

hollywood q&a

By Adam Thomlison
TV Media

Q: I was recently watching "A Star Is Born," with Judy Garland, on TCM. In parts of the movie, they use pictures with conversation playing in the background — I was wondering why they did that.

A: That must have seemed pretty strange indeed. Airings of the restored version of the 1954 "A Star Is Born" (the second of four film versions so far) should start with an explanation of the strange story of how it came to be.

The film is now considered a classic, but it wasn't always. In fact, Warner Bros. hated it so much when it was first released that it pulled it out of theaters two weeks into its run and recut it, dropping a half-hour of screen time.

The version you were watching is a restoration of the original, but unfortunately some of the cut footage was lost forever. The soundtrack was found, though, so the restorers decided to just put up still photos to replace the lost scenes.

Historian and film preservationist Ronald Haver began the restoration in 1981, and eventually wrote a book about his experience. He said the task was "like putting a jigsaw puzzle together with a blindfold on."

It involved digging through storage facilities, poring over old scripts and listening to the soundtrack to try to guess what they were referring to.

It was a huge task, but it paid off — mostly. As you saw, there are several minutes of the film that remain lost.

Another restoration was released in 2010, but this one, according to an L.A. Weekly review, was "cosmetic rather than structural." The missing footage is still missing, but what's there has been digitally restored.

It's a testament to Judy Garland's star power that interest in this version of the film remains after updated remakes with Barbra Streisand (1976) and Lady Gaga (2018).

Q: I love "Gotham" and the many talented actors in it. I read that this is its last season, but I'm hoping maybe the CW network will pick it up, since that network has so many more shows from the genre. Any chance?

A: Almost none. You can never say never, of course, but the producers have already moved on from "Gotham," and they would need to be behind a revival.

You raise an interesting point, though: why isn't "Gotham" on CW with all those other DC Comics-based shows ("The Flash," "Arrow" and so on)? "Gotham" may air on Fox, which is a competing network, but it shares a more important link — it's produced by Warner Bros., which owns a piece of CW (via its parent company, AT&T).

"Gotham's" tone is a little darker and grittier than those CW shows I mentioned, which may be why Warner opted to place it on Fox instead.

And that brings us back to the "Gotham" producers and their new project. Danny Cannon and Bruno Heller, two of the main minds behind the show, are already working on a new series that reaches even farther back in the timeline of the Batman universe. "Pennyworth" will tell the story of the younger years of Batman's trusty manservant, Alfred, and how he came to work for the Wayne family.

Cannon and Heller have said that this show will be even darker and more "mature" than "Gotham," and so Warner is placing it on premium cable. It's slated to debut in June on Epix.

With the producers tied up on that new show, it's unlikely "Gotham" will experience the sort of last-minute rescue certain Batmen are famous for.

Have a question? Email us at questions@tvtabloid.com. Please include your name and town. Personal replies will not be provided.

STREAMING THIS WEEK

By Shona Dustan
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NEW ON NETFLIX:

"The Dirt" (2019)

If you need a little anarchy in your life, check out this Mötley Crüe biopic, available Friday, March 22. Mötley Crüe took the "sex, drugs, rock 'n' roll" stereotype to a whole new level in the 1980s, and this film captures all of the infamous insanity. Based on a 2002 book penned by the band members themselves, the screen version captures not just the highest of their highs, but the lowest of lows as well. From massive successes and manic parties to overdoses, illnesses, divorces and tragic deaths, this band has been through it all, and the Hollywood version of their story is almost as much of a roller-coaster as the real thing. Machine Gun Kelly ("Roadies") stars as Tommy Lee, Iwan Rheon ("Game of Thrones") is Mick Mars, Douglas Booth ("Jupiter Ascending," 2015) is Nikki Sixx and Daniel Webber ("The Punisher") is Vince Neil — it's a perfectly cast look back at a time when lighting fires, shooting up and throwing TVs out of hotel windows was the epitome of rock 'n' roll. You don't want to miss this crazy ride.



