



List of films screened

2000

23 Nov 00

Run Lola Run

14 Dec 00

Enter the Dragon

2001

4 Jan 01

The Maltese Falcon

18 Jan 01

Pleasantville

1 Feb 01

Little Voice

1 March 01

Un Nos Ola Leuad

22 Mar 01

The Wild Bunch

5 Apr 01

Central Station

31 Aug 01

2001: A Space Odessey

25 Oct 01

Velvet Goldmine

8 Nov 01

Memento

22 Nov 01

West Beirut

13 Dec 01

Three Kings

2002

3 Jan 02

All About my Mother

24 Jan or 22 Feb 02

South

Animation on 4

14 Feb 02

Those who love me can take the train

7 Mar 02

The Thirty-nine Steps

28 Mar 02

American Movie

31 Aug 02

Best in Show

Thursday 26th, September 02

The Cup

1999, Khventse Norbu. Tibet, 94 mins. Subtitles

World Cup fever is holding a Tibetan monastery and obsessed monks in its grip. A sweet and funny 'East meets West' story.

Thursday 24th October 02

Birthday Girl

2001 Jez Butterworth.

This comedy-cum-thriller is centred around John who finds -a bride via a Russian website, All is well until Nadia's cousin and his friend turn up to join in her birthday celebrations. John suddenly finds himself involved in comical bank robberies and other, slightly less tasteful, activities. One of Nicole Kidman's best role to date.

A REAL COUP FOR THE OCCASIONAL CINEMA TO BE SHOWING THIS FILM SO EARLY AFTER ITS RELEASE. WE ARE ALSO DELIGHTED TO PRESENT CHRISTOPHER BUTTERWORTH THE PRODUCER (AND DIRECTORS' BROTHER) WHO WILL INTRODUCE TONIGHT'S SHOWING,

Thursday 7th November 02

Twentyfour Seven

1998 Shane Meadows

Bob Haskins' local boy made good returns to his roots to teach the local lads boxing. Good 'kitchen sink' results combined with dialogue to die for and superb one-liners make for a very entertaining film. Shot in black and white for effect so don't hang the projectionist.

Thursday 21st November 02

The Wages of Fear

Henri Georges Clouzot, France, B&W, 156 mins

French ex-pats', in a bid to make money, drive a load of nitro-glycerine 'through' the South American Jungle. Brood-chilling tension and the inevitable deaths make for a very dark vision of human nature, Bring a cushion.

Thursday 12th December 02

People on Sunday

Germany, 73 mins B & W Menschen am Sonntag 73 mins, Subtitle*

This unique blend of feature and documentary is as much a celebration of people, as a valuable historical document of Berlin in the 1920s. The five central characters in the film were all amateurs, who actually worked at the jobs described in the film and were only free for shooting on Sundays. Billy Wilder wrote the script and Fred Zinnemann assisted the direction. Beautifully and excitingly photographed in the last of cinema's "silent years", TONIGHT'S OCCASIONAL CINEMA SCREENING FEATURES LIVE PIANO ACCOMPANIMENT, WITH AN ORIGINAL SCORE FROM "CLASSIC OLEW STAR PAUL SHALLCROSS.

2003

Thursday 16th January 2003

Ghost Dog Way of the Samurai

Jim Jarmusch, Fr/Ger/Jap/US

Pigeon fancying hit-man flies to live and die by the Samurai code. Forest Whitaker actually makes this work. High action, superb soundtrack and a plot which swings from dark to light, filmed in beautiful Jarmusch style.

Thursday 6th February 03

The Eel

Japan 1996 117 mins

A man leaves prison after eight years for murdering his wife and her lover and becomes a barber in a village of misfits. His only friend is an eel because "It listens to me when I talk and doesn't tell me the wrong things in return. Seeing is believing.

Thursday 20th February 03

Solas (Alone)

1998. Benito Zambrano. Spain,

An unsentimental drama about a young woman's desperation when finding herself pregnant and abandoned. Watch out for some fine acting in the character of her mother. Winner of 14 international awards.

Thursday 6th March 03

Dr Strangelove: or, How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb

1963, Stanley Kubrick, GB, 94 mins, B&W

Kubrick and Sellers at their finest. The stereotyping of US generals, President, and their flunkies is still very contemporary and the message still pertinent, But you could just forget Armageddon and enjoy the laughs. Most memorable scene - Stetson wearing bomber pilot riding the bomb to oblivion.

Thursday 27th March 03

Dogtown and Z-Boys

2002 Stacy Peralta. US 89

This documentary tells the true story of how kids living in Santa Monica, CA in the 1970's brought their surfing styles into skateboarding and revolutionised the sport. Using home movies, photos, a brilliant soundtrack and candid, articulate interviews, director Stacy Peralta (one of the original boys) details the birth of a pop culture phenomenon.

Thurs 11th Sep 2003 EM 7.30pm

Nine Queens

(2000, Biellnisky, Argentina, 115 mins, subtitles)

This black comedy thriller finds two conmen in possession of a set of forged stamps. What follows is a tale of multiple twists, which has all concerned uncertain as to who is doing what to whom, and will leave you guessing right till the end. A dizzy making but hugely entertaining movie.

Thurs 25th Sep 2003 EM 7.30pm

Roger & Me

(1989, Michael Moore, USA, 85 mins)

Less well known but just as absorbing and funny documentary from Michael Moore (maker of 'Bowling for Columbine'). He attempts to meet with the head of General Motors, to ask him why, despite record profits, they have laid off tens of thousands of workers in his hometown. The failure of the American dream has tragic-comic consequences for the people of Flint, Michigan.

Thurs 6th Oct 03 EM 7.30pm

Letter to America

(2001, Trifonova, Bulgaria, 105 mins, subtitles)

Ivan's best friend lays dying in a US hospital. Denied a visa to travel to Karen's bedside, Ivan heads into the Bulgarian countryside in search of a forgotten folk song believed capable of resurrecting the dead. The most successful feature film ever to come out of Bulgaria.

Thurs 30th Oct 2003 EM 7.30pm

Bread & Roses

(2001, 'Ken Loach, UK & Europe, 110 mins) Ken Loach makes a Hollywood movie! Don't you believe it? We may be in LA but as ever this passionate filmmaker is interested in the people who live on the margins, He focuses on the illegal immigrant cleaners of the dazzling marble and glass, office blocks of corporate America, who appear invisible to the lawyers and Hollywood agents who work in them.

Thur 13th Nov 2003 - CABAN 8pm

At the Height of Summer

(1999, Tran Anh Hung, Vietnam, 115mins subtitles)

After the death of their mother the lives of three sisters and one brother are thrown into turmoil by adultery; Poetic and beautiful film set in Hanoi, from the director of 'The Scent of Green Papaya.

Thurs 4th Dec 2003 CABAN 8pm

Man with a Movie Camera

(1929, Verlov, USSR, B & W, 138mins)

An old film of the Russian avant-garde - a documentary of a day in the life of the Soviet Union, which at the same time explores numerous cinematic techniques as it manages to show the audience watching the film that it is making. Even the tripod takes a bow! The Occasional Cinema is delighted to show a print with a completely modern score by The Cinematic Orchestra, whose turntables, brass section, soul, hip-hop and jazz undertones make this astonishing film even better.

Thurs 15th Jan 2004 CABAN 8pm

12 Angry Men

(1957, Sidney Lumet, US, B & W, 95mins)

Henry Fonda, dressed in a white suit, is the only member of the jury unconvinced of the guilt of young man accused of murder. Gripping hot and sticky drama, which questions all our prejudices. Packed with well-known faces like Jack Klugman (TV's 'Quincey') in an early role. A timeless classic movie.

Thurs 5th Feb 2004 EM 7.30pm

Lantana

(2001, Ray Lawrence, Australia, 121 mins)

A woman's body is found in some Lantana bushes, and her identity is slowly revealed to us, The discovery has consequences for a bored Sydney detective and his wife and for several other relationships. An ingenious thriller of neatly contrived coincidences and chance events.

Thurs 19th Feb 2004 EM 7.30pm

Ten

(2002, Abbas Kiarostami, Iran, 93mins, subtitles)

A sophisticated woman makes ten car journeys around the city of Tehran, during which she gives lifts to her son, her sister and a variety of other women; All this is filmed from entirely within the car. The conversations provide a fascinating insight into the lives of Iranian women, whose position in society is very different from our notions of equality.

Thurs 18th March 2004 EM 7.30pm

Sunshine State

(2002, John Sayles, USA, 140mins)

Florida is the sunshine state of the title and the developers are intent on destroying established communities to build golf courses, and shopping malls. How this affects two families representing white and black residents is warmly portrayed in a gentle un-Hollywood like manner.

23 Sep 04

Respiro

Caban Italy 2002 90 mins

(English subtitles)

A stunningly filmed piece following the tensions within a Sicilian fishing village over a long hot summer. A massive bonfire finally breaks the quiet storm on the beach on St Bartholomew's feast. Be warned the ending is not neat! Respiro won Best Film at Cannes critics week in 2002. L

14 Oct 04

L'Homme du Train

EM France 2002 90 min Patrice Leconte (English subtitles)

A chance for all closet Johnny Hallyday fans to see their hero acting and doing it well. A bank robber (Hallyday) meets a retired literature teacher. Strangers bound by coincidence - the robbery is planned for the same time as the teacher is due to have surgery - the two men begin to wish they could have lived the other's life: with an entirely unpredictable result. This elegant, very French film won the audience prize at the Venice Film Festival 2002. L

4 Nov 04

City of God (Cidade de Deus)

EM 2002 Brazil/France/USA 130 min Cert 18 Fernando Meirelles and Katia Lund.

In Portuguese with subtitles.

Based on the novel by Paulo Lins, this film depicts the varied paths children take to survive in a brutally dangerous housing project in Rio de Janeiro. The characters are based on the lives of the many people Lins interviewed during eight years of research for his book, and the entire cast was drawn from locally trained or non-professional actors. Reportedly the portrayal was so authentic and appalling that City of God prompted socioeconomic policy reforms in Brazil. A

18 Nov 04

Talk to Her

EM Spain 2002 (English subtitles)

An Oscar and BAFTA winning film from sad, sly, funny, clever, controversial film magician Pedro Almodovar. A difficult story of two men who each love a woman in a coma becomes a meditation on the importance of communication in relationships. Of all Almodovar's teasing masterstrokes, none is more daring than a saucy, silent film-within-the-film called Shrinking Lover, which serves a subtly clever purpose. L

2 Dec 04

Belleville Rendezvous

EM France/ Canada/ Belgium. 2002 (no dialogue so no subtitles!)

The French answer to Nick Parks' genius. If Tati had made cartoons this is what they would have looked like. A typically French subject, cycle racing, given a very unexpected plot turn and superb artistry. The cultural stereotyping is wonderful, watch out for the frog lollies. L

13 Jan 05

Mediterraneo

Caban 1991 Italy 96 min Gabriele Salvatores.

In Italian/English/Greek/Turkish with subtitles.

An Italian ship leaves a handful of soldiers on a little Greek island during World War II. There's not a lot for them to do so they have a good time. A film that's like going on holiday. A

3 Feb 05

The Man Without a Past (Mies Vailla Menneisyttä)

EM, 2002 Finland/ Germany/ France 97 min Aki Kaurismäki. In Finnish with subtitles.

A man arrives in Helsinki and is promptly mugged. He recovers, but is left with amnesia and must try to rebuild his life from scratch. This quiet black comedy received an Oscar nomination for best foreign film. It's the second in Kaurismäki's "Finland" trilogy. A

17 Feb 05

Être et Avoir

EM 2002 France 104 min

Nicolas Philibert. In French with subtitles.

The documentary sensation that follows a year in the life of a rural French village school, its children and their teacher. This is filmmaking of both heart and humanity with poetry in its vision and restraint and care in its telling. Really lovely. L

3 Mar 05

High Plains Drifter

EM 1973 USA 105mins Cert 18

Clint Eastwood

In the spaghetti westerns, Clint Eastwood made the anonymous hero into a cliché and here we have another man with no name. But Eastwood is now director as well as lead, thinking outside the box, so that at the end we are forced to wonder whether the hero exists at all. Using the western genre as framework, Eastwood has made a film like no other, an elegiac essay in the mysterious semi-supernatural set in surroundings usually associated with simple straightforward plots and action. B

7 Apr 05

A Mighty Wind

EM 2003 USA 91 min

Christopher Guest

In mock-documentary style, this comedy follows an aging '60s era folk trio who reunite for a memorial show following the death of a concert promoter. This affectionate send-up is the third "mockumentary" from the writing duo Christopher Guest and Eugene Levy (after *Waiting for Guffman* and *Best in Show*) and is reminiscent of *This is Spinal Tap*, which Guest also co-wrote and starred in. A

Sat 27 August 05 Bryn Derwen Coed y Parc Bethesda

Leningrad Cowboys go America

Aki Kaurismäki 1989

Following last season's successful screening of Kaurismäki's 'Man Without a Past', we are pleased to show what most consider his masterpiece, a film that has gained a global cult status.

The Leningrad Cowboys, a group of Finnish musicians, and their manager, travel to America seeking fame and fortune. As they cross the country, trying to get to a wedding in Mexico, they are followed by the village idiot, who wishes to join the band. This is without question one of the greatest rock and roll movies ever made. Aki Kaurismäki has to be admired for making such a gutsy and crazy film.

Wed 21 Sept Y Caban

Peace One Day

Jeremy Gilley (2004)

The story of one man's attempts to persuade the global community via the UN to officially sanction a global cease-fire day . . . a day of peace. This documentary charts the 5-year journey of the filmmaker as he lobbies just about

anybody who's anyone and his dog. The real challenge is to get the world to unite on a day fast approaching. 1hr 20mins. Cert PG

Thurs 6 Oct 05 EM

Cold Fever (Á köldum klaka)

Friðrik Þór Friðriksson 1995 83 mins USA/Japan/Iceland/Denmark/Germany. In English, Japanese, German, and Icelandic.

Hirata (Masatoshi Nagase) is a successful young Japanese businessman who reluctantly makes a trip to Iceland to perform a traditional ceremony at the location where his parents died in an accident. His journey takes twists and turns that make for a humorous and absorbing road movie featuring spectacular shots of Iceland.

Thurs 20 Oct 05

Jour De Fete

Jacques Tati 1948 77mins. Cert U

The French comic genius Tati makes his film debut. The village postman endeavours to streamline his service à l'américaine.

"The timing and sheer cleverness of the gags is breathtaking".

This film is supremely good natured, gently and gloriously funny.

Thurs 3 Nov 05 EM

Only Human

Spanish with English subtitles 3 awards from the International Film Festival 2005

Directed by Dominic Harari; Teresa Pelegri

An amusing, feel-good take on family relationships and Jewish-Arab relations.

When Leni brings her Palestinian fiancé Rafi home to meet her Jewish family- mayhem. European farce at its very best. (BFFS)

Its slight zaniness is recognisably Spanish while there were also elements of typically Jewish humour. Some of the set pieces in the film are laugh at loud funny, while the characters are superb - in particular the ex-Israeli army granddad, the ultra religious but very confused son and the nymphomaniac daughter. This is a family with real problems and the comedy is often tinged with sadness. In an albeit short argument at the end between the Jewish daughter and her Palestinian boyfriend the Middle East debate is given a very vocal hearing, and while this film does not attempt to delve into the subject too deeply.

Thurs 17 Nov 05 EM

Hukkle

Gyorgy Palfi 2002

Using almost no dialogue, the film follows a number of residents (both human and animal) of a small rural community in Hungary. While most of the film is a series of vignettes, there is a sinister and often barely perceptible subplot involving murder.

This film should be seen by anyone who enjoys experimental film, or simply wants to see something different. Palfi should be applauded as a director who can not only conceive of such a movie, but also execute it in such an interesting and compelling way.

Thurs 1 Dec 05 EM

The Man in the White Suit

Alexander Mackendrick 1951

An innovation classic. It is one of the famous Ealing comedies that include "The Lavender Hill Mob," "The Ladykillers," and, of course, "Kind Hearts and Coronets". Ealing Studios, the longest continuously operating film studio in the world, is in itself an icon for the triumph of the eccentric over the mainstream, of the underdog over the establishment.

For a film released in 1951, "The Man in a White Suit" establishes that there are very few humorous sci-fi comedies and this satire is the very best. A boffin invents a fabric of infinite strength which never wears out and never gets dirty! When it is made up into a suit, Capital and Labour slowly, slowly begin to realise the consequences . . .

Thurs 15 Dec 05

Y Galeri Shorts including a number made in Wales.

Food from 6pm.

Note change in venue to Y Galeri, Victoria Dock, Caernarfon - next to Safeway/Morrisons.

2006

Thurs 12 Jan 06 Y Caban

Riding Giants

Stacy Peralta.

From the creator of Dog Town and Z-Boys comes a passionate advocacy of surfing. Peralta tells us that surfing is incomparably exciting, a type of hedonism that offers an ecstatic and genuinely spiritual contact with nature.

Although there are no Beach Boys tracks here the film is distinctly biased to American surf culture. But put that aside and enjoy the ride. Cert 12A

Thurs 26 Jan 06 EM

Memories of Murder

Bong Joo-Ho 2003 Subtitles 2hrs 10mins Cert 15

Based on real events, this unpredictable comedy is the strange story of a botched investigation into a Korean serial killer in the late 1980's. The two detectives assigned to the case are amongst the most incompetent imaginable.

The film generates a feeling of unease at their inability's, of farce as we get closer to the killer, and of farce as clues are lost or destroyed. Unbelievable, yet all too believable.

Thurs 16 Feb 06 EM

The Station Agent

Thomas McCarthy 2003

When his only friend dies, a man born with dwarfism moves to rural New Jersey to live a life of solitude, only to meet a chatty hot dog vendor and a woman dealing with her own personal loss.

This film is a genuine charmer. The vertically challenged hero loses his job and home but inherits a disused railway station in the backwoods where he gradually builds a new social grouping. A warm and compassionate movie totally without goey sentiment.

Thurs 2 March 06 EM

Consequences of Love (Le Conseguenze dell'amore)

Paolo Sorrentino 2004 100 mins Italian with subtitles.

Consequences of Love follows Titta (Toni Servillo), a resolutely detached man with seemingly no identity or purpose. It becomes a gripping psychological thriller as the people around him cause him to reconsider his life of isolation. It was nominated for the Palme d'Or at Cannes.

Thurs 23 March 06 EM

Machuca

Andrés Wood 2hrs Cert 15

The events surrounding Pinochet's coup in Chile in 1973 seen from the point of view of two 11-year old boys. The boy's friendship across the class barrier is doomed to come to an end as their school is taken over by the state and Pinochet's grip on power tightens. ???

Date unknown

Down by Law

Dir: Jim Jarmusch 1986 107 min USA/West Germany In English and Italian.

