

**3/5**

BLACKWOOD

ED STOPPARD, SOPHIA MYLES, RUSSELL TOVEY

When a troubled university lecturer (Stoppard) moves his family into a creepy old house and things start going bump in the night, he decides it's either ghosts or his young son (Isaac Andrews) being an almighty brat. Meanwhile, Russell Tovey lurks nearby, skulking around the neighbouring forest as an eccentric groundsman. The first half of this old-fashioned English ghost story deploys its haunted-house tropes to good effect, before second-half revelations crack open the thin facade. **MM**

RELEASED ON 1 AUGUST

**2/5**

THE CONGRESS

ROBIN WRIGHT, KODI SMIT-MCPHEE, JON HAMM

Ari Folman's sci-fi satire charts an ageing, out-of-work actress (Robin Wright) who reluctantly sells her digital likeness to a Hollywood studio, to be used any way they see fit, before leaping forward 20 years into an animated realm, where she witnesses the consequences of that action. It's a fab showcase for Wright, relishing her *House Of Cards*-fuelled revival, but the animated future – which resembles a *Looney Tunes* cartoon run amok – becomes hugely tiresome, even with Jon Hamm's voice to soothe the way. **MM**

RELEASED ON 15 AUGUST

**3/5**

MOOD INDIGO

ROMAIN DURIS, AUDREY TAUTOU, GAD ELMALEH

You know what to expect with Michel Gondry – director of *Eternal Sunshine Of The Spotless Mind* – at the helm: fanciful surrealism combined with romantic heartbreak. His latest fable, about a woman with a fatal water lily growing in her lungs and the inventor fighting to save her, doesn't disappoint on visual invention. But for all the google-eyed gazing between adorable French stars Duris and Tautou, it never reaches the tragic-passion apogee it's striving for. **MM**

RELEASED ON 1 AUGUST



LILTING

4/5

BEN WHISHAW, PEI-PEI CHENG, ANDREW LEUNG

Anyone who managed to catch writer-director Hong Khaou's debut feature at BFI Flare earlier this year will know what a moving and beautifully lyrical drama it is. Those who didn't are in for a lovely treat. As the title suggests, *Lilting* unfolds with gentle melancholy while outlining the stilted relationship between Richard (Whishaw) and June (Pei-pe) following the death of Kai (Leung), the former's lover and latter's son. Interspersed with delicate flashbacks, the film explores the grieving duo's longing and awkward efforts to communicate with each other, as the chasm between young Londoner and stubborn Chinese woman lost in an alien culture prove grimly difficult to bridge. Cinematically, it's a Zen meditation session as opposed to a vigorous workout, but Khaou is a master of mood (let's hope we see more from him in future), Whishaw and Leung make a dreamy couple and Chinese acting legend Pei-pe is a spiky delight. **MM**

RELEASED ON 8 AUGUST

WHAT IF

3/5

DANIEL RADCLIFFE, ZOE KAZAN, MACKENZIE DAVIS

Radcliffe is an unlikely romantic lead in this indie rom-com, which is set against the backdrop of hipster Toronto (with a brief visit to Dublin). Chantry (Zoe Kazan) is a quirky animator who sparks up a friendship with Radcliffe's depressed Englishman abroad and must decide whether to embrace their unspoken love or stick with her uninspiring long-term boyfriend. Cinematically it's nothing new, but a sweet and occasionally funny story to indulge in nonetheless. **BK**

RELEASED ON 20 AUGUST

