



Reel/Buzz

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PALACE NOVA

President's Report

Welcome to the beginning of the 10th year of the Film Society.

AGM elections are coming up in week 3 and I notice that the job description of president calls for someone to carry on the 10 year world domination plan. Well, this is year 10, Dr Evil hasn't been defrosted yet, our mad doctor's metal monsters haven't been built yet, no one in the club has had a terrible accident involving radiation or crazy machines (or so people keep assuring me), so whoever takes over this spot for 2005 better get cracking .

Or maybe we should just console ourselves with the fact that we're living in the matrix anyway, so none of it really matters . nah!

During o-week there are lots of fun film events going on . well, two. On Wednesday night of O-Week there is a cinema on the lawns screening of Mystery Men and the Incredibly Hulk. On Thursday night there will be a projectionist training night, so if you want to learn how to actually project films on 16mm films, send our projectionist guy (projectionofficer@aufs.org) an email and turn up at the projection room 7pm, level 6, Union Building.

Heres to you all having a year of film fun with the AUFS.

Esther

Reviews

My House in Umbria

When I read 'a delightfully playful and warmly tender story told in the grand tradition of quality UK dramas,' I thought 'not another one'. I, after all, am American. I was not brought up on UK drama (let alone the Royal Family) and when I discovered it as an adult, I found most of what was on offer to be stuffy, pompous and trite. Of course there are enormous exceptions but 'grand tradition of quality UK dramas'? It somehow didn't peek my interest. And the director is Richard

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Loncraine, who recently did the movie Wimbledon, another reason to stay at home. But Maggie Smith is often brilliant so I decided to tackle the film.

The story goes as such: a bomb explodes in a car of a train and four out of nine people survive. Mrs Delahunty, being one of them, invites the other three to her house in Umbria while they convalesce. A grumpy, pretentious American threatens to tear the newly-bonded foursome apart by taking his niece, the orphaned Aimee, back to America but Mrs Delahunty, while dealing with her own demons, manages to keep things sunny and bright. An easy enough plot but the two lead roles are multifaceted and Chris Cooper (the disgruntled, homophobic neighbour in American Beauty) and Maggie Smith shine.

Smith does an outstanding job at playing the part of the slightly haughty but charming nonetheless Mrs Delahunty. Normally I abhor those characters—seen too many to find them interesting anymore—but this one also holds the added bonus of being a slosh. Smith plays a drunk exquisitely. In fact, she's awful. One would like to say 'disgusting' but she lives in a sort of fantasy world (she's a romance writer) and tries to surround herself with people who need her so can someone so child-like be disgusting? Her role is a complex one and, along with Cooper's uptight and insecure Mr Riversmith, it is what saves this movie from becoming another dull film about an old rich lonely English lady.

See this at the Palace if you want to feel good. You won't leave the theatre with any burning questions or odd sensations but you'll be happy to have gotten to know Mrs Delahunty.

Heather Taylor Johnson

Deep Blue

Directed by Andy Byatt and Alistair Fothergill

The Study Guide accompanying this awesome film informs that it consists of 22 "stunning ocean segments". From sweeping vistas of blue, polar ice-caps and sandy shores it plunges beyond the coastal shallows through tropical coral forests, deeper and deeper into the darkest depth of the Abyss, a hellish

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'fire and brimstone', inhabited by other worldly creatures emanating light.

It seems we must travel the depths of the oceans to appreciate the achieved heights of life on this blue planet. On observing the grace, in movement and design, of animals of the sea we can only wonder at the grace of wit that enabled our predecessors to emerge and triumph this deadly game.

This film documents the mother of all narratives, that of nature. It is directed but you can be sure that whichever particular segments were selected - from the 7000 hours of footage filmed by the BBC Natural History Unit over 3000 days across 200 locations - and what ever was said in their regard, the story would remain the same. This is the greatest story ever told, the survival of the fittest.

Travelling Birds, and its literal bird eye view, was the first challenge to our collective longing for a paradise lost. No more can 'free as a bird' resonate without the accompanying exhaustion of having to stay up there, in the clouds, having to get there to feed, and to fuck, to continue the race. Deep Blue presents a completion of the quaternary of animal instincts; those of fight and flight.

All performances are outstanding. They have to be in this ultimate reality show. Watch out for the brilliantly hued fish hiding under a ledge of coral in the dark of night as a hoodlum shark skims past, searching.

Deep Blue offers the breathtaking beauty of nature's canvas, on which is played out the savagery of its' bloodied tooth and claw.

Lou Crow

Illustrated Family Doctor

When I received the press notes for *The Illustrated Family Doctor*, I was surprised to find it was a mere 101 minutes. I was sure it was well over two hours. Perhaps the theme of 'floundering in a seemingly meaningless world in which death is the only sure thing' contributed to that but I returned to *Magnolia* (a movie that left me feeling depressed but incredibly impressed) and I decided that no, a theme that stresses boredom in one's life should not inflict boredom on the audience. I'm left to believe it was the direction.