Three very different men—an unemployed disc jockey (Tom Waits), a small-time pimp (John Lurie), and a strong-willed Italian tourist (Roberto Benigni)—are brought together in a Louisiana prison, where their adventures begin. Described by director Jim Jarmusch as a “neo-beat-noir-comedy.”

Tuesday, September 19 2006

Together

Dir: Lukas Moodyson. Swedish. 2000.

It's 1975. there's snow, sex, Volkswagens, Abba and politics (personal and global). With humour ranging from gentle to bawdy, 'Together' is a wry Swedish story of human relationships. As someone says in the film, "I'd rather eat porridge together than pork chops alone", and that is the recurring message throughout the film. When Elizabeth tries to move away from her violent husband, she escapes to her brother's Stockholm commune. We gradually meet the members of the household and get to see their strengths and weaknesses as they struggle to live with each other (and themselves).

Tuesday October 3

Dark Star

Dir: John Carpenter. USA.1974

Classic, low-budget sci-fi spoof about four stoned astronauts on a 20-year mission in deep space, to destroy unstable planets. Set mid-22 century, they while away their time, trying to keep cabin fever at bay, with sunlamp treatment, videotape diaries, joking, bickering and wresting with their pet alien (is it a beach ball or is it God?).

Tuesday, October 17

Bombon El Perro

Dir: Carlos Sorin. Argentina/Spain. 2004

Set in Patagonia, this tender story follows the fortunes of a middle-aged, unemployed man, struggling to retain his dignity and confidence. He is given an enormous pure-bred Argentinian dog, when he helps a stranded motorist, and his life takes a new direction when he begins entering Bombon to dog shows. With a cast of mainly amateurs, the beautiful but desolate landscapes and haunting score emphasise the gentle man's vulnerability.

Tuesday, October 31 2006

Donnie Darko

Dir: Richard Kelly. USA. 2001.

Cult thriller takes psychological journey through time travel, existentialism, nihilism, love, and personal sacrifice. Set during elections in 1988 small-town America, Donnie, a disturbed teenager on medication and undergoing psychoanalysis for blackouts and personality disorders, is being visited by a demonic being in a rabbit-suit called Frank who tells him the world is about to end.

Tuesday, November 14

Paradise Now

Dir: Hany Abu-Assad. France/Germany/Netherlands/Israel. 2005.

In Nablus on the West Bank, two ordinary guys, garage mechanics, Said and Khaled, friends since childhood, have volunteered as suicide bombers. Suha, an educated, well-travelled young woman acts as their conscience, challenging their plans. Shot on location in both the Palestinian territories and Israel, 'Paradise Now' is a tense and

gripping human drama exploring some of the motivations behind acts of terrorism. A film which knows its topic up close and provides no easy answers. "Gripping, thoughtful . . . extremely moving" says the Daily Telegraph. Certificate 15 - contains no gratuitous violence.

A nomination for best foreign language film in the 2005 Oscars; winner of the Golden Globe, Blue Angel and Amnesty International awards in 2005 and has other awards.

Tuesday, November 28 2006

Atanarjuat The Fast Runner

Inuit. 2001

The frozen landscape of northern Canada is the stage for an adventure based on an Inuit legend. Atanarjuat, a charismatic young hunter is challenged by his jealous cousin. Everyday Inuit life and simple struggle for survival is the backdrop to a passionate saga. Universal themes of love, betrayal, rape, murder, revenge, communal loyalty, patience, dreams and fate are all explored. Acted by local amateurs, this is the first Inuit language film to be made.

Tuesday, December 12 2006

Wings of Desire

Dir: Wim Wenders. Germany. 1987

Two angels wander through a mixture of post-war and modern Berlin. Invisible to humans, they help and comfort all the fearful, lonely, sad souls they meet. Finally, one of the angels becomes unhappy with his immortal state, yearning to become human and experience the joys of everyday life. He meets a beautiful, circus trapeze artist and falls in love. The entrancing, dreamlike poetry of the dialogue fits seamlessly with the powerful cinematography.

2007

Tuesday, January 9, 7.30pm Y Caban Brynrefail

Hidden

French thriller. 2005. Dir: Michael Haneke
Starring Daniel Auteuil and Juliette Binoche

This utterly compelling psychological thriller. Georges, a Parisian TV presenter begins to receive mysterious and alarming packages containing covertly filmed videos of himself and his family. To the mounting consternation of Georges and his wife, the footage on the tapes - which arrived wrapped in drawings of disturbingly violent images - becomes increasingly personal, and sinister anonymous phone calls are made. Convinced he knows the identity of the person responsible, George embarks on a rash and impulsive course of action that throws up some unpleasant facts about his past and leads to shockingly unexpected consequences.

Eat first...Rachel is serving Provencal casserole of aubergine, peppers and olives or boeuf bourginon served with bread then chocolate mousse cake for £6.95 from 6pm

Tuesday January 30, 7.30pm Y Caban Brynrefail

True Stories

USA comedy/drama. 1986. Dir. David Byrne

David Byrne visits the fictional Texas town of Virgil, on the eve of the town's celebration of the state's sesquicentenary.

In character, Byrne is an amusing eccentric, cruising around town in a cherry-red convertible delivering humorous one-liners, often speaking directly to the audience, and wearing tacky urban cowboy attire. His countenance throughout the film is a wonderful mix of curiosity, amazement and disbelief as he passes through the every day life of Virgil, introducing us to the local colourful characters, seeking, and finding, the bizarre in the ordinary.

Great Talking Heads soundtrack.

Tuesday February 20, 7.30pm Y Caban Brynrefail

Bread and Tulips

Italian romance

A neglected Italian housewife, Rosalba, married since 21 to a plumbing supplier whose mistress is her sister in law, does a Shirley Valentine when she is left behind by her family on a bus trip. On a whim, she hitch-hikes to Venice. She finds a room owned by Fernando, an Icelandic waiter; befriends Grazia, a holistic masseuse; and, gets a job at a flower shop owned by a cranky anarchist. Her husband sends a portly plumber to find her.

Will duty and maternal instinct win out, or will Alba stay in Venice, find real romance?

Tuesday March 13 , 7.30pm Y Caban Brynrefail

A Cock and Bull Story

British historic drama/comedy. 2006. Dir: Michael Winterbottom. Starring: Steve Coogan and Rob Brydon

Flipping back and forth between the 18th Century and the hapless efforts of 21st Century film makers, A Cock and Bull Story is an unorthodox adaptation of the English literary masterpiece, "The Life and Opinions of Tristram Shandy, Gentleman", written by Laurence Sterne. The story begins with Tristram Shandy (Steve Coogan) narrating his life story as he sees it. Crammed with literary jokes and dark humour, Shandy's warped childhood tales are constantly interrupted by his family and household, inadvertently revealing far more about himself than any conventional autobiography.

Wednesday, 12 September, 7.30pm, Y Caban Brynrefail

Monsieur Hulot's Holiday

Les Vacances des Monsieur Hulot

French classic. 1953 Director: Jacques Tati

If you do not have the time or money to travel back to 1953 to spend a French holiday, you might as well just watch M. Hulot's Holiday. The humour in the film is warm, never condescending or patronizing to the characters. There is always the sense of fun. The movie really sells itself by not making Mr. Hulot a buffoon alone in the crowd. Circumstance and happening reveals everyone to be capable of situational humour, the accidents of the movie are shared with a laugh.

It is an observational movie, and the majority of the humour is not forced, neither upon us nor upon the movie itself. It merely shows how people can get involved in each others' lives, how funny the average day can be. The camera does not stick itself to Mr. Hulot, but goes anywhere for a laugh. If a small boy is doing something funny, the camera will be there to capture it all, and then leave the boy. This would make another film feel large, but because there is no story to the film, because there is no main character to feel especially attached to, it always feels personal, it always feel like you are seeing something nobody else is.

Perhaps the best part is that the film sticks with you for days afterward, and soon Mr. Hulot's Holiday shows its real genius, as you start noticing similar things happening around you.

Wednesday 10 October 2007

Ten Canoes

(2006 Australia 90 min) Dir: Rolf de Heer/Peter Djigirr

Genre: Adventure/Comedy/Drama/History/War Language: Aboriginal/English

A richly layered folk-myth drama set among Australian Aborigine tribes in the Northern Territory. Wry, playful voiceover from actor David Gulpilil, who explains that the story he has to tell, is a complex and sophisticated affair with as many ramifications as branches on a tree. A young hunter with his tribesmen is out stripping tree-bark with a view to making 10 canoes. Discontented with his unmarried status, he nurses a desire for one of his brother's wives. In order to instil wisdom and patience into the young buck, his elder sets out to tell him interweaving stories of his ancestors. Part of what is refreshing about Ten Canoes is that it does not make the Aborigine people alien or exotic, or a subordinate part of a story about white people's transgression.

Wednesday 14 November 2007

This is England

(2006 UK 101 min) Dir: Shane Meadows

Genre: Drama Language: English

Shane Meadows' latest has a familiar theme, a kid struggling to make the right choices and being influenced by a charismatic but dangerous surrogate father figure. It's a confident and invigorating take on 1983, and a crucial summer holiday for the film's excellent lead actor, Thomas Turgoose. If this is Meadows' mea culpa for flirting with the far right in pre-teen years, he's careful to separate the wheat from the chaff: the skins Shaun originally gangs up with show him care and camaraderie. Their only violence is against property, at least until the arrival of ex-con Combo, a bitter, racist representative of a previous generation of skins. Handling the complexities of masculinity, violence and race with sensitivity and a lightness of touch, the film captures the mood of the time, and the allure of being part of a gang.

December 12 2007

Into Great Silence

(2005 France/Switzerland/Germany 169 min) Dir: Philip Groening

Genre: documentary Language: English/French/Latin

The German documentarist Philip Groening waited patiently for 13 years before the Carthusian monastery of the Grande Chartreuse in the French Alps near Grenoble invited him to make a film about their lives on the conditions that there should be no artificial lighting, no music (other than their own Gregorian chants) no interviews, no commentary and no accompanying crew.

The result is a meditation on lives given over to poverty, prayer and solitude. Groening lived in a cell of his own for four months, covering all seasons, communicating with the monks by letter and recording their lives.

We see the monks praying in their cells, gathering in the chapel, working in the tailor's workroom, the laundry, the farm, the gardens, the kitchen, a cobbler's workshop and an improvised barber's salon. We also see two novices, one black, one Asian, being welcomed into the order by the general prior. We also see the monks chatting on their weekly walk and talk expedition in the countryside and see their childlike delight in sliding down a snow-covered hill using their shoes as toboggans and throwing snowballs. The only person to speak to camera is an elderly, blind monk who describes his loss of sight as a gift from God.

2008

Wednesday 9 January 2008

Water

(2007 114 mins) Dir Deep Mehta

Genre: Drama Language: Hindi

From the courageous and provocative filmmaker Deep Mehta, comes the Oscar-nominated Water, a profoundly moving and beautifully vibrant story of India's 'widow houses', where women of all ages are taken to live (even today), isolated from society following the deaths of their husbands. Sprinkled with humour, rife with universal emotions and alive with visual excitement, the story of Water follows three widows who dared to stand up for themselves in the liberating time of Mahatma Gandhi.

Wednesday 13 February 2008

Mountain Patrol (Kekexili)

(2006 China/Hong Kong 90 min) Dir: Chuan Lu

Genre: Action/Drama Language: Mandarin Chinese/Tibetan

One man will risk everything to save innocence

Based on true events. There is harsh beauty and even harsher drama in this Chinese movie directed by Lu Chuan, about the "mountain patrol" licensed by the Beijing government in the 90s to stamp out the illegal poaching of antelope in the vast Tibetan plain of Kekexili, a place so utterly untenanted by humankind that each footprint, as someone puts it, "will be the first since the world began". When Beijing journalist Ga Yu arrives at Kekexili, he witnesses a Tibetan funeral and a village in mourning. Ga Yu is determined to uncover the real story behind the mysterious disappearance of patrol volunteers, the killing of rare Tibetan antelopes, and the rumour that the mountain patrol collaborates with the poachers. Stunning cinematography covers shimmering landscapes, treacherous ice-rivers and white walls of mountain.

Wednesday 12 March 2008

The Journals of Knud Rasmussen

(2006) 112 min Dir: Norman Cohn, Zacharias Kunuk
Genre: Drama Language: English, Inuktitut, Danish

This is the first film to visualise the Christianisation of indigenous people from their own point of view.

Based on the real journals of 1920s adventurer, Knud Rasmussen (who was raised in Greenland by a Danish father and Inuit mother), we follow the lives of the last great Inuit shaman, Avva, his rebellious daughter, Apak, and their family. We witness the momentous changes introduced to their ancient culture by European explorers, missionaries and traders.

This second collaboration from Zacharias Kunuk and Norman Cohn, directors of the award-winning *Atanarjuat - The Fast Runner*, is more a collage of image and sound than a traditional narrative feature, and is a challenge well worth audience perseverance.

Screened to follow Llanberis Mountain Film Festival 2008 showing. www.llamff.co.uk.

Wednesday 9 April 2008

Le Chignon d'Olga

(2006) 92 min Dir: Jérôme Bonnell.
Genre: Romantic Comedy Drama Language: French

Le Chignon d'Olga is the charming first film by talented 23 year-old writer-director Jérôme Bonnell.

A tender romantic comedy-drama set in a provincial French town, it tells the story of brother and sister, Julien and Emma, who are grieving after the recent loss of their mother. As the summer draws to a close, Julien aimlessly wanders the streets until one day he encounters Olga, a beautiful young woman who works in a bookshop. Secretly, without confiding even in his close childhood friend Alice, he tries everything he can to get closer to the object of his affection. Bonnell's remarkably confident debut received widespread critical acclaim and favorable comparisons to the work of French filmmaking master Eric Rohmer.

Sunday, August 24 08

The Science of Sleep

2006, France, Cert 15, 106 mins, Dir: Michel Gondry Cerebral, romantic comedy

French-born Michael Gondry, and co-writer of *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, has given us another movie with that distinctive combination of elegance and wackiness: insouciant, self-reflexive and intensely childlike. It is set in Paris, where Stéphane (Gael García Bernal) has returned to live in the almost-forgotten family home he left with his father when his parents divorced. Now his mother has divided the apartment into two flats, allowing him to live in one and rent the other out to two single girls, Stéphanie and Zoe (Charlotte Gainsbourg and Emma De Caunes). Stéphane simply moves back into his childhood bedroom, which his mother has kept unchanged with all his old toys and posters and wacky inventions, and it encourages Stéphane in his regressive Walter Mitty-ish tendency to reverie and fantasy. In his head, Stéphane is the host of a homemade TV show, with stage-set and cameras made of cardboard, a kind of lifestyle-news programme whose sole purpose is to comment on the ongoing bafflement of his life. And poor Stéphane is falling for his beautiful neighbour, Stéphanie, who is entranced by this innocent, with his ingenuous imaginative charm and love of arts and crafts, but does not find him attractive. Idealistic and romantic: a thwarted love story that does not trade in the degraded clichés either of romance or conventional sexiness. Stéphane's relationship with his workmates, particularly the boorish yet likable Guy, played by Alain Chabat, is effortlessly comic.

Wed Sep 10th 08

The Baker

UK 2007 Director: Gareth Lewis

A hit man has second thoughts about his career and seeks refuge from his boss by finding work as a baker in a rural Welsh village.

Writer-director Gareth Lewis provides a great story, excellently told with lots of refreshing originality, tons of laughs, and perfect casting throughout. Damian Lewis is wonderful in the lead role, displaying the perfect blend of comedy, action and romance and Kate Ashfield is gorgeous. A family-friendly feel-good story of redemption.

Wed Oct 8th 08

Persepolis

France 2007 Director: V Paronnaud & M Satrapi

Poignant coming-of-age story of a precocious and outspoken young Iranian girl that begins during the Islamic Revolution. The black-and-white animation, highly stylized and in two dimensions unlike the usual cartoon 3-D, summarizes in quick, intelligent flashes, often impressionistic, growing up in Teheran and Vienna from a highly personal point of view. The narrative is as original as the art.

The narrator, Marjane Satrapi, only daughter of an educated Teheran couple, first sketches in briefly how the Shah first came to power, only to lose it and have it replaced by the fanatical religious regime of today. Educated in a French school, she and her family are rapidly alienated from the so-called revolution; she is sent to Vienna to continue her education, falls in with a group of punks and eventually returns both depressed and disillusioned to Teheran where, with other university students, she must submit to the rule of extreme Islamists.

The story covers a great deal of ground from the point of view of a young pro-Western culture radical, and is told with humor and intelligence. She laughs at herself as much as at the semi-lunatic Guards of the Revolution.

This is no fairy tale with flying horses and beautiful princesses, but a serious, unsentimental and sometimes brutally honest film covering, among other events, the story of the millions of Iranians and Iraqis who died in a now forgotten seven year war around the Persian Gulf.

Wed Nov 12th 08

And when did you last see your Father

UK 2007 Director: Anand Tucker

Starring Jim Broadbent, Colin Firth and Juliet Stevenson

Writer, Blake Morrison's moving and candid memoir of the weeks leading up to his Yorkshire GP father's death. A beautifully written, well acted but above all wonderfully directed, film looking at a man who learns about himself by finding out about his father. Colin Firth plays a real writer who wrote an auto-biographical novel about his relationship with his father played by Jim Broadbent.

The events are funny and moving but restrained within a believable reality. Firth learns to live with his father's behaviour as we see that he isn't perfect either. It's positive about life without being sentimental.

Anand Tucker brings Blake Morrison's autobiographical bestseller to the screen with sensitivity, humour and visual flair. - Empire

Wed Dec 10th 08

The Band's Visit

Israel/France 2007 Director: Eran Kolirin

Comedy/Drama

A band comprised of members of the Egyptian police force head to Israel to play at the inaugural ceremony of an Arab arts centre, only to find themselves lost in the wrong town. What follows is a special night of quiet happenings and confessions as the band makes its own impact on the town and the town on them.

A touching film about what makes us similar as humans, you will be subjected to a wide range of emotions during this film: joy, frustration, embarrassment, delight and so on - the humanity of the film really shines. People of such different backgrounds are basically the same; same hopes and aspirations, same fears and frustrations etc. The same things make all of us tick.

This film is also about strangers and others. And how we can help one another. The scene with Haled and the Israeli boy and girl in the skating rink is a classic.

Wed Jan 14th 08

Edge of the World

UK 1937 b&w Director: Michael Powell

Shot on the North Sea island of Foula, a magnificent, primal landscape of high, rocky inland plains and sheer cliffs jutting out of the sea. Powell renamed the island Hirta for this fictional story (based on the real-life evacuation of the island of St. Kilda) of an isolated community's traditional way of life slowly dying as the young men are drawn to the modern cities of the mainland. John Laurie and Finlay Currie play the two family patriarchs who struggle over the future of the island community. The romantic melodrama at the heart of the tale turns on a breathtaking race up the sheer cliffs and the grudge resulting from that contest.

