

# ReelBuzz

Monthly Publication of the Adelaide University Film Society

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## PRESIDENTS REPORT

Welcome to another issue of Reelbuzz! I'll keep it short this issue. Firstly, over the holidays we've had some much appreciated opportunities to see previews of great films like "Tarnation" and "Look Both Ways" thanks to Melissa McCaig from Communicate, and also "Sin City" thanks to Charlotte Henry from Buena Vista International. Sorry to those who missed out! There will be more opportunities in future, so stay tuned!

The Weekend Away in Goolwa was a big success. Cheers to everyone who came along! You helped make it what it was, and then helped clean it up afterwards! Special thanks to Blake for assisting as an 'avatar' enforcing my will, Clemmie and Amanda for helping with the kitchen stuff, everyone who drove for driving, everyone else for everything else, and to Will for bringing that cursed Zombie game!

Definition: Avatar (av·a·tar n)

1. an incarnation of a Hindu deity in human or animal form, especially one of the incarnations of Vishnu such as Rama and Krishna
2. somebody who embodies, personifies, or is the manifestation of an idea or concept
3. a movable three-dimensional image that can be used to represent somebody in cyberspace, for example, an Internet user

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**Michael Hill (AUFS President)**

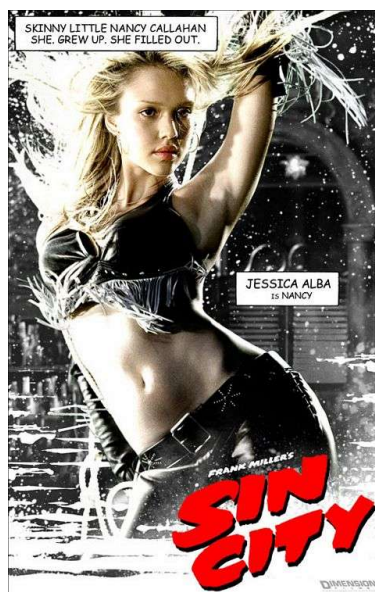
## EDITOR'S WORDS

I will try to get through this with out spelling and grammar mistakes. I am surprised it has been such an issue lately. The last couple of issues I have sent out and then realised that I have made some really obvious error and it is too late to do anything about it. I apologise too those of you who have been actual reading this little section wondering just what it is that I have been trying to say.

I don't actually have much too say this issue. We have a Sin City Special this month with two reviews for you all. I personally am looking forward to enjoying Sin City sometime in the next week.

Enjoy what is left of the holidays and stay tuned in to the website, <http://www.aufs.org>, and to your inbox for another fantastic programme of films for term three.

**Cassie (AUFS Editor)**





# Film Reviews

## Sin City

Directed by Robert Rodriguez and Frank Miller. In the current overload of comic book adaptations this month, Sin City is worlds away from anything before it. Based on the graphic novel series created by Frank Miller, the series is virtually unknown outside the comic book world, where it has received constant critical acclaim. Consequently, Sin City is greatly unique and in its production, the original supporters haven't been forgotten and purists shan't be disappointed.

With Quentin Tarantino featured as guest director, his style shines through, especially in the construction of the story and presentation. Sin City follows a method of broken progression, interchanging largely between the viewpoint of 3 main characters, echoing with the classic construction of Pulp Fiction. The story begins plunging us straight into the action with the efforts of Hartigan, played by Bruce Willis, as he struggles to fight against his aging body in pursuit of justice. We are then soon introduced to Marv, an almost un-recognisable Mickey Rourke. Almost caricature like in appearance, he is the lovable, wise-cracking, yet emotionally troubled lunk, not dissimilar to Ron Perlman's performance as Hellboy, in the movie of the same title. Marv, searches for answers as he awakens with his perfect woman lying dead in bed beside him and the cops hot on his trail. The 3rd character Dwight (Clive Owen), takes the form of a young vigilante, who finds himself fighting to maintain stability between rival groups in Sin City, resulting in the pursuit of a decapitated head.

The viewpoints cut back and forth numerous times, cutting between time spans, slowly unveiling how each story interconnects, eventually clarifying the incidents as a whole, leaving a longing to view the movie again. Although 2 hours long the movie feels somewhat short as all 3 viewpoints are unveiled, leaving an interest to know more about Sin City, as will no doubt be explored in the inevitable sequels, which are already underway.

