"Soul Men", "Madagascar 2", and "Role Models" are this week's three theater releases, and "Get Smart", Hellboy 2", and "Kung Fu Panda" hit DVD. As he does each Friday night, Mitch gives us the lowdown on all the new movie releases and keeps us posted on all the latest Hollywood gossip, including rumors this week about the sequels to "Iron Man" and "Get Smart", and also the latest projects for Denzel and Charlize Theron.

To start out, let's do a one paragraph review of "RocknRolla". It's not a mainstream film, and it's doubtful that it'll be in the theaters much longer, considering it's low-key marketing...but since I went out and saw it last week, I'll report on it.

Guy Ritchie goes back to his roots, and revisits the Damon Runyon-esque London gangsters and low-lifes he previously brought to life in the brilliant "Lock, Stock, and Two Smoking Barrels", and "Snatch". "RocknRolla" isn't as good as either of those movies, but it's not bad, either. Ritchie's characters are a little less over-the-top and more "realistic" in this film, which is good if you like character development, but not nearly as much fun as the last two.

In all, it's a good tale, and Gerard Butler, Tom Wilkinson, and Thandie Newton shine in their roles.

Rent it when it comes to DVD.

## News and Rumors

~ Interesting side story on the whole "Terrence Howard was fired from ‘Iron Man 2' thingy". Seems like Mr. Howard was the first person cast for the first movie, and in some weird set of circumstances, ended up being paid a LOT more than Robert Downey, Jr., Gwenyth Paltrow, or Jeff Bridges. No way was he going to get that level of scratch again. Hence the question that will go

unanswered is whether he was fired, or he was given an offer more in line with a supporting role and he balked.

~ Steve Carell has been signed for a sequel to the spy comedy "Get Smart". The movie was a big success at the box office...and critically as well, so it doesn't go into the "Stupid Remakes and Sequels" category.

Yet.

~ Charlize Theron will team up with Tom Cruise in a remake of a 2005 French thriller "Anthony Zimmer. It will be retitled "The Tourist", and will feature Theron as a female agent on the hunt for an elusive ex-boyfriend, who becomes a wanted man.

~ Another one that I HOPE is able to avoid the "Stupid" column. Clive Owen and Denzel Washington will reprise their roles as Dalton Russell and Detective Keith Frazier in "Inside Man 2".

Spike Lee will once again direct.

No Jodie Foster this time, which is good...but I worry that this could end up like "F/X".

A great movie with Byran Brown and Brian Dennehy that was completely ruined by the making of the lame sequel.

~ Got a great looking upcoming project for Clive's "The International" co-star Naomi Watts. She will play a successful New York therapist in "Need". In it, she finds that a suicidal woman, played by Naomi's BFF Nicole Kidman, is having an affair with her husband.

## Stupid Remakes and Sequels

~ One for the TV side of things. The CW is planning to contemporize the campy old TV shows "Hawaii Five-O", and "Melrose Place'. As if "Knight Rider" and "90210" being remade weren't bad enough.

Didn't they learn anything after the crashing last year of the pathetic "Bionic Women"?

## This week's new movie releases:

**Soul Men**

Starring: Samuel L. Jackson and Bernie Mac

Plot: Two estranged soul-singing legends agree to participate in a reunion appearance at the Apollo Theater to honor their recently deceased band leader.

View Trailer

The BeerBuzz: Maybe not the greatest film ever made, but evidently a very fitting last performance by Bernie Mac before his untimely passing. Said to have some great chemistry between Bernie and Samuel L. Jackson, along with some major scene stealing by Sharon Leal as the daughter of one of the singers, who is now a singer in the group.

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**Madagascar: Escape 2 Africa**

Starring: Voices of Ben Stiller, Chris Rock, and David Schwimmer

Plot: The former zoo animals from the first film get in a repaired plane to return to New York, but end up touching down on the African Plains.