The Edge of the World is more stately and still than Powell's cinematically playful and stylistically vibrant later films like *The Red Shoes* and *Black Narcissus*. The proud, hard residents of the island are constantly framed against the dramatic sky, the craggy mountains, or the rolling meadows. Yet there's a poetry to his images, which are never less than gorgeous, and Powell directs with a sense of tension, urgency, and desperation that pulls at the easy pace of this harsh lifestyle.

Wed Feb 11th 09

Blame it on Fidel

France/Italy 2006 Director: Julie Gravas

A 9-year-old girl weathers big changes in her household as her parents become radical political activists in 1970-71 Paris.

Review from Time Out

There's a delightfully supple comedy in this early '70s story, not only from the tantrum-throwing heroine's uneasy adjustment to newly radicalised priorities, but also in her instinctive probing of mum and dad's sometimes woolly self-justification. While Julie Depardieu and Stefano Accorsi are both fine as the grown-ups, the film belongs to Nina Kervel's intuitive brilliance as their Little Miss Unimpressed, a pouting terror in school uniform. It's conjecture just how close this is to the childhood of the first-time director, whose father is the great political filmmaker Costa-Gavras, but she's managed the rare trick of making an essentially serious movie with the lightest of touch. How do we learn about notions of justice and equality when as children our perspective's so naturally self-centred? A deft, original, entertaining and thoughtful look at that moment when we realise the world's just that bit more complicated than we thought.

Wed Mar 11th 09

Blindsight

UK 2008 Director: Lucy Walker

Documentary/Drama

Set against the breathtaking backdrop of the Himalayas, *Blindsight* follows the gripping adventure of six blind Tibetan teenagers on a climbing expedition up the 23,000 foot Lhakpa Ri, on the northside of Mt. Everest.

This is not your average triumph over adversity story. The film reveals the very strong, often contradictory personalities of two highly accomplished adults leading the children: Erik is a blind American mountaineer and Sabriye is a blind German academic who runs a school for blind youngsters in Lhasa Tibet.

They are both exceptional in their own ways, but disagree on what will really benefit the kids. Erik wants them to reach the summit while Sabriye wants them to enjoy Erik as a role model and take pleasure in the moment. One walks away not really being sure who was right, or if the whole climb was a mistake or a great idea. The most profound scenes are with the Tibetan children themselves and the hardships they faced before finding their way to the school.

The film captures both the arguments of the climbers as well as their frustrations, despair and exhilaration towards the end.

Wed 8 April 09

The Pillow Book

UK 1997 Director: Peter Greenaway

This film, starring Vivian Wu from *"The Last Emperor"*, is a seductive and elegant story that combines a millennium of Japanese art and fetishes with the story of a neurotic modern woman who tells a lover: "Treat me like the pages of a book." Early in Nagiko's life, she sees something she was not intended to see: her father's publisher forcing her father to have sex as the price of getting a book published. On another occasion, when she is 6 or 7, she is introduced to the publisher's 10-year-old nephew, and told this will be her future husband. These events set up fundamental tensions in her life, and as an adult, unhappily married to the publisher's nephew, she begins keeping her own pillow book. The nephew is a shallow dolt, who finds her book and in a jealous rage burns her papers and then their house.

Nagiko flees from Kyoto to Hong Kong, where eventually she finds work as a fashion model and begins to seek lovers who will fulfil her dreams. For her the appearance of a person's handwriting is more important than the surfaces of his face; she wants to be used as a book, to be written on, to be read.

Her fetish ties in with two ancient Japanese artistic practices. One is the art of tattooing, which can be much more elegant and artistic than in the west, and is used by the yakuza as a way of bonding with their criminal brothers. It can be seen as a form of submission--to the will of the tattoo artist, to the will of the group dictating the tattoos, or simply in the willingness of a person to be used as an object.

The other practice is the long-standing Japanese tradition in art of deliberately exposing the artificiality of a work of art. Realism is less prized than style. Landscapes may use great realistic detail, and then have captions written on them, or the bright red artist's mark. Kabuki and Noh theatre overlay their stories with ancient layers of style and tradition. To write a poem on a body is much the same as writing it on a landscape: The word and the image create a tension.

Greenaway, whose work includes "The Draughtsman's Contract," "The Cook, the Thief, His Wife and Her Lover" and "Prospero's Books," uses an essentially Japanese technique. He likes to build up his images in layers, combining film and video, live action and paintings, spoken narration and visual texts. He shoots in colour, b&w, and subtle tints. Here he tells a lurid story of sexuality, fetishism and betrayal, in an elegant and many-faceted way.

One of the most elegant parts of the film comes toward the end, as Greenaway illustrates the pages of Nagiko's pillow book. She has used each part of the body for the appropriate texts, even writing on ears and tongues, and here the words (Japanese, English, printed, spoken, Kanji) take on a sort of mystical, abstract quality. The talkies chained pictures to words; Greenaway finds a way out by using words as pictures.

Wed 22 Oct 08

Sen to Chihiro no kamikakushi "Spirited Away"

(2001) Japan - Directed by Hamao Miyazaki

A lavish Japanese fairy tale. While moving to their new home a young girl and her parents find an odd tunnel in the side of a hill leading to a strange "theme park" on the other side where things are obviously very "wrong" (at least to the little girl - her parents seem woefully oblivious) and as sunset approaches the world becomes very strange indeed. This film works on many levels; a social commentary on Japan, a homage to ancient Japanese/Russian mythology, a moral film for both children and adults. But most importantly, it is a simple story brilliantly told by a great filmmaker.

Highly rated and award winning animation, very hard to classify - perhaps a modern 'Alice through the Looking Glass', very funny in parts but like 'Alice' possibly disturbing for some.

Wed 26 Nov 08

Eldra

(2002) Wales - Directed by Timothy Lyn

A gypsy girl arrives in Bethesda to stay with her grandparents in the 1930s The setting and style of the film captures the essence of rural North Wales and the choices Welsh families had in that era. Eldra's family obviously come across as very Romany Pagan, and it's this which causes the conflict between them and their neighbours, not unheard of to this day. Superb cinematography and music.

Wed 28 Jan 09

Les Choristes

2004 - France/Switzerland/Germany - Christophe Barratier

Bangor and Anglesey French Film Society (BARFFS) and Occasional Cinema present Les Choristes (The Chorus) French producer and musician, Christophe Barratier makes his directorial debut with Les Choristes, inspired by the 1947 film La Cage aux Rossignols. Wildly successful orchestra conductor Pierre Morhange (Jacques Perrin) returns home when his mother dies. He recollects his childhood inspirations through the pages of a diary kept by his old music teacher, Clément Mathieu (Gérard Jugnot). Back in the late '40s, little Pierre is the rebellious son of single mother Violette (Marie Bunel). He attends a grim boarding school run by strict headmaster, Rachin (François Berléand). New teacher Mathieu brightens up the place, organising a choir, leading to the discovery of Pierre's musical talents. Featuring performances by Les Petits Chanteurs de Saint-Marc Choir. The Chorus advances the theory that troubled kids are better charmed than chastened. Les Choristes was shown at the Berlin Film Festival in 2004.

Wed 25 Feb 09

Lives of Others - Das Leben der Anderen

2007 - Germany - Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck

Very highly-rated Oscar winning film about the horrifying, sometimes unintentionally funny system of observation in the former East Germany. In the early 1980s, the successful dramatist Georg Dreyman and his longtime companion Christa-Maria Sieland, a popular actress, are big intellectual stars in the socialist state, although they secretly don't always think loyal to the party line. One day, the Minister of Culture becomes interested in Christa, so the secret service agent Wiesler is instructed to observe and sound out the couple, but their life fascinates him more and more...

Wed 25 Mar 09

Le Velo de Ghislain Lambert

2001 France Director: Philippe Harel

This whimsical low budget comedy is an overlooked gem.

One man's slow climb up the ladder to modest success is thwarted at every rung in this lightly downbeat comedy-drama. Ghislain Lambert (Benoit Poelvoorde) is an amateur bicycle racer who lives on a small farm in Belgium with his brother, Claude (Jose Garcia), and a hired hand who cannot speak, Denis (Sacha Bourdo). Lambert dreams of someday going pro, and a local coach, Focodel (Daniel Ceccaldi), agrees to help him train. With Focodel's help, Lambert is asked to join a team of pro cyclists and finds himself sharing a room on the road with Riccardo (Emmanuel Quatra), an outgoing Italian racer who urges him into a romance with cycling enthusiast Babette (Christelle Cornil) and introduces him to performance-enhancing drugs. Lambert soon butts heads with Fabrice (Jean-Baptiste Lera), the team's star rider, and while Lambert tries to show up the self-centered racer, his plan backfires when he's kicked off the team for drug use. With Claude's less-than-cordial assistance, Lambert gets back into the game and lands a lowly position with another racing team, essentially putting him back where he started.

Wednesday 27 May 9.00pm Blue Sky

The Age of Stupid

UK 2009 Director: Franny Armstrong

The Age of Stupid is the new four-year epic from McLibel director Franny Armstrong. Oscar-nominated Pete Postlethwaite stars as a man living alone in the devastated world of 2055, looking at old footage from 2008 and asking: why didn't we stop climate change when we had the chance?

"Every single person in the country should be forcibly made to watch this film". Ken Livingstone, former Mayor of London

"I was nodding to myself all the way through, thinking 'How can I reduce my flights?', 'Can I install a wind turbine at home?'. It is definitely going to change my life. It was so powerful and so moving I wanted it to go on for another hour." Gillian Anderson, actress

"I defy anyone to come out and not feel like they've got to make a difference." Caroline Lucas, Leader of the UK Green Party

More details on www.ageofstupid.net

Wednesday 24 June 8.30pm Blue Sky

The End of the Line

UK 2009 Director: Rupert Murray

Another special showing by member request. Partial blackout arrangements mean we can start the film a little earlier than previously. This is a new film and the blurb which follows is from The Evening Standard. The film was also covered in the New Scientist this week. Admission £3.

Fish have had their chips in The End of the Line

By Derek Malcolm, Evening Standard 12.06.09

Stark choice: "Anyone who doesn't eat sustainable fish is doing our children no favours"

When a mere documentary inspires a respectable film star to appear naked with nothing but a fish in her arms you have to credit its makers with chutzpah. Let's hope it works and the fish enjoyed itself.

Filmed over a two-year period in settings as far apart as the Straits of Gibraltar, Alaska, Senegal and Tokyo, Rupert Murray's film is a warning that there may be no fish in the sea by 2050. It points out that man, "the most efficient predator our oceans have ever known", is allowed to fish in 99 per cent of the seas, which has led to the near extinction of bluefin tuna, used in sushi, and a vast over-population of jellyfish. Anyone who doesn't eat sustainable fish is doing our children no favours.

Scientists, fishermen and enforcement officials state the case, and Murray has applied a professional gloss but visually and emotionally The End of the Line understates its case. If what it says is true, it does not seem angry enough. And does it really provide enough facts to underline its argument?

Perhaps its chief purpose is to interest those who know very little about the devastation caused by deep sea trawlers without putting them off with pessimism. If so, it does a good job – but a tougher argument might have done an even better one.

Also see: <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/worldnews/article-1191337/End-line-Pret-tuna-sandwich-After-seeing-shock-new-film-food-chain-boss-bans-snacks-containing-endangered-fish.html>

2009-2010

Wed 9 Sept

Rumba

Director: Bruno Romy, Dominique Abel, Fiona Gordon

Country: France: 01.17

Year: 2008 Duration

Guardian quote: “Strictly Jacques Tati is the order of the day for this engaging, gentle and lovable film about a married couple who live for ballroom dancing... Driving home one night from a typical trophy-winning success they encounter a dorky depressive, who is attempting, incompetently, to take his own life. His appearance brings about a catastrophe that causes their lives and relationship to unravel.”

Wed 14 Oct

The Yes Men Fix the World

Director: Andy Bichlbaum/Mike Bonanno

Country: France/USA

Year: 2009 Duration: 01:27

Troublemaking duo Andy Bichlbaum and Mike Bonanno, posing as their industrious alter-egos, expose the people profiting from Hurricane Katrina, the faces behind the environmental disaster in Bhopal, and other shocking events.

Guardian quote: “Funnier and more useful than Sacha Baron Cohen’s Brüno, this guerrilla movie records for posterity the serious satirical work of the poker-faced American pranksters Andy Birnbaum and Mike Bonanno, who set out to expose the lies and misdemeanours of conglomerates.”

Wed 11 Nov

Of Time and the City

Director: Terence Davies

Country: UK

Year: 2009 Duration: 01:14

A love song and a eulogy to the director’s birthplace of Liverpool. It is also a response to memory, reflection and the experience of losing a sense of place as the skyline changes and time takes its toll.

Guardian quote: “a heartfelt and even ecstatic study...brashly emotional and sentimental - sometimes angry, more often hilarious. Nothing has given me more pleasure this year: the sweetness of its temper, the unfashionable seriousness of its design and its mixture of worldliness and innocence make for something sublime. Like Noel Coward, Davies revels in the potency of cheap music.”

Wed 9 Dec 09

Caramel (Sukkar Banat)

Director: Nadine Labaki

Country: Lebanon/France

Year: 2007 Duration: 01:35

A romantic comedy centered on the daily lives of five Lebanese women living in Beirut. Loyal works in a beauty salon in Beirut along with 3 other women. Loyal has a relationship with a married man, Nisrine who is no longer a virgin, will soon be married, Rima is lesbian and Jamal is worried about getting old. Rose, a tailor with a shop next to the salon, is an old lady who devoted her life to take care of her older sister, has found her first love.

Guardian quote: "received a standing ovation at Cannes last year...melancholic, comedic drama...low-key, astute sociological, religious, and gender insights bubbling away behind engrossing interpersonal politics...largely non-professional cast lends an air of authenticity."

Wed 10 Feb

Waltz with Bashir

Director: Ari Folman

Country: Israel

Year: 2008 Duration: 01:27

One night at a bar, an old friend tells director Ari about a recurring nightmare in which he is chased by 26 vicious dogs. The two men conclude that there's a connection to their Israeli Army mission in the first Lebanon War of the early eighties. Ari can't remember a thing anymore about that period of his life. He decides to meet and interview old friends and comrades around the world to discover the truth about that time and about himself.

Guardian quote: "extraordinary animated documentary."

Wed 10 Mar

Mid-August Lunch (Pranzo di Ferragosto)

Director: Gianni di Gregorio. Italy. 2008. Duration: 01:25

Gianni has no job or income and still lives in his comfortable family home with his ageing mother who requires a lot of attention and patience. When his friends escape from Rome for some countryside air one mid-summer weekend, he finds himself left behind with his mother and a motley group of elderly ladies. Guardian quote: "a wonderfully patient, delicately observed film; warm, generous, never for a moment sentimental or patronising, never exploiting dottiness and eccentricity."

Wed 14 April

Morris: A Life With Bells On

Director: Lucy Akhurst

Country: UK

Year: 2009 Duration: 01:40

If you enjoy folk dance you must see this film. If you enjoy England you must see this film. If you enjoy laughing you must see this film. This film is a mocumentary in the tradition of This Is SpinalTap, and A Mighty Wind.

Wed 23 Sep

Joyeux Noël

Director: Christian Carion

Country: France

Year: 2005 Duration: 01:56 Cert:12

This very touching story about a true occurrence during the first Christmas of the Great War is very moving. Although the truce was not a generalized event, it did happen in quite a few areas all along the front line. It was the only moment of sanity in an otherwise gruesome experience in futility. Twenty years later, these same countries would be at it again. Karl Marx said that wars are awful events pitting ordinary people (proletariats) one against another for the benefit of the wealthy, the powerful, the aristocrats. This aspect is depicted very well in this movie. Alfred Anderson, the last survivor of the Christmas Truce of 1914 died November 21th, 2005 at a nursing home in his native Scotland. He was 109 years old. Lest we forget.

Ultimately, Joyeux Noel achieves the near-impossible, by keeping the treacle to a minimum while leaving one in no doubt about the finer aspects of humanity. Utterly magical. Oscar-nominated.

Wed 28 Oct

In the Loop

Director: Armando Iannucci

Country: UK

Year: 2009 Duration: 01:46

Guardian quote: “..horribly brilliant comedy about this government's culture of spin and muddle, using characters first aired in the TV show The Thick Of It. It is a satirical, cynical nightmare on the subject of the run-up, or blunder-up, to the war in Iraq, complete with the nastiest of PR attack dogs and the dodgiest of dossiers. It conjures up a compelling backstairs political world of anxiety and incompetence, bullying and humiliation”.

Wed 25 Nov 09

We Are Together

Director: Paul Taylor

Country: UK/South Africa

Year: 2006 Duration: 01:23

We Are Together tells the moving and inspiring story of 12 year old Slindile and her remarkable friends at the Agape orphanage in South Africa. Filmed over three years, with unforgettable kids, soaring music and a plot full of surprises; a stirring and uplifting theatrical documentary.

Wed 13 Jan 10

Sleep Furiously

Director: Gideon Koppel

Country: UK

Year: 2008 Duration: 01:34

Set in a small farming community in Trefeurig, Ceredigion, where Koppel's parents, both refugees, found a home. This is a landscape and population that is changing rapidly as small scale agriculture is disappearing and the generation who inhabited a pre-mechanised world is dying out. This is a poetic and profound journey into a world of endings and beginnings; a world of the mobile library, stuffed owls, sheep and fire.

Guardian quote: “The film has richness and an unshowy compassion...pays tribute to the grit of a people who may yet revive their economy..”

Wed 27 Jan 10

Fermat's Room

Director: Luis Piedrahita/ Rodrigo Sopena

Country: Spain

Year: 2007 Duration: 01:28

Four mathematicians who do not know each other are invited by a mysterious host on the pretext of resolving a great enigma. The room in which they find themselves turns out to be a shrinking room that will crush them if they do not discover in time what connects them all and why someone might wish to murder them.

Guardian quote: “an ingenious, relentlessly exciting film, a moral fable at once visceral and cerebral.”

Wed 24 Feb

I've Loved You So Long

Director: Philippe Claudel

Country: France

Year: 2008 Duration: 01:55

Guardian quote: “Kirsten Scott Thomas's performance, easily the best of her career, is at the centre of a deeply involving, beautifully acted and expertly constructed human drama by and for grown-ups. She plays Juliette, a fortysomething woman who after a long and painful separation has been taken in by her younger sister, Léa. When we first see Juliette, being picked up at the airport, she wears no makeup and smokes perpetually; she has a dowdy grey cardigan of the sort worn in girls' boarding schools, and has clearly been institutionalised in some awful way.

