

Ree/Buzz

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President's Report

Hello, Film Society, and welcome once again to *Reelbuzz*. This is a short term, so we've made up for it with our Japanese FilmFest with the Japan-Australia Friendship Association in the first week back - a whole week of Japanese films of various genres. Check out a lineup of classics - including the continuing adventures of Flash Gordon! - to see you through to exams, and look out for our next Weekend Away in the mid-year break. Get away from it all up at Woodhouse on the 24th-25th June for winter walking in the hills and food and filmwatching indoors. If you own or have access to a film or video camera and would like to record proceedings, let us know!

During the break your committee faced the challenge of... The Projection Room Cabinet!! It is now tidy and we know where stuff is. For the moment. (We recommend *Galaxy Quest*, too.) And - the more interesting bit - we have an archive. That is, we have a shelf in the cabinet where we are collecting old Film Society stuff - programmes, newsletters, flyers, posters, etc, a special thanks to David Donaldson of the Australian Council of Film Societies for providing material from the Adelaide University Film Group, one of our previous incarnations in the 70s. If anyone is interested in having a look, or has material to contribute, again, let us know. Another "let us know" thing is for wannabe projectionists. Give us some notice and we can put you in touch with a projectionist who's willing to show you how it's done on the night.

Also look out for our next film choosing. Start coming up with some ideas now, and if you can't make it on the night, send us an email. Get Involved!

Sue

Editor's Talk

Hi everyone! This is your Editor having a bit of a say. Last year I helped Chris manage this *Reelbusiness* but now I have taken over completely, doing my best to figure out both pagemaker and photoshop. Fortunately, I get great help from all the people in the Resource Centre, not to mention all the moral support from the rest of the Committee. As I have decided to take up this space by rambling, I might as well thank Heather, Chris and Guy for writing the reviews for this issue, and also Esther and Sue for their contributions.

If there are any other potential reviewers out there, thinking it would be fabulous to see free movies in the early hours of the morning, let yourselves be known. Come along to a Thursday night movie, a film choosing night or a Weekend Away and see what the spirit of the Film Society is all about. Last year I was an exchange student and did not know a soul in Adelaide but now, largely thanks to the Film Society, I feel very much at home here. Sharing the experience of watching great movies is a perfect way of getting to know new people, whether you end up praising or arguing about the films in question. Also a reminder for those of you who would be interested in voting for best Australian film of the year - just become members of the AFI and all the relevant information will be sent to you. Have a say in the making of film history.

Good watching until next time!



Editor: Sol

*Contributors: Sue, Esther, Heather
Chris and Guy*

Reviews

Sample People

Director: Clinton Smith

Starring: Kylie Minogue, Ben Mendelsohn, Simon Lyndon and David Field

Palace Nova East End Cinemas

The title, *Sample People*, refers to its ensemble cast, a snapshot of contemporary Australian suburban youth-culture. The exception is Phil (Gandhi MacIntyre), an aging Indian kebab shop owner whose role is as the vehicle for earthy oriental apophthegmata. It also refers to the music that epitomises the unifying theme of night-clubbing, drugs and seediness. The film consists of the criss-crossing narratives (I hesitate to use the word 'plot') of these hip youths' lives. It is set in Sydney but shot mainly in Adelaide.

The director and production team had little or no experience in film. One of their intentions was to produce a contrast to the dark and brooding trend of Australian cinema, aiming to give the subject matter a more up-beat style. The producer (Emile Sherman) also claims the film breaks new ground in showing Australia's multi-culturalism. This is fine as far as it goes, but the non-Anglo-Saxon characters might as well have been Anglo-Saxon. Multi-ethnic it is, multi-cultural it ain't.

The ensemble cast, including several newbies, gives a strong performance. Perhaps the most memorable individuals are Justin Rosniak as Joey, a wannabe rebel who becomes increasingly erratic and violent in his pathetic desperation to be taken seriously, and Ben Mendelsohn as the camp parasite John (an amusing but ultimately superfluous character). Top-billed Kylie Minogue is not impressive, trying and failing to be sultry and intense.

