

# Reel/Buzz

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PALACE NOVA

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## President's Report

2001 has so far been a haphazard year for the FilmSoc. Enrolments during O'Week were significantly down from recent years. This trend was almost universal among clubs and so was probably more to do with the SAUA's arrangements than anything the club did, though our traditional O'Week film, *A Clockwork Orange*, has obviously lost its pull. Are the old in-out-in-out and ultra-violence *passee* these days? There have also been unavoidable difficulties encountered in the programme, the usual Thursday slot being unavailable for *Jaws*, and *Nosferatu* being cancelled amid a communications breakdown with the Adelaide University Union. Hopefully things will settle down as the year progresses.

Introducing your newly reinvigorated committee: 'Mad' Matt Lowry is the FilmSoc's seventh president, upholding the fine presidential tradition of having long hair. Aarons Camens fills the Vice Presidency and is also the inaugural First Year Rep, the designated embodiment of the new. Mandy Rudham is Treasurer, Michael Rowlands is Webmeister and Stephen Hobson is his deputy, the Sorcerer's Apprentice. Club stalwarts continue their involvement in the form of Matthew Harvey, resuming his erstwhile role as Secretary; Paul Huntley becomes Clubs' Association Delegate; Anna Solding continues as Reelbuzz editor with Kirk Svenson as assistant asrequired. I retain a minor hat as Poster Boy.

I would like to thank those who have helped to make involvement in the club an enjoyable and worthwhile experience and to wish the new members well. Needless to say, the committee is not an exclusive clique that jealously monopolises all aspects of film-watching: ordinary members can be as much or as little involved as they want, for instance, in reviewing new-release films, projecting, or generally hanging. Happy viewing.

Guy Olding

<http://www.smug.adelaide.edu.au/aufs>

## Review

### *Chocolat*

Director: Lasse Hallstrom

Starring: Juliette Binoch, Judi Dench & Johnny Depp.

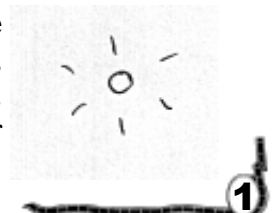
Do you love chocolate? Do you every now and then need a heart-warming film where you don't have to think much? Did you like *What's Eating Gilbert Grape* and last year's Oscar winner *The Cider House Rules*? If the answer is yes, you are most likely to also enjoy director Lasse Hallstrom's new international venture *Chocolat*.

Set in a conservative small town in France some decades ago, the story revolves around a single mother (Binoch) and her struggles to establish a *chocolaterie* and be accepted by the villagers



for who she is. Feels like you've seen it all before? Well, you probably have (Dutch film *Antonia's Line* has a similar premise, but takes it much further). What makes *Chocolat* more interesting than the average Hollywood fluff are the exquisite chocolate making scenes and the great performances from Juliette Binoch and Judi Dench. Even though we know what is going to happen, we want to see it all on screen (Johnny Depp is to die for in his pony tail and struggling Irish accent).

Characters in interaction are Hallstrom's strength but *Chocolat* also has occasional visual experiments that work (like the black and white shot of the village where only the roofs stand out red). Further devises of a similar kind could have improved the overall look of the film but I suppose *Chocolat* is more about smelling, tasting and feeling. So when you go, don't forget to bring a bag of your favourite chocolates!



# More Reviews

## *2001: A Space Odyssey*

Director: Stanley Kubrick

Starring: Douglas Rain, Daniel Richter, Kier Dullea.



Can words sum up the majesty and impact of this movie? Not really. Kubrick himself eschewed dialogue for much of his masterpiece, preferring instead to let the audio-visual experience connect directly with the audience without extraneous speech. These reservations of reviewing aside the remastered (now with thundering 5.1 Dolby Digital sound) reissue of is yet another confirmation of its perfection. Containing the greatest jumpcut in cinematic history, where four million years of human history and evolution are deemed irrelevant, the most harrowing death scene, and the single finest sequence ever committed to celluloid, *2001* is not the sort of film to be missed. It's as simple as that. I could continue raving in praise but I'll wrap up right now.

Masterfully written, directed and edited this is a film which will restore your faith in great cinematic works of art, provoke your awareness of our place in the universe, and still leave you a drooling incoherent mess afterwards. What more could we demand of cinema? See it or live with the knowledge that your life is sadly incomplete.

