



Reel Buzz

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PALACE NOVA

President's Report

My seven weeks at Camp David were enlightening but despite the shock therapy I have decided that the Film Society will now invade Iraq in its fight against the terror of Hoyts and Greater Union. This will immediately increase our membership by several million and compulsory attendance at Thursday films will be introduced in accordance with my religious law. The dramatic expansion of my empire of course requires the demolition of most of Adelaide University to convert the area into an extremely large drive-in. This can also be utilised during the rest of the week as a parking lot, further swelling the Film Society coffers.

In accordance with our aim to satisfy our members' needs (sounds good!) you will find the term programme for our Thursday films in this issue of *Reelbuzz*. I hope there is something there to whet your appetite and if not it's your own fault for avoiding the film choosing night! Look at the list - they are all classics and too good to watch on video, come and see them on the very-nearly-big screen and don't forget there are movie-pass door prizes. Anyway it's winter and you can't have anything else to do on a Thursday night can you? You do? Why wasn't I invited? And if you really can't come to the films persuade someone else to come along.

Make a note in your diary for 1.00pm on Wed 14th August. We, your committee, are holding a Special General Meeting to fill a couple of vacancies in our structure. Here is your chance to become 'slightly' involved and reap all the benefits that will flow from our annexation of Iraq and eventual takeover of Hoyts and Greater Union. Come along anyway and support us even if you can't become a committee member, it's a big room with only eight of us!

Enjoy the reviews that follow. We hope they help you to decide where to invest your precious movie dollars. By the way, committee members review these films - just one of the perks of the job.

Breaking news: log on to www.aufs.org and check out our very own website.

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

Film Quiz

1. Director Frank Darabont has directed *The Shawshank Redemption*, *The Green Mile* and *The Majestic*. Which of these films was not originally a story by Stephen King?
2. What was the first Stephen King novel to be turned into a film?
3. Which country produces the most films per annum?
4. What has been the best-attended film in film history? *Star Wars* (Episode IV), *Gone with the Wind*, *Titanic*?
5. What country was Alfred Hitchcock born in?
6. Which film won best film this year at the Academy Awards?
7. Director David Fincher, who made the films *Se7en*, *Fight Club* and *Panic Room*, also directed *Alien3*. True or False?

ESther

Editor's Note

First of all I'd like to thank ESther for filling in for me while I was away and also for compiling interesting details for this terms programme. Secondly, thanks goes to everyone in the club who makes an effort to see previews and write reviews. Without you there would be no *Reelbuzz*. Keep up the good work!

Contributors: Allan,
Gus, ESther, Bronwen,
and Felice

Reviews

The Tracker

Directed by Rolf de Heer.

Starring David Gulpilil and Gary Sweet.

In the 1920s an Aboriginal man suspected of murdering a white woman has fled into the wilderness. Pursuing him are a mounted policeman (Sweet), a young and naïve trooper, a laconic veteran, and their Aboriginal tracker (Gulpilil). The journey exposes the white men's patronising brutality and their ultimate dependence on the tracker.

This film received a standing ovation when it opened at the Adelaide Festival earlier this year. This can't have been anything to do with its cinematic qualities. Few films leave viewers with so little scope for their own interpretation and so little doubt as to what their emotional and moral response is supposed to be. The audience is forced into identifying with its blatant moral agenda - anyone who doesn't applaud is obviously insensitive and bereft of human compassion. Its technique of moral coercion is twofold.

Firstly, it self-consciously separates itself from any real situation: none of the characters have names (captions introduce them as 'the mounted policeman representing the government' etc) and the location is 'Somewhere in Australia...' This constitutes a none-to-subtle claim to universalism and implicitly asserts that what is conveyed belongs to some higher level of truth. Secondly, there are the paintings, illustrating various scenes, that intersperse the film, and Archie Roach's songs. These might be fine by themselves. In the context of a film they are, at best, unnecessary and, at worst, spadefuls of meta-narrative, serving only to heighten (if possible) the film's moral and aesthetic pretension. It's an amazing regression from the simplicity and dignity of Philip Noyce's *Rabbit Proof Fence*, which I still think is the best film I've seen this year.

