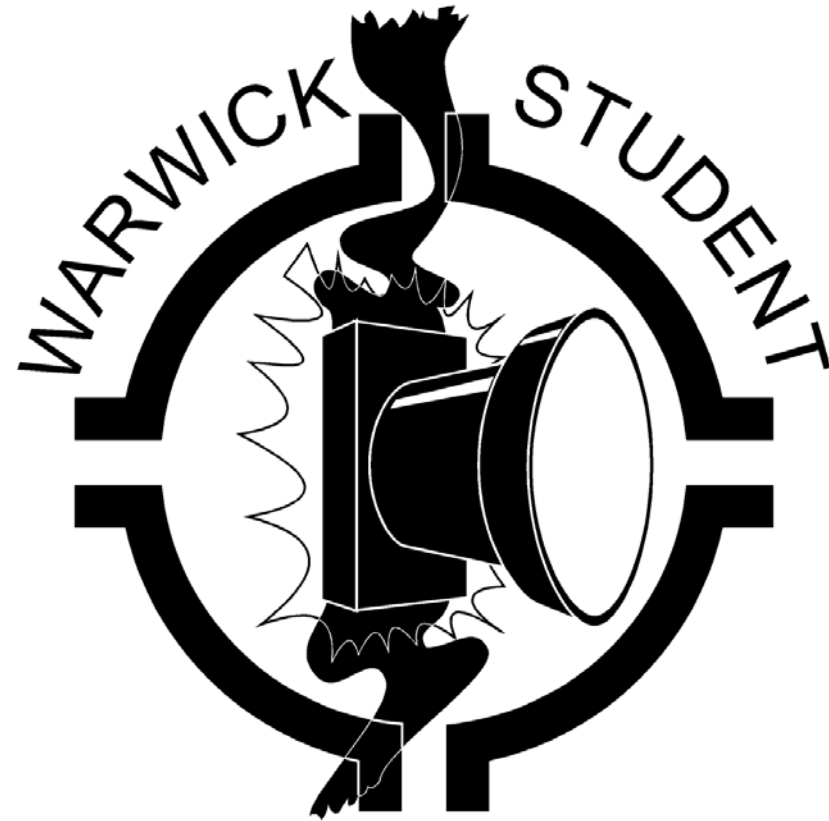


The University of Warwick Students' Union Film Society



C I N E M A

**Summer Season 2004**

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# Welcome back!

"Why is the Student Cinema showing films during an exam term?" you may ask. Well, we are because films are a part of everyone's life, whether the pressure of exams is there or not. Everybody loves to watch movies, and we're not stopping for exams - we hope you don't either.

So what do we have we in store for you this term? The Oscars have come and gone and *Lord Of The Rings* has swept all of the awards away like the tidal wave in the trailer for the upcoming disaster flick *The Day After Tomorrow* - but there are other films that were nominated and won awards that deserve your attention. *Cold Mountain* and *The Last Samurai*, wartime epics with very different settings; *Lost In Translation*, a very understated film which is worthy of your time; *21 Grams* and *House Of Sand And Fog*, both with fantastic ensemble acting. Then we've got something to make you laugh, which is healthy during an exam term, with *Scary Movie 3* and *School Of Rock*; *Osama* and *In This World*, films set in Central Asia that should interest everyone whose knowledge of this region came only from recent media coverage; *Infernal Affairs*, a phenomenally popular Hong Kong movie about gangster and cops; the list goes on - we really do have something for every taste!

We do hope you all turn up for some of these films. Perhaps you've just studied for 6 hours straight, or you've just completed that really difficult module you've been afraid of. You have a few options: you could go to the bar and talk about it with friends, you could dance your troubles away - or you could come to a Student Cinema screening and be entertained, be inspired, lose yourself in a different world, and for a couple of hours live a life different from yours. That's what films are good at doing.

For those of you at Warwick next year, don't forget we'll be back in the Autumn Term with a full schedule including a selection of the best recent blockbusters; arthouse and foreign films you might not have had the chance to see at the cinema on their initial release; and classic movies that belong on the big screen where you can be impressed and dazzled by them.

Finally, we'd like to wish everyone who has them good luck in their exams.

Best wishes for the future,

**The WSC Exec.**

# Warwick Student Cinema

*proudly presents*

A 'Publicity Team' Production

## 'Summer Season 2004'

Featuring The Exec

President PHILIP LURIE Treasurer JACOB WOOD

Films and Administration Officer SEBASTIAN NG

Chief Projectionist TIMOTHY DAVIDSON Technical Officer NICHOLAS MARCH

Chief Duty Manager RICHARD WINSKILL

Equal Ops and Socials Officers JONATHAN DOWNING & ROSANNA WILSON

IT Officer KISHAN POPAT

Publicity Officer ANDREW MADDISON



## General Information

### Membership

Academic year 2003-2004 £2.50

### Tickets

Single Member £1.80

Single Guest £2.80 (only one guest per member per show)

Five-Film Ticket £7.00 (valid for 2003-2004 Academic Year)

### Societies Federation

Please note that you need to become a member of Societies Federation before you can join Warwick Student Cinema. Rates for Societies Federation membership for students are as follows:

1 Year	2 Years	3 Years	4 Years
£8	£12	£15	£17

Discounts are available to Erasmus Students taking a year off. Societies Federation rates for Union/University staff and non-University members are available on request.

Prices correct at time of going to press and are subject to alteration.

### Where To Buy

Memberships, Tickets and Societies Federation Memberships are available on the Science Concourse before any Student Cinema showing (subject to availability) - we can only accept cash or cheques: we **cannot** take credit/debit cards. You can also buy your Student Cinema and Societies Federation membership online at the Union's web portal ([www.sunion.warwick.ac.uk](http://www.sunion.warwick.ac.uk)) with credit/debit cards, or in person at Union North Reception during stated hours.

**Please note:** All films screened by WSC may contain visual or audio elements which those with impaired senses may find difficult to understand. All efforts are taken by WSC to advertise films which may cause a problem, however due to delivery constraints this is not always possible. Please contact WSC with any queries regarding specific films.

**GET INVOLVED WITH WSC AND SEE FILMS FOR FREE!**

### Stewarding

Can you smile and give change from a tenner? Can you spare a little of your time before watching a film for free? If so then stewarding is for you.

**In return for helping out at just one film a fortnight you and a friend can see WSC films for Free**

### Projecting

Projecting is at the core of the society and is probably the most rewarding job. You will be shown the principles of film projection and how all the equipment works. Your training consists of projecting a public show every fortnight, under close supervision until you qualify to project on your own.

