



ReelBuzz

Monthly Publication of the Adelaide University Film Society

Vol.10 Ed.6

December 2005

PRESIDENTS REPORT

Well I guess this is it for 2005!

The term is over, with any luck your exams, and probably now the end of year film!

Don't forget to stay tuned to your inbox's for any free passes we get offered over the holidays, review opportunities, and probably the Film Choosing night for term 1 next year. Hopefully you've enjoyed being part of the film society this year and gained your dues worth in some format, if not positive karma.

This last term, our charity screening of the Incredibles with 'East Meets West' went well with a large number of attendees (thanks)! We also got club of the year at the Clubs Association Awards night, so currently possess the plaque! We also got our CA grant to acquire a souped up data projector! Thus requests for specific film nights / marathons at non-uni locations are now viable! <Insert Legend of Zelda 'opened chest' music here!>

I want to congratulate and thank everyone who helped out this year! I can't remember all your names and would forget some of you anyway so let's keep it generic. Thank you to the committee for your hard work, thanks to all you members for making the bulk of the society supporting screenings, thanks to the reviewer mob, thank you Quito Washington, and Giovanni Sanseviero for allowing us to screen your independent films, thanks to Wallis, Foster PR Workshops, Kommunikate, Buena Vista, Madman, Mercury Cinemas and those involved for your generosity, passes giveaways and support!

Plus a big super-thank-you to FILM INK and the PALACE NOVA CINEMAS for sponsoring us and giving us your constant support!! Especially to the Palace for hosting this party, which I hope you enjoy!! XO!! Have a great Xmas holiday!

Michael (El Prezidente 2005)

P.S. Unless the editor is more mature than I, Carine Koorts instructions for eating batteries should be included somewhere in this newsletter.

VICEPRESIDENTS REPORT

"I dually did my part, as the Vice President. [a sometimes job, or a fill in for the president] i believe that with our powers combined we are 'captain celluloid'. (or something to that affect) Having said that, i think a big round of applause should be given to the exec and all their minions for making the AUFS the "Best Club of 2005" and also for the pres and myself, in our 'suck-up' mode for the newly acquired projector [still to be bought]. Kudos to Brenton for some really great posters, uber thanks to Cassie for the newly vamped 'ReelBuzz'. With any luck the AUFS fame and infamy will rise during its rise to world domination. Long life AUFS."

Alex Massy Gartly (Vice President 2005)



Film Reviews

EDITORS WORDS

Merry Christmas and Adieu to 2005!

What a year it has been. The AUFS has had a great year; showing over 25 full length films as well as countless shorts, a great weekend away at the beach house, being involved in plenty of orientation events and taking out a tonne of awards.

There has been some wonderful movies released this year, take a moment to think about your favourites. For me some of the highlights were:

- the fourth installment in the Harry Potter series – what can I say I love the books and loved every minute of this film;
- Sin City – I enjoyed the way this film was shot with black and white with hints of colour, for me the cartoonish feel made it easier to sit through all the violence and Elijah Woods character is still showing up in my nightmares;
- Charlie and the Chocolate Factory – I thought that Johnny Depp did a wonderful job with the role, he did his own nutty take on Wonka and for me didn't ruin the original Gene Wilder version.

I think the president and his team have done a wonderful job this year! I have personally enjoyed helping out in my role as editor and look forward to seeing the AUFS continue to grow and eventually take over the world.

Cassie Childs (Reelbuzz Editor 2005)



HOWLS MOVING CASTLE

Howls Moving Castle/ Hauru no ugoku shiro

By Hayao Miyazaki.

This latest creation by Miyazaki and his team at studio Ghibli is based upon the novel written by Diana Wynne Jones. The story centers around a young girl, Zofi, who is changed into a 90 year old woman by the witch of the wastes, a character that is after Howl's heart. This story is all about Magic and Science and of course being a fairy tale, about true love.