*View Trailer*

The BeerBuzz: It will be quite satisfying for all the kids that showed up for the first one, making it a surprise hit in 2005. Unlike many animated sequels ("Shrek 3" anyone?), this one aims for the same demographics and should be just as enjoyable for anyone that liked the first one.

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**Role Models**

Starring: Paul Rudd, Seann William Scott, Elizabeth Banks

Plot: Unsavory behavior forces a pair of energy-drink salesmen to enroll in a Big Brother program.

*View Trailer*

The BeerBuzz: Director David Wain (a Shaker Heights product), aims for the Judd Apatow demographic...VERY lowbrow R rated humor with a bit of heart at its center. The early buzz is that this is a surprisingly good movie...quite shocking given how stupid the trailer looks.

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## New DVD Releases

**Get Smart** **-** OK...this one came out this last Tuesday...don't ask me how I missed it. In any case, this is one of the best examples I've ever seen of an old TV show being made into a movie. The credit goes to the brilliant casting of Steve Carell as Maxwell Smart, Anne Hathaway as Agent 99 and Alan Arkin as The Chief.

Funny, funny movie.

Go rent it.

**Hellboy II: The Golden Army** - Ron Perlman returns as the Big Red Cigar Chomping Demonic Hero. Director Guillermo Del Toro almost makes this movie more of a sequel to "Pan's Labyrinth" than to the first Hellboy movie, with some amazing visuals.

Much more of a thinking person's comic book adaptation, it is definitely worth renting.

**Kung Fu Panda -** Yeah...I know that I listed that this was to be released LAST Tuesday. So I'm either dyslexic, or else the web site I go to for this information lied to me. I'm picking that lied they.

## Calendar Watch

Next week: *Quantum of Solace*

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

*Twilight* - November 21st - the adaptation of the popular book series concerning a relationship between a non-blood drinking vampire and a teenaged girl.

*Australia* - November 26th - Baz Luhrmann's epic tale set in WWII Australia. With Nicole Kidman and Hugh Jackman. Think "Gone with the Wind" with kangaroos.

*The Day the Earth Stood Still* - December 12th - Keanu Reeves in a remake of the classic 1951 sci-fi film.

*The Spirit* - December 25th - Frank Miller's next comic book adaptation, done in the same style as "Sin City".

*Valkyrie* - December 25th - Evidently some good editing has been performed on this film once destined for the scrap heap.

Very positive buzz about Tom Cruise's performance as the German colonel who attempted to assassinate Hitler.

We shall see.

## Oscar Contenders - Movies that will have limited releases by the end of the year, and if they are any good...you'll see them in January

*Milk* - Sean Penn as the first openly gay man elected to public office in San Francisco in 1977, only to be assassinated the following year.

*Cadillac Records* - A chronicle of the rise and fall of Chess Records, the label founded by Leonard Chess (Adrian Brody), that featured Etta James (Beyonce Knowles), Chuck Berry (Mos Def), and others.

*Doubt* - The principal (Meryl Streep) of a Catholic school in the Bronx grows suspicious of a priest (Philip Seymour Hoffman) who might have molested a student.

*Frost / Nixon* - December 26th - Ron Howard's latest Oscar attempt, adapting the stage play of the disgraced president's attempt to re-habilitate his image on David Frost's TV show, and Frost's attempt to drag out the truth from Tricky Dick

*The Wrestler* - Mickey Rourke is picking up early Oscar buzz in this character study of a professional wrestler nearing the end of his performing days.

*Revolutionary Road*- Leonardo DiCaprio and Kate Winslet as a young couple raising a family in a Connecticut suburb during the mid 1950s.

Sam Mendes ("American Beauty") directs the "Titanic" stars in their on-screen reunion.

*Defiance* - Daniel Craig and Live Schreiber as Jewish brothers in WWII Russian, leading a band of refuges in striking back at the Germans.

