

Summer movies: Here are five new films that aren't retreads

A dog and his robot, something spooky in the forest, weirdness with Emma Stone, Kevin Costner out West and a space-age rom-com.

By SEAN P. MEANS

The Salt Lake Tribune

For movie fans, summer is the season of blockbusters — big popcorn movies with lots of action that are designed to leave audiences happy and satisfied, though not necessarily intellectually or emotionally challenged.

This summer promises such franchise extensions as the storm-chasing "Twisters," the scary prequels "A Quiet Place: Day One" and "Alien: Romulus," tough law enforcement in "Bad Boys: Ride or Die" and "Beverly Hills Cop: Axel F.," the animated "Inside Out 2" and "Despicable Me 4," the horror follow-up "Maxxxine" (which completes the trilogy started by "X" and "Pearl"), and the return — and possible redemption — of the Marvel Cinematic Universe with "Deadpool & Wolverine."

And already in May, moviegoers have had a chance to see the sequel "Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes," the prequel "Jurassic: A Mad Max Saga" and the reboots "The Fall Guy" and "The Garfield Movie."

Can a movie with a new idea succeed amid all of the retreads? Some filmmakers hope so, and have dotted the summer schedule with movies that aim to offer something new and different.

Here are five new movies coming this summer that look to break the mold. (All release dates are subject to change.)

'Robot Dreams'

May 31 ▶ A dog, living alone in an apartment in New York, sees a commercial for a robot companion and buys one. That begins Spanish director Pablo Berger's first animated feature, an Oscar nominee earlier this year, which follows Dog and Robot through their summer adventures — and what happens when they're separated at summer's end. The movie whimsically and wordlessly explores friendship, memory and the connection found in the perfect summer-jam song.



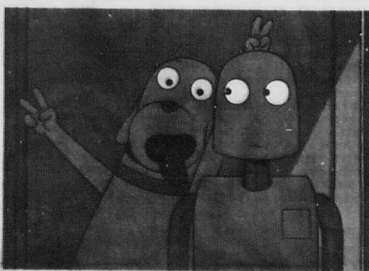
Kevin Costner is one of the actors featured in "Horizon: An American Saga." The four-movie series was filmed in southern Utah. The first installment is scheduled to be released June 28 and the second on August 16.

'The Watchers'

June 7 ▶ In this adaptation of an A.M. Shine novel, an artist (Dakota Fanning) seeks shelter in a forest in west Ireland and finds herself trapped with three strangers as they're stalked by creatures at night. The writer-director is Ishana Night Shyamalan, making her feature directing debut — after working as a second-unit director for her father, M. Night Shyamalan, on "Old," and directing and writing episodes of the series "Servant." Is a talent for making atmospheric, unsettling thrillers an inherited trait? We'll find out. (M. Night, by the way, also has a new movie this summer: "Trap," starring Josh Hartnett, scheduled to come out August 2.)

'Kinds of Kindness'

June 21 ▶ We haven't been told much about this movie — but because it's reuniting director Yorgos Lanthimos with actor Emma Stone, just after she won her second best-actress Oscar in her "Poor Things," that's enough to spark interest. The studio's synopsis is cryptic: "A man seeks to break free from his predetermined path, a cop



Dog tries to have fun with his new companion, Robot, in director Pablo Berger's animated film, "Robot Dreams."

questions his wife's demeanor after her return from a supposed drowning, and a woman searches for an extraordinary individual prophesied to become a renowned spiritual guide." Besides Stone, the cast includes Jesse Plemons, Willem Dafoe, Margaret Qualley, Hong Chau, Joe Alwyn, Mamoudou Athie and Hunter Schafer.

'Horizon: An American Saga'

June 28, August 16 ▶ Kevin Costner has spent a ton of his own money to make a four-movie Western epic, a sweeping story that covers the years before, during and after the Civil War. A lot of that money has gone

into the economy of southern Utah, where the first two installments were shot last year, and where the third is ramping up production later this summer. Costner leads the sprawling cast, which includes Sienna Miller, Jena Malone, Sam Worthington, Giovanni Ribisi, Luke Wilson, Danny Huston, Thomas Haden Church and Abbey Lee. It's a big bet, but Costner has proven before that he can make a Western worth the risk.

