



Agyness Deyn checks out the pretty lights.

Electricity

★★★★ Out 5 December A model performance...

MODEL AGYNESS DEYN SWAPS glitz for hard-knock tumbles in Bryn Higgins' potent drama, a low-budget Brit-flick scuffed with struggle and heart. Amazingly, despite tackling the tricky role of an epileptic young woman in a deliberately 'de-glamourised' performance, Deyn makes the shift look natural. Boldly styled, boldly acted and (mostly) smartly adapted from Ray Robinson's novel, *Electricity* only occasionally falters, and then not because of its star.

Deyn aces all stops between damaged and defiant as Lily, whose mum lobbed her down the stairs at two, and who suffers re-enactments of that drop as flooring grand mal seizures: "Alice falling down the rabbit hole," as she puts it. Lily is hardly devastated when mum dies; no surprises there. But she is moved to visit London's mean streets in search of estranged kid brother Mikey (Christian Cooke), so she can give him his due inheritance.

Other kinds of familial inheritance provide sturdy thematic ballast, though Higgins and scriptwriter Joe Fisher inherit some wobbly aspects of Robinson's novel. Credulity cracks when Lenora Crichlow's good Samaritan Mel takes Lily into her posh

pad on first meeting. Later, coincidences mount as key revelations emerge in dead-end pubs, like they never do.

But *Electricity* is more character study than manhunt mystery, and it embraces that study with style and impact. When Lily suffers a seizure, Higgins' direction adopts her surreal, scrambled perspective with bad-trip power. The geezer-ific likes of Paul Anderson set off performance fireworks in support, but any flourishes serve to throw Deyn's controlled delivery into the spotlight – and she doesn't flinch. Making us understand Lily at her most reckless, Deyn's sensitive but never sentimentalised portrait of a wounded, wilful woman holds firm all the way to the careful climax, which moves without resort to miracle cures or shock tactics. **Kevin Harley**

THE VERDICT Deyn does far more than strike a pose in a Brit-flick well worth bothering with. Tender, tough and truthful, it'll pack a sharp, sure shock to anyone expecting her to stumble..

▶ **Certificate 15** Director Bryn Higgins Starring Agyness Deyn, Lenora Crichlow, Christian Cooke, Paul Anderson, Ben Batt Screenplay Joe Fisher Distributor Soda Pictures Running time 96 mins



LEVIATHAN

★★★★★ Out now

LIKE THE TITULAR SEA CREATURE, this is a monster of a movie from Russia's Andrey Zvyagintsev (*The Return*), a searing blend of political and personal corruption. Set on the Kola Peninsula, family man mechanic Kolya (Aleksey Serebryakov) is pitted against the town's greedy mayor, who wants to compulsory purchase his property. As their battle unfolds, satire mixes with violence, mystery and even murder in a brutish story accompanied by some stark, symbolic imagery. It's hardly subtle, as the little man is consumed by the government beast, but it's highly effective. **James Mottram**

▶ **Certificate 15** Running time 141 mins



MEA CULPA

★★★★★ Out 5 December

GUILT-RIDDEN EX-COP SIMON (Vincent Lindon) lives in disgrace following a fatal car accident; old partner Franck (Gilles Lellouche) investigates a series of mob slayings. When the unlikelyst of coincidences unites their worlds, Simon has a shot at redemption. The latest thriller from Fred Cavayé (*Anything For Her*) isn't strong on subtlety, but once past the unwieldy scene-setting it does have Cavayé: a genre specialist near his A-game, staging chases and shootouts with whip-smart camerawork and ludicrous élan. It's already halfway to the inevitable US remake. **Simon Kinnear**

▶ **Certificate TBC** Running time 90 mins



EASTERN BOYS

★★★★★ Out 5 December

THIS MYSTERIOUS FRENCH TALE KICKS off at the Gare du Nord: that's where middle-aged businessman Daniel (Olivier Rabourdin) picks up and invites back to his flat teenaged Ukrainian hustler 'Marek' (Kirill Emelyanov), in a meeting which changes both of their lives. *Eastern Boys* is not an easy film to pigeonhole. Moving fluidly between styles and genres, it's a suspenseful thriller (look out for the home-invasion sequence) and a shrewdly observed relationship drama, in which writer/director Robin Campillo refuses to judge his protagonists' actions. Impressive. **Tom Dawson**

▶ **Certificate 15** Running time 129 mins



BONOBO

★★★★★ Out 5 December

THIS BRITISH INDIE FOLLOWS JUDITH (Tessa Peake-Jones), an uptight widow whose daughter Lili (Eleanor Wylde) has dropped out of law school to join a hippie commune – one that follows the philosophy of the peaceful, sex-loving bonobo ape. Matthew Hammett Knott's feature debut is, as you'd expect, comic, although not overtly so. Rather, it touches upon themes of human nature and self-discovery with a charmingly delicate sense of wit – especially in the growing affection between Judith and Josie Lawrence's 46-year-old commune leader, Anita. Smart, funny and original. **Stephen Kelly**

▶ **Certificate 15** Running time 83 mins