### Social Evening and General Meeting

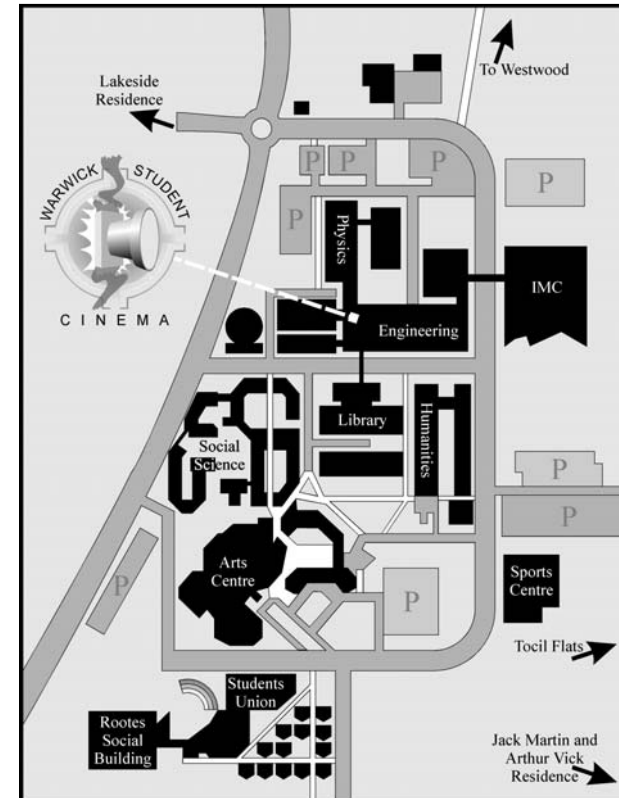
**Tuesday of every Even Week starting at 7.15pm in L3**

### DM-ing

Duty Managers are responsible for the admission and safety of the audience at each show. They organise the stewards, check ticket sales and bank the takings after the show.

For more information on these and other areas of WSC with which you can become involved, come along to a General Meeting!

## How to Find Us



**Warwick Student Cinema is situated off the science concourse just over the bridge from the library**

**Visit the WARWICK STUDENT CINEMA website:**

**[www.filmsoc.warwick.ac.uk](http://www.filmsoc.warwick.ac.uk)**

- News • Reviews of the term's films • Suggest a film for next term •
- Technical Information • Links to other Student Cinemas • and much more!



# thirteen

Director: Catherine Hardwicke  
 Starring: Evan Rachel Wood  
 Holly Hunter  
 Nikki Reed  
 Deborah Ungers

## *It's Happening So Fast*

Tracy (Wood) is an innocent 13-year old LA schoolgirl who hangs out with a couple of unpopular girls from her neighbourhood but desperately wants to be part of the cool group. When she notices that the most popular and beautiful girl is Evie (Reed), she sets out to try to get to know and impress her. She soon wins Evie over with the theft of a woman's purse, and the two become inseparable. Soon, Evie leads Tracy down a path of shoplifting, drink, drugs, piercings, and sex.



Tracy lives in a sprawling house with her former alcoholic and divorced mother, Melanie (Hunter). Melanie runs a beauty salon in her kitchen, and her house seems to be a drop zone for friends, acquaintances, their children and their needs. As her daughter's friendship with Evie develops from

harmless experimentation into something darker, with more serious consequences, Melanie finds her daughter change under the pressures of a new friend. However, she is too involved in the rest of her life to act preventatively, and their close relationship starts to strain.

Debut director Catherine Hardwicke shows off her experience as a production designer with an accomplished piece of film-making. Reed's semi-autobiographical screenplay was written whilst she was having difficulty with Hardwicke dating her father, and is a mature, and at times, cutting, piece of writing. Her acting is also impressive, convincing as the bad girl Evie - in contrast to her real-life role of Tracy. Both her supporting actresses put in polished performances; Wood is excellent as the innocent

girl who self-destructs into an angst-ridden teen, whilst Hunter portrays her character with gritty realism. You can't help but feel her pain as she seems unable to control Tracy and looks set to lose her.

*Thirteen* is a tough and brutally honest, if at times disturbing, look at some of the things that are happening to teenagers today. Not an easy film to watch but one that hits the mark with tremendous force, quite literally, from the start.

Alex Coe



7-30pm



7-30pm



# COLD MOUNTAIN

Director: Anthony Minghella  
 Starring: Jude Law  
 Nicole Kidman  
 Renée Zellweger

*Find The Strength. Find The Courage. No Matter What It Takes... Find The Way Home*

*Cold Mountain* is one of those films that comes simply oozing pedigree: from the director of *The English Patient*, starring last year's Best Actress, and based both on a Pulitzer Prize winning novel AND one of the greatest works of classical poetry. Surely then, it can be little more than a blatant awards-grabber, another Miramax Trojan Horse sent into our midst to overwhelm us with its worthiness and intelligence?



Actually, *Cold Mountain* might well overwhelm you, but not with its worthiness, but rather with its exemplary narrative structure, its layered storytelling, gorgeous photography and some stunning performances from its high-profile cast. Jude Law, in the least showy but most important role, plays a soldier sent to fight in the American Civil War, while Nicole Kidman



7-30pm



7-30pm



counterbalances him as the woman he loves, left to fend for herself in a world that has suddenly turned on its head. As her man begins his odyssey home from the front lines, Kidman's Penelope is forced to grow from girl to woman, and in the process protect herself and those around her from the lawless lawman who has taken control of the sleepy Cold Mountain.

*Cold Mountain* is a film ripe with incident and character, flowing seamlessly from one encounter to the next, giving equal import to Law's roaming soldier and Kidman's struggling farm girl. And each encounter layers the story with meaning, interlinking the two lovers inextricably and exposing the

hypocrisies, brutalities and everyday magic of existence, factors that are as relevant now as they were during the Civil War.

Anthony Minghella directs the film as you would expect from an English teacher - this is a beautiful, heavily symbolic and deeply intelligent work, one that bristles with hidden meanings and visual coding. That's not to say that it's some kind of pretentious puzzle for pedants, but rather that *Cold*

*Mountain* is a film that has almost everything a true cinephile could hope for. And, for action fans, it has one hell of an explosion...

Greg Taylor

# OSAMA

Director: Siddiq Barmak  
 Starring: Marina Golbahari  
 Arif Herati  
 Zubaida Sahar

*To Save Her Family A Girl Must Become A Boy. Her Story Is True. Her Name Is Osama...*

*Osama* is the first full-length feature film made in Afghanistan since the Taliban came to power in 1996. It shouldn't be mistaken for a film about the life and times of Osama bin Laden, however.



This movie is the story of a fatherless 12-year-old girl (Golbahari) who is forced to provide food for her all-female family. The men of the family have all been killed in various wars, and under Taliban rule a woman is unable to travel on her own, so her mother (Sahar) convinces her to cut her hair and dress as a boy named Osama so they can go to work in their village. Soon the Taliban come collecting boys for religious education, and "Osama" is taken

along, protected by her friend Espandi (Herati) but she's always under the threat of discovery.

The script and camerawork of *Osama* are clever and very skilful, giving us an intimate view of the characters and situations, while disarmingly natural performances make it feel almost like a documentary. It's a chilling examination of the effective imprisonment of women under Taliban rule, not to mention being deprived of education and even basic freedoms.

There's a truth here that can't be ignored - catch it on the cinema screen while you have the chance!