Kriv Stenders, in his first feature film, left me waiting for the end of the movie less than half way into it. He used some snappy art direction, some interesting camera work and casted Samuel Johnson (whose face in itself lends more character to the film

AGM 1.00pm, March 14th, Margaret Murray Room

Various incentives provided!

Committee positions open for voting:

President: A god amongst humans. Needs to coordinate club activities and continue the AUFS 10 year World Domination Plan. A daily job, but lots of fun.

Vice President: A plaything for the president ... and the person who has to step in and do curiously large amounts of work at odd moments. But otherwise, gets a lot of credit for being the 2nd in charge. A sometimes job.

Secretary: Takes minutes at meetings, fosters good will amongst all Society connections. Often involved in PR work for the club behind the scenes, booking films and leasing with the university powers that be. A weekly (or so) job.

Treasurer: Looks after the money, counts the money, grumbles when people want to spend the money! A weekly job.

Newsletter Editor/s: puts together a monthly Newsletter full of reviews and fun stuff during the academic year. A monthly job (well, maybe a tad more than that).

Minister of Propoganda (poster boy/girl): Creates the posters and puts up the posters that advertise us around the uni. A weekly job.

Media Liaison: Trusted PR Person who develops relationships with local cinemas and our sponsors. A weekly job.

Clubs' Delegate: Goes to the Clubs' Association monthly meeting and represents us whenever we need to plead for money! A monthly job.

General Committee Members (2 more voices at least): The soul of the AUFS machine. Must come to weekly meetings and help make decisions about how your club is run.

Membership for AUFS is \$8 for the whole year. That's right... a year's worth of viewing for the cost of a baguette and juice.

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than what was set before him in the protagonist Gary Kelp) but it just didn't cut it.

The film was difficult to enjoy. The characters were not very likable and there seemed to be no noticeable background to distract from the drudgery of the foreground. What *The Illustrated Family Doctor* did do was allow me the time to consider an interesting trend in Australian cinema: the apathetic, grungy, artsy film in which the audience leaves feeling hopeless. Stimulated, but hopeless. *Praise* and *Head On* did it (extremely well). *Dirty Deeds* did it (and flopped). Now, *Stenders* has done it. These are conceptual films. The kinds that make you reconsider your life goals. That make you question your legacy. Perhaps it is this sort of intellectualism that won *The Illustrated Family Doctor* a spot in the upcoming Adelaide Film Festival. I think I'll see the one on female genital mutilation. I somehow expect it won't be as bleak.

Heather Taylor Johnson

Stage Beauty

Directed by Richard Eyre

The 1660's was a time in England when male actors could become famous for their ability to play shakespearean female roles, which women were forbidden to perform. One such actor, Ned Kynaston was credited at that time, by the diarist Samuel Pepys, as being the most beautiful woman on the stage.

Stage Beauty is a very clever, very post modern performance piece within which, the camera enables us a presence. We tread the boards and on the edge, twixt 'front and back' stage, we are hushed lest we intrude on performance. We experience the intimacy between Kynaston and his dresser, Maria, who in awe of her master and his art, has her own aspirations.

'Bonnie' King Charles 11 while delightfully 'campish' is, as are perhaps the events that unfold, very much at the mercy of his mistress, the street wise Nell Gwynn.

Taking advantage of the innocence of an earlier time, in a 'back to basics' style, this almost mundane story and setting succeed in presenting intellectual and visual delights while offering an admirable deconstruction of society and gender. Jeffrey Hatcher has obviously given this issue "much more thought" than most of us.

At the frontier of gender boundaries the protagonists explore, and are explored, within and

without. With all the playfulness of TISM (This Is Serious Mum) this film manages to touch with uncommon honesty the depth of issues which plague the modern world.

To the end, never predictable, the veil is drawn.

Lou Crow

Vera Drake

Directed by Mike Leigh

Vera Drake works her way through the streets of London administering good deeds and garnering good will. She empties the bedpan of her aged mother. She fluffs an invalid's pillow and makes a fresh pot of tea.

"Polly put the Kettle On" time.

Glimpses of the lives of the upper class are captured as Vera cleans and polishes their homes. A young woman on her first date, is intimidated and raped. She cannot protest and can only ask an acquaintance for help. She must pass through this, a rite of passage.

1950's modernism, like shards of light, emerges through the marketeering and camaraderie of dismal post war Britain, ushering in a new social order. Smart worldly women, blonde, brunette and redhead taking charge. Animal skin prints line their coats, no knitted cardigans here.

Vera wears her woolen coat tightly buttoned against the cold and carries a basket. A bonnet clasps her short brown hair. A cup of tea and the ever ready assurance that 'all will be well' are her stock responses to the world she encounters. The less said the better.

Her daughter Ethel, without her mother's sturdy body, hangs to one side, low and slow, but Sid, her son, who works as a tailor, is suave. He wears his black hair slick and side-parted. In the pub, for cigarettes, he trades silk stockings to help men curry favor with the ladies in the dance halls.