There are two warring nations, both who enlist the help of magicians, sorcerers and witches, as well using science to create imposing flying machines and devastating cannons. Howl as we find out is not a fully trained wizard, because he finished his training too early. He is also a coward and thus he enlists Zofi, who went looking for him to find a cure for her old age, to meet the heads of both nations that are seeking his assistance in the war. We get some great action and also poignant moments within this great visual feast. Another great production by Studio Ghibli, with some great English voice actors, notably Christian Bale as Howl and Lauren Bacall as Witch of the Waste, and not to forget a great character Calcifer played by Billy Crystal.

This movie is not like Princess Mononoke or some of Hayao Miyazaki's other works, but more like Spirited away, it is after all a fairy tale. I recommend you see this movie if you enjoy fairy tales, great art work or if you are a Miyazaki fan. I believe that this movie should be watchable by nearly everyone and everyone should be able to find something within it for themselves.

Never underestimate the power of love, is what I think the theme for this movie is.

Alex Massy Gartly



Film Reviews

CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY

Directed by Tim Burton
Starring Johnny Depp, Christopher Lee, Helena Bonham Carter

The movie is a nice fairy tale. I think the story is well-known. It includes all what is needed to be a nice story for kids. A really poor boy who lives with his whole family (with very old grandparents) in a very small house (marvelous exaggerated poor and slanted). Of course, he has a heart of gold and shares all what he has with his family. For sure, he gets the golden ticket from Willy Wonka and can visit the factory. Needless to say, that the other four children who get the golden ticket, are very unlovely and wicked. So, they can't dispute Willy Wonka's offers and get rid of the play. Little Charlie can inherit the factory but then he has to leave his family. What do you think that his decision will be?

It did not have much of the special Burton kind of way but it's also worth seeing for adults. I really enjoyed it. The only thing, I didn't like, was the dance performance of the Oompa-Loompas. But how can a fairy tale be without that? They played four songs. The fourth was a remake of "Bohemian Rhapsody of Queen" and on that place, I nearly enjoyed it.

All Oompa-Loompas were the same person (Deep Roy). At first, I found it really annoying, but after a while, it would be a running gag.

Johnny Depp created his own Willy Wonka. It makes a lot of fun to see him in this part. I can't confirm that he looks like Michael Jackson (I read it in another criticism). Also, Christopher Lee as Willy Wonka's father has a good part, too.

In conclusion, I can say, it's a really good remake.

Sandra Herlufsen



DUKES OF HAZZARD

Directed by Jay Chandrasekhar, the man who brought you 'Super Troopers.'

Starring Johnny Knoxville (Luke), Sean William Scott (Bo), Jessica Simpson (Daisy), and Burt Reynolds as Boss Hogg.

Basically this movie is about two misfits, Bo and Luke who cause minor disturbances within the county of Hazzard. Luke is a crazy man, who likes his women, a lot and Bo is a guy who loves his car, a 1969 Orange Dodge Charger the 'General Lee.' They spend most of their time on screen evading authorities or others that they have pissed off. Yet the premise of the film is that Hazzard county is being bought up or stolen by Boss Hogg, who wishes to make money. The Dukes get kicked out of their house and go on a mission to find out what Boss Hogg has prepared for Hazzard and then try to stop him.

Though there were many jokes and physical comedy moments, I still came out of this movie without a feeling of completeness; by that I mean, there was no substance to this movie and from what I have seen of the old series, it was just one long episode, with a bigger budget.

Sean and Johnny, surprisingly did well as a comedy team and if it weren't for the movie being as bad as it was, they would have done exceedingly well.

I recommend it if you are looking for a longer episode of the original series, or you like physical comedy and/or jokes like those from 'Super Troopers.' Otherwise I think it is not worth the time spent watching it.

Alex Massy-Gartly





Film Reviews

INSIDE DEEP THROAT

Directed by Fenton Bailey and Randy Barbato

The X-rated film *Deep Throat* was released into cinemas in the USA on June 12 1972. It is one of the most financially successful movies ever made, filmed in 6 days for 25 thousand dollars, and earning over 600 million US dollars to date; it is also one of the most controversial X-rated films ever made.

Inside Deep Throat, covers elements of the filming of *Deep Throat*, and the aftermath, both for the USA's political scene and the personal aftermath for the two stars, making it a fascinating documentary.