*Percival Tucker*



# RUNAWAY JURY

Director: Gary Fleder  
 Starring: Gene Hackman  
 Dustin Hoffman  
 Rachel Weisz  
 John Cusack

*Trials Are Too Important To Be Decided By Juries*

A bereaved widow hires lawyer Wendell Rohr (Hoffman) to sue the gun company that made the weapon used to kill her husband in an office shooting where 11 people died. If this trial swings in her favour it would be followed by thousands of other such trials from the relatives of gun victims. Fearing this, various gun companies club together to hire Rankin Fitch (Gene Hackman) who offers to sell them a verdict by cleverly manipulating the jury. Nicholas Easter (Cusack) happens to play juror number 9, but isn't all he first appears to be. Neither is his girlfriend Marlee (Weisz) who is also trying to play the jury game and offering to sell a verdict to both sides, but her motives are ambiguous.

Based on a John Grisham novel this film is a gripping story about three separate parties fighting for control over the opinions of some everyday people. Not all of the parties are as honest as they appear, and their methods differ as much as their motives.

The acting is probably the finest point of this film with its two Hollywood legends Hackman and Hoffman fighting against each other. Weisz is superb as a stealthy background character whose role is intentionally confusing at the beginning. Cusack is a mixture of confident showman



and quiet consoler and this combination of personas ingeniously allows him to influence his fellow jurors. The directing keeps the pace fast, withholding a lot of information at first, which maintains interest throughout.

The Grisham novel was originally about the tobacco industry but the story was altered for this film because people started winning cases against tobacco companies quite regularly. This anti gun theme is probably the reason why *Runaway Jury* was so heavily slated in the U.S. If you're very pro-guns you might find this film more a piece of Hollywood propaganda than a good story. *Runaway Jury* is a tense twisting film that can be highly recommended for its acting alone, and the story is pretty good too.

*Nicholas Grills*



# TOUCHING THE VOID

Director: Kevin MacDonald  
 Starring: Nicholas Aaron  
 Brendan Mackey  
 Joe Simpson  
 Simon Yates

*The Closer You Are To Death, The More You Realise That You Are Alive*

It seems particularly ironic that in a year of big budget horror movies and high profile thrillers, the most terrifying and exhilarating movie thus far is a low budget docu-drama about two blokes on a mountain. But, of course, it's not just any mountain, and theirs is not just any story - what *Touching the Void* is is a masterpiece of subjective documentation and the depiction of human endurance, spread across a canvas of intense dread and implacable nature.



Simon Yates and Joe Simpson were two fanatic climbers back in 1985 when they decided to attempt to scale the notoriously unclimbable west face of the Siula Grande Mountain in the heart of the perilous Andes. While their ascent was surprisingly unproblematic, it seems that the term "Pete Tong"

might've been coined specifically for their eventful descent. With one of them rendered almost immobile by a sharp fall, and with bad weather and bad navigation playing havoc with their minds, how could they possibly return home alive?

*Touching the Void* places its cards squarely on the table from the start by allowing the two climbers to narrate their story to the camera as actors portray the events that almost destroyed their lives 18 years ago. This, however, takes nothing away from the sheer impossibility of the situation that the two find themselves in as they battle for their lives with little hope of victory. As the two friends give their accounts of the horrors they faced on the mountain, we can but wonder at the resilience of the human mind and body that allowed them to survive - it makes getting through exam time look like scaling a climbing frame.

Kevin MacDonald avoids anything even approaching sentimentality, and similarly eschews bestowing any blame or responsibility upon his feckless subjects. Instead, he concentrates on telling one hell of a story, juxtaposing dizzying spectacle with quiet moments of introspection and self-valuation. *Touching the Void* is action cinema on both a grand, and inherently tiny scale, and a film that simply demands to be seen on the biggest screen possible.

Greg Taylor







# DOGVILLE

Director: Lars von Trier  
 Starring: Nicole Kidman  
 Harriet Andersson  
 Lauren Bacall

*A Quiet Little Town Not Far From Here*



Lars Von Trier is not a name one would readily associate with easy cinema. The co-founder of the confrontational Dogme 95 manifesto, and the director of the heartbreaking *Dancer in the Dark* and the divinely comic *The Kingdom*, Von Trier is not one to pull his punches, but also one of the very few directors working today who never refuses to deliver something resolutely, breathtakingly different. And, praise be, *Dogville* is yet another masterpiece in the auteur's oeuvre, a stunning, imaginative, and bleak sojourn into a very recognisable place indeed.

*Dogville* is a village situated somewhere in the American Rockies, a dying, insular skeleton of a habitation crawling slowly towards extinction. One night gunshots are heard far off in the distance, and soon after a mysterious young woman appears in the village, scared and looking for shelter and sanctuary. After some deliberation, the denizens of *Dogville* agree to take her in, but at a price - she must agree to work for them all, just a little bit, every day. At

first the arrangement works, but before long, as the human traits of lust, jealousy and hatred begin to raise their ugly heads, the stakes begin to raise and suddenly *Dogville* becomes a very threatening, dangerous place indeed, and events begin to move towards a tragic end.

Filmed entirely on a large stage, *Dogville* exudes smart confidence and dazzling insight. Von Trier's Brechtian revisioning of how cinema can function, utilising novelistic flourishes such as chapter points and a wry narrator reminiscent of George Eliot, makes for typically thought-provoking cinema. And cinema it is, making fine use of the camera to betray facial tics and expose the village's hypocrisy and corruption through expert framing and considered movements.

With a film as inherently character based as this, performances are key to success, and Nicole Kidman, currently the most interesting A-List actress working, is exemplary as the tired, scared, tortured and ultimately destructive Grace. Paul Bettany, cruising towards Oscar glory, also shines as Grace's hopeful, ambitious suitor, while turns from Lauren Bacall, Michael Gambon and Sonny Corleone himself add layers of talent and intertextual meanings to this deep and powerful mix. *Dogville* is another masterpiece from a director who has yet to deliver an uninteresting film, one of those rare films that can make you rethink exactly what film can do. Thought-provoking, adult stuff.

Greg Taylor






# THE LAST SAMURAI

Director: Edward Zwick  
 Starring: Tom Cruise  
 Ken Watanabe  
 William Atherton  
 Shin Koyamada

demonstrations of fighting and the samurai mentality. Koyuki as Taka sensitively portrays the widow of a samurai Algren kills who has to fight the shame of having Algren living under her roof and whose feelings eventually transform into tenderness and love towards him. The cinematography is excellent, from the beautiful scenery to the majestic-like presentation of the samurai, especially when they emerge from the mist in their ornate armour. The fight scenes are the most impressive element of the film, especially when you realise the impossible task the samurai face.



In *The Face On An Enemy, In The Heart Of One Man, Lies The Soul Of A Warrior*

Director Zwick takes audiences back into the 19th century as he did in *Legends of the Fall* and *Glory* with this fantastic action-adventure film. Cruise stars as Nathan Algren, a confederate soldier in emotional turmoil after being forced to commit atrocities against Native Americans during the civil war. To earn himself a small fortune he agrees to go to Japan to train the army in modern warfare so they can combat the samurai; revolting ancient warriors who oppose the Industrial Revolution taking place. However, when Algren himself is captured by the samurai he is immersed into their highly-disciplined culture of spirituality and honour, and has to make his choice of who he will stand and fight for.

