



Reel/Buzz

Circulation
330

Monthly Publication of the Adelaide University Film Society

Vol. 5 Ed. 6

May 2001

PALACE NOVA

WALLIS

President's Report

Hello everybody!

I'd like to use this issue of *Reelbuzz* to urge the AUFS members to, in the words of the most funky James Brown, "Get in to it and get involved". Yes folks, the Film Society only functions because people like you are willing to give up just a bit of time every now and then to make it all happen. Needless to say, you can start by coming to the film choosing night on Saturday the 9th of June. But please consider folks, there's all kinds of little things that you can do to help make AUFS the funkier film society on the face of the planet. For example:

* Someone has to be there to do the screenings. You can help out with "front-of-house". That's those nice friendly people who sit out the front of the cinema. Also there's projection. Ever wanted to learn how to use a 16mm film projector? We'll show you how.

* Those films need advertising! All it takes is a super happy health-inducing 15 minute stroll around the campus to help out putting posters up.

* So you like movies, huh? Well since *PalaceNova* are our sponsors, as an AUFS member you get the opportunity to go to special media preview screenings of new movies, before they officially open! All you have to do in return is write a review.

* What about a theme screenings - like the week of Japanese films we had recently in conjunction with the Japan-Australia Friendship Association. If you have an idea for a themed series of screenings then the AUFS' access to strange and obscure films is there to be exploited!

This is of course just a sample of the things that are possible. The sky is the limit with the extra special fun AUFS, but it needs people to get in to it and get involved. "How do I get involved, Matt?" I hear you say. Well it's simple. Just come along to the Committee meetings we have every week of term time. They are currently being held every Monday at 1pm in the

Cannon Poole room in the Union Building. So just rock on up, introduce yourself (right on), and you too can be part of the magical farcical tour that is organising the Film Society.

Well, that all from me. Enjoy!

Matt Lowry

Editor's Little Note

Hi there all movie buffs!

I hope you are following all the happenings on our discussion list. Anyone who feels they have thoughts to share on films or related topics can contribute whenever they like by writing to

aufs-discussion@smug.adelaide.edu.au

If writing emails simply isn't enough you have the opportunity to see your scribbles in print in this publication. All you need to do is contact me on anna_solding@hotmail.com

You can also come along to a Thursday night screening or even join us at a committee meeting on Mondays 1 pm in the Canon Poole room, level 5 of the Union Building. We always need more active members. As a reviewer you get to see films for free before they reach the cinema! The only catch is that they are usually shown at 9.30 am and you have to write a 300 word review. What a low price to pay for fame.

If anyone is interested in helping me out with *Reelbuzz* please let me know as I am more than willing to share the work load and teach you all I know about pagemaker and photoshop (which isn't all that much really, as you might have noticed...).

Good luck with exams to those of you who still have to endure them. Have a great holiday and don't forget the weekend away in July (see page 4).

Hope to see you all next term.



Reviews

Serenades

Directed by Mojgan Khadem.

Starring Alice Haines, Aden Young, Sinisa Copic & Bille Brown.

This film depicts the relations between Afghans, remote missions and the indigenous population in late 19th century Australia. The interplay is made manifest in the person of Jila (Katayla Williams/Haines): her aboriginal mother was a gambling debt paid to camel driver Shir Mohammed (Copic). As a child and teenager Jila is traded by one man to the next. The pastor (Brown) of an isolated Lutheran mission demands pigs, which Afghans normally refuse to transport, in exchange for giving custody of her to Shir. Shir betroths her to a Mullah in exchange for a substantial bride price. The pastor's son Johann (Young), Jila's childhood friend, tries and fails to out-bid the Mullah. Jila, largely passive throughout the film, in desperation makes her first deliberate act which backfires and estranges her from both the Afghan and Lutheran communities.