Vera's husband works for his young brother Frank, who is a mechanic and doing well. His wife Joyce declares that she is pregnant, and asks, can she now have her washing machine. Joyce doesn't like Vera. She thinks Vera is a busybody and that she should mind her own business. But for her husband's sake, for now, she agrees to visit the family.

Lou Crow

Editor: Stewy Jones

Contributors: Esther, Heather Taylor Johnson, Lou Crow

Programme Term I

Adelaide University Film Society membership is \$8 and all films are FREE for members, for the entire year! Non-Adelaide Uni students are required to join the Adelaide Uni Clubs' Association for insurance purposes (\$5). Unless otherwise specified, all films are screened in the Union Cinema, Level 5 of the Union Building, at 7 p.m. on Thursday evenings during term

WEEK 1, Thursday 3rd March

Duck Soup (1933)

Directed by Leo McCarey.

The most unremittingly anarchic of the Marx Brothers films is a burlesque of twentieth century politics and a parody of operetta. (B & W, USA, 16mm, 68 mins)

Die Abenteuer des Prinzen Achmed (1926)

Directed by Lotte Reinger.

The story from the Arabian Nights allows full rein for Reiniger's elaborate and ingenious work — magical, flying horse, wicked sorcerer, djinns, ogres, monsters and wondrous kingdoms abound. (B & W, Germany, 16mm, 71 mins)

Short: Alf, Bill and Fred (1964)

A cartoon in which Bill and his friends Alf, a duck and Fred, a dog, enjoy bouncing. When Bill inherits a fortune he forgets his friends and goes away to enjoy life differently. (UK, 16mm, 7 mins)

WEEK 2, Thursday 10th March

Akira (1988)

Directed by Katsuhiro Ôtomo.

Kaneda and Tetsuo, two high-school dropouts and motorcycle gang members stumble upon a secret government project to develop telekinetic humans for military purposes. Tetsuo is seized, drugged and turned into an experimental subject by the colonel who controls the project. (Japan, VHS, 124 mins)

Short: Duck Dodgers in the 24½ Century (1953)

Duck Dodgers (Daffy) is sent to Planet X to find a new source for the Earth's dwindling supply of the shaving cream atom, Illudium Phosdex. (USA, 16mm, 7 mins)

WEEK 3, Thursday 17th March

Picnic At Hanging Rock (1975)

Directed by Peter Weir.

In the summer of 1900 three girls ascend a mysterious rock in the midst of the Australian bush and disappear. The Victorian girls' school for the daughters of the privileged gradually becomes contaminated and destroyed from within by its inability to understand the forces confronting it. (Australia, 16mm, 113 mins)

Short: All About Weightlessness: The Astronaut's Dilemma (1955)

A fascinating animation from the Disney studios examining space science and the effects of space travel and weightlessness on a human subject. (USA, 16mm, 11 mins)

WEEK 4, Thursday 24th March

Peeping Tom (1960)

Directed by Michael Powell.

A withdrawn psychopath, traumatised by childhood memories, films young women as he impales them with the camera's tripod, forcing them to watch their own death throes in a mirror mounted on the camera. This is rendered genuinely disturbing as we are drawn into identification with the protagonist through Carl Boehm's subtly controlled performance. (B & W, UK, 16mm, 101 mins)

Short: Alice Cans The Cannibals (1925)

Alice and a cat find themselves shipwrecked on an island inhabited by cannibals. (Silent, B & W, USA, 16mm, 6 mins)

Short: Comedy Cartoons (1907)

Comedy Cartoons begins with a smoking gag and also borrows the moving clown cutout from Blackton. (Silent, B & W, UK, 16mm, 3 mins)

WEEK 5, Thursday 31st March

Il Bacio Di Tosca (*Tosca's Kiss*) (1984)

Directed by Daniel Schmid.

La Casa di Riposa is a retirement home for former opera performers, established by Italy's great opera composer Guiseppe Verdi in Milan at the turn of the century. Its inhabitants, none of whom are under eighty, are the subject of this moving documentary. Despite their advanced age, these singers and musicians have lost none of the airs and graces of their profession and soak up the attentions of the visiting film crew. (Italy, English subtitles, 16mm, 84 mins)

Short: Betty Boop and Grampy (1935)

The inventive Grampy decides to have a party; Betty Boop joins him with 4 casual acquaintances, including Laurel and Hardy caricatures. (USA, 16mm, 7 mins)

WEEK 6, Thursday 7th April

Night of the Hunter (1955)

Directed by Charles Laughton.

Depressed rural Ohio in the thirties; a psychopathic preacher ingratiates himself with a family, murdering the mother and terrorising the two children in his search for loot hidden by their father, an executed robber-murderer. (B & W, USA, 16mm, 93 mins)

Short: Caveman Inki (1950)

The deadpan Mynah Bird, some kind of nemesis of the young cannibal Inki, emerges apocalyptically from a mountain and proceeds relentlessly to cross the prehistoric countryside. Surreal. (USA, 16mm, 7 mins)

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