keep the children in line.

Alison de Souza

PHOTOS: SHAW ORGANISATION, TVN MOVIES, HBO



**DELIVER US FROM EVIL (NC16)**  
108 minutes / ★★★★★

This is the latest in a series of tense, violent crime thrillers from South Korea, which in recent times has delivered quality stories featuring dead-eyed killers and charismatic losers.

If this story emits a Western vibe, it is because it features a showdown in a city that has become Asian cinema's stand-in for Mexico: Bangkok. It is where triads, the yakuza (Japanese organised crime), gun-runners and drug dealers of all

nations come to do battle – at least in films.

Hired gun In-Nam (Hwang Jung-min, above) heads to the Thai capital to fix a vexing family problem. Hot on his heels and seeking revenge is Ray (Lee Jung-Jae), a South Korean mob boss with a penchant for torture. The stage is set for a stylish, savage match-up – one that has surprisingly tender family moments.

It is showing in cinemas and will be available on Singtel and StarHub Video On Demand from Oct 1.

John Lui

**FILMS**

**The Perfect Candidate (2019, PG13)**

In this Saudi Arabian drama, a young Saudi doctor's surprise run for office in the local city elections sees her family and community struggle to accept their town's first female candidate. Her creative and ambitious campaign builds momentum, becoming a symbol for a larger movement.

**PRICE:** \$10 for a 48-hour rental period  
**INFO:** str.sg/JXWp

**Arab Blues (2019, NC16)**

Raised in Paris, Selma moves back to her homeland, Tunisia, to open her psychotherapy practice to help the locals cope with the stress of cultural and social changes after the fall of long-serving dictator Zine El Abidine Ben Ali. Presented in collaboration with the Institut Francais, with the support of the Embassy of France in Singapore.

**WHERE:** The Projector, Level 5 Golden Mile Tower, 6001 Beach Road  
**MRT:** Nicoll Highway  
**WHEN:** Till Wed **ADMISSION:** \$10  
**INFO:** str.sg/JXWg

**Rebels (2019, NC16)**

In this French comedy, former beauty queen Sandra finds a job as a worker in a canning factory in northern France after spending 25 years on the French Riviera. She rejects her boss when he makes a pass at her and accidentally kills him – with two colleagues at the scene. When the trio discover a bag full of cash in the dead man's locker and decide to share the money, their troubles begin.

**WHERE:** Le Theatre, Alliance Francaise de Singapour, 1 Sarkies Road **MRT:** Newton **WHEN:** Sept 26, 3 & 4.30pm **ADMISSION:** \$8 & \$10  
**INFO:** str.sg/JXWN

**KIDS**

**Halloween Fun For Everyone!**

Go face to face with characters such as the Minions, Dracula, Frankenstein, the cast of Madagascar and Sesame Street characters, at Resorts World Sentosa's Halloween event. The characters are decked out in Halloween costumes. Visitors can go trick or treating around the park, where candy ambassadors will roam.

**WHERE:** Universal Studios Singapore  
**MRT:** HarbourFront **WHEN:** Till Nov 1

**ADMISSION:** Adult: \$66 (includes a Halloween mask); Child: \$58 (includes a pumpkin bucket)  
**INFO:** str.sg/JXWx

**Deep Boo Sea!**

Learn about some of the world's scariest-looking marine animals at the S.E.A. Aquarium. There is also trick or treating for the kids in the aquarium and a treasure hunt for lost pearls hidden within the underwater exhibits. Turn up in a Halloween costume and stand to win prizes in the best-dressed contest.

**WHERE:** S.E.A. Aquarium  
**MRT:** HarbourFront **WHEN:** Till Nov 1  
**ADMISSION:** Adult: \$32 (includes a Halloween mask); Child: \$27 (includes a pumpkin bucket)  
**INFO:** str.sg/JXWY

**NATURE**

**Grow With The Gardens – Growing Vegetables In Small Spaces**

In this virtual workshop organised by Gardens by the Bay, learn how to grow an edible garden at home and pick up tips on working in small spaces.

**WHEN:** Sept 26, 2–3.15pm

**ADMISSION:** \$30 (inclusive of materials) **INFO:** str.sg/JXWA

**OTHERS**

**Beyond The Magic By Ming Da**

Magician Ming Da will put on a live virtual performance in which participants can interact with and learn a trick or two from him.  
**WHERE:** Zoom Space **WHEN:** Sept 26, 8pm & Sept 27, 3 & 8pm  
**ADMISSION:** \$27 a device  
**INFO:** str.sg/JXWd

**Mid-Autumn Festival**

Gardens by the Bay celebrates the festival with a mix of on-site and online offerings. Illuminating the outdoor gardens are lantern sets that embrace the themes of reunion and unity – including about 2,000 lanterns hand-painted and coloured by community groups and the gardens' senior staff. Virtual programmes include a performance by award-winning flautist and composer Rit Xu and a snowskin-mooncake workshop.

**WHERE:** Gardens by the Bay, 18 Marina Gardens Drive  
**MRT:** Bayfront **WHEN:** Today – Oct 4, 7–10pm **INFO:** str.sg/JXWW

**HOW TO GET YOUR EVENT LISTED**

The listings on these Happenings pages are free.

Go to [str.sg/happen](http://str.sg/happen) at least two weeks ahead. Required information includes the name of the event, organiser, venue, date and time, ticket prices and nearest MRT station, as well as your name, address and contact number.

We reserve the right to edit or reject items. Go to [www.straitstimes.com](http://www.straitstimes.com) (click on Lifestyle) for more listings.