The creators of this film have certainly taken a poetic licence in combining legend and history but the result is a rich and exciting lesson in heritage. Those dubious about Cruise in the lead role will be relieved to see he carries the film well, but the real cast strength comes from the samurai. Watanabe as the imposing warrior leader, Katsumoto is fantastic; he really did deserve his Oscar nomination. Koyamada's film debut as Katsumoto's son is also impressive with his skilful

This film is not perfect and at times it is in danger of falling into predictable sentimentality but the strength of the acting and impressive fight scenes bring it through in fine form. Just to see the samurai take on canons and machine guns with their medieval weapons puts you on the edge of your seat and really does have to be seen on the big screen.

Hannah Upton

# Lost In Translation

Director: Sofia Coppola  
 Starring: Scarlett Johansson  
 Bill Murray  
 Akiko Takeshita

deceptively intricate direction to convey a sense of both alienation and affirmation, and as such there are three people who deserve credit. Bill Murray, playing Bill Murray perfectly, brings the perfect sardonic edge to his portrayal of a past-his-prime actor who is just doing his thang for fortune and glory, while Scarlett Johansson is divine as the young wife ignored by her photographer husband.

*Everyone Wants To Be Found*

Coming away from its small-scale Oscar triumph and the critical adoration heaped upon it by the press, it is perhaps high time to consider exactly what it is about *Lost In Translation* that so captivated audiences and intellectuals alike - after all, it is just an extended version of *Before Sunrise* in the Far East, isn't it?



Well, in fact, no it isn't - for one thing, *Lost In Translation* is not a romance in any airport paperback sense of the term. Rather, it's a delicately drawn portrait of two very different people who have somehow managed to lose themselves in their own lives, cast adrift in Japan and lonely in a way it is only possible to be in a throbbing, endlessly crowded metropolis. Blessedly these two lost souls meet and form a bond which is as transitory as it is powerful, and begin to discover together both the incredible country in which they find themselves, and the emotions that make them human.

*Lost In Translation*, while following a fairly conventional narrative coding, doesn't offer easy answers and trite resolutions, but instead relies on pitch perfect performances and

But the true kudos must go to the waif-like Miss Coppola, who has crafted a film of such melancholy beauty that it makes the heart ache. From her charming vistas of Mount Fuji to the fragmented editing which conveys the loneliness of her characters so perfectly, she nary puts a foot wrong - something one could barely say about her father post-*Godfather Part II*.

So what is it about *Lost In Translation* that just works so well? I suspect it's the fact that it is a film that never condescends to the viewer, never indulging in crass sentimentality or easy answers to complex questions. And, in dealing with the most widespread and painful of human emotions, it cannot but strike a chord with even the most automaton-like of viewers. As a filmic experience, *Lost In Translation* is moving: as a piece of art, it is astounding.

Greg Taylor



# IN THIS WORLD

Director: Michael Winterbottom  
 Starring: Jamal Udin Torabi  
 Enayatullah  
 Imran Paracha  
 Hidayatullah  
 Jamau

The smuggler puts them on what is known as The Silk Road, a long, and at times harrowing, journey through Iran, Turkey, Italy and France. Short on money, lacking proper papers, and forced to travel in trucks, lorries, and shipping containers, the two boys find themselves at the mercy of the people-smugglers who make their living out of others' misery. Soon they find that their route is littered with stolen cash, broken dreams and dead bodies.

With this film, Michael Winterbottom has created a striking addition to his portfolio, which includes the excellent Bosnian war movie, *Welcome to Sarajevo*. Shot with a small digital camera, this film is not a documentary, although many of the scenes were apparently taken without the knowledge of the people in them and has a real sense of urgency. The cast of unknowns do well, with the lead Jamal Udin Torabi revealing a real character. Also, most of the dialogue is improvised, based on a script from interviews with others who made the journey.

This film shows that the struggle for survival is common in every part of the world; it simply takes a different shape or form. A stark, intelligent, and essential film to see.

Alex Coe






7:30pm

## The Journey To Freedom Has No Borders

We are living in a time when more and more people are shunning the rat race and opting for a quieter life in the country. Living off hefty salaries makes way for living off the land, and the phrase "bringing home the bacon" takes on a whole new meaning with the reliance on animal husbandry. However, it's easy to forget that there are those who already live in such circumstances and can't wait to get away from it.



But what is it about our stress-filled lives that these people want? Whatever it is, it's enough to risk their lives for. And then we realize the ignorant and arrogant lives we've been living; the luxury of taking survival for granted.

*In this World* tells the real-life story of Jamal Udin Torabi (played by himself), a 16-year-old Afghan boy who lives with his family in the Shamshatoo refugee camp in Pakistan. His cousin Enayatullah (Enayatullah) is sent to London and because Jamal speaks English, he is allowed to go along as a translator and companion. The two make a deal with a human-trafficker, betting their borrowings and life savings on a one-way ticket to London, where another cousin is waiting for them.

# S.W.A.T.

Director: Clark Johnson  
 Starring: Samuel L. Jackson  
 Colin Farrell  
 Michelle Rodriguez  
 LL Cool J

fugitive. Alex offers a \$100 million reward on television to anyone who frees him, and the cops assume there will be a lot of escape masterminds hoping to collect the reward. It's up to Hondo and his team to safely escort the prisoner to jail.

## Even Cops Dial 911

Who do the police call when they're in trouble? Well they call S.W.A.T. of course, who else? The movie begins with a hostage situation gone wrong. A S.W.A.T. team member (Brian

That it does not go smoothly goes without saying. However, in an era when so many action flicks are a mindless assaults on your intelligence, it works as something vaguely plausible and yet still entertaining.



The director remains faithful to the conventions of the genre while sneaking in the occasional surprise to keep us off balance, which makes the film better than many of its kind, with performances being mostly serious, with dashes of humour thrown in for good measure. One of the best action movies of 2003; see it where it belongs - on the big screen.

Percival Tucker

Gamble) disobeys orders, enters a bank and wounds a hostage. He and his partner Jim Street (Farrell) are offered demotions. Street accepts; his partner leaves the force. Street, a talented officer and a great shot, is spotted by the legendary veteran Hondo Harrelson (Jackson), and chosen for his hand-picked elite S.W.A.T. team.

A routine traffic stop leads to the unexpected arrest of Alex (Olivier Martinez), an internationally wanted







7:30pm 7:30pm

# IN AMERICA

Director: Michael Winterbottom  
 Starring: Samantha Morton  
 Paddy Considine  
 Djimon Hounsou

*In America*, one of Empire's Top 25 Films of 2003, is the heart-warming tale of an Irish couple and their two daughters who illegally emigrate to New York City in search of a better life. However, before they can fully embrace the challenges and wonders of their new home, they must cope with and triumph over the emotional wounds of a past sorrow that haunts each of them - the death of son, Frankie.

Although many people have argued that nothing actually happens in this film, I would argue that it is precisely scenes such as these which make it well worth seeing. It is a film very much true to life, the beauty of which lies in every moment, and doesn't require an action-packed story line to make it work. All of the cast's performances are exemplary, and it is no wonder than Morton and Hounsou were both nominated at this year's Academy Awards for their roles.



