

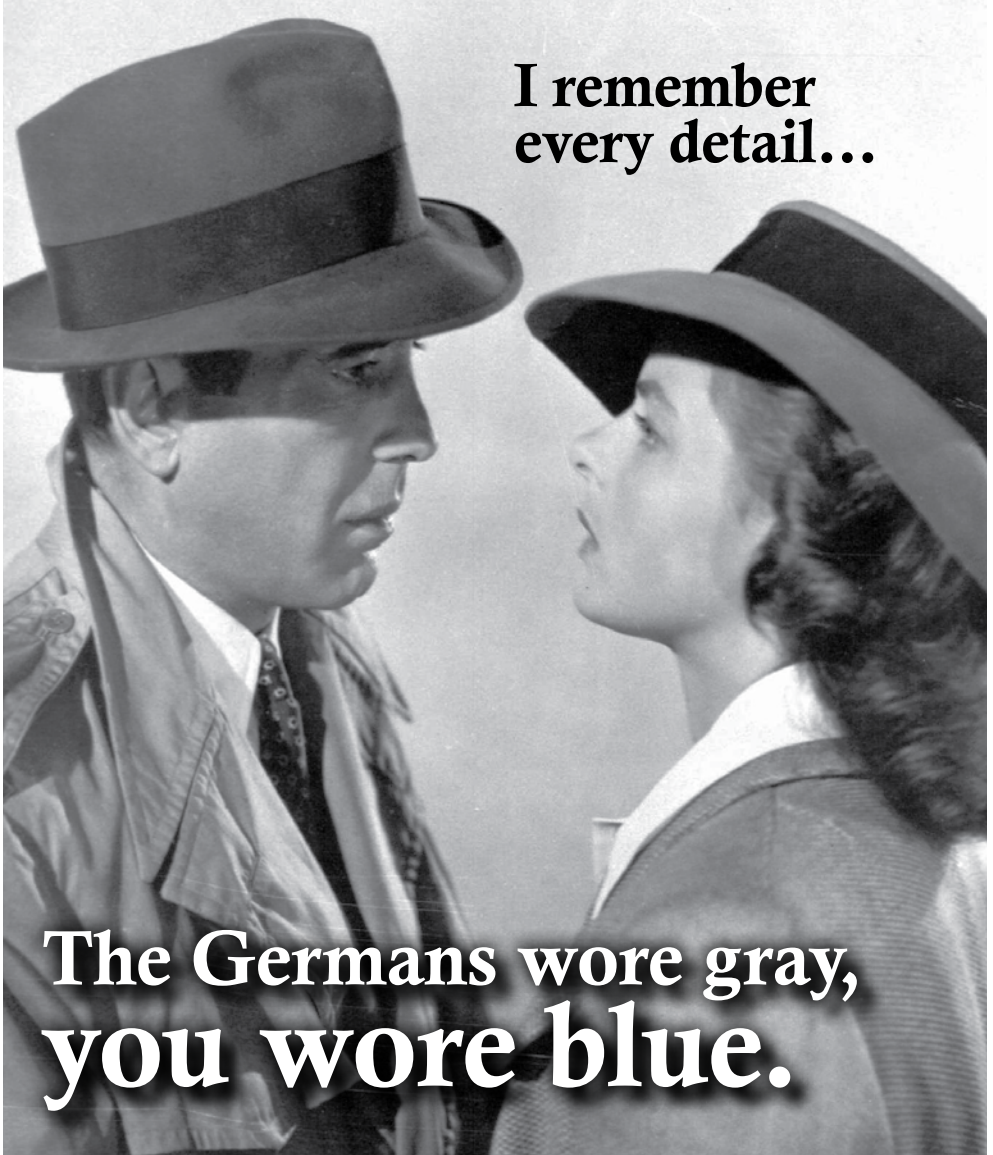
Adelaide University Film Society's Monthly Propaganda  
Volume XVI Issue 2 - May 2011



# *Reelbuzz*

**I remember  
every detail...**

**The Germans wore gray,  
you wore blue.**



# Is the end nigh for video stores?

by Aaron Fromm

There has been talk in the news this year and even recently about the end of book-stores (such as Borders) because people are buying their books online from overseas and using e-readers. This has me thinking: Is the end of the movie rental business on its way?

With big players moving into the market, offering movies as on-demand downloads, Xbox now having on-demand movies and Foxtel services and Telstra of course having movies on-demand, our choices for films is wider and easier to obtain than ever. Even the physical video/DVD rental store is under threat, thanks to websites such as Quickflicks and DVD rental vending machines.

