

The Province

It starts here.

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Pop Forecast: Bourne-again film franchise, Sheen's second coming

By Chris Lackner, Postmedia News August 3, 2012

Jeremy Renner and Rachel Weisz star in The Bourne Legacy.

Here is what's on the radar screen in TV, music and film for the coming week.

MOVIES

Big release: The Bourne Legacy (Friday)

Big picture: No, Total Recall did not start a disturbing trend. This is not another remake and Jeremy Renner is not the new Jason Bourne. Renner (The Hurt Locker) plays Aaron Cross, a new, semi-brainwashed, semi-confused, deadly-agent-turned-unlikely hero in The Bourne Legacy. Consider Cross a lethal byproduct of the events in the series' first three instalments, which starred a beefed-up Matt Damon.

Forecast: This film franchise, based on Robert Ludlum's novels, has rarely strayed from its target. Bourne Legacy sets the stage for a potential sequel in which Bourne and Cross team up — or face off in battle. But in an originality-deprived Hollywood — remember Alien vs. Predator? — can the ultimate secret-agent showdown be far off? James Bond is back with Skyfall in November. My guess for what's coming to a theatre near you in, say, 2014?: Bond vs. Bourne: The Return of Octopussy.

TELEVISION

Big event: Anger Management (Aug. 12, CTV, 4 p.m.)

Big picture: Remember when everyone paid attention to Charlie Sheen's firing from Two and a Half Men like it was the second coming or the sinking of the Titanic? Well, Sheen's finally back on the small screen playing yet another character only slightly removed from his own infamous persona. Anger Management — based on the Adam Sandler and Jack Nicholson film — offers a sneak-preview premiere in Canada tonight after the Olympics' closing ceremony. Sheen plays Dr. Charlie Goodson, an anger therapist with a few screws loose, a few skeletons in his closet and a few potential women under his bedsheets (though not simultaneously — that only happens to real-life Charlie).

You can catch a repeat on CTV Aug. 13 and The Comedy Network will premiere the pilot on Aug. 14. The co-stars for the series certainly help give it promise. Brett Butler (Grace Under Fire) plays a sassy bartender, and Selma Blair co-stars as Charlie's own therapist — and potential love connection. If Dr. Charlie's anger doesn't get the best of him, will his libido?

Forecast: The FX premiere in the U.S. garnered 5.74 million viewers, but ratings have dropped off since. Do we love him or do we love him not? That said, I wish Charlie had followed his heart for his next TV show instead of poaching from a 2003 film. Imagine a special effects drama about a perpetually “winning” Vatican Assassin Warlock — the offspring of a dark wizard and a seductive weretiger (played by Canada's Pamela Anderson). The show practically writes itself.

Honourable Mention: Hell on Wheels (AMC, Aug. 12, 9 p.m.). This underrated AMC western about a railroad expanding into the uncharted American West was one of last year's best new series. Season 2 is a welcome respite from the frontal-lobe assault that is summer reality TV. One of the best ensemble casts on television, the show is led by Anson Mount as anti-hero Cullen Bohannon — a former soldier, killer and outlaw out for revenge. (Cullen makes Bourne and Aaron Cross look like boy scouts.)

MUSIC

Big release on Tuesday: Antibalas (Antibalas)

Big picture: I know, I know, you've never heard of them. But they might be one of the best things you've never listened to. In a week without any big star power, why not give the Brooklyn, Afrobeat outfit a chance? Modelled after Fela Kuti's African ensemble (they even once performed in an off-Broadway musical called Fela!, which celebrated their hero), Antibalas offer a healthy mix of musical flavours — from dub and jazz, to funk and world beat. This is their first album with Daptone Records (Sharon Jones), which bodes well for your ears. Dare you not to dance.

Forecast: How can you say no to a band with a minimum of five brass instruments and three percussionists? Antibalas is anti-pop, but will have you dancing longer and harder than Call Me

Maybe. And for those hungry for mega stars: Aerosmith and Alanis Morissette will have new efforts at the end of the month.

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