

Beyond Solo: Riding the Independent Wave of Film in RI This Summer

If you're looking to move beyond Solo, super heroes and adults playing tag, consider these summer movie alternatives.

Let's begin with a film that takes place in summer, *Summer 1993*, a Berlinale-winning film from Carla Simon taking us back 25 years, about a young girl named Frida sent to her uncle's family in the countryside after her mother dies, who struggles to adapt to her new surroundings.

Bart Layton (*The Imposter*) returns with an exciting crime drama called *American Animals*, starring Barry Keoghan, based on events in Lexington, Kentucky, about four young men who orchestrated an incredibly ambitious heist. The film blends actors playing the young men with footage of some of the older and wiser men portrayed today.

In the vein of last year's *Patti Cake\$*, Brett Haley (*The Hero*) returns with *Hearts Beat Loud*, blending elements of coming-of-age and mid-life crisis with a father and daughter forming an unlikely songwriting duo in the summer before she leaves for college. It stars Nick Offerman, Kiersey Clemons and, yes, Ted Danson.

You can't get more indie than a title like *Izzy Gets the F*ck Across Town*, with Mackenzie Davis (Tully) as a woman finding her way across Los Angeles (hence the title) to crash her ex-boyfriend's engagement party. David Robert Mitchell follows up *It Follows* with the bizarre comedy *Under the Silver Lake*, where a man's obsession with the strange circumstances of a billionaire's murder and the kidnapping of a girl take him on a strange, exotic journey. The Zellner brothers, of *Kumiko, the Treasure Hunter* fame, return with *Damsel*, a comedy-drama about a businessman who travels West to join his fiancée in the mountains.



Into July, Debra Granik's *Leave No Trace* presents a father and young teen daughter living an ideal existence in an

urban park in Portland, Oregon, where a small mistake derails their lives forever. Comedian Bo Burnham (originally from Hamilton, Massachusetts) has his first feature, a Sundance favorite, *Eighth Grade*, starring Elise Fisher as a teenager in transition trying to survive the last week of her chaotic eighth-grade year before leaving to start high school. Further into July, we have a timely film, *Generation Wealth*, from Lauren Greenfield (*The Queen of Versailles*), investigating an obsession with affluence and its influence in creating the richest society the world has ever seen.

When the calendar pushes into August, you can catch the Best of Next! In Sundance, rising filmmaker Aneesh Chaganty's winning first feature, *Searching*, about a desperate father breaking into his 16-year-old daughter's laptop to look for clues to find her when she goes missing, starring John Cho. The Best of Next! Runner Up is from Josephine Decker, with art imitating life in *Madeline's Madeline*, about a theater director's latest project that goes too far when her young star takes her performance too seriously.

August continues with two must-see French co-produced films, each taking us to different parts of the world. *A Prayer Before Dawn* is based on a true story of an English boxer incarcerated in a prison in Thailand as he fights in Muay Thai tournaments to earn his freedom. *Makala* is about a young farmer earning a living making and selling charcoal in Congo and his aspirations and dreams.

We close out the summer with Spanish director Isabel Coixet's *The Bookshop*, the story of a woman who decides, against polite yet ruthless local opposition, to open a bookshop, a decision that becomes a political minefield in 1959 England. Finally, we have the long-awaited latest film from Lenny Abrahamson (*Frank, Room*), the horror mystery *The Little Stranger*, about a country doctor called to work on a mysterious country estate for a wealthy family in decline.

Additionally, for anime lovers, The Studio Ghibli fest continues via Fathom Events with *Pom Poko*, *Princess Mononoke* and *Grave of the Fireflies*, as well as *Fireworks* from the producer of *Your Name*. From anime, we move to international women in animation as the 10th edition of Womanimation! travels north to Framingham, Mass, at the Amazing Things Arts Center on June 30.

For other film festival events this summer, head to the beach to attend the 20th edition of the Provincetown Film Festival with honorees including actress Molly Shannon and director/writer Sean Baker from June 13 - 17, and the 22nd Flickers' Rhode Island International Film Festival from August 7 - 12.

The independent film experience will not be the same without the beloved Cable Car Cinema, which closed its doors as of May 27. We are toasting it on page XX in this edition to honor its mark on the community over the past 40 years.