The cast behind the film is not short of some of Hollywood's finest talents, yet not all used for their star power, nor is their star power abused. Some stars are un-recognisable, whilst Elijah Wood doesn't speak a single word, nonetheless he plays one of the most memorable characters in the film. The characters themselves are gritty and hard as nails, yet have very human qualities.

Sin City has a distinct and highly artistic visual style with a largely black and white presentation. This assists in creating a very 50's mob scene atmosphere. Colour is featured every so often, yet is savoured, truly heightening emotions in the film, calling back to Pleasantville. The only indication towards the film's modern setting is the occasional modern car or object, the rest of which wouldn't seem out of place in 50's Chicago.

There are subtle touches that shed light on the comic book roots of the film, in the form of silhouette death scenes and the application of flat colours for reflections, ever present in the glasses of Elijah Wood's character 'Kevin'. This presentation stays true to that of the graphic novels and may either be its biggest deterrent for the mainstream public, or a means to mark its impact.

As expected from directors Robert Rodriguez and Quentin Tarantino, Sin City is filled to the brim with a plethora of blood, violence and brutality, it's questionable as to whether it was leading towards an R rating, yet at the same time so much of it is sadistic humour. A prime example of this is expressed by Dwight's monologue heard over a key scene in the movie, "She doesn't quite chop his head off. She makes a Pez dispenser out of him", which cracked up the entire cinema.

Overall, Sin City brings forth a new approach to comic book adaptations. No longer have the concepts of the comic book been removed and adapted for the big screen but rather the film has entered this same world and is not trying to fool anyone. The world of Sin City offers a unique and high class presentation, that delivers a stellar production, that whilst may not appeal to everyone, is sadistically humour filled action romp, with an intriguing story that longs to be further explored.

*Matt Williams*





# Film Reviews

## Sin City

Plot outline: An adaptation of Frank Miller's graphic novel, set in Basin City. Following characters' redemption via unaccustomed means in a world full of crime, lust, shadowy honour and above all the possibility of being beyond redemption.

This has to be the best conversion of a Graphic novel (Comic book for those unused to this expressive medium) to film ever done so far. This movie seems to come straight of the pages of Sin City, yet still gives an excellent account of itself.

When the movie starts we arrive upon young woman outside on the balcony taking a smoke, the whole scene is in black and white except for her dress and lips which are a brilliant red. She is met by a man who talks to her, assures her and informs her of her worries and proceeds to... All the while we get a monologue from this man about what he thinks, very reminiscent of 50's films and this is done very well throughout the whole film. I said that this film was in black and white, yet to be more exact it is in Silver and Black, which makes for an eerie light about the whole world of Sin City, just as in the graphic novel.

When talking about the theme, it is nothing like its we would expect: namely 'black and white;' for we find out that those who seem black of character, act white in nature, and vice versa; thus it's a very powerful look at redemption from those who need it most.

This city is aptly named, for corruption runs rife, the weak are exploited and the strong exploit. During the course of the movie we follow many characters and their stories, but the central character is that of Marv, a man who is 'like the devil' and uses violence to solve everything. In his own way he has honour, and doggedly sticks to it, which results in him tracking down the person responsible for Goldie's murder. Goldie being the lady that slept with him right after getting out of prison, someone who showed him kindness in a world of cruelty. This movie, like the graphic novel, is filled with violence, mild nudity and explicit themes, including cannibalism; yet without them they would not make as an alluring movie as they did. Not for the faint of heart or the squeamish.

I recommend this movie to all graphic novel lovers and those interested in Sin and the ways to redeem oneself. Thoroughly engrossing, spectacularly visual and a great score. Best 'comic' adaptation to date, a great film and a great graphic novel.

**Alex Massy Gartly**

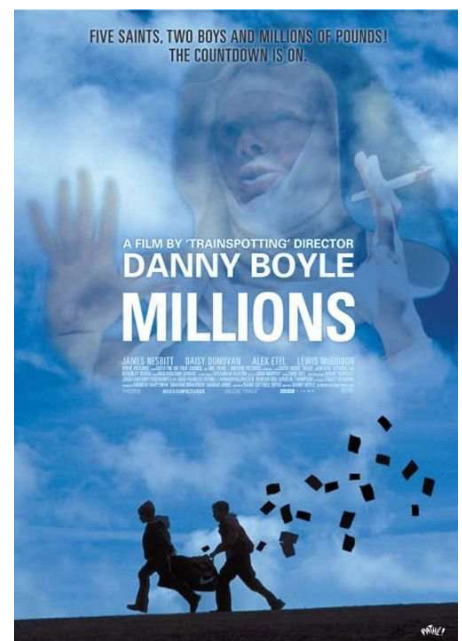
## Millions

Director Danny Boyle is known for his highly conceptual adult films (not pornography, but films like *Trainspotting*, *Shallow Grave*, *The Beach* and *28 Days Later*). He took a huge leap upward with *Millions*, and I don't think any of his fans will be disappointed.