Craig (Who else? *Editor's note*)



## *The Contender*

Director: Rod Lurie

Starring: Joan allen, Gary Oldman, Jeff Bridges, Christian Slater.

I walked into the Palace flustered because it was already thirty-plus degrees at nine-thirty in the morning and I was three minutes late. I didn't know what to expect: the scheduled movie had changed and there were no production notes on hand. When I realised the movie had an American political flavour, I was flustered *nd* skeptical. To my surprise, *The Contender* turned out to be the highlight of my day.

The tale is a timely one, focusing on scandal and courtroom proceedings in the White House. You may ask 'Haven't we

s e e n enough?' following on the heels of Bill Clinton's legacy of sexual indiscretion, but I suggest giving the topic a second viewing.



Rod Lurie directs one of the finest cast of actors I've seen in a long time. The understated but compelling Joan Allen was nominated for an Oscar as best actress for the movie. Her frustrated composure under extraordinary circumstances is both delicate and forceful at once. Jeff Bridges received a similar nomination for best supporting actor as his role as the President of the United States. His food-fixation gives an everyday-guy quality to his title, as does his compassion and admiration for his Vice-President elect's integrity. Gary Oldman usually wins favour with his many diverse roles and this is no exception. His control of the Chairman of the judiciary hearings is unbreakable with a careful mixture of deserved respectability and utter ruthlessness. We love to hate him and yet somehow feel sympathy.

The story begins with an act of heroism, which we think is to be the focus of the central plot. It then winds itself into a tangle of dirty tricks, assumptions and lies. The party's are out to get each other and it looks as

though no one is going to win. Lurie's development of action leads to the knowledge that no one is who we think they are so you have to



wonder who, in this fight for justice under the guise of democracy, is trustworthy. Very dramatic indeed.

And it is the pure drama of *The Contender* that is so compelling. The pace is never too much or too little (though occasionally some of the monologues are). And where I would usually cringe as the music swells in typical Hollywood style, it somehow seems to be unexpected and acceptable and perhaps even welcomed. It's a political movie in more ways than one—certainly we're meant to learn something—but it's a fine example of what Hollywood can produce if the right people get together and do it with style.

**Heather Johnson**

## *Dr T. & The Women*

Director: Robert Altman

Starring: Richard Gere & Helen Hunt.

Dr Sullivan Travis, known as Dr T. (Gere), is a gynaecologist, professionally successful and adored by his society-set clients and (entirely female) staff. His success is founded upon his immense respect for women. As he says, no two are alike and all are saints. Ie he's a patronising twat. Dr T.'s world is thrown upside down when two of the women in his life exhibit strange and disturbing signs of making their own lifestyle decisions. His eldest daughter DeeDee (Kate Hudson) is getting married but at her wedding runs off with a bridesmaid with whom she has had a lesbian relationship. If this decision was split-second or premeditated is not clear: if the latter she displays appalling disregard for her fiance's feelings (but that's all right because he doesn't get any lines) and her father's bank balance, wastes the time of hundreds of guests and insults them with her smug and calculatedly confrontational grandstanding. But Dr T. accepts this because he loves his daughter. What a man. It is new golfing instructor Bree Davis (Hunt) who causes him



most grief. They become romantically involved but Dr T. is crushed when he discovers that her habits are not exclusive. Just as well that point was made, I wouldn't have spotted her as capable of independent thought if she wasn't promiscuous. Also, Dr T.'s wife (Farrah Fawcett) becomes mentally unhinged from an excess of loving care, just in case you hadn't got the idea that patriarchal sexism can come from positive emotions as well as negative.

*Dr T. & the Women* is an inane self-satisfied film about superficial people acting in contrived situations to make facile social comment on an issue that was hackneyed 20 years ago. By comparison, *The Contender*, a current film also dealing with attitudes towards women, is only 10 years out of date and has the decency to use a sledgehammer when it wants to insult your intelligence.

**Guy**

## *Walk the Talk*

Director: Shirley Barrett.

Starring: Salvatore Coco & Sasha Horler.

This movie made me want immediately to hire *Funny Games* in disgust, to remind myself of what really happens to people when you shoot bullets at them...