The problem with movies-on demand is quality. It's a great concept being able

to download a film and start watching it within minutes. But not everyone has the spare bandwidth to download movies in DVD quality. Of course, it needs to be great quality because almost everyone's TVs are now all 1080p HD and no-one wants to pay for poor quality.

People are also very time poor or at least lazy these days. Who wants to 'waste time' perusing the local video store when they can spend five minutes online then setting their computer to download their film while they go to the toilet or get a drink, or order films in advance and wait until something comes in the mail?

Then there is the question of whether people still even use video stores? I know I've only been to one once in the past 12 months and that was to get an arthouse film I couldn't easily buy elsewhere. I buy a fair few DVDs and borrow others from friends. Many of my friends only buy DVDs that they really like and usually only when they are on special.

So I ask you, will you be the one saving the video rental store or will you be joining others with nail and hammer (to put another nail in the video store coffin that is!) as you download high-quality movies from Xbox and Telstra?



# Oranges and Sunshine (2010)

directed by Jim Loach

starring Emily Watson, Hugo Weaving, David Wenham



review by Alastair Collins

You'd think that, by now, we'd understand the concept that even (or should that be *especially*) the greatest governments in the western world have, at one time or another, performed horrible acts of neglect or abuse against their own people, let alone those they consider enemies.

However, a film like *Oranges and Sunshine*, which concerns the mass deportation of approximately 130,000 institutionalised children from Britain to Australia, some as recently as the 1970s, serves as a stark reminder that we should never allow ourselves to turn a blind eye to the illegal or immoral goings on of the government, even one acting in our best interests, as well as any *V for Vendetta*-style film has in the past.

We've all seen this kind of film before; it's the true story of Margaret Humphreys (Watson), a British social worker, who uncovered the existence of these deported children and decided to help them find their families, no matter what. However, in a strange departure from usual form, very little time is spent on the struggles she faces getting to the bottom of it all, but instead, director Jim Loach (his feature debut) has focused on the people involved and their experiences. There's little in this film to push a certain way of thinking on to the audience in regards to the governments involved or the religious foundations that cared for the children in Australia. The actions of the past and the reactions of the present are simply laid out and although they do not paint anyone positively, there's little accusation behind it. That's for the audience to come to independently.



Watson stars as Humphreys and pitches her performance perfectly. There's no catalyst moment that suddenly drives her to do what she does, with no previous interest, but a steady progression as she uncovers each element in the story. It is in these moments of discovery that Loach has worked in some incredibly graceful and subtly moving directorial moments.

Hugo Weaving makes an appearance as one of the first deported orphans Humphreys comes in to contact with, Jack. He has relatively little screen time, but definitely makes an impact. His character is unapologetically damaged and his idiosyncrasies pass by uncommented on, but certainly not unnoticed.

David Wenham's character, Len, plays a much more active part in the story and his portrayal is such that there is a lot of room for interpretation at first, but it is slowly whittled away as more of his back story is revealed. Again, between Wenham's acting and Loach's direction, a very well rounded characterisation and character arc is unveiled.

A special mention needs to be made of Richard Dillane, who plays Merv Humphreys, Margaret's husband. Little time is spent on the Humphreys' family dynamic, but Dillane and Watson really communicate a lot of meaning about their relationship to the audience in the little time they are given to explore it.

A very dry, dispassionate portrayal of some distasteful events in our history, *Oranges and Sunshine* is one for true story and history buffs.

# Love and Other Drugs (2010)

directed by Edward Zwick

starring Jake Gyllenhaal and Anne Hathaway

review by Esther Speight

*Love and Other Drugs* is set in the late 1990s before the big pharmaceutical companies like Pfizer (the one featured in the film) were hit by a series of scandals regarding the research and marketing of their drugs. It is the heyday of drug company representatives (aka, salespeople) and the reps shamelessly court doctors' business by giving gifts and money, or pay for doctors to attend conferences in exotic locations, all for an unofficial promise to prescribe their drugs to patients.

Enter Jamie (Gyllenhaal). He's young, a fantastic salesman and let's face it, pretty hot. He walks a fine line between being a schmoozer and a user and you just know that he's going to be successful in the cut-throat, competitive world that the drug reps inhabit.

As he's finding his feet in his first job for Pfizer, he meets Maggie (Hathaway) and is immediately infatuated by her. They begin a relationship that is based, by mutual

agreement, on their physical attraction alone and they promise not to get more seriously involved than that. You see, Maggie has Parkinson's disease and prefers to remain an independent, free spirit.