One striking feature of this film is its inventive camera work and visuals, such as the use of layered light effects during a drugged-out picnic scene. These are not necessarily original but are quite effective. Strangely, these don't appear in the second half of the film. With its many-tiered narratives, themes of drugs etc, this film is basically a cross between *Two Hands* and *Go*. It

does not break any new ground. The question is, therefore, how well it presents and interprets its material. The visual effects could have been memorable if they had been sustained but their sudden disappearance left the feeling that they were self-conscious and contrived.

An opportunity to do something different was certainly missed. I'm not convinced that all the characters were substantial enough to justify their place. *Sample People* is ultimately uneven, unoriginal, and several characters and threads would not be missed if left out. However, there is enough humour, interest and some fairly intense individual scenes to make it worth watching.

Guy Olding

Mansfield Park

Director/Screenplay: Patricia Rozema

Starring: Frances O'Connor, Jonny Lee Miller

Palace Nova East End Cinemas

Mansfield Park is the latest screen adaptation of a Jane Austen novel and perhaps one of the best. Having never read a Jane Austen novel in my life, I am speaking purely from a filmic perspective. Canadian director Patricia Rozema does not have all that many credits to her name but is quite obviously skilled in the art of filmmaking. The only thing she has done that I



have seen is *Yo Yo Ma Inspired By Bach* which showed on the ABC a couple of years ago. Yo Yo Ma is a violinist (or maybe a cellist, I can't remember) and various directors directed

'music clips', for want of a better word, of him playing Bach in different settings. Atom Egoyan was also involved in this project.

Mansfield Park is the story of Fanny Price (Frances O'Connor) whose family is poor but who has rich aunts (or at least their husbands are rich) that live on the great estate Mansfield Park. Fanny is taken to live with her aunts when she is about 11, not realising until she arrives that she will not be able to return to her family. She grows up writing stories and sending them to her sister who she used to entertain with them as a child. With the help of her friend and cousin Edmund Bertram, Fanny expands her mind (one of her downfalls, as several people put it) by reading as much as she can. Once she is a woman, the question of marriage arises and this is when the drama starts.

The first two thirds of this film are quite witty and humourous and the last third quite dark. This does not detract from the film at all. In fact I think it makes it stronger. It loses all possibility of being dismissed as fluff like other Jane Austin adaptations could be, for example *Emma* and even *Sense and Sensibility*. O'Connor does a brilliant job as the heroine and Miller is also good in his role. I find it difficult to fault this film, although I am sure people who have read the book might. I have been told that Fanny is a bit pathetic in the novel. However, in the film she is not. In fact she is comparable to Lizzie in *Pride and Prejudice*. There is also the question of the so-called lesbian aspects of two of the scenes. They are justified, one scene is to prompt a man into action and the other is the result of reading too much into it after seeing the first scene. If that doesn't make sense then go and see the film and you will understand.

This is an excellent film well worth seeing.

ChrisB

The Girl on the Bridge (La filles sur le pont)

Director: Patrice Leconte

Starring: Vanessa Paradis and Daniel Auteuil
Palace Nova East End Cinemas

The opening scene is Adele. Shot after shot: there is Adele with her big sorry eyes and the gap between her teeth and credits flashing in between. I knew then that *The Girl on the Bridge* was going to be a visual and an emotional hour and a half. The scene continues with Adele

confessing her misfortune. Wrong choices, wrong turns, wrong roads taken.

"There's no wrong road, only bad company." That is what Gabor tells Adele after he has stopped her from jumping off a bridge. Then the movie takes off into a knife throwing frenzy around the world, with fear and passion being confused and a whole lot of luck.