Wed 24 Mar

Jar City (Myrin)

Director: Baltasar Kormakur

Country: Iceland

Year: 2006 Duration: 01:34

Guardian quote: "cracking police-procedural thriller from Iceland, inspired by a real-life controversy when that country put the genetic records of its entire 300,000 population on a single database, as an ideal test sample for research into inherited diseases. Inspector Erlendur, a tough, grizzled cop is investigating the brutal murder of a revolting old child-porn enthusiast, who lived alone in a mangy flat. Erlendur finds there the mysterious photograph of a little girl's grave, taken in 1974, and stubbornly pursues this coldest of cold cases in this coldest of cold countries. Meanwhile, an agonised businessman, whose daughter has just died at the same age, appears to be digging into the computer gene-records."

Wed 28 April 10

Honeydripper

Director: John Sayles

Country: USA

Year: 2007 Duration: 02:03

1950 rural Alabama. Cotton harvest. It's a make-or-break weekend for the Honeydripper Lounge and its owner, piano player Tyrone "Pine Top" Purvis. Deep in debt to the liquor man, the chicken man, and the landlord, Tyrone is desperate to lure the young cotton pickers and local army base recruits into his juke joint, away from Touissants, the rival joint across the way.

Honeydripper is a warm-hearted celebration of communal life, but it is far from being an exercise in nostalgia. Sonny, who's built his own electric guitar and amplifier, is the harbinger of a new music and he saves the day for Tyrone in an exuberant finale that reinvigorates the community. Great music and cinematography.

CABAN 2011

September 14th 2011

Micmacs

Jean-Pierre Jeunet France 2009 105 mins 12A

Comedy - Crime

A man and his friends come up with an intricate and original plan to destroy two big weapons manufacturers.

October 12th

Riding Alone for Thousands of Miles

Yimou Zhang China 2005 107 mins certificate tbc

Drama

A Japanese father travels to China's Yunnan province in the place of his ailing son to film a famous folk-opera star. Intimate, low-budget story of an individual struggle. Tremendous cinematography.

November 9th

Patagonia

Marc Evans Argentina/UK 2010 118mins 15

Drama

A young Welsh couple travel to Argentina to work on their relationship. With Duffy.
Editor to come and introduce film!

December 14th 2011

Submarine

Richard Ayoade UK 2011 97 mins 15

Comedy - Drama

15-year-old Oliver Tate has two objectives: To lose his virginity before his next birthday, and to extinguish the flame between his mother and an ex-lover who has resurfaced in her life. Set in South Wales. Adrian Mole-esque.

2012

January 11th

Le Quattro Volte (Four Times)

Michaelangelo Frammartino 2010 88mins U

Docu-drama

Inspired by Pythagoras's belief in four-fold transmigration, by which the soul is passed from human to animal to vegetable to mineral, this wondrous docu-essay traces the cycle of life through the daily rituals of life in the southern Italian region of Calabria.

February 8th

Salt of Life

Gianni di Gregorio Italy 2011 90mins 12A

Comedy

Middle-aged Gianni, henpecked by his mother, wife and teenage daughter who put upon him with selfish demands, decides he needs a sympathetic mistress. Subtly observed details of behaviour and gesture - an elaborate Chekhovian story.

March 14th

Cave of Forgotten Dreams

Werner Herzog France/Canada 2010 90mins U

Documentary

Werner Herzog gains exclusive access to film inside the Chauvet caves of Southern France, capturing the oldest known pictorial creations of humankind in their astonishing natural setting.

April 11th

Double Indemnity

Billy Wilder USA 1944 107 mins PG

Crime - Film-noir - Thriller

An insurance rep lets himself be talked into a murder/insurance fraud scheme that arouses an insurance investigator's suspicions.

BLUE SKY 2011

September 28th

Winters Bone

Debra Granik US 2010 100 mins 15

Drama - Mystery - Thriller

17 year-old Ree sets out to track down her father, who put their house up for his bail bond and then disappeared. If she fails, Ree and her family will be turned out into the Ozark woods. Challenging her outlaw kin's code of silence, and risking her life, Ree hacks through the lies, evasions and threats offered up by her relatives and begins to piece together the truth. Richly observed portrait of poor, US backwoods life.

October 26th

Chico and Rita

Tono Errando et al Spain 2010 94 mins 15

Animation - Music - Romance

Set in Cuba, Chico is a young piano player with big dreams. Rita is a beautiful singer with an extraordinary voice. Music and romantic desire unites them, but their journey brings heartache and torment.

November 23rd

Of Gods and Men

Xavier Beauvois France 2010 122mins 15

Drama - History

Under threat by fundamentalist terrorists, a group of Trappist monks stationed with an impoverished Algerian community must decide whether to leave or stay. Severe, austere and deeply moving.

2012

January 25th

How I Ended This Summer

Alexei Popogrebsky Russia 2010 124 mins 12A

Drama

Gritty, award-winning tale of two meteorologists isolated on a remote Arctic island in a tense allegory about modern Russia.

February 22nd

Mary and Max

Adam Elliot Australia 2009 92mins 12

Animation - Comedy - Drama

A tale of friendship between two unlikely pen-pals: Mary, a lonely, 8-year-old girl living in the suburbs of Melbourne, and Max, an overweight 44-year old New Yorker. Narrated by Barry Humphreys.

March 28th

The Secret in Their Eyes

Juan José Campanella Argentina 2009 129 mins 18

Drama - Mystery - Thriller

A retired legal counselor writes a novel hoping to find closure for one of his past unresolved homicide cases and for his unreciprocated love with his superior - both of which still haunt him decades later.

April 25th

Benda Bilili

Renaud Barret & Florent de la Tulaye Dem Republic of Congo/France 2010 85 mins PG

Documentary

Summer 2009. Five paraplegics and a young able-bodied teenager light up the stage in front of an entranced audience of 8000 people. "Benda Bilili" - in English "See Beyond", is the name of this Kinshasa band which has acquired a global following.

?????????

Departures

Yojiro Takita Japan 2008 130 mins 12A

Drama

A newly unemployed cellist takes a job preparing the dead for funerals.

Caban 2012

Sept 12th

Black Cat White Cat

Emir Kusturica 1998

Crime - Film-noir - Thriller

'Amiably beserk tale of chaos and carnival from Sarajevo-born Kusturica, set among a modern-day Gypsy community living on the banks of the Danube. Petty crime and even pettier punishment ensue, all leading up to an epochally frenzied wedding party full of commotion, frolics and runaway goats. Funny, fascinating and faintly exhausting.'

10 October

Monsieur Lazhar

Philippe Falardeau Canada 2011 94mins 12A Drama

An Algerian refugee plays ramshackle Mary Poppins to the kids at a Montreal primary school. Subtle & uplifting.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3il9hm14FeU>

14 November

A Royal Affair

Nikolaj Arcel Denmark 2012 128mins 15 Drama History

The court of Christian VII of Denmark was rocked by adultery, madness, and sado-masochism - but all they really cared about was who got to wear the trousers.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RiHnVMHk6YU>

12 December

Intouchables

Olivier Nakache, Eric Toledano France 2011 112mins 15 Drama

After he becomes a quadriplegic from a paragliding accident, an aristocrat hires a young man from the projects to be his caretaker.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hsPHXVnt27g>

2013

9 January 2013

The Angels' Share

Ken Loach UK 2012 101mins 15 Drama Comedy

Young Glaswegian offenders redeemed by community service.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QhQeWhqs1bA>

13 February

The Well Diggers Daughter

In pre-World War II France, a father is torn between his sense of honour and his deep love for his saintly daughter when she gets in trouble with the wealthy son of a shopkeeper.

Twenty-five years after rising to international acclaim in *Jean de Florette* and *Manon des Sources*, Daniel Auteuil stars and makes a very competent directing debut with this handsome, old-fashioned film, (and remake of the 1940's classic) adapted from the novel by Marcel Pagnol.

Auteuil plays Pascal, a digger and cleaner of wells: he is a greying widower and the father of a number of daughters living in the Provence countryside. The eldest, and the most beautiful of these is the 18-year-old Patricia (Astrid Bergès-Frisbey) who is being courted by Pascal's heartbreakingly humble, middle-aged mate Félipe (Kad Merad). But she, like Hardy's *Tess of D'Urbervilles*, is to be romanced and ruined by a handsome, unreliable young man from wealthier stock.

13 March 2013 Caban

Intouchables / Untouchable

Olivier Nakache, Eric Toledano France 2011 112mins 15 Drama

After he becomes a quadriplegic from a paragliding accident, an aristocrat hires a young man from the projects to be his caretaker.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hsPHXVnt27g>

10 April 2013

Welcome to the Sticks

Dany Boon France 2008 106mins Comedy

A really charming film. Charming being the word for movies with simple plots, very down-to-earth stakes and the ability to leave you with a big smile on your face afterwards. If you like cross-cultural fish-out-of-water movies you're going to love this story of a postmaster who gets reassigned to the apparently misunderstood (in many senses) northern region of France, and how lives change accordingly.

The English subtitles captured all the nuances of the convoluted wordplay that was obviously happening on screen. This becomes an even more impressive feat when you consider that much of the verbal fun of the movie comes from the various misunderstandings between the French-speaking lead character and the folks who speak in the northern provincial "Schticks" dialect. Capturing these dynamics was not the product of an ordinary clerical translation job: the director, Dany Boon, actually took an active role in ensuring that all the subtitles for the different languages properly and lovingly reflected the nuances and intent of the on screen banter. With truly impressive results.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_6Mx3HZ4_tl

2012 Blue Sky

There won't be a showing at Blue Sky in September

24 October

Yes

Written and directed by Sally Potter 2005 100 mins UK

A stylish love story and an exposition of the travails of household cleaning; essential viewing; a rare treat from the director of 'Orlando', Don't miss this great start to the season at Blue Sky.

28 November

Le Havre

Aki Kaurismäki Finland 2011 93mins Drama Comedy

Bold, quirky look at Europe's response to immigrants from the developing world.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_ZjfdmvBLq4

2013

23 January 2013

Incendies

Denis Villeneuve Canada/France 2010 130mins 15 Drama History

Two siblings attempt to unravel their mother's Lebanese civil war past.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0nycksytL1A>

27 February 2013

The Guard

John Michael McDonagh Ireland 2011 96mins Comedy Crime

Unorthodox garda, whose quiet corner of coastal Connemara becomes an international crime hotspot, is paired with an urban FBI man.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iJxBKglv2zw>

27 March 2013

Eat Drink Man Woman

Ang Lee Taiwan 1995 124mins Comedy Romance Drama

This is a brilliant portrait of a family on the verge of being torn apart by their personal differences and the ominous presence of modernity, which has started to undermine the roots of the traditional Taiwanese family life. The presence of traditional Chinese Cuisine, in which Chu is both a master and the heir to hundreds of years of knowledge, serves as the perfect background to place the characters, as a metaphor for a way of life that is quickly disappearing, threatened by fast food and changes in family values. The director does not, however, focus on mellow or sweetened scenes to show the conflict, but he maintains a humorous tone throughout the movie, placing the actors' performances on subtle gestures and witty lines which rely heavily on understatement and comedy-like situations. The basic premise of the movie suggests that change is not only inevitable but also necessary. However, the old values still need to be cherished and passed on to the next generation since they are the foundations which give sense and meaning to a life which tends to assimilate happiness to disposable items and economic success. In doing so, Chu and her daughters get reconciled, as well as their traditional background comes to terms with modernity.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yicBx-okC3k>

24 April 2013

Nowhere in Africa

Caroline Link Germany 2003 141mins Biography Drama

Nowhere in Africa tells the story of a German-Jewish family who flees Hitler's Germany in the 1930s to live in Kenya, Africa - a place about as different from home as they can possibly imagine. Against this unique setting, the family struggles to survive, to adapt, and to stick together during hardships and strife.

This is a film that has the power to take the viewer to a whole new world, with an involving, poignant screenplay and solid direction. The cinematography is of a standard that can only be described as par excellence; the film's photography exquisitely captures not only the rural landscape but the insides of buildings too - it is hard to find words for such superb cinematography. The pseudo-indigenous music score is excellent too, bringing one into the spirit of Kenya. The content of the film is full of so many ideas that one can extract to the point that it is perhaps too complex a film, but that hardly mars this unforgettable movie experience.

The film justly won the 2002 Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vL5QGVWXYiE>

2013-2014 Season

Caban

11 Sept 2013

The History Boys

Nicholas Hytner UK 2006 109mins Comedy 15

An unruly class of gifted and charming teenage boys are taught by two eccentric and innovative teachers, as their headmaster pushes for them all to get accepted into Oxford or Cambridge.

Directed by Nicholas Hytner with an Alan Bennett story and screenplay and a cast to die for, this is already a classic which well deserves a second (or more) viewing. British cinema at its best.

The film works primarily because of the snappy interactions and byplay among the ensemble of the eight students whose odyssey is the principal subject of the story. The boys are dissimilar types but all are energized as only high spirited adolescents can be. And it is this energy - the constant quipping, antics, and small dramas of daily life among them and in their encounters with their teachers - which so richly infuses the movie with the active pace and rhythms of movement that film demands.

Bennett also helps the film's proceedings immensely by avoiding the drawn out speechifying that can succeed on stage but kill off a movie in nothing flat. His screenplay sparkles with laser-like little zingers.

A very good film - not setting black against white but looking at flawed people and complex arguments. Also brilliantly funny.

WEDS October 9 at the Caban:

Searching for Sugarman

Director/Country Malik Benjelloul Sweden/UK/USA

Details 2012 86 mins 12A Documentary/Biography/Music

Two South Africans set out to discover what happened to their unlikely musical hero, the mysterious 1970s rock 'n' roller, Rodriguez.

An incredible true story about a folk singer who became a sensation in South Africa while remaining in obscurity in his native US.

Wonderful soundtrack and plenty of humor here as well in this tale of parallel universes: one in which Rodriguez is Elvis and another where he's scarcely a blip on the radar. The film begins as an investigation by curious fans seeking to learn about the whereabouts of Rodriguez and what may have happened to him. The stories circulating about him are not promising but they are undaunted and continue to search for answers. Everyone who sees "Searching For Sugar Man" will be thankful that they did.

Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8hEojBYmR-o>

WEDS November 13 at the Caban

Beasts of the Southern Wild

Director/Country Benh Zeitlin USA
Details 2012 93 mins 12A Drama/Fantasy

Faced with both her hot-tempered father's fading health and melting ice-caps that flood her ramshackle bayou community and unleash ancient aurochs, six-year-old Hushpuppy must learn the ways of courage and love.

An engrossing, vigorous, fanciful, primal movie set in Southern Louisiana in time of flood and strife. It's about the power of people to survive. It's a celebration of animal behavior. It's about community and loneliness. There are echoes of ourselves in all these people in their craziness or compassion, or their uneducated wisdom (or lack of wisdom which then depends on luck and instinct).

In short it's quite a ride, and the leading character is a little girl who now is up for an Academy Award nomination for best actress, with the only question about that being the weirdly simple and true question--how much is she acting, how much is she just being herself with amazing transparency on the camera? Well, the same could be said of lots of adult actors who are really just themselves over and over, and so you really can watch "Beasts" for the stellar and heartwarming effort by Quvenzhané Wallis.

Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZF7i2n5NXLo>

WEDS December 11 at the Caban

Village at the End of the World

Director/Country Sarah Gavron & David Katznelson Denmark
Details 2013 82 mins 12A Documentary/Family/News

Shot over the course of a year in Northern Greenland, the film intrudes audiences to a remote village with more dogs than people. The film focuses on four townsfolk from the tiny population of 59

Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ql6kWqa76nQ>

THURS October 24 at Bluesky

Blancanieves

Director/Country Pablo Berger Spain/France
Details 2012 104 mins 12A Drama/Fantasy

A twist on the Snow White fairy tale that is set in 1920s Seville and centered on a female bullfighter. Silent film. On a par with The Artist. Silent cinema in the modern age feels like it offers a brand new way of expressive cinema and Blancanieves is oozing with expression. With textured black and white shots and energetic editing, it's a rush of raw inspiration, making full use of the frame. With such a timeless story, there's a risk of it being a complete retread, but Blancanieves tells it in such a refreshing and unpredictable way in which I was constantly looking for the famous plot points and then pleasantly surprised me when it's revealed which character is playing what role. It's a film with such a warmth for the characters and builds their relationships in a great archetypal way. With its great pace, it hits story beats efficiently and I was never bored and always caught off guard with its reinventions, with the bullfighting angle implemented seamlessly. The highlight is the fantastic score, which also rivals The Artist, with its variety of styles, the best parts being when it has flamenco influences. Blancanieves is a very entertaining and tragic rendition of a great story that avoids sentimentality all the way.

Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HanTDiiZLpg>

THURS November 28

Castaway on the Moon

Director: Hey-jun Lee South Korea
Details 2009 116 min - Comedy | Drama | Romance

A failed suicide attempt leads a heartbroken man to live a life in the 'wilderness'.

A beautiful film about self-made reality and what is actually real, about our infinite connection to the natural world, and how nothing is ever final even when it seems so.

The film is both funny and romantic (and sometimes very sad) and is amazingly well done, with a fine balance between its elements. The plot is solid, the images and camera work are top notch, and the story, containing some rather delicate situations and characters, is very sensibly and honestly told. The characters are very real people, sometimes confused, sometimes weak, and they make no apology for it, do not try to explain themselves - the most interesting, real people you will see on a screen.

The plot is wonderful, but not really the point. This is a movie about isolation, and human connections, and what makes us human at all. It is a social commentary, and a beautifully told fable. To call it a romantic comedy, to compare it to an American movie with a similar title, is to miss the point entirely.

Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YUBz5xfbl0c>

2014

Wednesday 8 January 14

Barbara

Director/Country Christian Petzold Germany

Details 2012 105 mins 12A Drama

In 1980s East Germany, Barbara is a Berlin doctor banished to a country medical clinic for applying for an exit visa. Deeply unhappy with her reassignment and fearful of her co-workers as possible Stasi informants, Barbara stays aloof, especially from the good natured clinic head, Andre. Instead, Barbara snatches moments with her lover as she secretly prepares to defect one day. Despite her plans, Barbara learns more about her life that puts her desires and the people around her in a new light. With her changing perspective, Barbara finds herself facing a painful moral dilemma that forces her to choose what she values.

Official German Entry for the 2013 Academy Awards - Best Foreign Language Film

Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-l3VRf3enx8>

Wednesday 12 February 14

More than Honey

Director/Country Markus Imhoof Germany

Details 2013 95 mins PG Comedy/Drama

An in-depth look at honeybee colonies in California, Switzerland, China and Australia. Brilliant cinematography . . . A very interesting and intriguing documentary which shows that sometimes the documentary format has more to offer than fiction movies. Not to mention that they should affect us more. Hopefully it will also take away the fear of bees many of us have - bees should be more afraid of us actually.