"Amy Schumer: Growing"

Thanks to a case of Hyperemesis Gravidarum (extreme nausea and vomiting brought on by pregnancy), Amy Schumer has had a rough year. Her extreme illness has caused her to cancel shows and ultimately shut down her comedy tour earlier this year, but fans can get the Schumer fix they're craving on Netflix starting this week. Her newest special drops Tuesday, March 19, and in it she takes on pregnancy with her usual wit and irreverence. Her pregnancy bits will really resonate with anyone who's been through it, but she doesn't linger too long on her current woes, she branches out and covers a plethora of subjects, hilariously, of course. If you've been craving some comedy, and you're a standup fan, this new special is for you.

"Most Beautiful Thing"

When a beautiful woman (Maria Casadevall, "Ilha de Ferro") is betrayed by her husband and left with nothing, she starts a new life in Rio in this new Brazilian drama. As she struggles to make ends meet and follow her dreams, she surrounds herself with other women who share her strength and determination. Before long, the makeshift family begins to make their dreams reality. This show is both visually and narratively beautiful, and if you don't mind subtitles, you'll want to check it out. It's available as of Friday, March 22.

NEW ON AMAZON PRIME:

"The Stinky & Dirty Show" Season 3

This children's show features the adventures of Stinky (a garbage truck) and Dirty (a backhoe loader), best friends and unexpected heroes in their community. When things go wrong, the dynamic duo asks themselves "what if" questions that often lead to creative solutions. Based on the kids' books by Kate and Jim McMillan, this series encourages



critical thinking and highlights important values such as friendship, community and helping others. If you pay attention, you might even hear some familiar voices — many big names have worked on the series, including Whoopi Goldberg, Joan Cusack, Jane Lynch and many more. You can get the new season starting Friday, March 22.

"Cold War" (2018)

This Academy Award-nominated film is available to stream starting Friday, March 22. In the aftermath of World War II, Poland is under communist control, and performers Zula (Joanna Kulig, "O mnie sie nie martw") and Wiktor (Tomasz Kot, "Gods," 2014) dream of living somewhere that allows artists creative freedom. Though their backgrounds and personalities could not be more different, the two musicians fall in love, and Wiktor convinces Zula to flee with him to France. When they finally make their move, though, things go awry, and they must both make decisions that will change them forever.

NEW ON HULU:

"Cardinal" Season 3

Billy Campbell ("The Killing") stars in this Canadian crime drama that draws from the novels of Giles Blunt. It's a thrilling, chilling detective drama that follows the eponymous John Cardinal (Campbell) as he obsessively solves murder cases in the great white north. Season 3 is set for release Friday, March 22, and you can stream the first two as well. If you're into reading the book before you see its adaptation, the new season is based on "By the Time You Read This," which was published in 2007. In this installment, Cardinal hunts for a clever serial killer while simultaneously dealing with the aftermath of a personal tragedy.

"Fear the Walking Dead" Season 4

This spinoff of "The Walking Dead" has been yet another big hit for AMC, and you can stream the fourth season starting Tuesday, March 19. Madison Clark (Kim Dickens, "Treme") struggles to keep her family alive in the aftermath of the zombie apocalypse, but there is always a new threat at their door. Alycia Debnam-Carey ("The 100"), Colman Domingo ("The Knick") and Frank Dillane ("In the Heart of the Sea," 2015) round out the main cast, and the new season features the first crossover between this series and "The Walking Dead."

"The Act"

This new Hulu original is an anthology series set to tell one true crime story per season. Season 1, which premieres Wednesday, March 20, tells the crazy true story of Dee Dee and Gypsy Blanchard, played by Patricia Arquette ("Medium") and Joey King ("The Kissing Booth," 2018), respectively. On the surface, they seemed to be a loving mother and daughter. Gypsy was sickly and weak, so Dee Dee dedicated her life to caring for her beloved daughter — but that facade couldn't have been further from the truth. Dee Dee had a raging case of Munchausen syndrome by proxy disorder (that's a mouthful that basically means she was keeping her poor kid sick on purpose), and when Gypsy found out the truth, she went to extremes to get out from under her mother's thumb. Chloë Sevigny ("Big Love"), AnnaSophia Robb ("The Carrie Diaries") and Calum Worthy ("Austin & Ally") also star in this tale of dysfunction, betrayal and murder, and the folks at Hulu are hoping it'll be the first season of many.

