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PALACE NOVA

President's Report

Half gone or half to go?! Perhaps it depends on how well you're coping! *GRIN*

Either way, allow us to assist in your recreational relief with some celluloid meditation :o). I'm especially pleased to report, that after clerks & angels heating up, rocking all night and freaking out with shorts, to JAFAs, super duper Spirited anime, rugs, dEspairing spelling bees, their wax, and years of Marienbad (and beyond)... this year has so far been a bumper for attendance! So... is something missing from *your* life?? Come along and be part of the party :o)

Goolwa Getaway!! It has come to our attention after announcing THE date, that exams are rapidly approaching and would perhaps deter get-awayers, so the Goolwa weekend of drunkenness & debauchery has been postponed till mid-year holidays... *sigh*. However, the immediate good news is we will be having a grown-ups' sleep over at Beach-Castle Cassidy on Friday 13th & Saturday 14th June! BYO sleeping bag, sleeping bag warmer (?!), munchies, personalities & pills, and scary/weirdo (the weirder/cornier the better) films!! Only \$5 for the whole weekend to cover basics (such as copious amounts of communal chocolate *chocolaty grin*). Expressions of interest are welcome at ANY time to aufs@aufs.org.

Here at the AUFS office we appreciate that not everyone can make it to Thursday night screenings, or even Film Choosing Nights; so as we are for you as well as for ourselves, we're bringin' the choosin' to YOU!! New on the agenda for next term's selection we will be trialing YOUR EMAIL VOTE!!! (Use it or lose it) But do come if you can, and get in on the act for 'short-listing' the options. As always, fresh blood at any gathering is luuurved.

So, see ya at a weekly screening, or at Café Buongiorno's after 9.00pm each Thursday, or at the next Film Choosing Night on Saturday 14th of June, 7.00pm @ Castle Cassidy. Miss T's magnificent muffins on offer of course. Email webmaster@aufs.org for the address details and to RSVP. And remember to check your email regularly!

Miss Muffin-Maker Maestro-ess

<http://www.aufs.org>

Editor's Note

If the past month has taught us anything, it might be that Australian cinema is lodged into a pitiable abyss. Director Abe Forsythe's miserable feature *NED*, which is billed as a send up of *Ned Kelly*, is absolutely appalling. The reason this comes about is not just the poor script and repulsive puerility, but the fact that Gregor Jordan's was little more than a hollow hymn to rising patriotism.

Then there's *Horseplay*, Stavros Kazantzidis' spoof of the Melbourne Cup and Melburnian aristocracy. I sat in the cinema suffering from that most painful of film-induced sentiments: knowing I'm supposed to laugh but not being able to. There are many recognisable faces, including Abbie Cornish (Penne from *Life Support* on SBS) and Jason Donovan, but what's the use if the material is (to speak euphemistically) horse-waste?



Perhaps I am being too much the jaded cynic. *Alexandra's Project* from Adelaidean Rolf de Heer makes an arresting cinematic incision into very labyrinthine suburbia. The film has created much discussion because its

protagonist (Helen Buday) disrobes her housewife persona in a manner that's not only confronting but also (for some) too earnest. One not to miss for those who still believe in Aussie film.

Felix Staica

Editor: Felix Staica
Contributors: Miss Muffin-Maker
Maestro-ess, Brenton Priestley,
Two French Girls, ESther

Film Reviews

Angry Young Men in New York City

25th Hour

Directed by Spike Lee

Starring Edward Norton, Rosario Dawson, Barry Pepper and Phillip Seymour Hoffman

Igby Goes Down

Directed by Burr Steers

Starring Kieran Culkin, Claire Danes, Susan Sarandon and Ryan Phillippe

Monty Brogan (Edward Norton) has built a profitable career out of the drug trade; he began dealing drugs to his wealthy high school friends, and has coasted comfortably into his thirties. However, all good things come to an end, and Monty has been caught out. The film charts his final day (hence the title) before starting his lengthy prison sentence as he sets things right with his girlfriend (Rosario Dawson), friends (Barry Pepper, Phillip Seymour Hoffman) and father (Brian Cox).

25th Hour is Spike Lee's best and most entertaining film yet. By focussing on telling a good story well, I'd argue that the film says more meaningful things about race and culture—subtly and subtextually—than more overt racial polemics like *Do the Right Thing* (1989) or *Malcolm X* (1992). The strength of the film lies not only in Lee's script (co-scripted with David Benioff, from Benioff's novel) and direction, but on the supremely gifted cast. All of the actors seamlessly inhabit their characters—Norton, in particular, gives one of his best performances yet (with some echoes of his character in *Fight Club*—you'll see what I mean).