'Fly Me to the Moon'

July 12 ▶ Can Greg Berlanti, the guy who made Archie comics cool on "Riverdale" and built a whole DC universe on the CW, make the space race sexy? We'll find out as Berlanti directs this rom-com set in the 1960s, with Scarlett Johansson as a marketing executive brought in to improve NASA's public relations — and angering the launch director (Channing Tatum) with the suggestion that, as a backup, they shoot fake footage of a moon landing. Having Johansson and Tatum creating screen chemistry could help this movie take off like a rocket.

Five summer concerts that Utah music fans will love

Slash plays the blues, Olivia Rodrigo spills her 'Guts,' New Wave returns, Jelly Roll starts his tour, and The Aces support Goth Babe.

By SEAN P. MEANS

The Salt Lake Tribune

Utah will not be lacking in good music this summer, with some 200 shows and festivals playing at major venues around the state — mostly along the Wasatch Front.

Trying to boil the summer down to a handful of interesting shows, we picked five concerts that look to offer something extra. (Ticket prices could fluctuate, as the secondary market does what it does.)

S.E.R.P.E.N.T. Festival

It's a given that Slash knows guitar. So when the top-billed guitarist (best known for his work in Guns 'N' Roses) launches the S.E.R.P.E.N.T. Festival, a touring event celebrating the blues, you can bet there will be guitars. The Salt Lake City tour stop — Tuesday, July 16, at Red Butte Garden — will feature guitarists Keb' Mo', Samantha Fish and Jackie Venson. (Tickets, at \$95 for the general public, at redbuttegarden.com.)

Olivia Rodrigo

The 21-year-old pop star Olivia Rodrigo is returning to Utah — where she wrote songs on her first album, "Sour," while



Olivia Rodrigo will bring her "Guts World Tour" to Salt Lake City's Delta Center on July 31.

co-starring on "High School Musical: The Musical: The Series" — in the middle of a world tour behind her second album, "Guts." At Delta Center on Wednesday, July 31, performing songs like "Vampire" and "Bad Idea Right?," Rodrigo will be staking her claim to the title of heart-break queen. (Currently sold out; check deltacentr.com for secondary-market tickets.)

Howard Jones / ABC

Utah loved the New Wave in the '80s, and that love never went away. So there should be appreciative audiences at Sandy Amphitheatre on Friday and Saturday, August 16 and 17, when two of the acts who sprang from that era — Howard Jones and Martin Fry's ABC — headline. The novelty is their opening act: The British band



Slash will bring his touring S.E.R.P.E.N.T. Festival to Red Butte Garden on July 16.

Haircut 100, which hasn't performed in North America since 1982, when the New Wave was happening. (Tickets, starting at \$59.50 plus fees, at SandyAmp.com. The Saturday show is nearly sold out.)

Jelly Roll

The country sensation Jelly Roll (real name Jason Bradley DeFord) isn't just coming to Delta Center to perform on Tuesday, August 27. Like Bad Bunny did in February, the country singer-rapper is starting his North American tour, "The Beautifully Broken Tour," in Salt Lake City. (Tickets, starting at \$56, at deltacentr.com.)

Goth Babe / The Aces

Goth Babe — whose show on Tuesday, October 8, at Granary Live comes near the end of the outdoor concert season — is, in fact, an alt-rock dude named Griff Washburn, originally from Tennessee but now making his home in the Pacific Northwest. Utah music lovers will remember that Goth Babe played at the 2023 Kilby Court Block Party. The other draw for Utah fans is the opening act: Orem's own The Aces, who are working their way up the ladder of indie pop success by supporting Washburn on his national tour. (Tickets, starting at \$37.50, at granarylive.com.)