*Millions* is a story about a little boy named Damian (played by the irresistible Alex Etel) who has a unique interest in the lives of the saints. It sets him aside as a little odd and his brother Anthony (Lewis Owen) tells him to give it a rest if he wants to be accepted at their new school. When a large duffle-bag full of money is thrown from a train and lands on Damian's cardboard box fort, Damian mistakes it as coming from the sky, directly from God, and he must decide what to do with it. With help from his saints, who come to him in hallucinations, Damian concocts many ways to use the money for good—namely helping the poor. But once his brother finds out and later his father and his new girlfriend, things go from 'good' to senseless. The pressing issue here is that the pound is about to change over to euros in a matter of days so the family have very little time to spend the money.

This is the kind of movie you want to see at Christmas with your family. It makes you feel *really* good and Etel's adorable and good-hearted Damian has a lot to do with it. Though the content differs intensely from Boyle's previous endeavours, his trademark cinematography and editing still impress. So while this is a feel-good experience, it is also a journey of artistic vision. Good combination for the masses.

**Heather Taylor Johnson**



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## Competition

In the last issue of ReelBuzz we ran a competition for Sin City tickets that turned out to be quite popular! And quite contentious. It was a very hard quiz. A particular little gem was, who/what was the shortest performance by a best actress? This question had quite a few of you stumped. Below are the answers as were agreed upon before the competition was run.

Here are the answers:

Who/what was:

The youngest best actor Oscar winner - Adrien Brody, 29, The Pianist

The oldest best actor Oscar winner - Henry Fonda, 76, On Golden Pond

The youngest best actress Oscar winner- Marlee Matlin, 21, Children of a Lesser God

The oldest best actress Oscar winner - Jessica Tandy, 80, Driving Miss Daisy

The shortest performance by a best actor - Anthony Hopkins, 16 mins, Silence of the Lambs

The shortest performance by a best actress - Judi Dench, 8 mins, Shakespeare in Love

The only Best Picture-winning sequel - The Godfather, Part 2 or Lord of the Rings: Return of the King

After some very insightful discussions with some smart people, it has been agreed that the answer to who/what was the shortest performance by a best actress was a bit misleading as Judi Dench was Best 'Supporting' actress in Shakespeare in Love. It is also acknowledged that this may not have been the shortest performance by a supporting actress that this may go to Beatrice Straight for Network with a screen time of 6 minutes.

...said 'smarty-pants' has been justly rewarded. ;)

- Ed

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## Getting to know you...

**Cassie, AUFS Editor**

**Age:** 25

**5 Random titles from your DVD collection:**

Amelie,  
GoodFellas,  
Baraka,  
Adaptation,  
Samurai Jack: The Premiere Movie



**If you were stuck on a desert island and you had a TV and DVD player (and a power source), what 3 movies would you choose to have with you to pass the time?**

I find it hard to watch movies more than a couple of times so this is a really difficult question. I would take the last 3 Star Wars movies. I haven't seen them since I was a kid. My husband has been trying to get me to watch them for years but I just can't stay awake through them!

**What movie are you embarrassed to admit you own?**  
Dirty Dancing

**If you could make one film, what sort of film would it be?**

It would be a childhood fantasy. I love to escape in stories like Harry Potter, Lord of the Rings and especially some of the BBC TV type classics like Lion the Witch and the Wardrobe. I am still a child at heart. Maybe it is time for Enid Blyton's Enchanted Wood and The Wishing Chair to be made into films. Those stories can be so great when they are done well for the screen. They not only engage children but adults too. They also seem to be making a lot of money at the moment and that couldn't be a bad thing.

Hands up volunteers for the next  
Get to know you..

Don't make me start emailing random  
people in the club. Email me at  
[editor@aufs.org](mailto:editor@aufs.org).  
Come on... it is painless... I promise! :)