Link: <http://www.imdb.com/video/imdb/vi2777000217/>

Wednesday 12 March 14

Frances Ha

Director/Country Noah Baumbach USA

Details 2012 86 mins 15 Comedy/Drama

A story that follows a New York woman (who doesn't really have an apartment), apprentices for a dance company (though she's not really a dancer), and throws herself headlong into her dreams, even as their possible reality dwindles.

Noah Baumbach and Greta Gerwig lead us on an expansive journey that takes place in the confines of several years in the life of a single character - Frances. They co-wrote the film and Gerwig is sublimely engaging as Frances, a woman who prefers to focus on the moments along life's path rather than any sort of destination to the path itself.

Baumbach takes those incredibly realistic and often uncomfortable moments, shapes them into black-and-white vignettes that are both immediate and personal, and then precisely combines those vignettes into this delicate and funny film. It's rounded off by an unbelievably talented supporting cast who make "Frances Ha" an all-around joy to watch.

Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YBn5dgXFMis>

Wednesday 9 April 14

Experience Preferred but not Essential

Director/Country Peter Duffell UK

Details 1982 80 mins 15 Drama

The character of Annie is the central point of the story. Played by Elizabeth Edmonds, she is awkward, confident, shy, and easy to identify with. Edmonds, who you've probably never seen before, shows off a beautiful humanity in her character. And that is true for the rest of the cast. Each of them are given people with real personalities and eccentricities. Nobody is flat or dull to watch.

This film is almost the prototype for Bill Forsyth's "Local Hero", which was produced the following year. It's pure and down-to-earth - a fun, cheerful, mostly light film.

Wednesday 14 May 14

A Simple Life

Director/Country Ann Hui Japan

Details 2011 118 mins PG Drama

After suffering a stroke, an altruistic maid announces that she wants to quit her job and move into an old people's home.

This is a film about our connections to those we love, those we hardly know, and to ourselves. It is a sublimely graceful work and truly seamless. Deannie Yip, plays a maid who has worked for a family for many, many years. When she falls ill she moves to a long term care facility. Her struggle to move into her new role as an "ill person" is completely in keeping with what we know about her character. Great acting! The relationships she shares with the family members she's worked for are studies in the nuances of intimacy. Directed by Ann Hui....it's no wonder she's said to be "Asia's most important female director"

Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OCD00LLZmys>

Wednesday 10 September

The Epic of Everest

Official film record of the legendary 1924 Mallory and Irvine Everest expedition

UK. 1924. Documentary/History. JBL Noel. Cert U. 87mins

When George Mallory and Sandy Irvine attempted to reach the summit of Everest in 1924 they came closer than any previous attempt. Filming in brutally harsh conditions with a hand cranked camera, Captain John Noel captured images of breathtaking beauty and considerable historical significance.

This film newly restored by the BFI National Archive has transformed the quality of the surviving elements of the film and re-introduced the original coloured tints and tones. Revealed by the restoration, few images in cinema are as epic - or moving - as the final shots on the blood red sunset over the Himalayas.

A newly commissioned score, composed, orchestrated and conducted by Simon Fisher features a haunting combination of electronic music, found sounds, western and Nepalese instruments and vocals.

In June 1924 George Mallory and Andrew Irvine walked to their deaths, disappearing over the north-east ridge of Mount Everest. That there was a film-maker on hand to record any of their final steps is impressive, even when viewed from the age of citizen photojournalism. For all its historical significance, The Epic of Everest feels more like an art film than a documentary, thanks to the restoration of the original tinted sequences and a new and richly textured, often sinister score. Modern viewers may squirm at the contrast between the film-maker's reverent approach to the mountain and his condescension toward the Tibetan locals. But the chill grandeur of his images, and the mystical note in his rueful conclusion, that will linger in your mind.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MwuPmg68mKU>

Wednesday 8 October

Calvary

Led by a brilliant performance from Brendan Gleeson, Calvary tackles weighty issues with humor, intelligence, and sensitivity.

UK. 2013. Drama. John Michael McDonagh. Cert 15. 100mins

In the darkness of the confession box, Father James (Brendan Gleeson surpasses himself) learns he is about to be killed. Behind the grille, a shadowy parishioner explains that he was abused as a child and is hellbent on revenge. Father James, as a representative of the church, has been selected to take the fall; the good priest parachuted in

to deputise for the bad. His crucifixion is booked for the following Sunday, just down on the beach. The priest now has a week to put his own house in order.

It's billed as a black comedy, but at its root, Calvary wants to move you emotionally and still you as the closing credits soberly roll. It succeeds on both counts.

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LGM5rq_vX4U

Wednesday 12 November

Of Horses and Men

Country romance about the close relationship between humans and horses

Iceland. 2014. Comedy/Drama. Benedikt Erlingsson. Cert 15. 81 mins

Filmed in the great Icelandic outdoors: a colossal and wildly beautiful valley plain. It is like a giant natural stage. The human inhabitants are smallholders and horse breeders who take a certain curtain-twitching interest in each other's business. This means patient surveillance using binoculars. Kolbeinn is courting the widow Solvei. Kolbeinn is a tense, fastidious character who lavishes a great deal of unwholesome and possessive emotion on his dainty little white mare. He looks faintly absurd, trotting over to see the object of his affections; she is the owner of a black stallion that takes a very great shine to this gentleman's mare. The result is farce, violence and tragedy. Horses are the language that allow the human characters to speak to each other. This film deserves its cult status.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MKodaUmsYxk>

Wednesday 10 December

The Invisible Woman

The 19th century and Charles Dickens come alive in this jewel directed by and starring Ralph Fiennes

UK 2014. Drama/History. Ralph Fiennes. Cert 111mins

Piercingly intimate and intelligent, this new movie shows how Ralph Fiennes is going from strength to strength as a director, and his on-screen presence, sometimes rather desiccated and chilly, is here richly sanguine, as he plays Charles Dickens - the preening peacock of emotional pain. At the height of his career, Charles Dickens meets a younger woman who becomes his secret lover until his death.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WDMHb3Getlc>

2014 Blue Sky

Thursday 23 January 14

Nostalgia for the Light

Director/Country Patricio Guzman Chile/France/Germany/Spain/USA

Details 2010 90 mins 12A Documentary Drama

In Chile's Atacama Desert, astronomers peer deep into the cosmos in search for answers concerning the origins of life. Nearby, a group of women sift through the sand searching for body parts of loved ones, dumped unceremoniously by Pinochet's regime.

A beautifully made film, that is at once both fascinating and immensely sad, but offers hope that perhaps we live in a better time and that people are have been able to help keep the past alive.

Not a documentary in the traditional sense - more a work of poetry, or a spiritual experience.

The brutal results of Pinochet's military dictatorship are meshed with the search for the origins of the universe. Both subjects deal with the past, as we only have past and future; there is no present. So, astronomers are really archaeologists. They study space to discover the past. Writer/director Patricio Guzmán combines this "archaeology" with the archaeologists who search the desert for the bodies buried by Pinochet. A fascinating story.

Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7FvhsYCKcN8>

Thursday 27 February 14

Caesar must die

Director/Country Paolo Taviani Italy

Details 2013 76 mins 12A Drama

Inmates at a high-security prison in Rome prepare for a public performance of Shakespeare's "Julius Caesar." This prison setting is extremely symbolic and renders the actor performances utterly intense. It feels as if the prisoners, lacking their physical freedom, are getting deep into the skin of those new personas seeking the experiences which prison has deprived them of. The performances are so convincing that one has to contemplate on the nature of human destiny. Could it be that one's social condition or even coincidences could make the same persons capable of the best and of the worst? Moreover, the film leads to an unavoidable rumination of the concept of freedom in all its forms.

Link: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aTmwTuHyTxg>

Thursday 27 March 14

Red Dog

Director/Country Kriv Stenders Writers: Louis de Bernières (book) Australia

Details 2012 92 mins PG Comedy/Drama/Dog

A beautiful film shot in one of Australia's most iconic locations that reconstructs a true tale of an Australian larrikan in the manner that these stories are meant to be told, serious, but with a nudge & a wink. It was refreshing that the director and the human actors never tried to upstage the true star of the movie Red Dog (Koko), letting him become the focus of the story. An Australian film without the painful slow pace & without the obligatory close up shot of something totally unrelated to the movie ... refreshing!

A film about the Australian Cattle dog that makes Lassie look lame and Rin Tin Tin look like an obedient idiot because Red Dog is a dog for the soul.

The true story of a wandering pooch that brought people together and joy to a community. He exhibited ferocious, inspiring independence and fearless loyalty to freedom. This dog made Che Guevara look like he didn't give it his best shot. He had the best qualities of every living creature while still sticking it to the man. No one owned Red Dog - until he met a man and gave himself to that one man.

In real life, all this took place in North West Western Australia at a town called Dampier during the 1970s. There's even a statue erected in honour of Red Dog who had a reputation for sniffing out a party 600 kms away and turning up. He seduced and intimidated people into giving him free rides all over the country and, as legend has it, hitched a ride on a tanker to Japan for a spell too.

9 awards & 15 nominations

Thursday 24 April 14

A Separation

Director/Country Asghar Farhadi Iran

Details 2011 123 mins PG13 Drama

Won Oscar. Another 59 wins & 21 nominations; IMDB top 250 #106.

The story concerns the vain attempts of a wife (superbly acted by Leila Hatami) to leave Tehran with her husband to improve the life of their 12 year old daughter. But the husband cannot force himself to leave his Alzheimer's afflicted father behind and so stalemate ensues and divorce becomes the only alternative; this results in a separation and the husband (played to perfection by Peyman Moaadi) hires a nurse to look after his desperately sad father during the day.

The direction is perfect and the acting is top-notch. The story is engaging and believable and differences of cultures between Iran and Brazil are intriguing. I really recommend this film for any cinema lover or people interested in learning a little about Iranian culture.

Starts incredibly strongly then just keeps cranking up the tension and conflict. The characters are beautifully layered, complex and fascinating and the director manages to maintain empathy for all of them until the final frame, simply not allowing us to 'take sides' - which is what the couple's daughter is being asked to do. The insight into modern Iranian family life (albeit a privileged one) might help to erase the convenient misconception that 'they' are not like 'us'.

Link: <http://www.imdb.com/video/imdb/vi2758057497/>

Thursday 25 September

Locke

Portrait of a man in transit and in crisis

UK. 2013. Drama. Steven Knight. Cert 15 85mins

For an hour and a half, all you see is Tom Hardy, playing a Welsh construction manager at the wheel of his car, talking to the people in his life on his hands-free mobile - his boss, his wife, his former assistant. Hardy plays Ivan Locke: a dependable, professional bloke. But on the eve of an important job, he abandons work and drives to London. Something momentous is happening, for which he is prepared to sacrifice everything in his life. Tom Hardy brilliantly suggests a guy with no experience of expressing his emotions, keeping it calm, holding it together, having the necessary phone conversations while the tears start trickling down his face.

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xdaofZfgV_Q

Thursday 23 October - Diwali

The Lunchbox

A real charmer of a film: a wry and gently comic Mumbai-set drama with a level of quiet observation that rekindles memories of Bill Forsyth in his prime - Independent

India. 2013. Romance/Drama. Ritesh Batra.

Already a huge success in its native India, this Mumbai romance arranges a tender marriage of Brief Encounter with Ernst Lubitsch's *The Shop Around the Corner*. Saajan, an ageing office drone finds the wrong lunchbox delivered to his desk and stumbles into a chaste relationship with Nimrat Kaur's unhappy housewife. Before long, this pair will learn the value of crossed wires and missed connections and how "the wrong train can get you to the right station". Perfectly handled and beautifully acted; a quiet storm of banked emotions.

22 wins & 33 nominations at film festivals

Trailer: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IJIGJtb_N7E

Thursday 27 November 2014

Omar

The beauty and terror of this film is that it's about people not ideology. And the reality that people on both sides are capable of great good and great evil.

Belgium. 2013. Drama. Hany Abu-Assa. Cert 15. 96 mins. A few violent scenes.

If the saga of Omar were a wine, it would have to be described as "Shakespearian, with notes of Dante, Orwell, Golding, and Sartre." Omar is a basically decent, seemingly uncomplicated young bakery worker who is inexorably drawn into the violent political warfare of the West Bank through his love for a girl, his increasingly radicalized circle of friends from childhood and Israeli injustice. Right up to its unexpected, yet expectable, ending, Omar is more victim than protagonist.

A subtle political film about a young man caught between love and his commitment to the Palestinian cause. Omar the hero, a young militant goes on a mission with his two best friends, gets captured by Israeli intelligence, and realises that compromise and subterfuge may be the only way to win Nadia, his friend's sister. As the intrigue tightens, so do the visuals - a leitmotif, in the film's many chase sequences, has Omar racing between walls that seem to be forever closing in on him. Sharply and sensitively acted, Omar has the intimacy of a star-crossed romance and the political and moral complexity of a *le Carré* story. It's a lean, controlled film and most compelling.

Oscar nomination for Best Foreign Language Movie.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OPcvn4MtgIc>

2015 Blue Sky

26 February

The Rocket

A 10-year-old boy's journey to redemption

Laos-Australia. 2013. Kim Mordaunt. Cert 12. 96mins IMDB 7.4

A boy who believed to bring bad luck to his village, leads his family and two new friends through Laos to find a new home. After a calamity-filled journey through a land scarred by the legacy of war, to prove he's not cursed, he builds a giant rocket to enter the most exciting and dangerous competition of the year: the Rocket Festival. But the

backdrop - of forced relocation to allow for the construction of dams - is proving more contentious. The film raises questions about the roles played by multinational companies in emerging economies, director, Kim Mordaunt arguing that more than 60m people worldwide have been displaced by dams alone.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8MMdL1-qg-E>

26 March

The Broken Circle Breakdown

Powerful, haunting tale of love, loss and bluegrass music

Belgium. 2012. Drama. Felix Van Groenigen. 111mins

Elise and Didier fall in love at first sight, in spite of their differences. He talks, she listens. He's a romantic atheist, she's a religious realist. When their daughter becomes seriously ill, their love is put on trial. A montage of past and present, this shimmering play-adaptation slips between the couple's first passionate encounters and their later battles against the illness that threatens to rob them of their daughter.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JrBgSZIQAz0>

Who would have thought that a Flemish movie could bring Blue Grass music to the mainstream? In fact it's a tough movie to take without the music, this is probably the most powerful film of the season.

23 April 14

Sunrise

USA 1927 F W Murnau 94 mins

Boasting masterful cinematography to match its well-acted, wonderfully romantic storyline, Sunrise is perhaps the final -- and arguably definitive -- statement of the silent era.

Rich, strange and gorgeous, F.W. Murnau's Sunrise shows what an artist of the late silent era could accomplish cinematically, backed by an open checkbook and fueled by the highest aspirations even in the simplest of morality tales.

Janet Gaynor won the first ever best actress Oscar for her work in this exquisite silent feature, subtitled A Song of Two Humans. Emigré director FW Murnau, best known for Nosferatu, a Symphony of Horrors, has reduced a tale of threatened marriage to its bare essentials, as George O'Brien's farmer falls for visiting city girl Margaret Livingston. It is hard to convey briefly the wonder of imagery on display here, as Murnau both wittily and stylistically uses every aspect of visual storytelling, even making imaginative use of the back projection itself. Perspective design and stunning photography (by Charles Rosher and Karl Struss) help immeasurably. The tale is timeless, the setting nameless and the mood resolutely central European, though it was filmed in America at great expense. O'Brien brings a distinctively American presence to the romantically tortured hero, and Gaynor is simply perfection as his wife. This is pure cinema: emotionally uplifting, utterly absorbing, sublimely refreshing. Cynics be warned, it will melt your heart.

Radio Times

Overall, Sunrise is a masterpiece. It easily ranks as one of the best, and most important silent films ever made and it is as brilliantly technically as it is on the substance front. A must see for all fans of cinema.

Listed by the BFI as the no. 5 best ever film

2015 Caban

Wednesday 14 January

Flesh and Blood

A new Dad who has been adopted goes looking for his birth Mother

UK 2003 Drama 73 mins

Christopher Ecclestone excels himself in this gritty drama set in Morecombe.

Julian Farino and Peter Bowker were responsible for 'Marvellous' recently and this earlier film of theirs genuinely broadens the mind - we feel sure you will have changed at least some of your preconceptions after seeing this accomplished and ultimately charming film, but don't expect a smooth ride.

BAFTA nominated - 3 major awards

What a great film and what a masterful performance by Christopher Ecclestone. The delicate subject matter is dealt with extremely well, stripping away the usual prejudices, with a man coming to terms with the reality of his roots and his struggle to overcome his own prejudice. It is extremely well filmed, directed and acted - wholly recommended.

Wednesday 11 February

Twenty Feet from Stardom

Backup singers live in a world that lies just beyond the spotlight. Their voices bring harmony to the biggest bands in popular music, but we've had no idea who these singers are or what lives they lead, until now.

USA. 2013. Documentary/Music. Morgan Neville. 90mins

Such a great idea for a documentary, and such a surprise to realise that it has never been done before. Morgan Neville's Oscar-winning film is about the backing singers who have lent their musical talents to many a star name's pop record. Sometimes they have been acknowledged and appreciated, and sometimes not. Sometimes they have been content with a supporting role, and sometimes not. Includes interviews with Bruce Springsteen, Stevie Wonder and Mick Jagger. Bursting with life, with music, with energy, and it also notes the personal and professional sadness of those backing singers who wanted to be stars, but couldn't make it. We end with the feel-good possibility that a backing singer can indeed sometimes find a place centre-stage.

The film is full of wonderful and touching stories dealing with either high praise or simply hard luck. The fact that so many great songs are so memorable because of something that background singers are doing is a subject that seems to be long overdue.

The backup singer exists in a strange place in the pop music world; they are always in the shadow of the feature artists even when they are in front of them in concert while they provide a vital foundation for the music. Through interviews with veterans and concert footage, the history of these predominately African-American singers is explored through the rock era. Furthermore, special focus is given to special stand outs who endeavoured to make a living in the art burdened with a low profile and more personal career frustrations, especially those who faced the very different challenge of singing in the spotlight themselves

Interviews with Bruce Springsteen, Stevie Wonder, Sheryl Crow, Mick Jagger and Sting to name just a few.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tWyUJcA8Zfo>

Wednesday 11 March

The Past (Le Passé)

Finely-crafted, sinewy drama anatomising clotted and complex relationships

France 2013. Drama. Asghar Farhadi. Cert PG 130mins

A Frenchwoman is attempting to resolve difficulties with her estranged Iranian husband, and to make a fresh start with a new partner. We explore the mortality of love, along with ideas about intimacy and domesticity in a world where the stepfamily is the norm. Here it is further supercharged with a grand tragic theme - the past and its pitiless grip on us. It is an intricate and often brilliant drama, with restrained and intelligent performances; there is an elegantly patterned mosaic of detail, unexpected plot turns, suspenseful twists and revelations.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3g14sPmDoXw>

Wednesday 8 April 15

Belle

A love story and the value of being honest to yourself is what Belle is about

UK 2014 Amma Asante 104 mins

BELLE is inspired by the true story of Dido Elizabeth Belle (Gugu Mbatha-Raw), the illegitimate mixed race daughter of Admiral Sir John Lindsay (Matthew Goode). Raised by her aristocratic great-uncle Lord Mansfield (Tom Wilkinson) and his wife (Emily Watson), Belle's lineage affords her certain privileges, yet her status prevents her from the traditions of noble social standing. While her cousin Elizabeth (Sarah Gadon) chases suitors for marriage, Belle is left on the sidelines wondering if she will ever find love. After meeting an idealistic young vicar's son bent on changing society, he and Belle help shape Lord Mansfield's role as Lord Chief Justice to end slavery in England.