Opening at Palace-Nova Eastend Cinemas on 8th August.

Guy

Walking on Water

Directed by Tony Ayres.

This is an Australian film in quite a few senses: it's set in Sydney, has some characters from Kangaroo Island and features three gay men, one of whom dies of AIDS within the first ten minutes. Directed by Tony Ayres and written by Roger Monk, it tells the story of friends and family left behind.



Gavin (David Bonney) wants to be assisted to die. His two friends Charlie (Vince Colosimo) and headstrong, dominant Anna (Maria Theodorakis) live with him. Vince's boyfriend is the somewhat younger, somewhat more successful and cuter Frank (Nicholas Bishop) and the differences between them

become apparent as we see more and more of the movie.

Gavin's mother Margaret (Judi Farr) is pushed into the background by Anna's monopolistic involvement in everything, from funeral flowers to her gaining Gavin's house via the will. Her other son, Simon, has also brought his young family to see his brother off. They leave earlier than he, allowing him to luxuriate in his newfound independence: he sleeps with Anna and goes out to a nightclub where he overdoses. It's full of sharp humour and observations about people. It tries to pick at the human side of loss and to show us the little ways and things through which life goes on. It's a low-budget local production but definitely fun to watch.

Will be screening at Palace-Nova Eastend Cinemas from 26th September.

Felix Staica

Fast Food Fast Women

Y tu mamá también

Directed by Alfonso Cuarón.

Spanish with English subtitles, rated R

A raucous sex scene sets the tone for this sizzling film from Mexico. *Y tu mamá también* (And Your Mother, Too) is about sex, friendship, sex, self-discovery, sex, life and sex. Tenoch (Diego Luna) and Julio (Gael



García Bernal) are two testosterone driven friends living perfect lazy lives - Tenoch in his family mansion and Julio in a modest apartment. The two face an unbearable summer of celibacy whilst their girlfriends are away in Italy. Their daily routine of sleeping in, getting high and jerking off is interrupted when they meet the beautiful, adventurous Spaniard, Luisa (Maribel Verdú) at a high-society wedding. Thinking with the contents of their briefs, the two invite Luisa to join them on a trip to an imaginary beach they have labelled "Heavens Mouth". They are shocked when she actually accepts the offer.

Here begins a road trip full of sex, drugs, crazy revelations and a series of quirky and surprising twists. There is also a deeper message concerning happiness, life and death, but thankfully, director, Alfonso Cuarón steers away from moralising. Cuarón brings together a crisp, lively script and a spirited cast to create a film that is extremely amusing, erotic, unpredictable and a hell of a lot of fun. It's a great 105 minutes of entertainment bound to leave you with a smile... and the need for a cold shower.

Y tu mamá también will be showing at Palace-Nova Eastend Cinemas from 26th August.

Bronwen

Directed by Amos Kollek.

This film is advertised as a comedy following in the footsteps of Woody Allen but I must say I didn't find it particularly funny. The story revolves around Bella (Anna Thomson), soon to turn 35, who works in an all-American diner. She has an ongoing affair with an older man but is talked into a blind date with the eligible Bruno (Jamie Harris). Of course it all goes wrong but they still get each other in the end. It is almost as if the director has been tempted to make a fairy tale out of a film.

Bella is a likable character but what ultimately makes this film more than fluff is the people who surround her. Three older men often meet and eat in the diner but when one of them answers a personal ad the equilibrium shifts. To me, it was both sweet and refreshing to see older people fret over possible sexual inadequacies. How often are elderly couples even portrayed on screen these days?