The film's themes are hardly revolutionary nor are they innovatively handled: the inability of different cultures to find common ground and the difficulties experienced by those who straddle the gap, the conflict between rigorous adherence to religious teaching, expediency and humanity and the denial of self-determination to women. It is worth noting that Khadem's previous work is in documentaries and that historian Christine Stevens was pivotal in writing the script. It is my feeling that they were more interested in the general situation than the particular characters or story. I have a sneaking suspicion that this is behind the episodic approach to Jila's life and that the climax, involving an explosion in the prominence and resolution of her character, is a dramatic nicety. This is not to say that the climax is not charged and memorable. *Serenades* is not a totally gripping film but there is enough in the characters and story to keep you interested. And is there any finer occupation than the study of history?

Guy



What's Cooking?

Directed by Gurinder Chadha

Starring Alfre Woodard, Kyra Sedgwick and Mercedes Ruel.

I'm American. Being from America, I celebrate Thanksgiving. The only thing bigger than the Thanksgiving feast on Thanksgiving Day is the anxious mixture of loyalty to one's family and duty toward tradition—love and exasperation. Nearly every American movie I've seen about Thanksgiving is founded upon this tradition. In *What's Cooking?* there's a mother (Alfre Woodard) driven to a near-nervous breakdown by her mother-in-law, a child who is no longer a child (Kyra Sedgwick) coping with her alternative lifestyle in the realm of her childhood home, a father using the holiday to win back his wife (Mercedes Ruel) despite his infidelities and a family's peace being interrupted by the rebellious teenagers (Kristy Wu and Jimmy Pham) of a new generation. In short, no one is normal and it all comes to a climax as the turkey hits the table. So I can say I've seen it before, I've lived it before, at least twenty-seven times. But what sets *What's Cooking?* apart from the typical Thanksgiving theme is its international flavour.

Along with a camera-eye view of Mexican, Vietnamese, African-American and Jewish foods blending in complete contrast, but quite sumptuously, I'm sure, with the traditional tinned cranberry sauce, stuffing and turkey, Gurinder Chadha lets us peek at these cultures which blend in amazing consistency with the American culture. No one is normal. Every family has its problems. And everyone eats, regardless of politics, bitterness, guilt or pride, regardless of race, religion or background, with the family. It is America.

The stories are as obvious as the outcome but these are endearing stories. I left the theatre longing for lunch, a grand lunch, and longing for my family with all of its quirks and never-ending surprises. No matter where you're from, you might very well leave the theatre feeling just the same.

Heather Johnson

The Mummy Returns

Directed by Stephen Sommers

Starring Brendan Frazer, Rachel Weisz and Freddie Boath.

After you've spent five hours dissertating with your friends on the respective merits of *Red*, *White* and *Blue* and other pompous French crap, why not unwind with



a good old belly laugh at your local megacinema? *The Mummy* has indeed returned, bigger, better and more hilarious than before.

Ten years after their first adventure, Rick (Brendan Fraser) and Evelyn O'Connell (Rachel Weisz) are now married with a son (Freddie Boath). The boy accidentally gets his wrist locked in the bracelet of eternal something-or-other. This causes all kinds of trouble, as Imhotep (Arnold Vosloo), the original *Mummy*, has been resurrected from "hibernation" at the Museum, to join his rather more attractive other half Anck-Su-Namun (Patricia Velasquez) in a quest to conquer the universe together forever. All they need is to get the bracelet, insert it into the statue of eternal something-or-other, and kill the Scorpion King – played by WWF big boy The Rock (no lack of acting experience there) – who is also bursting to be resurrected. Poor Rick and team have to bundle these villains back into the grave before they destroy the universe. It's completely ridiculous, but hey! If you liked the first installment, you'll love this:

there's the same cast of goodies, actors that by now just seem to go so well together. The goofy one (John Hannah); the serious one (Oded



Fehr); the female one; call it a cliché. I call it a time-honoured formula for success. And I think this stands alongside *Jewel of the Nile* and ... almost next to *Raiders* as one of the great action-comedy-romance movies of all time. And in 2002 there's apparently going to be a prequel (that tainted word), also starring The Rock. In summary, you'd have to be pretty boring and pompous not to enjoy this one... Yeah yeah and I can hear you muttering something about "excludes

most of the film-choosing night attendees". Just be thankful we chose the occasional raucous 50s British comedy...fumble, bumble, oh bother I dropped my toupee on my snuff-box...