The film briefly courted notoriety before its release because of its overt references to September 11—one scene even takes place in front of a window in an apartment with the clean-up of the World Trade Centre site taking place in the background. However, to Lee's credit, the Sept. 11 motif isn't gimmicky, but is in fact quite well-integrated. While it arguably doesn't have any thematic bearing, the realistic presentation of the effects of Sept. 11 on New Yorkers gives the film even more integrity and authenticity.

And, in the end, it's integrity and authenticity that makes *25th Hour* work so well. Although it briefly strays into Scorsese territory with some dealings with brutal Russian mobsters, overall, the film is about real people—their fears, bonds and hopes, set within the context of a city which has a character of its own. Spike Lee is to New York what Mike Leigh is to London. And I'll be surprised if any scene in any other film

this year packs as much emotional punch as *25th Hour*'s coda.

Igby Goes Down is also set in New York—also, presumably post-Sept. 11, as evidenced by multiple cityscape shots in which the World Trade Centre is notably absent. While Monty Brogan in *25th Hour* was at the end of his drug-dealing career, Igby Slocum (Kieran Culkin) is at the beginning of his, by selling dope to NYC's upper crust. However, unlike Monty, who was driven (at least partially) by economic necessity, Igby's brief excursion into the criminal underworld seems more like an act of rebellion against the wealthy milieu into which he was born.

Essentially, *Igby Goes Down* is an extended, episodic riff on this idea—the teenage Igby sparring, mostly verbally, against the suffocating, stagnant upper-class, especially as embodied by his mother (Susan Sarandon). In this way, the film resembles Hal Ashby's *Harold and Maude* (1971) and Wes Anderson's *The Royal Tennenbaums* (2001)—without, I should say, the former's sheer causticity and the latter's formalistic and technical playfulness.



Igby Goes Down is pretty good—it's just a little too loosely structured and circular to really hit the mark. It's not very long, but it felt like it.

Burr Steers, who wrote and directed it, was previously best known as the character 'Flock of Seagulls' in *Pulp Fiction* (1994). However, on the strength of *Igby Goes Down*, he's clearly a filmmaker with potential. Like *25th Hour*, the film features an impressive and eclectic cast, and the characterisations are what carries it; Culkin (yes, Macaulay's younger brother) holds it all together in a tricky role, and it's great to see talented actors like Bill Pullman and Jeff Goldblum away from films like *Independence Day* (1996).

All in all, *Igby Goes Down* is smart and pretty funny—but hopefully a prelude to even smarter and funnier films from Burr Steers.

25th Hour and *Igby Goes Down* both open on June 5 at the Palace.

Brenton Priestley

<http://www.aufs.org>

More Film Reviews

Travelling Birds

Directed by Jaques Perrin

OMG. What an exquisite feast of sound and vision is this piece of film. I cannot sing enough praise for the 85 minutes of masterful cinematography and direction which took over four years to produce. I didn't even come close to tiring of the stunning visuals, my heart constantly elevating with each splendid scene. The soundtrack is enchanting and the images entrancing (similar in style to that of *Baraka*). This is a beautiful and extremely well filmed saga with amazing in-flight shots from all perspectives, each consistently enhancing already empathetic feelings.

The story of birds' migration really is one of survival; this is real. And who needs humans anyway? Species we never knew of around every corner of the globe... and who said walking on water was impossible?! I found this film continually surprising... who would have thought birds could evoke such a vast range of emotions, mine even felt toyed with to some extent... goosebumps... sickening... answers... staggering... "Heaven is ephemeral". Three-dimensional views of our ineffable planet—so amazingly beautiful they seem incredible.

Jaques Perrin, probably most well known for *Microcosmos* (but also actor in over 100 films including *Cinema Paradiso*), rises well above any



expectations with this extraordinary and enlightening Oscar-nominated documentary. Providing far more than your average perspective of birds, this is "both a dazzling travelogue and a poetic ballet of energy and grace." I couldn't have said it better myself. Five teams of people—more than 450 individuals, including 17 pilots and 14 cinematographers—what a collaboration of passions and skills.

Marvellous, spectacular, mind-blowing. Reaffirmed my own passions and beliefs. Life-changing piece of film IMHO. 10/10 but then you gotta love birds.... If you do, then do yourself a favour, truly.... Opens June 19th at Palace.

