

Elvis, First Love and Lucia di Lammermoor

By  Daniel Derksen

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Elvis is an epic, big-screen spectacle that explores the life and music of Elvis Presley, *First Love* offers a poignant look at a young man's difficult entry into adulthood, and opera lovers can enjoy an electrifying new staging of the Met Opera's *Lucia di Lammermoor*.



Elvis

A thoroughly cinematic drama, *Elvis*'s (Austin Butler) story is seen through the lens of his complicated relationship with his enigmatic manager, Colonel Tom Parker (Tom Hanks). As told by Parker, the film delves into the complex dynamic between the two spanning over 20 years, from Presley's rise to fame to his unprecedented stardom, against the backdrop of the evolving cultural landscape and loss of innocence in America. Central to that journey is one of the significant and influential people in Elvis's life, Priscilla Presley (Olivia DeJonge).

"While this story is called *Elvis*, it's also Colonel Tom Parker's story—the telling of it at least; he's our way in, our narrator, and an unreliable one at that," states writer/director/producer Baz Luhrmann, who directed from a screenplay he crafted with Sam Bromell, Craig Pearce and Jeremy Doner, from a story by Luhrmann and Jeremy Doner.

"In the mid-1950s in parts of America, carnivals were transitioning into music, mainly country and western. But Parker was always looking for the extraordinary—the one that made the most money had a great costume, excited the audience, had a strange twist... Just something special, like *Elvis*," says Luhrmann.

"This story is about Elvis and Colonel Parker's relationship...a true story told brilliantly and creatively that only Baz in his unique, artistic way, could have delivered...a director who put his heart and soul...into this film. Austin Butler is outstanding. Tom Hanks was Col Parker," says Priscilla Presley.

Read more [here](#).

First Love

Jim (Hero Fiennes Tiffin), a senior in high school experiences the highs and lows of his first love with Ann (Sydney Park) as they navigate their pending departure to college. At the same time, Jim's parents (Diane Kruger and Jeffrey Donovan) are dealing with the familial fallout of a financial crisis.

First Love is a movie writer-director A.J. Edwards had wanted to make for 15 years. "A personal story with a timeless theme. It is a modern romance, but one not often portrayed quite like this in other films and books."

"*First Love* is about faithfulness, family, and the epiphanies we experience in daily life. The story is simple and universal – the title says it all – but it was the structure of the storytelling that attracted me," says Edwards.

"The film's characters, the Albright family, are searching for the everlasting amidst the ever-changing. This search couldn't

be more relevant in today's altered world. The film is a necessary reminder that we not only come from love but are bound for it," Edwards concludes.

Read more [here](#).

Lucia di Lammermoor

Soprano Nadine Sierra takes on one of the opera repertory's most formidable and storied roles, the haunted heroine of Donizetti's Lucia di Lammermoor, in an electrifying new staging by Australian theatre and film director Simon Stone, conducted by Riccardo Frizza.

Simon Stone's new staging of Donizetti's classic opera updates the work to a present-day American town. This live Cinema Nouveau transmission is part of the Met Opera's award-winning Live in HD series.

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ABOUT DANIEL DERCKSEN

Daniel Dercksen has been a contributor for Lifestyle since 2012. As the driving force behind the successful independent training initiative The Writing Studio and a published film and theatre journalist of 40 years, teaching workshops in creative writing, playwriting and screenwriting throughout South Africa and internationally the past 22 years. Visit www.writingstudio.co.za

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