The Making of Deep Throat

Apparently everyone was making porno films at the end of the 60s. Luminaries of the film industry like Wes Craven describe directing porno films in those days as an "entry-level job" in the film industry. It was a rite of passage for many directors and an easy way for people to make money.

There was no particular reason to think that *Deep Throat* would be any different from the myriad of X-rated films that were being made at the time, or was there? Well, it did have a gimmick. Director Gerard Damiano realized he was onto a winner when an acquaintance told him that his girlfriend, AKA Linda Lovelace, could do something quite unique and spectacular and very X-rated, something which we now refer to as "*Deep Throat*" in honour of the film. Deciding that this would be a great premise for a film Damiano came up with a storyline and filmed it in 6 days.

The Politics

Deep Throat was released at a time when the issue of pornography and its lack of any significant effect on the viewer had been accepted by the Nixon administration. Rules on X-rated material were being relaxed. The public backlash to this move was extreme and the film *Deep Throat* became a target for demonstrations and a call for censorship laws to be tightened in the name of decency.

Luckily for *Deep Throat*, the *New York Times* ran an article that suggested that going to see film was part of a new kind of movement the writer dubbed "Porno Chic". From the moment the article hit the news stands, everybody who was anybody was being photographed going to see the film and protesting its censorship.

The Stars

This further round of publicity for *Deep Throat* fueled the moral outrage already being directed toward the film and several judges in various states across the USA declared the film obscene and had it banned in their jurisdictions. In total *Deep Throat* was banned in 23 states and the director was arrested and charged under US obscenity laws. When these charges were dropped a further movement in the religious right and the US political system pushed for the actors to be prosecuted under the obscenity laws. Sadly for Harry Reems, the male star of the film, he was tried and eventually sentenced to 5 years in jail.

The film was also released at a time when feminism was gaining a firm foothold in the USA and the film was targeted as an example of exploitation. Star Linda Lovelace later came forward and joined the feminist movement as a protester, claiming that those watching the film were actually watching her being raped.

Inside Deep Throat is an interesting documentary about an issue that is still controversial today. A number of writers, political commentators and celebrities add their perspective on the events that unfolded, and the stories surrounding the actors and the making of the film make interesting viewing.

Ultimately, this documentary is far more interesting than the actual film *Deep Throat*, and well worth the time if you are interested in the issues it raises.

Esther



Film Reviews

INSIDE DEEP THROAT

Is freedom of expression an inviolable right? What about sexual expression?

Inside Deep Throat presents arguments for both these questions in a well-paced and engaging way. It also tells the story of arguably the most successful film ever made in the context of the sexually experimental seventies.

It must have been an interesting era in which to be making films, particularly sexually explicit films. 'Deep Throat' captured on camera one woman's 'special ability' for mainstream release throughout middle America. Shock Horror! There are some comments made about the excellent cinematography in the film. Yes, laugh - you won't be alone - particularly if you have trouble taking pornography seriously as an art form, but this documentary puts a convincing argument forward for the ground-breaking impact of this film on both the porn industry and mainstream cinema.

This is a fascinating documentary because it evokes an era that many people, including myself, are too young to have experienced but was a very exciting time for the expression of sexuality in the mainstream. It highlights how far western society has come in progressing more liberal attitudes to sex and sexuality. It is also clear that in some ways very little has changed, making some pointed comments about the marriage of church and state in American politics at the same time.

While the documentary does include clips from the film the focus is less on recounting the making and more on the impact of the film on the lives of the director, the actors, and the public. Ironically, the more that conservative politicians and religious figures denounced the film, the more publicity reached the mainstream audience, until your white picket fence housewife had reserved it as her Sunday film. To paraphrase the words of one elderly cinema goer, "I don't want some politician to tell me I can't go to see a dirty movie". Bravo.

Marianne Close

NIGHT WATCH

I looked forward to viewing this movie with hope because of past experience with Russian sci-fi on the page. Notable experiences are 'We' by Yevgeny Zamyatin, and the more spiritual than scientific 'The Master and Margarita' by Mikhail Bulgakov. I was not disappointed. This movie delivered. I look forward to the next two installments in the trilogy and will seek out others in the genre. It was refreshing to view an action-science fiction that was plot-driven and subtle in many ways.