This film charts their relationship against the backdrop of the pharmaceutical industry and its excesses and its successes. For this fascinating historical perspective alone, the film is worth watching. In addition, the relationship between Jamie and Maggie heats up the screen; there are a number of sex scenes and some great laughs to keep you going until the suitably Hollywood ending.



In designing the sex scenes, Director Edward Zwick had the principals watch romantic comedies and sexually charged films (everything from *Pillow Talk* to *9 Songs* to *Last Tango In Paris*) and talk about what turned them on. Then some of those shots and ideas were incorporated into the making of the film.

# Evita (1996)

directed by Alan Parker

starring Madonna, Jonathan Pryce, Antonio Banderas

review by Elizabeth Flux

It's easy amidst all the divorce, gristle comparisons and affairs with young men named 'Jesus' to fall into the Madonna-mocking trap. Indeed, when it comes to Madonna and film, the first thing that springs to my mind is her disquietingly dominatrix-esque turn in *Die Another Day*. The fact that everyone seems to forget about *Evita*, I suppose, is a testament to her skill as a performer. That, or to some casting director's epic bit of typecasting.

For the uninitiated, Alan Parker's 1996 film *Evita* is the (arguably true) story of María Eva Duarte de Perón. Her story is complex (if you're keen, I hear there's a film about her life). In short, set in Argentina from the 1920s to 1950s, Eva is born to the poor mistress of a wealthy man. Her father passes away and she is shunned from the funeral by his upper class family. Her family lives in poverty. Eva grows to resent the class divide and grows up to become a political powerhouse. The film focuses on her marriage and contribution to the career of Juan Perón, as well as presenting her as somewhat of a 'scarlet lady' in her youth (best summed up in the number *Goodnight and Thank You*).

Interestingly, the film skims over her nomination for the office of vice president of Argentina; not a small feat for a woman in 1951.

At this point, it should probably be

mentioned that this film is a musical - an Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice musical nonetheless. Despite having now most likely alienated a large chunk of otherwise potential watchers (Buffy would be sad), for all you musical-haters, I still say this film is worth a look. The characters don't randomly burst into song for apparently no reason. The melodies don't send you frantically to YouTube shouting "SANCTUARY!" as you put Rebecca Black on max volume to drown out the horror, the horror! Instead, the soundtrack is a cleverly constructed script unto itself. The entire narrative is expressed through music. You could arguably not see the film at all; listening to the CD alone would give you an almost complete understanding of the story.

Personally, I think this film deserves 5 'reels'. The casting can't be faulted, it moves at a good pace, it doesn't fail hard like most musicals do and it has a Guinness World Record title (according to Wikipedia) for the most costume changes.



**Most of the costumes for Eva were based on outfits that the real Eva Perón wore. Some were recreated from photographs, but many were based on the originals, which are still kept in government vaults in Argentina. Madonna changed costumes 85 times.**

# *The Maiden Heist* (2009)

directed by Peter Hewitt

starring Christopher Walken, Morgan Freeman, William H Macy

review by Alastair Collins

There is definitely something to be said for subtle comedies that place more emphasis on the characters than on silly slapstick spectacles. Unfortunately, it's not that they make a lot of money in the cinema, so it's understandable, if a little bit of a shame, that *The Maiden Heist* has been released straight to DVD.

The cast of this film is of an incredible calibre; Christopher Walken, Morgan Freeman, William H Macy, Marcia Gay Harden, all of whom have at least been nominated for an Academy Award, and even pop culture giant Breckin Meyer makes an appearance. Since this film relies so heavily on the portrayal of the characters to deliver the comedy, I'm doubtful a less talented cast would have been able to deliver.

The plot isn't all that complex; three art gallery security guards learn that their favourite pieces are being sold to a Danish gallery and decide to switch the real works with fakes, so they can keep them for themselves. There's not a lot more to the plot aside from that. There's the mix-up

that puts it all in jeopardy, of course, but primarily, it's a very simple film.

Christopher Walken's hen-pecked Roger Barlow is delightfully underplayed. Everything happening around him seems to wash over him and although not naïve, he just seems to get carried along with it despite himself. It's a type of character Walken's done before, but that doesn't mean it's phoned in, just that he's good at it. William H Macy's night guard, George, could easily have been overdone or simply played in a way that comes across as silly. However, Macy ties up all of George's strange tendencies and uneven traits with a believability that even creates a sympathetic character at times.