A love story and the value of being honest to yourself is what Belle is about. This movie transports you to the 1700s England. The story is beautifully layered with the issues of equality and slavery but is not preachy. It merely shows how the matters of the heart can't be prevented by the color of your skin. This coming of age story is masterfully told.

2015-16 Caban

Wednesday 9 September 15

Two Days, One Night

Jean-Pierre & Luc Dardenne, Belgium, 2015, 95mins, Cert15, Drama, IMDB 7.4

A young Belgian mother, discovers that her workmates have opted for a big pay bonus, in exchange for her dismissal. She has only one weekend to convince them to give up their bonuses so that she can keep her job. What elevates this drama into Oscar consideration is Marion Cotillard, dressed not like a movie star but a working girl, little makeup accompanied by sleeveless tees and serviceable jeans. Make no mistake; she still is one of the world's most attractive actresses. However, here she is believable as a vulnerable mother grasping for her job that the family desperately needs to survive.

She has a contributing husband, Manu (Fabrizio Rongione), he is unusually supportive, almost to a fault. Yet, dramatically, he's positioned well to keep her in the forefront. She has the intelligence and wit to get the family through.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qxLqaEGZiDY>

Wednesday 14 October 15 repeated on Wednesday 21 October 15

Salt of the Earth

Juliano Salgado & Wim Wenders, France/Brazil/Italy, 2014, 110mins, Documentary, IMDB 8.4

Stunning ode to the life and work of world-renowned Brazilian photographer Sebastião Salgado.

Wim Wenders' new masterpiece is a visually stunning lesson about our planet and our lives. We, the people, are both the salt and the scorch of the Earth...

Juliano Ribeiro Salgado and Wenders have made a thoughtful emotional journey through the life and work of the famous photographer Sebastião Salgado. Both his personal and professional journeys are depicted through the photographs of the talented humanist. The adventurous journey is becoming a discovery of the human nature and after that of nature's condition. A masterful revelation, this picturesque travel envisions the marks which we leave on our planet and the traces which we imprint during our stay here.

And this feeling is surreal - a deep voyage into darkness and light - into the power of drawing with a camera. As a photographer too, I am once again amazed how a single picture can foretell, tell and commit to a certain topic. A person, a landscape, an overall feeling - this is what we get from this film.

Intricately constructed and simplistically presented, the meaning behind these shapes and colours is not ambiguous - we are the spice which could make the Earth both a better and worse place.

This documentary is very much a universal message of the ever repeating cycle of anger - despair - hope. This honourable look at the artist and his power which can transform people and nature is mesmerizing. As a conclusion I truly hope that we can learn from our mistakes and not repeat them all over again.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jgd3ZDtx8lg>

Wednesday 11 November 15

Wild Tales

Damián Szifron, Argentina, 2014, 121mins, Cert15, Drama/Comedy/Thriller, IMDB 8.2

This delicious chocolate box of nasty, untamed tales about revenge from Argentina will have you biting your fist with traumatised horror.

Wickedly hilarious and delightfully deranged, Wild Tales is a subversive satire that doubles as a uniformly entertaining anthology film.

Wild Tales, the screamingly funny anthology film from writer-director Damian Szifron, is a movie of broken shoelaces. In six pitilessly hilarious vignettes, the filmmaker follows a handful of disparate characters who have been ground down for so long by everyday indignities that when they finally snap (under circumstances ranging from extraordinary to mundane) it is in great, gloriously cathartic conflagrations.

You don't have to read up on Argentina's history of systemic corruption to identify with these hapless souls pushed past their breaking points by the effrontery of the rich and privileged, or the fatalistic feeling that we're all playing a rigged game. Some frustrations are sadly universal.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ee-T0Q5GP6c>

Wednesday 9 December 15

Song of the Sea

Thom Moore, 2015, Ire/Den/Belg/Lux/Fra, 93mins, IMDB 8.2

Animated gorgeous, almost painterly tale of two siblings trying to reach home, but waylaid by witches, owls and faeries.

This is a story of love that is infused with rich mythology and folklore. Beautiful is the only word to use to describe Song of the Sea. Director/writer Tomm Moore has created a wondrous and vibrant style that immediately calls to mind the works of Hayao Miyazaki that Moore has cited as his personal inspiration. Whereas Miyazaki draws upon the wealth of his Japanese heritage to create internationally acclaimed works such as Spirited Away and Princess Mononoke, Moore celebrates the folk stories of his native Ireland as he did in his 2009 Oscar nominated film The Secret of Kells. With Song of the Sea, we get tales of spirits, selkies, fairies and the like that seems as if they've been immortally captured in a children's storybook and jazzed up with a modern family drama. Moore's animations are infused with Celtic designs and an eerie mysticism that seem as if a painting has come to life before your eyes. There is something absolutely enchanting in the way Moore and his animation company Cartoon Saloon are able to use traditional animation to tell such a compelling story. The characters are engaging and the story is both poignant and inspiring, but the real beauty in this film is the swirling palettes of color that captivate the audience with each passing frame. Set aside all that digital garbage and be refreshed by a style of animation that is truly magical.

It has dark elements, a timeless and engrossing story, and an aesthetic mastery that will see you through the winter.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HgbXWt8kM5Q>

Wednesday 13 January 16

The Legend of Barney Thompson

Robert Carlyle, UK, 2015, 96mins, Comedy/Crime, IMDB 7.00

Barney Thomson, awkward, diffident, Glasgow barber, lives a life of desperate mediocrity, but his uninteresting life goes from 0 to 60 in five seconds, as he enters the grotesque world of the serial killer.

What starts off like it's going to head into Guy Ritchie mk1 territory, veers sharply into the often difficult waters of black comedy. But oh it's damn good. Emma Thompson steals the show; there is no doubt that she is in her element here as a the protagonist's part mum. Both Carlyle and the ever angry 'ard Winstone also deliver powerful and hilarious performances. I have a sneaking suspicion that in a few years' time, this film will be regarded as a British cult classic. Why? With a storyline like this, there are usually dozens of cringe worthy lines that a whole host of actors fail to deliver with conviction; but not here. The casting of Ashley Jensen playing decidedly off character is another masterstroke. Definitely one of the best British efforts of the last year.

Trailer: http://www.imdb.com/title/tt2552394/?ref_=nv_sr_1

Wednesday 10 February 16

Samba

Olivier Nakache Eric Toledano, France, 2015, 118mins, 12A, Comedy/Drama, IMDB 6.7

The team that brought us Untouchable do it again with a comedy about immigration

Samba is just like the dance, slick, emotional but also fun. Omar Sy and Charlotte Gainsbourg's rapport on film felt natural and wasn't overplayed. The reality of illegal immigrants is not what this movie is about; this movie is about hope as expressed through the four main characters. Charlotte Gainsbourg gives a riveting performance, as a tortured soul in need of feeding and nurturing, at times filling the screen with her beauty at others looking so raw and in pain, it's all in her eyes and a gentle pitch in her voice, Tahar Rahim was very believable as Wilson, he has fun with this role, but never takes away from Omar Sy, a good supporting actor's performance from him. The Stevie Wonder with Syreeta soundtrack is uplifting. There is no "fluffy, Hollywood, let's all live happily ever after" cheesy ending for Samba just a natural conclusion.

Given the subject matter, the film is much funnier and more pleasant to watch than one might expect. The actors are all wonderful and interesting to watch as their characters struggle through the hand they've been dealt. Samba and Wilson steal moments of joy while living in constant fear of being discovered, while Alice is borderline depressive and insomniac. She and Samba spend much of the movie in clumsy flirtations while their stressful situations swirl around. It's awkward to watch, but we find ourselves hoping things work out for each of them.

Wednesday 9 March 16

Still Life

Pasolini, UK/Italy, 2014, 88mins, 12A, Drama, IMDB 7.4

Sensitive, affecting tale of a council worker dedicated to his job finding next of kin of those who have died alone, apparently without family or friends.

A tour-de-force by Eddie Marsan, in the quietest possible way. This is a poignant, thoughtful look at a man out of step with the modern world, who still holds to the (outdated) values of treating others with dignity and respect, in their last journey. He plays a British civil servant whose job is to organise funerals for those who have died alone, and locate their friends/relatives to advise them of their bereavement. After 22 years, he still pursues each new case with understated vigour, diligently seeking out anyone who may have had a connection to the deceased, but often being the sole attendant at the funeral.

It is a beautifully filmed slice-of-life on the themes of loneliness, loss and the disconnection of human beings in modern urban life. Marsan's performance is very authentic and affecting, and one is drawn in by his compassion and humanity.

This movie has lots of small moments of humour but mostly it is a thought-provoking homage to our humanity, and a reminder that social contacts with those we care for, are often the most positive, important and joyous moments of our lives. The movie sneaks up on you, and reaches into your soul.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gt9CsXrI08Y>

Wednesday 13 April 16

Grow your Own

Richard Laxton UK 2007 101 mins PG

Comedy

The film centres on a group of gardeners at a Merseyside allotment, who react angrily and with suspicion, when a group of refugees are given plots at the site. After they get to know them better, they soon change their minds and the refugees are accepted into a diverse community, united by their love of making things grow.

Starring Eddie Marsan, Omid Djalili, Peter Jackson, Benedict Wong and Olivia Coleman

Occasionally melancholy, often funny, this is touching, lyrical home-grown fare' '.... a gentle, astute, life affirming British comedy. Dig in!

Although lighthearted, it attempts to illustrate a serious issue, that of how refugees are integrated into their community. The film grew out of an idea to fundraise for the Family Refugee Support Project, a project started in 1999 (under the auspices of Alder Hey Hospital), offering psychotherapy and allotments to traumatised asylum seeking families newly arrived from war-torn countries.

The original plan - with very little money (£2000) - was to film the families on the allotment over a year. It developed into a full length feature film using a film set allotment and real actors.

Wednesday 14 September 2016

Chasing Ice

Jeff Orlowski, UK, 2012, Documentary

This documentary follows National Geographic photographer and Extreme Ice Survey founder James Balog and his passionate team across Greenland, Iceland, Alaska and the Arctic as they install to record glaciation changes.

National Geographic photographer and Extreme Ice Survey founder James Balog and director Jeff Orlowski team up in what turned out to be a fantastic effort in documenting vast amounts of photographic evidence including custom-made time-lapse cameras showing the effects of recent global temperature increases on glaciers in Alaska, Iceland, Canada, and Greenland.

The footage is magnificent and breathtakingly beautiful. James Balog's personal challenges in undertaking the project are an interesting angle to the film.

By presenting the footage in as non-partisan manner as possible, Chasing Ice avoids tarnishing its message with politics.

Wed 12 Oct

Taxi Tehran

Jafar Panahi Iran 2015 82 mins Comedy/drama

A taxi driver is driving through the streets of Tehran. Various passengers enter the taxi, each candidly expressing their views while being questioned by the driver who, it transpires, is no one else but the film director Jafar Panahi himself.

When you are a filmmaker and you are not allowed to direct movies any more, you have to retrain. So why not become a taxi driver? Or better, why not pretend you are a taxi driver and make a film despite everything? This is what Jafar Panahi has done. His camera placed on the dashboard of his car transforms the space into a mobile studio, and captures the spirit and contradictions of Iranian society through the comedic and dramatic drive with a sting in its tail.

The changing passengers speak out openly what is on their mind. A female teacher and a young man discuss the death penalty, a bootlegger offers the new season of "The Walking Dead" and some Woody Allen movies, two old women want to transport their goldfish in a glass bowl, a young woman wants to transport her much older husband who has been injured in an accident, and a cheeky little girl explains the rules of Iranian filmmaking and her entitlement to a Frappuccino

"One of the most captivating cinematic experiences of this year" New York Times

" A movie of corrosive intelligence and gleaming courage" The Financial Times

" Reviewing 'This is not a Film' in 2012, the great Philip French commented, 'There is unlikely to be a wittier, braver, more serious film shown in Britain this year.' Three years on, exactly the same can be said about Panahi's latest" The Observer

Wed 9 Nov 16

Mustang

Deniz Gamze Erguvan France/Turkey 2015 97 mins

Set at the start of summer in a village in northern Turkey, Lale (the youngest sister, through whose innocent eyes the film is seen) and her four sisters are spotted playing with boys whilst at the beach; the supposed debauchery of their games causes a scandal with unintended consequences. Forbidden from leaving the house by their strict grandmother and uncle, they are forced to cook and do housework instead of going to school; then their grandmother starts to marry them off. But the sisters rebel in their own ways.

Mustang is an ingeniously crafted, meticulously layered & deftly measured piece of cinema that's engaging, entertaining & enlightening on more levels than one and for a first time filmmaker, it's an incredibly polished effort. Ms. Ergüven's direction exudes both confidence & composure and the story as a whole manages to make its voice heard loud & clear. A fearless celebration of womanhood and a heartfelt rendition of indomitable human spirit, Mustang is a timely & welcome coming-of-age story and is essential viewing in every sense of the word. Don't miss it!

Nominated for a Best Foreign Language Film Oscar and with 45 other award nominations.

14 December 16

180 degrees SOUTH

Chris Malloy USA 2010 85 mins PG Documentary, Drama, Sport

This gorgeous, historic, and inspiring new film from director & surfer Chris Malloy, documents the adventures of surfer and climber Jeff Johnson as he retraces the epic 1968 journey of his heroes Yvon Chouinard (rock climbing legend and founder of outdoor clothing company, Patagonia) and Doug Tompkins (founder of North Face), on which they drove, mountain climbed and surfed their way to Chile and Patagonia. Along the way, Jeff gets shipwrecked off Easter Island, encounters big surf (surfing the longest wave of his life), snowy mountains, a dangerous ocean crossing, pulp mills, cowboys, dams and more on his way to climb Cerro Corcovado in Patagonia. Jeff's life takes a turn when he meets up in a rainy hut with Chouinard and Tompkins who, once driven purely by a love of climbing and surfing, now value above all the experience of raw nature and have come to Patagonia to help use their influence to help protect it. The film is a road trip movie (filmed almost entirely en route to and in Patagonia), a historic document, and an environmental call to arms, but mostly a meditation on what matters most in life - staying true to one's own vision and values.

If you're craving inspiration or a call to action, this is your film

Blue Sky

Thursday 26 November 15

Dark Horse

Louise Osmund, 2015, Wales, 82mins

A beautiful film about some wonderful people from Cefn Fforest, a great story, with horses added for those who like them.

This is an inspirational true story set in the village of Cefn Fforest in one of the poorest mining valleys in Wales. When Jan Vokes, the barmaid at a local working men's club, overhears a regular talking about the time he owned a share of a racehorse, she decides to breed a racehorse of her own and goes into business with the regular and her husband. Together they buy a £300 thoroughbred mare and pair her with an aging stallion, then unite with 23 friends in the village who form a syndicate paying £10 a week to raise the resulting foal. Raised on a slagheap allotment, to the astonishment of the racing elite, Dream Alliance grows up to be an unlikely champion, until one day...

Thursday 28 January 16

Theeb

Naji Abu Nowar, UAE/Qatar/Jordan, 2014, 100mins, Drama, IMDB 7.7

During World War I, a young Bedouin boy embarks on a perilous desert journey to guide a British officer to his secret destination.

This film is an excellent all-around package, as long as you're not overly addicted to slambang mindless Hollywood productions. The actors were every bit the characters they played, and the story makes you think about the issues of brotherhood, taking sides, growing up, the impact of colonialisation on far-off lands.

The cinematography is gorgeous, spanning the North African landscapes in all their vastness, adding to the viewer's understanding of the isolation the tribal people lived with (it also made me want to ride camels...). While this movie takes place in WWI, it is not a "war movie." Yes, there is a British soldier and an element of culture clash when he seeks help from young Theeb's brothers. But the story has much more to do with the character of the boy Theeb, the dilemma he finds himself in when trying to balance survival and loyalty, and the reminder that while empires fight their wars, local populations are far more concerned with going on with their lives.

While the movie is serious, I didn't find it at all depressing. Thoughtful treatment, and pitch-perfect acting and direction.

Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=US3NKlGzkwg>

Wednesday 24 February 16 - Note Wednesday, not the usual day of Thursday (this change is for February and March only)

Pelo Malo - Bad Hair

Won 11 film festival prizes and 21 nominations.

With two combustible lead performances and a vibrant representation of the high-rise life among Venezuela's working poor, this is an assured dance through universal themes of poverty, family and sexuality.

An exceptional performance by Samantha Castillo as a single mother struggling to balance childcare with employment in the unforgiving housing projects of Caracas drives this powerful yet playful domestic drama from writer/director Mariana Rondón. Recently widowed, Marta (Castillo) finds herself falling out of love with nine-year-old Junior, the misfit son whose anti-macho obsession with straightening his curly hair provokes anguish and anger about his putative sexuality. While news footage tells of fellow Venezuelans shaving their heads and murdering their mothers as Hugo Chávez's health fails, Marta and Junior (Samuel Lange, brilliantly cast) undergo their own personal crises in the pressure-cooker environment of a teeming high-rise, a place where otherness is shunned. Contrasting the innocent strains of Henry Stephen's touchstone song Limón, Limonero with cacophonous urban street sound, Rondón turns a deceptively simple coming-of-age tale into a vibrant treatise upon a raft of disparate issues (fatherless matriarchy, gender stereotyping, social deprivation, physical desire) with authenticity, integrity and, perhaps most impressively, a transcendent sense of levity.

- Observer review

Thursday 24 March 16

Tangerines

Zaza Urushadze, Estonia/Georgia, 2013, 87mins, Drama, IMDB 8.5

Touching anti-war story set in Georgia in 1990, about two Estonians embroiled in someone else's war.

This isn't a slow artistic movie where nothing happens, critics laud and regular people don't get it. This is something so good that everyone can appreciate it. Everything counts for something, and everything has a reason to be in the film - there are no stock characters, no stock conversations and no stock props.