Though some tricks in the movie reminded me of the mainstays of Hollywood action sci-fi drivel, the movie in its entirety smothered those criticisms before they had a chance to mature.

The visual style was not just 'cool', it was art. It created a viewing environment that drew me in. When the characters were disoriented, I was; when they felt sick, I could relate. Thanks to director Bekmambetov and his team.

Being more interested in plot and character, usually, I'll touch on that now - and how I wish I could speak on it specifically, but I don't want to spoil anything. Plot and character made this movie for me. Having not read the original series by Lukyanenko (but believe me, I'm looking for them) I cannot comment on the adaptation. But they were characters one could relate to, if in a weird way. I'm not saying I'm a shape-shifter or a seer; I'm saying that, for example, the character of Olga (Galina Tunina) is not in the movie because she is a shape-shifter. She is a character named Olga who *can* shape-shift. Shape-shifting is not the focus or the point.

As for plot, I will just say that it is interesting, moving and surprising. Its direction is unique. And, its climaxes (yes, there are more than one . . . score) are subtle, emotional, satisfying and don't include any of the following: characters randomly knowing martial arts, random explosions, random marriages, random deus ex machina. This is an entertaining and satisfying science fiction ride by masters of Russian cinema. If you decide to go see it, maybe I'll see you there on a repeat viewing.

William Brown



Film Reviews

LAST DAYS

Aside from the fact that more than ten people walked out of the film before it had finished and that the woman next to me spent the better part of the movie catching her head from falling to her chest in an impressive effort to stay awake, Gus Van Sant's latest offering (part three in his trilogy on death) was, for me, a cinematic experience like no other I've had.

Last Days is the story of Blake, a troubled Seattle rocker disillusioned with the demands of fame and truly life itself. The story is based on the final days of Kurt Cobain and though we rarely see his face and even more rarely do we hear his voice, Michael Pitt does a fantastic job of convincing us that suicide sometimes really is the only solution. The film is drudgingly slow, visually bleak and aurally uninviting (except for a remarkable song written and performed by Pitt himself) and sometimes the cinematography focuses on next to nothing for what seems like minutes and I think this could be why *Last Days* will be, for some, a critical disaster. For others, this movie will be considered untouchable in terms of cinematic exploration and innovation.

I tend to fall into the latter category though I must admit that the film is incredibly slow. It breaks convention - when we wait for the opening sequence to reach some sort of culminating adversity and then expect the opening credits to roll and these basic expectations aren't met, we're disappointed, confused and don't know when to stop waiting. In an interview with Margaret Pomeranz on *At the Movies*, Van Sant said that he thought 'Kurt was at odds with song structure' and so his approach to the movie was the best way to express this, 'by trying to break certain conventions in cinema style'. What we're left with is atmosphere. I have never experienced being a voyeur in the cinema so much as during this film.

The emotion Van Sant conveys by stealing from us the dialogue and action we all crave so much is an atmosphere of inappropriateness in witnessing something so personal. Cinematographer Harris Savides says in the same interview, 'It was a new way of watching a movie for us....you're not really being told, by montage, what to think, what to look at. You're processing things by yourself.' I'm still processing.

I would never recommend this film to the masses of cinemplex movie-goers but I find I cannot stop talking about it to those who appreciate film as art. *Last Days* is inventive and evocative and in my opinion, has just raised Van Sant from superb auteur to nothing less than genius.

Heather Taylor Johnson





Film Reviews

CINDERELLA MAN

Sports movies are not my cup of tea, nor do I have a particular affinity for watching grown men beat each other to pulp. That said, I don't know how the Venice Film Festival audience of *Cinderella Man* had the energy left at the end to stand for a fifteen-minute ovation; by the credits, I was exhausted. I became so wound up that I cried at least the last third, ducked, weaved and winced in the fight scenes, and jumped every time the bell was struck. In other words, it's not half bad.