Whilst the father, Johnny (Considine), auditions for theatre roles and mother, Sarah (Morton), works in a local diner to make ends meet, the two young girls, Christy and Ariel, befriend terminally-ill, temperamental artist, Mateo (Hounsou). Much of this poignant movie is seen through the eyes of the two girls, one of whom through her camcorder, keeps a video diary of sorts. It is through this camcorder that audiences are charmed by the transformation of Mateo from an angry, bitter man dying of AIDS, to a man of hope, who realizes that there is still some good in the world.

Writer and director, Jim Sheridan, famous for films such as *My Left Foot* and *In the Name of the Father*, has once again surpassed himself in this loosely autobiographical story of memory, secrets, love, loss and starting over. *In America* is one of the nicest films I have seen in a very long time.

Ricky Anthony Wyatt

A particularly brilliant scene is one near the beginning of the film, where the family venture out into the city funfair. Johnny intends to win a cuddly toy for his daughters, but before he knows it, is sucked into the game, with the scene climaxing in him gambling with the family's entire savings.

# inter'mission

Director: John Crowley  
 Starring: Colin Farrell  
 Cillian Murphy  
 Kelly Macdonald

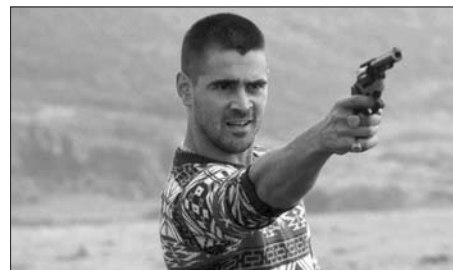
look like they're having a ball and this shows through the energy they possess and give throughout the film.

*Life Is What Happens In Between*

When the desperately insecure and emotionally inarticulate John (Murphy, *28 Days Later*) breaks up with Deirdre (Macdonald) to 'give her a little test,' his plan backfires leaving her broken-hearted and him alone and miserable. Through chance and coincidence, their break-up triggers a roller coaster ride of interweaving escapades in the lives of everyone around them. *Intermission* presents a slice of life, the passage between breaking up and making up, exploring how our lives intersect, and the power we all possess to affect the lives of those around us



With eleven plotlines, each worthy of its own film, the audience is never lost, instead, craving more. While films, such as *Love Actually*, did some heavy lifting to connect its wide-ranging plotlines, *InterMission* brings its many characters together with seeming effortlessness and no shortage of delightful, often rude, quintessentially Irish throwaway humour. Even a seemingly insignificant funny detail like John's addiction to brown sauce in his coffee plays a key role in the story.



Gritty ensemble movies with interlocking stories have become commonplace in recent years, and most of them have been at best tolerable. But the Irish *Pulp Fiction*, if you will, succeeds the majority for its believable portrayal of urban life, through its script, direction and superb cast. As usual, Farrell is magnetic as ever in a thoroughly disreputable part (including a real shock in his first few minutes of screen time). He even manages to pull off an inspired rendition of 'I Fought the Law' during the end credits. The rest of the cast

The film successfully portrays violence, humour, and touching little moments about love and the lengths people will go to get it. Although the film was successful in America, it did not get the release or promotion it rightfully deserved in Britain. Nevertheless, this sleeper is proof that a small budget doesn't matter when you've got a terrific script and great acting to bring it to life.

Phil Lurie

# SCARY MOVIE 3

Director: David Zucker  
Starring: Pamela Anderson  
Jenny McCarthy  
Marny Eng  
Charlie Sheen  
Simon Rex

*You'll Die To See These Rings*

*Scary Movie 3* is a surprisingly amusing film: one of the funniest of the last year. Sure, it's silly, tasteless, infantile, disgusting, and all but inexplicable to anyone who isn't familiar with American schlock-horror and thrillers. Of course, it's filled with barf jokes, boob jokes, sex jokes, cheap shots, slapstick and puns so awful that you laugh at them not because they are funny but because someone actually had the nerve to say something so stupid out loud. In a film like *Scary Movie 3*, though, such descriptions are less complaints than badges of honour and this film wears every single one of them proudly.

There are several reasons why this film works in ways that the other episodes simply didn't. The main change this time around is that the Wayans have been replaced by David Zucker, whose experience in the film parody genre can be demonstrated by such classics as *Airplane!* and *The Naked Gun* series. The immediate difference is one of approach; while the jokes in the previous films tended to focus on disgusting sight gags seemingly designed

only to humiliate the performers, Zucker goes for a lighter, sillier method of attack and uses every comic style in his arsenal in order to score laughs. Yes, there are gross-out gags but he also mixes things up with stupid jokes, elaborate parodies and genuinely sophisticated wordplay.

Another reason why *Scary Movie 3* works is that they have finally chosen the right films to parody. Instead of simply concentrating on one film, *Scary Movie 3* comes up with a story (to use the term loosely) that manages to incorporate elements from *The Ring*, *The Others*, *Signs*, *The Matrix Reloaded* and *8 Mile*. These are actually good selections because they



were films that were genuinely enjoyed by a large audience and they were filled with just enough self-seriousness so as to be ripe for satire.

All *Scary Movie 3* wants to do is make you laugh by any means necessary and, on the whole, it succeeds. You have plenty of opportunities in the current Student Cinema season to watch profound films about the human condition. Those are all well and good but there are times when you would simply prefer dumb laughs to the self-seriousness other offerings. *Scary Movie 3* more than fits that particular bill.

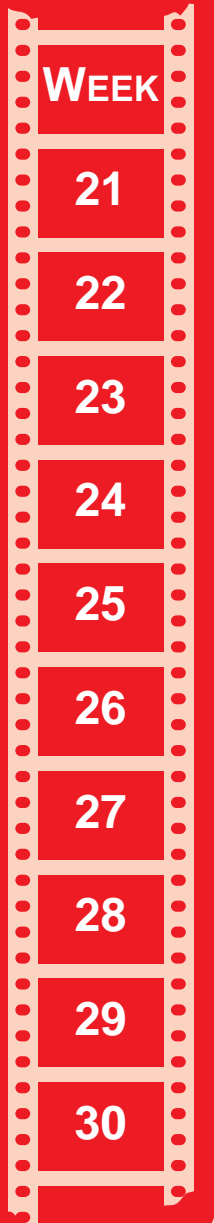
Percival Tucker





# SUMMER TERM 2004 FILM SEASON

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TUESDAY

7:30PM

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7:30PM

FRIDAY

7:30PM

SATURDAY

7:30PM

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Thirteen

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Cold Mountain

Osama

Runaway Jury

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Touching the Void

Dogville

The Last Samurai

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Lost in Translation

In This World

S.W.A.T.

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In America

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My Life Without Me

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Along Came Polly

Something's Gotta Give

Dead End

Programme subject to change without notice



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# AMERICAN SPLENDOR

Directors: Shari Springer Berman  
Robert Pulcini  
Starring: Paul Giamatti  
Harvey Pekar  
Hope Davis  
Judah Friedlander

his unremarkable working-class Cleveland life, a warts-and-all self-portrait. First published in 1976, the comic which relentlessly documents the ghastly realities of day-to-day life, earned Pekar cult fame throughout the 1980s, culminating in his appearance on *The David Letterman Show*.

## *Ordinary Life Is Pretty Complex Stuff*

*American Splendor* charts the rise and fall of Harvey Pekar (Giamatti & Pekar), a neurotic, jazz-loving, serial divorcee who would give Woody Allen a run for his money.