Every word counts for so much that you couldn't cut out one second of the film. It is neither slow nor rushed, neither pro-Georgian nor pro-separatist, neither pro-settlement or pro-exodus... very few people could have made this same movie with this same script without ruining it with political biases like anti-Islam, anti-Russia, anti-Georgian, anti-Caucasian, anti-Communist, anti-separatist sentiment (or pro any of those). This movie is about the people in it and it does it well without the director getting caught up in tit-for-tat, us-vs-them situations.

Everything here is weighted and is kept in the movie after careful consideration, from the car to the cassette, from the photo to the guns, from the shrapnel to the shish kebabs. No clichés, no stock characters, no distractions - just a great story.

Thurs 22 Sept 16

Sunset Boulevard

Billy Wilder, USA, 1950, 110 minutes, Film Noir drama.

Such a great film on so many levels. It is so beautifully shot (in that stark black/white that only nitrate negative could achieve), has a witty, clever and extremely well-written script, features some of the best acting in film's history, acrobatically balances the main plot/subplots with expert precision, contains some of the best characters on celluloid, has many true-to-life parallels (Swanson's career/real life cameos/DeMille's involvement/etc) and is peppered with such great dialogue/narration that today's film writers should take note. If that weren't enough, there's even a cameo by silent film great Buster Keaton (among others).

One of the most appealing aspects of this film is how, in the story, an aging, forgotten star is trying to recapture a bygone era (the silent film era). What's interesting is that now, so many years later, we're looking back at her looking back. To present day viewers, Gloria Swanson of the 1950's is a long forgotten lost gem and to experience her own longing for the 1920's is especially captivating and a little chilling. We all know that nothing lasts forever, but we don't often consider the abandoned participants; much like the veterans of a past war.

The movie got 11 oscar nominations but only won 3 of them. Apparently this was due to the film's harsh criticism of Hollywood.

Thurs 27 Oct 16

Embrace of the Serpent

Ciro Guerra, Columbia, 2015, 125mins, 12A , Adventure, drama, history

Unique and intoxicating, an art movie that grips like a thriller.

Providing a voice to a group of people seldom seen on the big screen, Embrace of the Serpent is a must-see.

The story of the relationship between Karamakate, an Amazonian shaman and last survivor of his people, and two scientists who work together over the course of 40 years to search the Amazon for a sacred healing plant.

It's 1909, and terminally ill German explorer Theodor Koch-Grunberg (Jan Bijvoet) is on the trail of yakruna, a sacred plant said to have healing properties. He recruits young mystic Karamakate (Nilbio Torres), the last of his tribe, as a guide. Thirty-one years later, American scientist Evan (Brionne Davis) takes up Theo's quest, and starts by tracking down the shaman, now living alone in the jungle, painting rocks. What follows is a dreamlike, episodic road movie by canoe, as first Theo, then Evan come face to face with the ghosts of a tribal past and the horrors of a colonialist present - all leading to a finale of great beauty.

Nominated for a best foreign language film Oscar 2016

Thurs 24 Nov 16

Second Mother

Anna Muylaert, Brazil, 2015, 112 mins, 12A , Comedy Drama

Charming and sensitive

When Val's estranged teenage daughter comes to stay with the affluent family she serves, the balance of their lives is upset. The family considers Val part of the family but far from treats her like one. The film points out these hypocrisies in a well defined, lightly comedic and dramatically satisfying way. The remarkable character of this film is in the way it reflects the points of views of mother and daughter without judging the appropriateness of either position. The film's generous heart allows enough time for each of the principals to grow in understanding the other.

Superb acting especially from Regina Case as the mother. Very natural and in the vein of real life, to an almost unbearably disturbing extent. The screenplay and directing are excellent. None of it is at all showy but it all builds up to quietly powerful and deeply emotional moments and scenes. The characterization is rich and it all really sneaks up on you in terms of its effect. Writer/director Anna Muylaert knows how to play all her cards right, including careful mise en scene to distinguish the dichotomies between class and their spaces. The film is a whisper with its quiet drama, but its implications are loud, striking a tender chord.

Awards: 26 wins and 16 nominations

2017

Caban

11 Jan 17

Black Mountain Poets

Jamie Adams UK 2015 85 Comedy/Drama /Romance

Two sisters, most unlikely career-criminal types, snip through a fence and attempt to steal a JCB. This ill-advised caper leads to even more bizarre happenings as they take a car belonging to two published beat poets, adopt their identities and make their way to a poetry festival in the Welsh Black Mountains where even a Tesco receipt provides humorous verse.

8 Feb 17

Rams (Hrutar)

Grimur Hakonarson Iceland 2016 135 15 Drama

In a secluded valley in Iceland, Gummi and Kiddi have not spoken to each other in four decades. When a lethal disease suddenly infects Kiddi's prize-winning sheep, the entire valley comes under threat.

8 March 17

The Eagle Huntress

Daisy Ridley UK/Mongolia/USA 2016 87 Documentary/ Adventure

Filmed in a remote part of Western Mongolia, this beautifully shot film chronicles the coming of age of Aisholpan, a 13-year-old girl who wants to become an Eagle Hunter like her dad, grandfather, and all male ancestors stretching back 12 generations.

12 April 17

The Brand New Testament

Jaco van Dormael Belgium/France/Luxembourg 2015 91 15 Comedy/Fantasy

God lives in human form as a cynical writer with his young opinionated daughter in present-day Brussels, Belgium. She concludes that her dad is doing a terrible job and decides to rewrite the world, which leaves God angry, powerless and adamant to get his power back.

This is a satire on the subject of Christianity made by an interesting Belgian director who is acclaimed for his humour (he has performed as a clown) and his respect for minorities, especially the disabled. It received 7 (out of 8) very positive reviews from our Christmas family viewing panel (aged 14 to 75 - member number 8 fell asleep). If you enjoyed Alice in Wonderland, the work of Terry Gilliam and the films 'Wild Tales', 'Amalie' or 'Science of Sleep' - you'll probably enjoy this. Very few films manage to pack in as much surreal comedy, philosophical insight and innocent charm as 'The Brand New Testament'. The pace is fast without being frantic and there's never a dull moment. There is some nudity, swearing and sexual activity but generally not all at the same time. The heroes whose stories we are told (they become the six missing Apostles) are all outwardly ordinary people who become something more.

The reminder that we all are all mortal and have a limited time left on this earth spices the action and might make each of us reflect that this is true in real life just as much as in any movie.

13 Sep 17

A Man called Ove

Hanes Holm Sweden 2015 116 Comedy drama

59 year old Ove is the block's grumpy man who several years earlier was deposed as president of the condominium association, but he could not give a damn about being deposed and therefore keeps looking over the neighborhood with an iron fist. When pregnant Parvaneh and her family moves into the terraced house opposite and accidentally backs into Ove's mailbox it turns out to be an unexpected friendship. A drama comedy about unexpected friendship, love and the importance of surrounding yourself with the proper tools

2017 Academy Awards Nomination for Best Foreign Language Film, as well as another 22 nominations and 13 wins

11 October

Interlude in Prague

John Stephenson Czech Republic/UK 2017 99 mins cert.15 Language: English

Biography / Drama / Romance Mozart, Music, Lust, Murder

Prague, 1787. Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart spends a few turbulent months escaping the frustrating, privileged elite of Vienna. However his unconventional presence soon unleashes a series of dramatic and tragic events.

Overwhelmed by the tangled web of violence and intrigue that surrounds him and with his mind affected, Mozart creates the astonishing music and drama that becomes Don Giovanni. Shot entirely in Prague, the movie captures the splendour of 18th-century Baroque theatre both through the visuals and sound.

8 November

Captain Fantastic

Matt Ross USA 2016 118 mins English

"I went to the woods because I wished to live deliberately, to front only the essential facts of life, and see if I could not learn what it had to teach, and not, when I came to die, discover that I had not lived." Henry David Thoreau
Set against the beautiful Pacific Northwest backdrop, Captain Fantastic is easily one of the most nuanced films to come to mainstream cinema in the last few years.

Its main plot addresses the struggle between people with the best of intentions but differing values. Additionally, the film makes honest and straightforward comments on controversial issues in today's society that are often taboo in the media: such as mental illness, the hypocrisy of children's exposure to violence, sex and religion. Flaws in the American education system come in for criticism too. This sounds heavy and uncomfortable but these issues are elaborated in such a way that parts of the film had us in tears from laughing so hard. Director Matt Ross says the project started as an exaggerated exploration of the difficult choices that must be made in regards to raising children in today's society. However the film goes a step further and awakens an internal dialogue in each of its viewers about the way that we live our own lives and whether societal influences are too strong for us.

Acting-wise the film is captivating, with Viggo Mortensen fitting the renaissance profile of Ben like a glove. He projects all the arrogance and hardheadedness of Ben together with his warmth, adoration for his children and respect for his wife's wishes with grace and subtlety in a seemingly effortless performance. He is also surrounded by an excellent supporting cast, from the children to his in-laws and sister. In summary, Captain Fantastic is a rare case where family dynamics, with their controversies and dilemmas are not oversimplified to a preaching doctrine in the finale; the film allows the viewer the space to find their own balance on what it means to raise a child.

13 December

A Midwinter's Tale

Kenneth Branagh UK 1995 Romantic comedy

Starring Richard Briers, Joan Collins, Nicholas Farrell. Celia Imrie, Julia Sawalha, Jennifer Saunders John Sessions, Michael Maloney.

An out-of-work actor on the verge of a nervous break-down decides to put on a production of Hamlet in a church. At Christmas. Despite admonitions from his agent and sister about the career suicide he's about to commit by

investing in such a morbid play over the holidays, he pushes on to realize his goal. Faced with a series of challenges and cast of misfits and oddballs, the troupe crawl towards opening night, discovering love, laughter, and friends along the way.

Blue Sky

Thurs 26 Jan 17

The Man who knew Infinity

Matt Brown UK 2016 113 PG13 Drama documentary

This is the story of Srinivasa Ramanujan (played by “Slumdog Millionaire” star Dev Patel), who grew up poor in Madras, India and demonstrated a mastery of mathematics from an early age.

While working as a lowly clerk after the fashion of Bob Cratchit, his supervisor was struck by a notebook of formulas he kept, so much so that he encouraged him to send letters with a sample of his work to universities in England. After Cambridge don G. H. Hardy (played to perfection by Jeremy Irons) reads the material, he invites Ramanujan to come to Britain to fulfill his dreams.

When Ramanujan arrives at Trinity College, he is met by racism from every quarter. Even Hardy his champion mixes well-intended paternalism with jibes about sending him back to India if he doesn't make the grade. In many ways, Hardy is a more interesting character than Ramanujan because he is constantly being forced to reckon with the disjunction between his prejudices and the reality of the young man in front of him who he finally acknowledges as the Mozart of mathematics—a man who could penetrate to the heart of a math puzzle and solve it as easily as Mozart could write a sonata.

It's a poignant film and an emotional roller coaster. The mathematics are treated well, and should not put anyone off enjoying the extraordinary story. The film rises above the genre and soars.

Thurs 23 Feb 17

Sing Street

John Carney Ireland 2016 106mins 12A Comedy/Drama/Music/Romance

A boy growing up in Dublin during the 1980s escapes his strained family life by starting a band to impress the mysterious girl he likes.

This is a lively, very humorous and engaging film, much enjoyed by our viewing panel. As we watch our hero come to terms with all that life throws at him, it's easy to imagine David Bowie or Iggy Pop facing up to the same challenges, each in their own special way. The period atmosphere is perfectly recalled (OK the 80s aren't that far back but still) and the soundtrack is excellent both in the choice of the popular hits and the band's own compositions.

Great performances from the cast, a beautiful feel-good film with an edge.

Thurs 23 March 17

Hunt for the Wilderpeople

Taika Waititi New Zealand 2016 101 Adventure/Comedy /Drama

A national manhunt is ordered for a rebellious kid and his foster uncle who go missing in the wild New Zealand bush.

Quirky style and highly individual cast members make for a fascinating study of what life can be like for people on the edge of society. Lots of humanity, although often well hidden, and a few people in authority who would give those tormenting Daniel Blake a run for their money, make for a chase which has you on the edge of your seat right up to the last minute.

Thurs 28 Sep 17

Paterson

Jim Jarmusch USA 2016 118 PG13 Comedy drama romance

Alluring, Charming, Unforgettable

From reflections in a puddle, cardinals singing, waterfalls, a harlequin guitar, shadows, designer cupcakes and more, the love of a creative and happy couple spills over the small town of Paterson, New Jersey. The ordinary becomes extraordinary.

Paterson, who shares his name with the community at large, is a bus driver. The daily bus route takes him through the heart of town where Paterson overhears intriguing conversations, records observations in his notebook, generates poems and opens lunchbox surprises from his lovely and artistic wife, Laura. The couple's chemistry, expressed in kisses, constant conversation, cheer and trust, is remarkable. "She understands me really well," says Paterson. Lucky guy. Lucky girl. The attractiveness, talent, color and charm of Laura and Paterson is infused in everything they do including Paterson's nightly tavern visits, the plain yet peculiar meals they have together, waking up in the morning and walking the dog.

Even in all its outward simplicity, there is astonishing and wonderful depth to the film characters, scenes, themes and conversations. This artistic sensibility that is infused in everyday life, is something I loved so much about Japan and Paterson shows what this imaginative awareness looks like in small town North America. Truly there is inspiration and beauty everywhere. While the film delves into music, paintings and other mediums, its main artistic focus is on poetry. There are nods to the poetry of William Carlos Williams, Wallace Stevens and others. The poems Paterson comes up with in his jaunts around town are brilliant and beautiful. A box of Blue tip matches inspires, rather sparks, a love poem. A poem called Another One is about seeing other dimensions, which is what this incredible film encourages itself. Paterson is delightfully layered with surprising wisdom, complexity, diversity and humor at every turn. Twins make appearances every so often, for example, to remind us of one of the film themes; there is always someone out there like us that matches our hearts, and we are never really alone. Articles and images on a tavern wall take us to other dimensions in time in an instant.

The on-screen chemistry between actors Adam Driver (Paterson) and Golshifteh Farahani (Laura) is critical to the film, and they are more than up to the task. They are outstanding, alluring and entirely convincing. The compassion and charm of this film is unforgettable. It reminds us that love and splendor spring from the unlikeliest of places. Seen at the 2016 Toronto International Film Festival.

Thanks to Raven 64 from Miami for this review

Thurs 26 Oct 17

Hidden Figures

Theodore Melfi USA 2016 127 PG biography, drama, history

The space programme in a special light

This is the true story of three African-American women who worked for NASA on the Mercury program in the early 1960s. Solid performances by all, some laugh-out-loud scenes, and some very emotional moments. It's also an important look back at the civil rights issues of the time period. The climax is a bit Apollo 13ish, and I'm fairly certain some scenes were embellished, but who cares. You should walk away from this film smiling, maybe even a bit choked up.

And in spite of it being an overall positive experience, I could feel the oppression at certain points - Dorothy at the library just trying to find the right book, but it is in a part of the library to which she cannot gain admittance due to her race. Mary being reminded that she must sit in the back of the court room, again because of her race. Katherine runs across campus just to find a bathroom that she is allowed to use and never once complaining about it until she is publicly berated about her use of time. Kevin Costner's character appears to be a generally good person who doesn't care about race, and yet still never even thought about the difficulty of being forced into a certain bathroom half a mile away.

Thanks to Calvinme for this review

Thurs 23 Nov 17

Loving Vincent

Dorota Kobiela, Hugh Welchman UK/Poland 2017 95 PG animation, biography, crime, drama

A feature-length painted animation - the first film of its kind - exploring the life and unusual death of Vincent Van Gogh through depictions of his artworks

'Loving Vincent' is a fascinating and truly beautiful animated feature. The entire film, frame-by-frame, is rotoscoped in the unique and stunning oil paint style of the late painter to tell a compelling, fascinating and heartwarming story about an investigation into the life of the painter. It offers up a fairly complex portrait of a man whose more inexplicable acts – the film kicks off with the infamous ear incident in Arles – will never be fully understood.

The story brings a poetic sense of tragedy to the last act of van Gogh's life, and fresh insight into the kind of man he was. "Loving Vincent" may exist as a showcase for its technique, but it's the sensitivity the film shows toward its subject that ultimately distinguishes this particular oeuvre from the countless bad copies that already litter the world's flea markets. To the extent that van Gogh's style permitted him to capture a deeper sense of truth, he makes a noble model for the filmmakers to follow.

2018

Mill Bistro

10 Jan 18

The Beckoning Silence

Louise Osmund UK 2007 75 mins Drama / Documentary

In this docu-movie, Joe Simpson (Touching the Void) shows how to tell a true story in a modern, breathtaking way. He gives a description of events from outside but also from the inside, climbing part of the mountain (the well-known Eiger) himself. He goes deep into the characters feelings, just by comparing their emotions with his own.

A story about mountaineers and the man behind the climber. Great story-telling about the risk, the hope and the fragility of life.

14 Feb 18

Treacle Junior

Jamie Thraves 2010 82 mins cert.15 Drama

An odd little independent film, made on the cheap in London and with an on-the-street vibe. It's a character study of two men, the principle of whom remains a mystery from beginning to end: he's a family man who one day abandons his family, flees to London, and appears to be having some kind of mid-life crisis.

The main emphasis of the film is on the second man, played by Aidan Gillen, who has gone on to receive fame and recognition for his role as Littlefinger in Game of Thrones. In this film he is quite different, a man with the behaviour of a child, delightfully uninhibited and taking a natural joy in the world and in his surroundings. Gillen's character is loud, brash, and often annoying, but nonetheless it's an acting tour-de-force and he never fails to convince in his part.

There are a couple of scenes of sex and violence.

14 Mar 18

On Body and Soul

Ildiko Enyedi Hungary 2017 116 mins cert.18 Drama/romance

On the outskirts of Budapest, the ageing recluse, Endre, is the reserved and saturnine manager of a small abattoir, who is used to hiding his disabled left arm along with his emotions behind a busy schedule. And then, unexpectedly, the loner's eye is caught by a shy and graceful newcomer in the office; the young Mária, the plant's cryptic and glacially beautiful quality-control inspector. Strange as it may seem, the slaughterhouse will provide the unorthodox background for a timid affair between the tender outcasts.

Nominated for 1 Oscar. Another 9 wins & 11 nominations. Some gory scenes in the slaughterhouse during the opening sequence.

11 April 18

In Between

Maysaloun Hamoud Israel/France 2016 103mins 15

This bittersweet debut feature from Maysaloun Hamoud is a spiky treat, an empowering tale of three Palestinian women living in Tel Aviv, each fighting their own battles for independence and fulfilment. Balancing tragicomic relationship blues with sharp sociopolitical observation, Hamoud's slyly subversive drama draws us deep into an often hidden world. As the title suggests, these women occupy a liminal space, caught between freedom and repression, religion and secularism, the past and the future.