Joey Grasso (Salvatore Coco) is the archetypal dreamer-schemer who bites off more than he can chew. Bonita (Sacha Horler) is Joey's paraplegic girlfriend, with compo money to burn, specifically to fund Joey's ambitious schemes. Nikki is a forgotten club singer whose dreams of fame have been buried beneath a cynical exterior. Joey becomes obsessed with rekindling these dreams when he meets Nikki in a Gold Coast evangelical Christian establishment. His "acceptance is unacceptable" mentality is carried to unpleasant extremes in his pursuit of Nikki's "star".

This film displayed all the features typical of poor Australian "quirk" movies (cf. e.g. *Spider and Rose*, and, though it is not Australian, *Million Dollar Hotel*). Such movies share the following features: (a) they are invariably set in the eastern states, with accents as appropriate; (b) they feature quirky characters with what in the real world would be regarded as seriously annoying character defects, at whom we are yet supposed not only to laugh, but to direct feelings of endearment and empathy; (c) they have completely unrealistic plots with ridiculous and sometimes disgusting scenarios in which the "lovable" characters do things like shoot guns around the place randomly causing damage to property and/or persons (*Walk the Talk*), or have baths with naked people four times their age (*Spider and*

Rose), displays which are supposed to endear us yet more to these severely deranged and inconsiderate "characters". Now, fair enough if these characters are just being realistic (no-one's perfect, everyone contains evil, right?); in this case, there is scope for the *harsh realist* movie. But not only are the characters in *Walk the Talk* etc. offputtingly naïve (Bonita) or irresponsible (Joey), they are also completely *unrealistic*; and they get away with things that in real life you'd almost certainly not get away with. OK, this film wasn't nearly as excruciatingly painful as *Million Dollar Hotel*. I enjoyed Nikki Bennett's role. And there were a few chuckles, especially at the start. But the worst thing about *Walk the Talk* was the ending, so be warned. If only it had been wrapped up differently, this movie might just have been brilliant. But ah what a tragedy! A tragedy it was ever made.

### Big Bouncy Bee of Death

## Important Note

Are you happy with the films we show? If you are pleased, so are we. But if you're not, let your voice be heard. We would love to hear from more of you members out there. If you want to have a say in next term's programme, why don't you come along to next film choosing night. It will be held on Friday 23rd March at a secret location in the City (our ex-prez' house). Let him know if you're coming and he'll tell you where it is.

[guy.olding@student.adelaide.edu.au](mailto:guy.olding@student.adelaide.edu.au)

Look out for upcoming film *Harry, He's Here to Help* (*Harry, un ami qui vous veut du bien*). Many a reviewer has called the suspense Hitchcock-like.



**Editor: Sol**  
**Contributors: Guy, Craig,**  
**Heather and Matt.**

## Programme

All films shown in the Union Cinema at 7 pm

**Wednesday 21st March**

***NOSFERATU* (Let's try again!)**

22nd March

***THE MAN IN THE WHITE SUIT* (1951)**

Directed by Alexander MacKendrick.

Starring Alec Guinness, Joan Green & Cecil Parker.

A laboratory dishwasher discovers a fabric that never wears out or gets dirty. Trying to sell his invention he is persecuted by both industrialists and trade unions. The same director and many of the same actors as last year's *The Ladykillers*.

plus short film

***ACT OF GOD* (1980)**

Directed by Peter Greenaway.

Short doco about victims of lightning strikes with that mystifying Greenaway style.

29th March

***KISS ME DEADLY* (1955)**

Directed by Robert Aldrich.

Starring Ralph Meeker.

Based on a novel by the gangster/private eye sleaze-monger Mickey Spillane. Classic film noir. A major source for *Pulp Fiction*.



plus short film

***L'ETOILE DE MER* (1928)**

An example of Man Ray's experimental cinematic techniques.

5th April

***FALSTAFF* (1967)**

Directed, written by and starring Orson Welles. Also starring Jeanne Moreau, Margaret Rutherford & John Gielgud.

A film focusing on the flamboyant but ultimately tragic character from Shakespeare's *Henry IV* parts 1 and 2. One of the last films Welles directed and reputedly the best-realised after *Citizen Kane*.

plus short film

***KING OF THE CATS* (1984)**

About what we all suspect cats are really up to.

<http://www.smug.adelaide.edu.au/aufs>