

The show must go on

When the world needed light relief, the Covid 19 pandemic hit the entertainment industry badly with studios closed. But Hollywood returns to its feet this year with these six blockbusters set to hit screens before December



Black Widow (8 July)
In Marvel Studios' latest action-packed spy thriller spin-off *Black Widow*, Natasha Romanoff (aka Black Widow) confronts her darker self when a dangerous conspiracy arises that digs up the past. Natasha must deal with her history as a spy and the broken relationships left in her wake long before she became an Avenger. Scarlett Johansson reprises her role as Natasha and Florence Pugh stars as Yelena, with David Harbour as Alexei (aka The Red Guardian) and Rachel Weisz as Melina. A thrilling watch as Natasha is pursued by a force that will stop at nothing to bring her down.

Above: Scarlett Johansson is Black Widow Below: Dwayne Johnson, Emily Blunt and Jake Whitehall in *Jungle Cruise*



Jungle Cruise (29 July)

Inspired by the famous Disneyland theme park ride, Dwayne Johnson and Emily Blunt star in an adventure-packed rollercoaster down the Amazon with wisecracking skipper Frank Wolff and intrepid researcher Dr Lily Houghton. Lily travels from London to the Amazon jungle and enlists Frank's questionable services to guide her downriver on La Quila – his 'charming' boat.

Lily is determined to uncover an ancient tree which is rumoured to have unparalleled healing abilities and the power to change the future of medicine. Thrust on this epic quest together, the unlikely duo encounter myriad dangers and supernatural forces, all lurking in the deceptive beauty of the lush rainforest. But as the secrets of the lost tree unfold, the stakes climb even higher for Lily and Frank.



Dune (22 October)

This adaptation of the 1965 Frank Herbert sci-fi classic has an all-star cast that includes Timothée Chalamet, Rebecca Ferguson, Oscar Isaac, Stellan Skarsgård, Zendaya, Jason Momoa, Josh Brolin, Dave Bautista and Javier Bardem. *Dune* is slated to be the first of two movies based on the book, with the first covering the massive novel's first half, while a second as-yet-unnamed movie is planned to cover the rest. There was also an HBO Max prequel series in the works.

Dune is among the upcoming Warner Bros movies slated to debut on HBO Max at the same time it hits theatres. That controversial decision announced by Warner Bros in December, didn't sit well with many in the industry including director Denis Villeneuve. He blasted the studio's then-parent company AT&T, saying in a *Variety* op-ed that it had "hijacked one of the most respectable and important studios in film history." AT&T announced in May that it would spin off its WarnerMedia business to merge it with TV company Discovery.



Above and right: Tom Cruise and Daniel Craig are up to old tricks in *Top Gun: Maverick* and the latest James Bond film, *No Time to Die*

Dune is still scheduled to have its world premiere at the Venice International Film Festival in September.

No Time to Die (8 October)

The 25th James Bond installment, Daniel Craig's final turn as 007, finds Bond having left active service and enjoying a tranquil life in Jamaica. His peace is short-lived when his old friend Felix Leiter from the CIA turns up asking for help. The mission, to rescue a kidnapped scientist, turns out to be far more treacherous than expected, and leads Bond onto the trail of a mysterious villain armed with dangerous new technology. Franchise actors Lea Seydoux, Jeffrey Wright, Ben Whishaw, Ralph Fiennes, and Naomie Harris join Craig as he hands in his James Bond credentials for the last time.



Ghostbusters Afterlife (Fall 2021)

From director Jason Reitman and producer Ivan Reitman,

comes the next chapter in the original *Ghostbusters* universe. In *Ghostbusters: Afterlife*, when a single mum and her

two children arrive in a small town, they begin to discover their connection to the original ghostbusters and the secret legacy their grandfather left behind. The film is written by Jason Reitman and Gil Kenan.

Top Gun: Maverick (November 2021)

It's been 30 years since the first *Top Gun* movie graced our screens. That wait should have ended back in July 2019 when *Top Gun: Maverick* was meant to be out. Star Jon Hamm did promise that the sequel is worth the wait. "It's everything you hope it's going to be," he told *Today*.

"The movie has exactly the right mix of nostalgia for the first one, but then the continuation of the story and the characters."

Tom Cruise will be hoping nobody has lost their need for speed in the extended wait as *Maverick* returns to pass his wisdom onto a new batch of *Top Gun* recruits before they head on a specialised mission that has never been seen before. ■