Pekar is a local hospital file clerk, where his interactions with his co-workers offer some relief from the monotony; their discussions encompass everything from music to the decline of American culture to new flavours of jellybeans and life itself. At home, he fills his days with reading, writing and listening to jazz. His apartment is filled with thousands of books and records, and he regularly scours Cleveland's thrift stores and garage sales for more, savouring the rare joy of a cheap find. It is at one of these junk sales that he meets Robert Crumb, a greeting card artist and fellow music enthusiast.

When, years later, Crumb finds international success for his underground comics, the idea that comic books can be a valid art form for adults inspires Pekar to write his own brand of comic book - a truthful, unsentimental record of

Filmed in the grainy, washed-out hues of a typical 70's American movie, it is anchored by a brilliant performance from Giamatti. The know-the-face-not-the-name character actor has long deserved a leading role, and manages to capture a unique, unusual character without being patronising or sentimental.



Sweet, funny and a bit leftfield, *American Splendor* blurs the boundaries between documentary and drama, creating something striking and original. Part of this is down to how Pekar is portrayed on screen - in three dimensions: by an actor (Giamatti); as cartoon/comic book caricatures; and by himself - looking on at the fictionalised recreation of his life and providing the movie's voiceovers whilst answering personal questions.

A wonderful examination of the complexities of ordinary life, told by a complex and ordinary man, Harvey Pekar.

Alex Coe



7:30pm



WEEK 26

# THE DREAMERS

Director: Bernardo Bertolucci  
 Starring: Michael Pitt  
 Eva Green  
 Louis Garrel

*Together Anything Is Possible. Together Nothing Is Forbidden*

Over thirty years ago, director Bernardo Bertolucci shocked the world with the help of Don Corleone, Maria Schneider and a knob of Utterly Butterly. With *The Dreamers*, the dirty old man is up to his old tricks again, releasing a film that whipped up a furore across the pond and was tagged with the dreaded, commercially suicidal NC-17 rating for "Explicit Sexual Content". Student ears the world over pricked up...

And, true to say, *The Dreamers* isn't averse to lingering over the bodies of its three young stars, playing a trio of students who go to ground in Paris in the late 1960s and experience an insular, borderline-perverse sexual awakening that threatens to shut out the revolution that is taking place in the streets around them. Michael Pitt, playing the film buff American who is unceremoniously integrated into the playful, possibly incestuous world of brother and sister Isabelle and Theo, brings just the right edge of youthful lust and wide-eyed wonder to a role which is both demanding and revealing.

Full of references that will thrill the film buff, *The Dreamers* uses its references as a way of demythologising its own characters, exposing

them as obsessed, insular and self-destructive individuals whose socially stunted existence is desperately at odds with the wave of change permeating the zeitgeist of the time. Though thankfully the film is not obsessed with negativity - for all their failings the characters are resolutely interesting people, and portray well the gleeful and painful truths of teen love, lust and growth.



Explicit though *The Dreamers* undoubtedly is, it is also a beautifully crafted, genuinely intelligent film that, despite its credentials, should have appeal outside of the art-house market. Its heady mixture of joyful exuberance and melancholy remembrance of time past cumulates in a moment of transcendent sadness, and leaves us aware that the more things change, the more they stay the same. A powerful, erotic and uncompromising work.

Greg Taylor

# School of Rock

Director: Richard Linklater  
 Starring: Jack Black  
 Joan Cusack  
 Mike White  
 Sarah Silverman

*For Those About To Rock... I Salute You*

Dewey Finn (Black - best known for his scene-stealing role as sweaty music-snob Barry in *High Fidelity*) is self-anointed rock and roll god, but when his band fire him for his OTT stage antics all hopes of winning a regional Battle of the Bands contest go out the window. That is until he takes a phone call for substitute-teacher flatmate Ned and decides to impersonate him to earn some cash. In his position at the elite prep school Dewey realises he can't fob the class off with day-long recess but when he learns a handful of them are talented musicians he embarks on a mission to teach them how to rock. Coming up against the stressed-out school



principal (Cusack), his flatmates -personality-devoid Ned and his uber-bitch girlfriend, and eventually a mob of angry parents who believed their kids are being abused, Dewey conducts a covert operation of entering the kids in the Battle of the Bands competition for the \$25,000 prize.

On paper this has the predictable formula of every other *Mighty Ducks*-esque film where a group of misfit kids come good under the guidance of an adult who believes in them. However, this is a lot better than expected and is full of laugh out loud moments, including Dewey handing out AC/DC, Led Zeppelin and The Who CDs for homework. Jack Black as the lead is utterly convincing and as real-life rocker in Tenacious D, all Dewey's passion is clearly shared by the actor. The rest of the cast are on fine form, especially the kids with whom Black has a natural rapport. Joan Cusack as the Principal is also funny but essentially the cast are eclipsed by Black's enormous presence.

This film is essentially a Jack Black showcase for his talent and infectious passion for old school rock. A natural performer he is totally at ease in the spotlight and it is a joy to sit back and watch. The plot may be far-fetched and the thought of a man getting into a classroom under a false identity is, well, you know. However, this is harmless fun for young and old and the soundtrack is amazing; a must see.

Hannah Upton

# The Fighting Temptations

Director: Jonathan Lynn  
 Starring: Cuba Gooding Jr  
 Beyoncé Knowles  
 Faith Evans



## Don't Fight The Feeling

About to land a big account, a top advertising executive (Gooding) is fired for lying and finds himself in debt. On the run, his grandmother dies and so he returns to his southern town roots where he learns that, if he becomes the choir director and enters the Gospel Explosion in Atlanta, he will inherit \$150,000. Unfortunately the choir leaves a lot to be desired and he has to start recruiting. Among the new recruits are three prisoners, a barbershop quartet, and, more importantly, a sinner (Knowles) from the local night club. Will she win over the community with her voice? Will the choir win the contest? Where's Whoopi Goldberg when you need her?

should be given praise as a credible actress and soulful songstress. Her performance of 'Fever' is scorching and the tensions between her 'R&B sex music' and the old fashioned choir members allow for some fantastic one-liners. If you're not a fan of her and her bootylicious ways, you will soon be converted. Hallelujah!

The plot is formulaic, love blooms between the leads, but this is only used as a platform in between the musical routines, which will have you rocking in the aisles... or at least tapping your feet. You may not believe that gospel music saves the soul of a greedy advertising executive, but it certainly makes this movie one to watch.

Can I get an Amen with that!

Phil Lurie

Cuba Gooding is back on track after a long line of flops since his Oscar win for *Jerry Maguire*, and the rest of the cast provide strong musical and comic talent. However, Beyoncé stands out from the crowd, or should I say choir, and



# the Human Stain

Director: Robert Benton  
 Starring: Anthony Hopkins  
 Nicole Kidman  
 Ed Harris  
 Gary Sinise

contrived life came unravelled. The story unfolds through carefully orchestrated and well developed recollections. They reveal what led the young Coleman to choose the path he has, one of denial of self.