The fairytale fellow of the title is James J. Braddock (Russel Crowe), a young boxer poised on the edge of greatness when the Great Depression hits, emptying his pockets, stomach and fighting ability. Braddock, as so many others of the day, is thus forced to scrape a living through dock work (a lá *On The Waterfront*) to feed his wife (Renee Zellweger) and three kids. Here, to his credit, director Ron Howard shows just enough of the Depression to garner sympathy and understanding for what Braddock faces, without smothering the viewer in (pardon the pun) depression or schmaltz. Zellweger, despite my initial misgivings, does quite well as the stand-by-her-man type; it's nice to have the love-interests married for a change. The other main players of note are the always superb Paul Giamatti as Braddock's manager, and Craig Bierko as Braddock's last opponent of the film, an arrogant pig who you wouldn't mind punching several times yourself.

Not that there is any lack of punching in the film already. Considering the plot, it would be ludicrous not to expect lots of fight scenes... but once you know the characters, and the damage they're doing, it becomes rather intense viewing. Two older ladies beside me kept looking away and 'ooh-ing' uncomfortably, and at several points the entire cinema audibly winced. The violence is not so much graphic as prolonged, which will prove an issue with some people.

Braddock was something like America's version of Phar Lap; the people's hero of the Depression, although this man was much more of a long shot. It is a very good story and very effectively executed; despite running almost 2½ hours it failed to drag. A good slice of the credit has to be Crowe's; say what you like about him, the bloke can act. Unless the Academy balks at honouring two boxing flicks in a row, I wouldn't be that surprised to see *Cinderella Man* up for a little gold man or two next year.

Emily Cock





Back Page

MUST LOVE DOGS

Directed by: Gary David Goldberg

Starring: Diane Lane, John Cusack, Dermot Mulroney, Elizabeth Perkins with Stockard Channing and Christopher Plummer.

If you are not already familiar with on-line 'mate seeking' this film will inform you. The new age meat market appears to inspire even the mated, if only to enter the digital domain for mate less friends and relatives. Thus are entered this film's main players.

John Cusack with "The Grifters" well under his belt shows that he can do anything. He plays Jake Anderson with aplomb. This serious man has his own sometimes 'frightening', theories and the skill to create works of art which are actually wooden boats that don't sell because they have been superseded by new technologies. Jake is grieving the loss of his love.

Sarah Nolan (Diane Lane) has lost her husband to a 15 year younger woman with whom he is now having the baby, which he was never ready to have with her. What happened she is asked? "He stopped loving me".

This romantic comedy has a sad underbelly. Players must it seems lie about age, weight, personality and likes and dislikes if they are to attract any takers. However it is perhaps this deceit that provides the material for those always funny disastrous dating scenarios.

Sarah's silver haired father (Christopher Plummer) whose dead wife can never be replaced enters the game as a rose-carrying romantic who enchants the long time weathered but always refreshing Stockard Channing (Dolly) and other aged beauties. In an Oedipal twist Sarah's first date is with her father, a story destined to enter the annals of family history.

Lou Crow

EDITOR
Cassie Childs

CONTRIBUTORS
Michael Hill
Alex Massy Gartly
Emily Cock
Marianne Close
Heather Taylor
Johnson

Esther Speight
Sandra Herlufsen
William Brown
Lou Crow



Getting to know you...

Name: Emily Cock

Age: 20

5 Random titles from your DVD collection..

Gentlemen Prefer Blondes, Kinsey, Withnail and I, Love Actually, Breakfast at Tiffany's

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? *The Philadelphia Story, Orlando*, and the complete *Coupling* set which I got for my birthday and haven't finished yet.

What movie are you embarrassed to admit you own? I'm a sucker for the cheap DVDs of old movies lying everywhere at the moment, so am lucky enough to own such classics as *Dishonoured Lady, Languishe Go Down* and *No Man of Her Own*.

If you could make one film, what sort of film would it be? It would require resuscitating Katharine Hepburn, Spencer Tracey and Cary Grant, and throwing them into a love triangle for a screwball comedy.



Have a Merry Christmas and a safe, healthy and prosperous new year.