Your Guide to 8 of the Most Exciting Movies at the New York Film Festival

Description

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While it doesnâ??t have the glitz of Venice, the breadth of Toronto, or the Cannesiness of Cannes, the New York Film Festival is still a heavy-hitting stop in the fall-prestige cycle. In addition to a few major fall releases that have already screened in the United States â?? including Kenneth Lonerganâ??s *Manchester by the Sea*, Kelly Reichardtâ??s *Certain Women*, and Barry Jenkinsâ??s *Moonlight* â?? the slate includes the U.S. premieres of some big-time movies, as well as two major worldwide debuts. Here are the highlights.

13th
Ava DuVernayâ??s new documentary is named for the 13th Amendment, which contains the clause that seems to presage mass incarceration in the United States: â??Neither slavery nor involuntary servitude, except as a punishment for crime whereof the party shall have been duly convicted, shall exist within the United States.â?• If thereâ??s anyone who can take on a topic as weighty and complex as the prison system in modern America, itâ??s DuVernay, whose clear-eyed and humanizing approach seems like the ideal fit for a subject this inhumane.

20th Century Women
If you responded to Millsâ??s heartfelt and funny *Beginners*, which won Christopher Plummer a well-deserved Oscar, youâ??re likely to spark to this one, where Annette Bening stars as a witty, fretful single mother who enlists lodger Greta Gerwig and neighbor Elle Fanning to help raise her 15-year-old son. And if you respond to throwback attire, youâ??re definitely going to spark to every single jumpsuit, vintage tee, and denim jacket worn in this 1979-set film.

Billy Lynnâ??s Long Halftime Walk
Besides being an Ang Lee film thatâ??s likely going to be part of the Best Picture race, *Billy Lynnâ??s Long Halftime Walk* is also sure to generate conversation for its technical ambition. Lee shot the movie, which adapts Ben Fountainâ??s novel about an Iraq War hero who returns home, at 120 frames per

second versus the standard 24, with the intent of creating one of the most realistic and hypervisceral depictions of war ever to be shown on a movie screen. Regardless of how *Billy Lynn* turns out â?? and hopes are high â?? the 4K 3-D showing at NYFF should be a notable experience in and of itself.

Elle
A comedy about â?? wait for it â?? a woman brazenly overcoming her own rape, director Paul Verhoevenâ??s first film in French was one of the most talked-about films at Cannes. Itâ??s also one of two acclaimed movies coming out this fall featuring the French actress Isabelle Huppert, whose *Things to Come*, directed by up-and-comer Mia Hansen-LÃ¸ve, is also showing at NYFF. While Huppertâ??s two-pronged Oscar push could be a major awards-season narrative, *Elle* is worth seeing in its own right: Verhoeven is many things, but heâ??s never boring.

Jackie
Natalie Portman gives a brave, ballsy performance as Jackie Kennedy in this Pablo Larrainâ??directed biopic, which shrugs off the stodginess so often endemic to this genre in pursuit of something even bigger than real. Portmanâ??s Jackie is no shrinking violet, though the men around her would love it if she played the dutiful, porcelain-faced wife even after the tragic assassination of her husband. How she, in turn, manipulates the image-crafters around her in one last bid for agency gives *Jackie* its startling kick.

Paterson
In an industry defined by big, loud, expensive superhero movies, Jim Jarmusch exists as the ultimate outlier. His movies are quiet, cool, and indie to the core, and new one *Paterson* sounds no different: Adam Driver plays a bus driver in Paterson, New Jersey, whose name is also Paterson, and who writes poems, and who hangs out with his wife and dog, and â?¦ thatâ??s pretty much it. But thatâ??s enough, and after raves out of Cannes, this should be the kind of film that gives a certain kind of moviegoer hope.

Personal Shopper
Personal Shopper director Olivier Assayas recently stated, in no uncertain terms, that Kristen Stewart is the best actress of her generation. If this comes as an unusual suggestion to you, then you havenâ??t been paying close-enough attention, because KStew has, truly, become a must-see performer â?? including in Assayasâ??s most recent movie, *Clouds of Sils Maria*, for which she won a CÃ©sar Award, something no American actress has ever done before. With a strange premise â?? Stewartâ??s character is a personal shopper and, also, a medium, meaning there are fancy clothes AND a ghost â?? and a famously divisive reception at Cannes, this gives the best actress of her generation one of the most anticipated films of the fall.

The Lost City of Z
James Grayâ??s last film *The Immigrant* was under-seen and under-heralded, as James Gray films tend to be. But his new one, *The Lost City of Z*, gives him an unusually sexy topic: The British explorer Percy Fawcettâ??s search for a city in the Amazon rain forest, based on the book of the same name by the virtuoso *New Yorker* writer David Grann. Hopefully, it can bring Gray the wide audience he deserves; at the very least, audiences in the know can savor a new film from one of the most thoughtful contemporary American directors.

The Lost City of Z; Jackie; Billy Lynn's Long Halftime Walk. Photo: LCOZ, Jackie Productions, Dune Films

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