## How Far Would You Go To Escape The Past?

The Human Stain is a version of the final novel in the Philip Roth trilogy that began with *American Pastoral* and continued with *I Married a Communist*, featuring Roth's novelist alter-ego, Nathan Zuckerman. It follows the story of Coleman Silk (Hopkins), a distinguished Jewish classics professor at a prestigious New England college. His life takes a turn for the worse when he inadvertently racially slurs a couple of his students, who demand an apology. With no support from his academic colleagues against the claims, he resigns, an event which brings on the death of his wife.

*The Human Stain* is an emotional drama, featuring powerful performances, as expected, from the all-star cast. Anthony Hopkins and Nicole Kidman are brilliant as the key players, with good support from Gary Sinise and Ed Harris. But what strikes you first are the voices drawing you in. Hopkins' recognisable tone is as seductive as ever, but it is Kidman with a weary huskiness that is most surprising. Sinise's narration, as Zuckerman, is straightforward, reflecting his character's open conversations with Silk.

Alex Coe



Following the death of his spouse, widower Silk embarks on a passionate affair with Faunia Farelly (Kidman), a middle-aged cleaning lady at the college, who has a grim past and violent ex-husband. When his scandalous affair is uncovered, the secret Silk had harboured from his wife, his children and colleague, writer Zuckerman (Sinise) for fifty years, explodes in a conflagration of devastating consequences. It is Zuckerman who stumbles upon Silk's secret, and sets out to reconstruct the unknown biography of this eminent, upright man, esteemed as an educator for nearly all his life, and to understand how this ingeniously



WEEK 27

WEEK 27

# BIG FISH

Director: Tim Burton  
 Starring: Ewan McGregor  
 Albert Finney  
 Danny DeVito  
 Jessica Lange.

*An Adventure As Big As Life Itself*

Tim Burton is one of the few visionary auteurs who is still thriving within the parameters of the Hollywood studio system, no doubt due to the fact that his unique world vision usually means big bucks for the man behind the desk. Happily, though, with *Big Fish*, Burton has resisted the pandering displayed in his underrated, though distinctly below-par *Planet of the Apes* remake, and has fashioned a beautiful, lyrical and deeply moving tale of love, loss, family and the great human art of story-telling, and as such has perhaps created his greatest cinematic triumph - something truly Burtonesque.

returns to his father's deathbed to try and finally piece together the truth of his life. But, of course, the truth is a notoriously subjective and slippery thing, and fact and fiction seems to blur as we see Ed's past life through his own eyes, taking in tales of giants, murderous trees, the saddest town in the world, parachute raids on Vietnam, deep and abiding friendship, and most importantly, true love.

And it is this love that pushes *Big Fish* into a league of its own - Burton's love for gorgeous visuals, the characters' love for one another, and our love for a story that makes us remember the beautiful things in life. As Will's voyage of discovery moves towards its emotional and uplifting end, it's impossible not to be moved as everything harmonises in a unique and tearful symphony - the music, the imagery, the acting (Ewan McGregor is perfect), the gentle, unobtrusive direction and the sense that this really is a one-of-a-kind movie.

*Big Fish* is absolutely one of those films that has to be seen on the big screen - its scope as wide reaching as a man's dreams. As close to flawless as a big budget Hollywood film can be, it would be tantamount to a crime to refuse to be seduced by one of the most beautiful films to grace the screens in some time. Don't let it get away...

Greg Taylor



Will Bloom is tired of the ridiculous stories told by his ageing father, and after cutting off direct contact for several years he

7:30pm 7:30pm

# Elephant.

Director: Gus Van Sant  
 Starring: Alex Frost  
 Eric Deulen  
 John Robinson  
 Elias McConnell

*An Ordinary High School Day. Except That It's Not*

There is a school of thought which says that the rise in increasingly violent human behaviour is heavily influenced by increasingly violent action-films, but is it as clear cut as this and could it be a case of the chicken vs the egg? Certainly, this film portrays an incident not dissimilar as that which happened at Columbine High, Littleton, Colorado, USA. The only violence in this film is that many innocent people are shot dead; it isn't violent in the way it presents those deaths.

The title is taken from Alan Clarke's *Elephant*, a BBC TV film that presented, without any commentary, a succession of killings in Northern Ireland and this is the only indication of what might happen. The unassuming nature of this film starts with the tracking of various students and staff as they arrive at the school and go about their daily routines, and continues with long tracking shots; the film simply watches the day's events unfold.

From the bespectacled librarian girl to the trio of popular girls obsessed with friendship and

slimming, the students at this school seem perfectly normal, except for two boys, Alex (Frost) and Eric (Deulen). Acting without any remorse, rage, bitterness or obvious emotion of any kind, they arrive at school with suspicious-looking bags.

In flashbacks that are virtually indistinguishable from the present, we see this pair of outsiders prepare for their massacre.

What to others will seem like random slaughter is to them a meticulously planned military exercise.

Van Sant himself admits to not knowing why the two killers acted like they did, and this film provoked lots of debate upon its original release. Even more so when this film picked up the Palme d'Or and the best director award at Cannes. It offers no explanation for the tragedy, no insights into the psyches of the killers, no theories about teenagers or society or guns or psychopathic behaviour.



This is an excellent example of storytelling - a film you should not miss!

Alex Coe

7:30pm

WEEK 27

WEEK 28



# INFERNAL AFFAIRS

Directors: Andy Lau  
Alan Mak  
Starring: Andy Lau  
Tony Leung  
Eric Tsang  
Anthony Wong

There have been some excellent cops and robbers match-ups in the crime thriller genre in recent years, from Al Pacino and Robert De Niro (in Michael Mann's *Heat*) to John Travolta and Nicolas Cage (in John Woo's *Face/Off*). Now it's the turn of Andy Lau and Tony Leung. Almost unknown outside of their native Hong Kong, they are the equivalents of Brad Pitt and Leonardo DiCaprio in terms of their stature and recognition in the Hong Kong film industry.



Living secretive lives, each man endures his own personal hell. Yan yearns to regain his normal, moral life, while the once-scandalous Ming aches to relinquish this now forced role of informant and become a true police officer.

Hong Kong cinema has come a long way since the low-on-plot, high-on-action fightfests from Bruce Lee, and the low-on-feasible plot, high-on-slapstick-action fightfests from Jackie Chan. *Infernal Affairs* is a gripping and thoroughly entertaining thriller, daring to challenge the creativity and slick production values of the US.

*Infernal Affairs* was originally censored by the Chinese authorities, who were unhappy with the emotionally powerful ending, but this has did not

deter the producers from making two follow-up films. This film has also made noises in the US, where Brad Pitt has bought the English-language remake rights, and is expected to star, having lined up Martin Scorsese to direct. Hopefully though, Hollywood will stick to the original plot and not carry out an act of celluloid crime like they did with *The Ring*.

One of the most popular and successful films in recent Hong Kong cinema history finally makes its way to the UK and to Warwick Student Cinema - do not miss this excellent film!

Alex Coe





  
 7:30pm

# THE MISSING

Director: Ron Howard  
Starring: Cate Blanchett  
Tommy Lee Jones  
Aaron Eckhart

finding it impossible to make a bad film, is brilliant as always, showing much dynamism and accuracy in her portrayal of the strong-willed Maggie.