Patrice Leconte directed this movie for movie connoisseurs. The lighting, the close-ups, the



angles...it is all there in black and white. The two actors absorb the screen: living and breathing heaviness with such simple movements: Vanessa Paradis as the tragically light Adele, and Daniel Auteuil as the tragically dark Gabor. They are both so tragically perfect. The soundtrack could not be more right with the swinging Benny Goodman for feeling good and the haunting Marianne Faithful for feeling quietly emotional. No wonder the film was nominated as the Best Foreign Language Film at the Golden Globes. It is a wonder, however, that it did not win.

I am not one of those females who feel degraded as a sex when I see beautiful young women fall for ugly older men in the movies. I know that anything is possible. I will, however, not deny that I have taken notice of it and laughed to myself. I did not need to laugh at all during *The Girl on the Bridge*, seeing a beautiful twenty year old girl with a ragged almost-fifty man. The delicacy with which the film is handled makes the romance between Adele and Gabor seem like the most natural thing in the world, not just the most natural thing in the movies.

The film, for me, was a visual feast complete with desire and anxiety and a touch of humor. It made me believe in love and it made me believe in luck. I still can't stop talking about it.

Heather Johnson

Programme

Week 9, Thursday 9th May

***Breathless* (1960)**

aka *À bout de souffle*

Directed by Jean-Luc Godard

Starring: Jean-Paul Belmondo, Jean Seberg

Belmondo is ideally cast as a Parisian hood who, accompanied by American girl (Seberg), is chased by police after stealing a car and killing a cop. As the police net tightens, Michel's bravado and desperation grow.



Groundbreaking, influential New Wave tale with a classic romanticized gangster-hero and great candid shots of Paris life. Dedicated to Monogram Pictures, with a story by François Truffaut.

Week 10, Thursday 18th May

***The Maltese Falcon* (1941)**

Directed by John Huston

Starring: Humphrey Bogart, Mary Astor, Peter Lorre

Outstanding detective drama improves with each viewing. Sam Spade is a partner in a private-eye firm who finds himself hounded by police when his partner is killed whilst tailing a man. The girl who asked him to follow the man turns out not to be who she says she is, and is really involved in something to do with the 'Maltese Falcon', a gold-encrusted life-sized statue of a falcon, the only one of its kind. Huston's first directorial effort (which he also scripted) moves at lightning pace, with cameo by his father Walter Huston as Captain Jacobi.

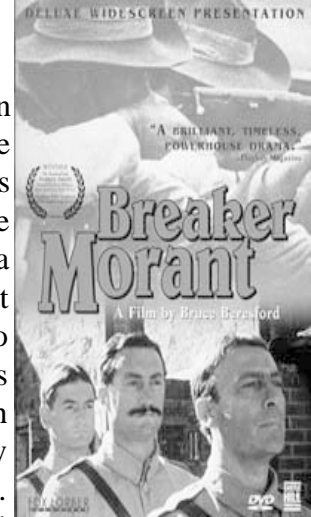
Week 11, Thursday 25th May

***Breaker Morant* (1980)**

Directed by Bruce Beresford

Starring: Edward Woodward, Jack Thompson, John Waters, Bryan Brown

Potent drama based on the true story of three soldiers whose actions during the Boer War are used as fodder for a trumped-up court martial--in order to satisfy the political plans of the British Empire. Based on a play by Kenneth G. Ross. Winner of several Australian Academy Awards.



Week 12, Thursday 1st June

***King Kong* (1933)**

Directed by Merian C. Cooper and Ernest B. Schoedsack

Starring Fay Wray, Robert Armstrong (I)



An expedition exploring a remote island capture a gigantic ape and bring him back to New York for exhibition. A beautiful actress who accompanies them is menaced when the monster's love for her causes him to break out. A classic version of the beauty-and-beast theme is a moviegoing must, with Willis O'Brien's special effects and animation of monster ape Kong still unsurpassed. Final

sequence atop Empire State Building is now cinema folklore; Max Steiner's music score is also memorable.