The Pebble

State and Main

Directed & written by David Mamet.

Starring William H. Macy, Philip Seymour Hoffman, Rebecca Pidgeon, Alec Baldwin, David Paymer & Sarah Jessica Parker.

Having been thrown off their shoot in New Hampshire, a film crew, desperate for a location, arrive in the one-horse New England town of Waterford. Problems continually plague the production. There are the tantrums and 'hobbies' of the stars, Bob Barrenger (a dissipated-looking Baldwin) and Claire Wellesley (Parker), the obsessive script-writer Joe (Hoffman) who has lost his typewriter and is blocked, and, not least, the town's historic mill turns out to have burned down in 1960, something of a disadvantage when shooting a film called 'The Old Mill'. Throughout it all director Walt Price (Macy) flatters, bullies and ooses false sincerity with the single-minded aim of getting the film in the can. The show must go on. There's no funding left.

The humour derives from the quick dialogue, the snowballing of trivial problems into potential disasters, and the collision of the characters' petty eccentricities. The sequence where Walt persuades a near-hysterical Claire to do a nude shot is an absolute treat. The general flavour is reminiscent of *Wag the Dog* (which Mamet co-wrote). There's a certain amount of cushy predictability and the plot twists are almost smug but this is disarmed with irony that never quite gets out of control. There are a few too many characters, many of whom don't get much description. Some of the casting and characterisation isn't quite right: teenager Carla (Julia Stiles) seems too calculating to be smitten with Barrenger, and Ann Black (Pidgeon) is a little too sharp and perky to be a product of a town of simple old-world values and laconic wit. A few too many allusions go unexplained and I didn't grasp the significance of the traffic lights at the intersection of State and Main streets (hence the title). But I did enjoy this film. It's entertaining and highly amusing.



Guy

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

What's Happening?

Film Choosing Night!

As the end of the term is drawing near, it is time once more to hold a Film Choosing Night. Yay! The story is simple. Any AUFS members (I guess non-members too for that matter) who care about what films we show in Term 3 congregate on the appointed night at the appointed location, pour over the musty old tomes we call "Catalogues", bicker for some time, make suggestions, then vote on the short list. The movies deemed most popular will be selected.

So, if you think your taste in movies is so superior, why don't you take the opportunity to inflict it upon everyone else and get involved! And remember - if you don't show up you can't complain when next term's program sucks. :)

This term the Film Choosing Night will be held at the domus of me, your erstwhile Prez. If you plan on coming then an email to me (Matt Lowry - mclowry@cs.adelaide.edu.au) would be cool so I have some kind of idea how many people might be there ... but feel free to just rock up on the night. All and sundry are welcome. :)

The details:

Date : Sat. 9th June

Time : 7pm onwards

Place : 414 Portrush Road, Linden Park
(directly opposite Burnside Shopping Centre)

Phone : 8379 6680

BYO : Food, booze, other social lubricants.

(if there is sufficient demand we can collectively order pizza or some such ...)

Matt Lowry

Prez

Friday the 13th!

Where would you rather be than stuck in the country with a bunch of fanatics on a day with an ominous-sounding name? Nowhere, we hope, because it is once again time for another of our famous (or should I say infamous) weekends away. It is all about getting together in some remote location and simply enjoying the occasional good movie and sampling gourmet food (commonly known as aussie barbie). With that you get fabulous company thrown in for free!

The next weekend away will take place on **July 13th to 15th**. We have still to book venue so keep an eye on the announce list for further details. It is usually very cheap as we buy and cook our own food. If you enjoy getting away from the city, simply relaxing for a few days and perhaps getting to know some like-minded people, this is for you.

Please let us know as soon as possible if you are interested as places are limited and usually disappear fairly quickly. Email me on anna_solding@hotmail.com or give me a ring on 8364 4916 and I will pass the message on.