Performances are generally good and the scenes with Bruno and his daughter are both touching and slightly amusing. I think the main problem with *Fast Food Fast Women* is that

it is pulling in so many directions, wanting to tell so many stories, and therefore it doesn't quite manage to keep focused. There are a few wonderful scenes, especially one (which could be dubious from a racial point of view)

where the black son of one of Bella's white friends gets her grooving and dancing in her own living room. Unfortunately, there aren't enough of those to make *Fast Food Fast Women* more than an average film experience.

Currently screening at Palace-Nova Eastend Cinemas.



Programme Cam 777

All films are screened in the Union Cinema, Level 5, Union Building, Adelaide University, at 7pm on Thursday evenings, except where otherwise stated. All films are free for members except where otherwise stated.

WEEK 1, Thursday 1st August

Letter from an Unknown Woman (1948)

Directed by Max Ophüls.

Starring: Joan Fontaine, Louis Jourdan.

In Vienna, about 1900, a dashing man arrives at his flat, instructing his manservant that he will leave before morning: the man is Stefan Brand, formerly a concert pianist, planning to leave Vienna to avoid a duel. His servant gives him a letter from an unknown woman, which he reads. In flashbacks we see the life-long passion of Lisa Berndle for him. A study in obsession and retribution.

With short:

Hold Me While I'm Naked (1966)

Directed by George Kuchar.

Early Kuchar film using his familiar mix of lurid melodrama, personal reflections and overblown, or sad, music. Effective as both a melancholy diary of frustration and a powerful pastiche, said to be a major influence on John Waters.

WEEK 2

Hiroshima Remembrance Day

Tuesday 6th August in conjunction with the Japan Australia Friendship Association

Begins: 7.30pm Cost: Gold coin donation

Kadashi no Gen (aka *Barefoot Gen*) (1983) Animation

Directed by Mamoru Shinzaki.

A powerful statement against war, *Barefoot Gen* is a tragicomedy, about the effect of the atomic bomb on Gen's life, and the lives of the Japanese people.

Thursday 8th August

The Day of the Locust (1975)

Directed by John Schlesinger.

Starring: Donald Sutherland and Karen Black.

Based on West's cynical novel set in 1930s Hollywood. This film, like *Midnight Cowboy* (1969), made by the same producer/director/writer team of Hellman, Schlesinger and Salt, is a pessimistic, sordid tale of broken dreams and human weaknesses. It focuses on the desperate lives of two failed entertainers, and other

assorted losers on the fringes of Tinseltown, who strive in vain to gain entry into the glamorous world of the studios. Through the framework of these characters' decline, the morally bankrupt, elaborate and exclusive social networks that constituted the Hollywood hierarchy are revealed.

With short:

Peace Mandala (1966)

Directed by Paul Sharits.

A flicker film where "blank colour frequencies spaceout and optically feed-fuse into black and white images of one love-making gesture" (Paul Sharits).

WEEK 3, Thursday 15th August

The Manchurian Candidate (1962)

Directed by: John Frankenheimer

Starring: Frank Sinatra, Laurence Harvey, Janet Leigh, Angela Lansbury.

Political paranoia thriller. After Harvey returns from the Korean War as a decorated hero, the other members of his platoon can't really remember what he did to win his medal. Two of the soldiers start having recurring nightmares, and one of them decides to investigate Harvey's current activities. What dark and sinister secrets are being withheld by the Government and the Army?

With short:

TV Sale

An animated Canadian film

WEEK 4, Thursday 22nd August

Wage in Die Nacht (aka *Paths in the Night*) (1999)

Walter is an ex-communist in his mid-fifties who was once powerful but is now redundant and adrift in post-unification Germany, a society that no longer has any use for him. Spurred by his idealistic belief in a better world, but one that can only be obtained through strict controls, he joins forces with two young vigilantes in a nocturnal battle for law and order in Berlin's subways.

With short:

Early to Bed (1928)

Starring: Stan Laurel and Oliver Hardy.

Oliver inherits a fortune, hires Stan as his butler, and proceeds to torment him.

Silent comedy.