Anyone who cannot appreciate this film is.... well..... just not my type hehe ;o)

A wannabe winged warrior

<http://www.aufs.org>

Read My Lips

Directed by Jacques Audiard

Starring Emmanuelle Devos and Vincent Cassel

Carla, a deaf woman, leads a non-exciting life in a male-dominated company. Her life changes the day she hires a trainee, Paul Angeli, an ex inmate. Because she reads lips and because an amazing relationship arises between them, he brings her into a strange adventure. "She teaches him good manners; he teaches her bad ones."

With a beginning worthy of a social comedy, this movie moves gradually to film noir. The spectator easily follows the change in atmosphere. The performances of the actors are remarkable.



Emmanuelle Devos and Vincent Cassel have managed to make their two characters endearing and disconcerting. We can grasp the work of director Jacques Audiard,

who offers to us so many beautiful shots.

The dark atmosphere is magnificently enlightened by the music. In a word, it is a good French production that you have to watch. *Read My Lips* received three French Cesar awards (best actress, best screenplay and best sound). Now, we know why...!

Two French Girls

I too have seen this film and I have to say my opinion varies somewhat. While it makes interesting viewing in parts, overall it is boring and tiresome. Having seen *Irreversible*, one cannot but keep picturing Vincent Cassel in his character from the other film. Despite his hyper-Gallic face and general shaggy appearance, he seems to be a drawcard for many audience members.

Emmanuelle Devos is perfect. The plot and rhythm are sinusoidal, offering distraction rather than enjoyment. I think this film should serve as a warning to those who believe that if a film is not in English (or is in French) it is automatically 'arthouse' and automatically worth seeing.

With this in mind, expect to see a Hollywood remake around the corner soon, because *Read My Lips* has all the elements of such a film.

Felix Staica

Quiz & Programme

Try out the following questions

1. Peter Finch was awarded the Best Actor Oscar for his performance in *Network* (1976); what was special about it?
2. What book is John Travolta's character in *Pulp Fiction* reading in the toilet?
3. Amanda Plummer is which famous actor's daughter?
4. Who is Susan Sarandon's partner?
5. What film launched Drew Barrymore's career?
6. What year was the film *Reservoir Dogs* released?
7. What thing is *Toy Story* (1995) famous for doing first?
8. Who is the director famous for his obsession with big breasted women?
9. Could Harpo Marx actually speak?
10. Who has the only speaking part in the Mel Brooks film *Silent Movie* (1976)?



Answers to last issue's questions

1. *Notting Hill* (1999) Julia Roberts as Anna Scott.
2. *Dr Strangelove or: How I Learned to Stop Worrying and Love the Bomb* (1964) Sterling Hayden as General Jack D Ripper.
3. *Lethal Weapon* (1987) Danny Glover as Sergeant Roger Murtaugh.
4. *The Princess Bride* (1987) Cary Elwes as Westley.
5. *Throw Momma from the Train* (1987) Anne Ramsey as Momma
6. *Terminator 2: Judgement Day* (1991) Arnold Schwarzenegger as the Terminator.
7. *Four Weddings and a Funeral* (1994) Rowan Atkinson
8. *Bowling for Columbine* (2002) Michael Moore talking to John Nichols.
9. *Bowling for Columbine* (2002)
10. *Monsters, Inc* (2001) John Goodman as Sulley.

WEEK 12, Thursday 5th June

Double Feature!

Cyberpunk (1990)

Directed by Marianne Tech

Including interviews with William Gibson and Timothy Leary. The term 'Cyberpunk' was first used to describe a new genre of science fiction literature, inaugurated by the publication of William Gibson's book *Neuromancer*. A self-confessed computer illiterate, Gibson's visions began shaping the way people thought and spoke about future technologies.

This program examines the concepts central to the Cyberpunk movement and interviews Cyberpunks, young people determined to use technology against those who would otherwise control that technology. The program covers computer animation, hacking, piracy, Virtual Reality and various technologies that have emerged or are being developed, influenced by Gibson's literary visions. From the USA. (60 mins).

The Avengers (The Girl from Auntie) (1966)

Starring Patrick Macnee, Diana Rigg, Liz Fraser, Alfred Burke, Bernard Cribbins

Returning from vacation, Steed is faced with some puzzles, such as why a pretty, plucky young woman named Georgie Price-Jones is impersonating Emma, and why everyone Georgie ever met is being murdered with knitting needles. The trail leads to an art dealer who is auctioning off Emma for her secrets. This episode went to air in the UK on 20 January 1966. From the UK. (52 mins).

With Short:

Tangerine Dream (1997)

A witty, poetic exploration of twenty-something bravado. From Australia. (9 mins)

As always, films screen 7pm,
Union Cinema, Union Building.
Membership \$7 then films are free
throughout the year!

<http://www.aufs.org>