The standout performance of the film is Morgan Freeman as Charles. Charles is what can only be described as a 'crazy cat lady' and Freeman's performance stands out because he doesn't; he is simply there and that is how he is. No comedy is derived by looking at how camp he is. There is no discussion or allusions to his



# Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides

## AUFS \$11 Special Screening

**Where:** Piccadilly Cinemas in North Adelaide

**When:** Monday 23rd May

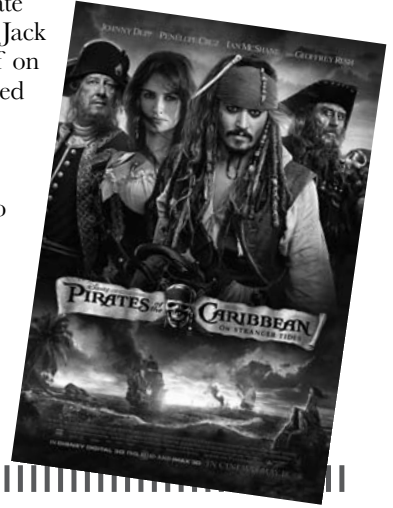
**Time:** 6:30pm

**Cost:** \$11 a ticket for everyone (\$10 +\$1 booking fee)

**Booking:** email [liaison@aufs.org](mailto:liaison@aufs.org) for the special web link that allows you to buy the tickets, or search on Facebook for 'Pirates of the Caribbean AUFS Screening'

You are welcome to buy tickets for your family and friends. This is somewhat of a test for the Film Society by Wallis Cinemas, they are wanting to see if we have a large enough following to be worthwhile sponsoring. So lets show them we are by selling out the session!

Captain Jack Sparrow crosses paths with a woman from his past, and he's not sure if it's love - or if she's a ruthless con artist who's using him to find the fabled Fountain of Youth. When she forces him aboard the Queen Anne's Revenge, the ship of the formidable pirate Blackbeard, Jack finds himself on an unexpected adventure in which he doesn't know who to fear more: Blackbeard or the woman from his past.



sexuality. That is simply how he is and once you have a feel for the character, you can't help but like him.

Peter Hewitt's direction fits the film perfectly. There is a single sequence, during the heist's planning, where there is a break in style that seems a little 'film-school', but considering it's a heist being planned by amateurs, it's strangely appropriate. Like Walken's performance, the direction is wonderfully understated and complements the comedy of the script by not overdoing it and aiming for the cheap laughs. Considering Hewitt's credits include *Garfield* and *Bill and Ted's Bogus Journey*, that's a bit surprising.

Also a surprise; the film was penned by Michael LeSieur, whose only other film

was the dreadful *You, Me and Dupree*. I'm pleased to say that this is nothing like his other piece of work. *The Maiden Heist* is a wonderfully subtle character comedy for anyone who prefers a word joke over a pie in the face.



# Term 2 films



## *Casablanca* (1942)

Week 2 - May 12

directed by Michael Curtiz

starring Humphrey Bogart, Ingrid Bergman, Paul Henreid

Set in unoccupied Africa during the early days of World War II, an American expatriate (Bogart) meets a former lover (Bergman), with unforeseen complications.

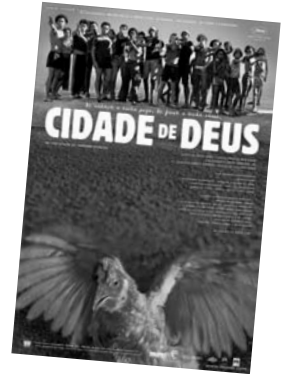
## *Cidade de Deus* City of God (2002)

Week 3 - May 19

directed by Fernando Meirelles, Kátia Lund

starring Alexandre Rodrigues, Matheus Nachtergaele, Leandro Firmino

Two boys growing up in a violent neighbourhood in Rio de Janeiro take different paths: one becomes a photographer, while the other becomes a drug dealer.



## *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory* (1971) rifftrax

Week 4 - May 26

directed by Mel Stuart

starring Gene Wilder, Jack Albertson, Peter Ostrum

Charlie Bucket (Ostrum) is a poor boy who wins the opportunity to tour the most eccentric and wonderful chocolate factory of all.



## *Clerks 1* (1994) and *Clerks 2* (2006) double feature

Week 5 - June 2

directed by Kevin Smith

starring Brian O'Halloran, Jeff Anderson, Jason Mewes, Kevin Smith

Follow a day in the lives of two convenience clerks named Dante (O'Halloran) and Randal (Anderson) as they annoy customers, discuss films and play hockey on the store roof.