A major early Oscar contender

**Blockbusters on the Distant Horizon** (movies that would seem to be big hits...as soon as they get made or released).

*The International* - February 13, 2009 - Clive Owen and Naomi Watts in a thriller about an Interpol investigation of a world-wide bank funding murder and corruption. And you thought Wachovia was bad?

*Watchmen* - March 6, 2009 - The screen version of what is arguably graphic novelist Alan Moore's greatest work.

*The Soloist* - March 13, 2009 - Rober Downey Jr. and Jamie Foxx star about a talented musician who is now living on the streets.

*The Road* - Viggo Mortensen as a man walking with his son for months across a ravaged, post-apocalyptic landscape in search of civilization.

Charlize Theron co-stars.

*X-Men Origins: Wolverine* - May 1, 2009 - Hugh Jackman goes it alone as the adamentium enhanced anti-hero. Wi th Live Schreiber as Sabertooth, and Ryan Reynolds as Deadpool.

*Star Trek* - May 8, 2009 - J.J. Abrams and a young cast reboot the franchise, going back to Kirk and Spock's days at Starfleet Academy.

*Angels and Demons* - May 15, 2009 - Tom Hanks and Ron Howard follow-up to "The DaVinci Code"

*Terminator 4* - May 22, 2009 - Christian Bale as John Conner as the franchise moves into the apocalyptic future.

*Transformers 2* - June 26, 2009 - The next chapter of Robots In Disguise!

*Public Enemy* - July 1, 2009 - Johnny Depp as John Dillinger. Co-starin

g Christian Bale, and directed by Michael Mann

*Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince* - July 2009 - The sixth of J.K. Rowling's seven books, setting the stage for the two part conclusion in 2010 and 2011.

*The Taking of Pelham 123*- August 7, 2009 - Denzel Washington, John Travolta, and James Gandolfini in a remake of the classic 1974 film about a hijacked subway car.

*Shutter Island* - October, 2009 - Martin Scorsese working once again with Leonardo DiCaprio in this mystery set in 1954.

*Nottingham* - November, 2009 - Ridley Scot and Russell Crowe together again in a retelling of the Robin Hood legend, this time through the eyes of the Sheriff of Nottingham (Crowe). With Sienna Miller as Maid Marion.

*Avatar* - December 18, 2009 - James Cameron's sci-fi/CGI extravaganza. The C.I.A. should take lessons about secrecy from Cameron, as he's keeping info about this film very much to himself at this time.

*Iron Man 2* - May, 2010 - Right on the heels of the success of the first one, Marvel is quick to get Robert Downey Jr. back into his titanium suit.

*The Chronicles of Narnia: The Voyage of the Dawn Treader* - May, 2010 - The series goes off in a bit of a different direction, as those of you who love the books already know.

*Thor* - June 2010 - Another Marvel superhero...but the Nordic God is about as bland personality-wise as Superman, so we'll see how it goes.

*Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part I* - 2010 - The start of the End for the boy wizard and his battle against He-Who-Shall-not-Be-Named

*Lincoln* - 2010 - Steven Spielberg directs the biographical film of the 16th President (Liam Neeson)

*The Hobbit* - 2010 - Guillermo del Toro directs and Peter Jackson will produce the prequel to "Lord of the Rings". Ian McKellen will return as Gandalf

*Fantastic Voyage* - 2010 - Roland Emmerich ("The Day After Tomorrow", "10,000 B.C.") remakes the classic 1967 movie about a miniaturized sub and crew operating on a scientist from inside his brain.

*The Avengers* - 2011 - Iron Man, Hulk, Thor, and Captain America open up a can of whoopass on bad guys everywhere.

*Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows: Part II* - 2011 - The end of the line for what will be beyond doubt the most profitable series in the history of film making.

*The Hobbit 2* - 2011 - del Toro and Jackson again, this time covering the time between the end of Tolkien's book, "The Hobbit" and the start of LOTR.