The three leads are exceptional at playing strong, complicated women who are constantly fighting to find a way around the great divide between the old and the new. Hamoud pulls no punches in how she portrays the painful sacrifices many modern Palestinian women make for a modicum of independence and self-respect. While the #MeToo movement is doing much to expose systemic sexism and harassment against women, In Between highlights how difficult it will be to make substantive change in the world's most patriarchal societies.

Wed 12 Sept 18

Islands and Whales

Mike Day UK/Denmark 81m documentary

A strongly environmental film which objectively and without judgment portrays whale hunting in the Faroes and those who try to stop it but the big story is really about oceanic pollution. A subtle, beautiful and deeply moving portrayal of a community threatened by outside forces although not in the way you at first imagine.

Wed 10 Oct 18

Frantz

François Ozon France/Germany PG 113m 2016 drama history romance war

Two years after the end of WW I this drama involves two soldiers who met during the war and the family of one of these soldiers after the war. It is intense and its intricacies are sobering and manifest.

4 wins and 33 nominations

Wed 14 Nov 18

The Breadwinner

Nora Twomey PG 124m 2017 animation drama

Angelina Jolie and the creators of The Secret of Kells and Song of the Sea bring us this film about Parvana, an 11-year-old girl growing up under the Taliban in Afghanistan in 2001 who dresses like a boy in order to support her family. Thrilling and enchanting, this is a luminously animated tale about the power of stories to sustain hope and carry us through dark times.

Nominated for an Oscar. Another 14 wins & 46 nominations.

Wed 12 Dec 18

The Man Who Invented Christmas

Bharat Nalluri Ireland/Canada 104m 2017 Biography, comedy, drama

Tells the story of how Dickens came to write A Christmas Carol.

In 1843 Charles Dickens is at a low point in his career with three flops behind him and his family expenses piling up. He decides to write a Christmas story and self-publish it in less than two months. As he labors writing at short notice, his estranged father and mother come to visit. Still haunted by painful memories of his father ruining his childhood by his financial irresponsibility, Dickens struggles for inspiration against his frustrations and his characters' opinions and creates a classic tale that would define the essential soul of our modern Christmas.

Blue Sky

Thurs 25 Jan 18

Burn Burn Burn

Chanya Button UK 2015 100 Cert:15 Black Comedy

Apparently the Daily Mail said this was an engaging black comedy, funny and moving. We don't usually use the Daily Mail as a source of information but in this case we think they couldn't have phrased it better. With a young British female director (we think she'll go far) the two young women who are tasked with distributing the ashes of their mutual friend around Britain turn in excellent performances. It's very enjoyable indeed. There are two (short) sex scenes.

4 awards plus a nomination at Raindance

Thurs 22 Feb 18

The Barbarian Invasions

Denys Arcand Canada - Quebec 2003 99 18 Comedy, crime, drama French language

A very funny, sad, tragic and thought-provoking film which touches on everything from drug-use, Canadian medicare, the child-father relationship and past intimate relationships. A fantastic screenplay for a wonderful cast of characters. Highly recommended.

Oscar winner - best foreign language film; 48 other awards.

Occasional Cinema and Science Cafe jointly present
a special presentation:

Blue Sky Cafe - Thurs 8 March at 7.30pm

Ex Machina

Director & writer: Alex Garland UK 2014 108 mins Cert 15.

A beautifully shot, fantastically lit, intelligently written, brilliantly cast film with original and brave editing leaving the film with a sharp Zen like quality, clearly the application of a disciplined mind.

Engaging and thoroughly watchable; the characters are simple and yet layered with complexity. The film strikes the perfect balance of not spoon feeding and not dumbing down and not being too arty or intellectual just for the sake of it.

Thurs 22 Mar 18

A Canterbury Tale

Powell and Pressburger UK 1944 124 U Drama, comedy, war Black and White

During WW2 a 'Land Girl', an American GI, and a British soldier find themselves together in a small Kent town on the road to Canterbury in this multilayered, erudite and passionate exploration of England's national character which examines English country life, the Englishman's love for nature, the idiosyncrasies, the distrust of foreigners, the 'pubbing', the resilience, the faith in institutions (the church, the gentry) and so on.

A gentle gem that defies description It's easy enough to say what it *isn't*: it's not a detective story and it's certainly not a thriller, despite the fact that it nominally revolves around an unsolved crime. It's not a war-story, although it is set immediately before D-Day and the main characters are intimately involved in the war effort. It's not quite a romance. And it's not the Chaucerian epic one might be led to expect by the title and the opening scene - although by the end, the pilgrimage allusions turn out to be rather more strangely apt than they at first appear.

Thurs 27 Sep 18

The Death of Stalin

Armando Iannucci UK 2016 107m comedy history

A stellar cast and director have real fun with a grim subject. If only all history were like this . . . not.

Thursday 25 Oct 18

La belle et la bête

Jean Cocteau/René Clément France 1946 96m drama fantasy romance

"Beauty and the Beast" not only expertly re-tells a beautiful story, but powerfully displays the Beast's magic. Cocteau's genius is that he makes simple editing techniques look like art and in this movie like the combination of art and magic. The visuals, in glorious black and white, are so stunning, you could almost cover up the subtitles and still understand what's going on.

Thurs 29 Nov 18

Arcadia

Paul Wright UK 2017 78m documentary

A fascinating look at man's relationship with Mother Earth shown using archive footage from around the UK set to a modern score. An intriguing blend of folk horror and documentary combine to create an unusual, almost ethereal, story.

Mill Bistro

Wed 9 Jan 19

Merchants of Doubt

Robert Kenner USA 2014 96 mins 12A

Inspired by the acclaimed book by Naomi Oreskes and Erik Conway, Merchants of Doubt takes audiences on a satirically comedic, yet illuminating ride into the heart of conjuring American spin. Filmmaker Robert Kenner ('Food Inc' shown at Caban a few years ago) lifts the curtain on a secretive group of highly charismatic, silver-tongued pundits-for-hire who present themselves in the media as scientific authorities - yet have the contrary aim of spreading maximum confusion about well-studied public threats ranging from toxic chemicals to pharmaceuticals to climate change. Cigarettes, climate change, and flame retardants are just some of the topics covered in this highly informative and unnerving documentary.

Wed 13 Feb 19

Tanna

Martin Butler, Bentley Dean Australia 2015 104 mins 12 drama romance

Set on a remote Pacific island, covered in rain forest and dominated by an active volcano, this heartfelt story, enacted by the Yakel tribe, tells of a sister's loyalty, a forbidden love affair and the pact between the old ways and the new.

With its magnetic cast and Venice award-winning cinematography, this film treads the familiar theme of star-crossed lovers with shimmering vitality - The Guardian

The first ever Australian-made film to receive an Oscar nomination for Best Foreign Language Film.

Wed 13 Mar 19

Palio

Cosima Spender Italy/UK 2015 91 mins 12 documentary

A film about the world's oldest horse race, held twice a year in the Italian city of Siena since medieval times. Each of the city's 10 districts enters a rider, with deal-making and bribery as vital to success as good horsemanship. Jockey Gigi Bruschelli needs only two more victories to become the greatest champion in the event's history - but this year, he has fierce competition from his own protege.

Picturesquely shot, tightly edited and re-purposing some old Ennio Morricone soundtrack music to spaghetti-western effect, this is an eye-opening documentary that can be enjoyed with or without previous knowledge of horses or horse racing.

Wed 10 April 19

Meru

Jimmy Chin, Elizabeth Chai Vasarhelyi US/India 2015 90mins 15 documentary

Harrowing and ultimately moving, "MERU" charts the efforts of three of the world's best mountain climbers to conquer an "impossible" Himalayan peak that had never been successfully scaled before. In the high-stakes pursuit of big-wall climbing, the Shark's Fin on Mount Meru may be the ultimate prize, sitting 21,000 feet above the sacred Ganges River in Northern India. In 2008, Conrad Anker, Jimmy Chin and Renan Ozturk arrived in India to tackle Meru. Their planned seven-day trip quickly declined into a 20-day odyssey in sub-zero temperatures with depleting food rations. Despite making it to within 100 meters of the elusive summit, their journey, like everyone before them, was not a successful one. They returned again in 2011 to undertake the Shark's Fin once more, under even more extraordinary circumstances than their first attempt. MERU is the story of those journeys; an expedition through nature's harshest elements and one's complicated inner demons, and ultimately on to impossible new heights.

Jimmy Chin and E. Chai Vasarhelyi's Sundance audience award winner is one of the best sports documentaries of its type in recent years

Wednesday 11 September 19

Final Ascent: The Legend of Hamish MacInnes

Robbie Fraser UK 2019 81 mins Documentary

Details 2012 105 mins 12A Drama

The story of legendary mountaineer and rescue leader Hamish MacInnes who lived a life full of daring, adventures and bravery. A magnificent and poignant tribute to one of the most significant mountaineers and innovators of the last few decades. Based in Glen Coe, he founded the Search and Rescue Dog Association (SARDA) and set up the Scottish Avalanche Information Service. He is credited with inventing climbing's first all-metal ice axe and the MacInnes Rescue stretcher, used for rescues worldwide He was also an adviser on Clint Eastwood's 1970s film The Eiger Sanction

Directed by Robbie Fraser with Michael Palin, Yvon Chouinard and Chris Bonnington.

Wednesday 9 October 19

Last Summer

Jon Jones UK 2018 97 mins Drama

A powerful coming-of-age film set in rural Wales during a long hot summer in the 1970s, Last Summer follows four young boys as they roam free through a neglected rural paradise, until a tragedy strikes that sets them against the adult world and changes their lives forever.

Wednesday 13 November 19

Everybody Knows

Asghar Farhadi Spain/France/Italy 2018 133 mins R Crime, Drama, Mystery, Thriller

A dark psychological study of people under extreme pressure which examines what can happen when intense pressure causes long-buried secrets to rise to the surface. Beautifully shot and exceptionally well-acted with realistic, convincing dialogue and outstanding performances across the board. Penelope Cruz and Javier Bardem star.

Wednesday 11 December 19

Kind Hearts and Coronets

Robert Hamer UK 1949 106 mins Comedy/Crime

Undoubtedly one of the most perfect, brilliant comedies ever, this film revels in its dark, clever humour. A comedy centred around a dapper, charming, likable, impoverished young English gentleman who is at the same time an utterly remorseless, ever-calculating killer. On top of that, he all the while takes great care in preserving his demeanor and status as a gentleman; all the relatives he must eliminate are brought to life by the genius of Alec Guinness.

Blue Sky

Thurs 24 Jan 19

The Magic Flute

Ingmar Bergman Sweden 1975 135 mins comedy fantasy music romance

This is, first and foremost, a film, albeit a film based on an opera.

If you like opera - you should see it. If you don't like opera, there's enough film and plot to make it interesting (Bergman is a master of cinema after all) and who knows - you may enjoy at least some of the music as well. We've tried it out on non-opera goers and got favourable reactions.

"One of the best and most enjoyable operatic films ever made. Watching Bergman's presentation of "The Magic Flute" does not require an extensive opera-going experience can be enjoyed on many different levels."

Nominated for an Oscar, Golden Globe and Cesar awards. Won a BAFTA.

Thurs 28 Feb 19

Hotel Salvation

Shubhashish Bhutiani India 2016 102 mins PG comedy drama

When a nightmare convinces seventysomething Dayanand Kumar (Lalit Behl) he is about to die, his accountant son Rajiv (Adil Hussain) shelves his problems at home and work to join him on a trip to the holy Hindu city of Varanasi. The tranquil atmosphere soon has a restorative effect. And there's nothing maudlin about Dayanand's odyssey, as he discovers life beside the Ganges to be very much to his liking, especially after he hooks up with a sprightly widow (played by his real-life wife, Navnindra Behl).

A leisurely, wise and ultimately affecting meditation on the benefits of letting go.

Thurs 28 Mar 19

Shoplifters

[Hirokazu Koreeda](#) 2018 121 mins 15 crime drama

Excellently scripted and full of impressive subtleties, Shoplifters is a harrowing look at a working-class family in Tokyo, in the business of trying to simply make ends meet day by day. At first glance this may seem like just a story of this family resorting to petty crime, but as the plot gradually unfolds the reasons for the behaviour and decisions of each character is revealed, and all the dots begin to connect amidst this struggle.

A big hit with the critics. Nominated for 1 Oscar. Another 21 wins & 64 nominations including Palme d'Or at Cannes.

Thurs 4 April 19

All the Rage

The Role of Psychological Trauma in Chronic Pain

Film to start at 7:45pm followed by Q & A with Psychologists.

On behalf of the the Division of Clinical Psychology (DCP) Wales, A documentary about the impact of psychological trauma on the experience of chronic pain.

“For nearly 50 years, Dr. John Sarno has been focusing on the mind-body connection and the nature of stress and the manifestation of physical ailments. Filmmaker Michael Galinsky collects testimonies from patients like Larry David and Howard Stern as well as other practitioners when he is struck with pain himself, bringing an unexpectedly personal dimension to his investigation.”

The Blue Sky Café will be offering soup, cheese and local bread for £5 per head, this will be served between 6:30pm and 7:45pm. In addition, the bar will be open serving alcohol and hot drinks and cakes throughout the evening.

This event is free to the general public and there will also be an opportunity for a discussion and question and answer session with psychologists following the film.

Thursday 26 September 19

The Shiny Shrimps/Les crevettes pailletées

Director/Country Cédric Le Gallo, Maxime Govare France 2019 103 mins 15 Comedy

Matthias Le Goff, an Olympic champion at the end of his career, makes a homophobic statement on TV. His punishment: coach the Shiny Shrimps, a flamboyant amateur gay water-polo team. They have only one thing in mind: to qualify for the Gay Games in Croatia where the hottest international LGBT athletes compete. It's the start of a bumpy and joyful ride - Faster, Higher, Stronger.

Thursday 24 October 19

Woman at War

Director/Country Benedict Erlingsson Iceland/France/Ukraine 2018 101 mins Unrated Adventure, Comedy, Drama

Halla, a woman in her forties, declares war on the local aluminum industry to prevent it from disfiguring her country. She risks all she has to protect the highlands of Iceland. This is a political thriller, a comedy with surreal overtones, an eco-action film. But foremost it is about the indomitable spirit of one woman who will have to make hard choices.

Highly rated - over 25 film festival awards.

Thursday 28 November 19

Pond Life

Directed by Bill Buckhurst, written by Richard Cameron, produced by Dominic Dromgoole UK 2018 100 mins Cert 15 Drama

At first this is an idyllic, slice-of-life drama about the joys of a long, hot, pre-social media mining village summer spent chasing a fishy legend which winds through stories of broken families, loss, growing pains and love in a beautiful and genuine way that isn't often seen in much script writing. The initial naivety seems upbeat and light-hearted, only to turn into something more significant as secrets are gently revealed. Pond Life shows that amid the mundanity of everyday life there are shining moments, and a good deal of humour. A wonderful performance by Esme Creed-Miles as the emotionally unusual and fragile Pogo is at the heart of the film – we'll be seeing more of her.

2020 – Blue Sky

Thursday 23 January 20

Capernaum

Director/Country Nadine Labaki 2018 126 mins 15 Drama

This is a remarkable film which will take you to the depths and back. Starring a 12 year old boy and set in the slums of Beirut (although any slum would suffice) it is a roller coaster ride into life at the very bottom of society. Best enjoyed without too much foreknowledge of what's to come. Trust us, put up with the foul language and some truly harrowing scenes, and let the talented young woman who wrote and directed this film work her magic.

Huge critical acclaim. Nominated for an Oscar. Another 33 wins & 39 nominations.

Thursday 27 February 20

One Cut of the Dead

Director/Country Shinichiro Ueda Japan 2017 96 mins 15 Comedy Horror

This is a film about the making of a film and is very funny. But first you watch the (short) film they made - which is a zombie horror. So it's two for the price of one. Like Capernaum a big hit with film clubs.

Free admission to the film if you come dressed as a zombie. Maybe even a prize for the best/funniest outfit.

Thursday ~~26 March 20~~

Looking for Oum Kulthum

Director/Country Shoda Azari/Shirin Neshat Germany 2017 90 mins PG Drama

A film within a film, "Looking for Oum Kulthum" beautifully recounts the plight of an Iranian woman artist/filmmaker living in exile as she embarks on capturing the life and art of Oum Kulthum, the legendary female singer, by a wide margin the Arab world's most popular entertainer and a cultural icon. Through her difficult journey, not unlike her heroine's, the director has to face the struggles, sacrifices and the price that a woman has to pay if she dares to cross the lines of a conservative male dominated society.

Not yet released in the UK or US this film has escaped attention here but our Occasional viewers have given it high marks

Thursday ~~23 April 20~~

The Gods must be Crazy

Director/Country Jamie Uys South Africa/Botswana 1980 109 mins PG Comedy

A unique film with a brilliant combination of slapstick, subtle humour, wonderful music, brilliant wildlife and scenic shots, all beautifully woven into a piece in an almost "road-style" movie around the adventures of a bushman. And there aren't many films about bushmen so roll up.

In English with some Afrikaans and a little of the dialogue in Xhosa.

2020

Wednesday 8 January 20

Balloon

Michael Herbig 2018 Germany 12A 125 mins Drama History

In the summer of 1979, in Thüringen, in East Germany, two families put together a crazy plan. They are desperate to leave the DDR for the 'West' and plan to flee in a homemade hot air balloon. After sewing and tinkering for weeks, the amateurs make their first attempt. Metres from the West German border, their balloon suffers from the rain and crash lands. Luckily, they manage to avoid being caught by the police. However, the wreckage from their escape attempt is found and that triggers a desperate manhunt.

Wednesday 12 February 20

At Eternity's Gate

Julian Schnabel 2018 Germany 12A 111 mins Drama History

At Eternity's Gate is an immersion into the world of Van Gogh. Art conveys something about the world and the human condition words can never express. Beautiful, poignant, historically accurate, its dialogue is lifted directly from Van Gogh's correspondence with his contemporaries. Vincent, Theo, and Gauguin come alive as do the people in his portraiture. Willem Dafoe's performance as Vincent is jaw dropping.

Wednesday 11 March 20

Cold War

Pawel Pawlikowski 2018 Germany 12A 89 mins Drama History

Set in the ruins of post-war Europe, the story concerns a musical director who discovers a young singer and helps her refine her talent. The plot follows their romance over the years as their different backgrounds, varying temperaments and the politics of the era keep separating them apart & bringing them back together. Splendid camerawork and wonderful music

Nominated for 3 Oscars. Another 44 wins & 106 nominations.

Wednesday 8 April 20

Honeyland

Tamara Kotevska, Ljubomir Stefanov 2019 Macedonia 12A 90 mins Documentary Drama

The last female beekeeper in Europe must save the bees and return the natural balance in Honeyland, when a family of nomadic beekeepers invade her land and threaten her livelihood. This film shot in Macedonia is an exploration of an observational Indigenous visual narrative that deeply impacts our behaviour towards natural resources and the human condition.