*How Far Would You Go, How Much Would You Sacrifice To Get Back What You Have Lost?*

*The Missing* is an action-packed drama set in 19th century New Mexico. Samuel (Jones) returns to his home town where he hopes to reconcile with his now adult daughter, Maggie, (Blanchett) for leaving many years ago. At first, Maggie wants none of it, but when her partner (Eckhart) is killed and one of her daughters is kidnapped by a group of savage Apaches, she is forced to work with him to remain hot on the kidnappers' tracks.



What is particularly brilliant about *The Missing* is its combination of genres. Sub-plots such as Maggie's quiet grievance for her murdered lover and frustration with her previously-absent father combine with scenes of fast-paced action and even witchcraft. As aforementioned, Blanchett and Jones' acting is sublime throughout, but no action film is complete without its fearsome enemy. The kidnappers, attempting to escape over the border into Mexico to sell the girls that they have captured, are led by a hideous Apache, capable of casting spells, one of which delays Maggie's pursuit.

Despite missing out on this year's Academy Awards nominations, arguably because it was released at the same time as films such as *Lost in Translation* and *Master and Commander*, Ron Howard's *The Missing* really is nothing short of amazing. At last, cinema goes get the sort of action film they have been impatiently waiting for. This really is not to be missed.

Ricky Anthony Wyatt

In my opinion, this film sees Tommy Lee Jones regain his status as one of Hollywood's finest actors of today. He goes far beyond his acting duties, even learning the native language to make his role all the more convincing. Cate Blanchett, an actress possessing the rare gift of






  
 7:30pm 7:30pm

# HOUSE OF SAND AND FOG

Director: Vadim Perelman  
 Starring: Jennifer Connelly  
 Ben Kingsley  
 Ron Eldard

*Some Dreams Can't Be Shared*

It's rare to find a film that doesn't take sides. Conflict is said to be the basis of popular fiction, and yet here is a film that seizes us with its first scene and never lets go, and we feel sympathy all the way through for everyone in it. They sometimes do bad things, but the movie understands them and their flaws. *House of Sand and Fog* sees into the hearts of its characters, and loves and pities them.



The story is simply told. Kathy (Connelly), a recovering alcoholic, has been living alone since her husband walked out on her eight months ago. She's fallen behind with the taxes for her modest home that has a view of the

California shore. She neglects warnings from the county, the house is put up for auction, and it is purchased by Massoud (Kingsley), an Iranian immigrant who was a colonel in the Shah's air force but now works two jobs to support his family, and dreams that this house is the first step in rebuilding the lives of his wife and son.

Into the lives of these two people comes a third, Lester Burdon (Eldard), the deputy sheriff who evicts Kathy but is touched by her grief, then stirred by her beauty. If we are keeping score, then it's his fault for what eventually happens. It is fair enough to fight for your home and family, but not fair to misuse your uniform - not even if your excuse is love.

To admire a story you must be willing to listen to the people and observe them, and at the end of *House of Sand and Fog*, we have seen good people with good intentions who have their lives destroyed because they had the bad luck to come across a weak person with shabby desires. And finally there is a kind of love and loyalty, however strange to us, that reveals itself in Massoud's marriage, and must be respected.

It's rare for a film to generate such strong conflicting emotions as this one does, and the actors' talents are largely responsible. You will come away in awe; well worth a trip to the cinema.

*Percival Tucker*



# My Life Without Me

Director: Isabel Coixet  
 Starring: Sarah Polley  
 Scott Speedman  
 Mark Ruffalo

Ann, 23 years old, lives a modest life with her two kids and husband in a trailer in her mother's garden. Her life takes a dramatic turn, when her doctor tells her that she has uterine cancer and only two months to live. Realising that her life will never be the same she embarks alone on the journey to the end, determined to fully live the time she has left, tie up any loose ends in her own life, and hope to make preparations to enable everyone else's life to go on without her. Her list of things to do before she dies includes falling in love with a lonely man she once met in a laundrette.



Burdened with her secret but liberated by her new sense of control, Ann's emotional journey leads her to unexpected places and gives her life new meaning: the tender moments, the volatile emotions she must keep inside, the recognition that she has the power to understand and appreciate her own life.

The premise screams out 'sad and poignant', yet it succeeds in being a tale of hope. The film doesn't focus on her plight from a medical perspective or one of suffering, but as one of a person coming to grips with the inevitable fact of human existence - death. But the film also serves as a reminder that if we don't open our eyes and look around we may miss life.

Polley (*Go!*) is impressive in her role as Ann, bringing depth and powerful emotion to the character, backed up by excellent supporting

performances. As an audience, we are so accustomed to lacquered perfection in screen actresses that Polley's own beauty, striking whilst unconventional, seems fresh and endearing. The integrity to her looks and her acting allows for an unspoken pact she establishes with the viewer.

Both written and directed by Coixet, and co-produced by Almodovar, the theme of death is a complex subject to explore, yet is handled maturely. Additionally, the paradox that death affects us all yet we know so little about it only contributes to its intricacy. Given this, *My Life Without Me* demonstrates stunningly how such a tragic event can have positive ramifications.

*Phil Lurie*



WEEK 29

WEEK 29

# 21 GRAMS

Director: Alejandro Gonzalez Inarritu  
 Starring: Sean Penn  
 Naomi Watts  
 Benicio Del Toro  
 Clea Duvall

## How Much Does Life Weigh?

Paul Rivers (Penn) is desperately waiting for a heart transplant, Christina Peck (Watts) is a reformed junkie with a loving husband and two girls, and Jack Jordan (Del Toro), is an ex-convict who has found in his Christian faith the strength to raise a family. These three characters are brought together by a terrible accident that will change their lives. By the final frame, none of them will be the same as they learn harsh truths about love, faith, courage, desire and guilt, and how chance can change our worlds irretrievably, forever.

Nominated for several Oscars, Inarritu has created a masterpiece which outweighs *Amores Perros*, and this is no mean feat. Many themes can be drawn from this film but it appears that the notion of reformation, which all three characters face at some point in the film, is questioned most of all.

The film succeeds on two levels. Firstly, the script and the acting are superb. Powerful scenes will drain

the viewer of every emotion. No single actor stands out as performances are equally as exceptional as each other, but credit should go to Watts, nominated for an Oscar, who seems to be getting better and better in every film. Secondly, and I believe what separates the film from other dramas, is Inarritu's decision to present scenes in no chronological order. Much like *Memento*, this can be argued as a piece of interactive cinema which challenges its audience to work out what is happening and to keep up with the plot. This allows the viewer to feel involved; there is no sitting back and relaxing to be had, which only makes the events on screen more harrowing as they must also be experienced by the watcher.



As smart as it is observant, *21 Grams* will stick in your mind for days after, and it will only leave when you accept that a simple event can affect so many people's lives.

Twenty-one grams. The weight of a stack of five nickels. The weight of a chocolate bar. The weight of a hummingbird. If this is the weight we lose at death, how much is gained in life?

Phil Lurie

# Along Came Polly

Director: John Hamburg  
 Starring: Ben Stiller  
 Jennifer Aniston  
 Hank Azaria  
 Phillip Seymour Hoffman

*For The Most Cautious Man On Earth, Life Is About To Get Interesting*

Some would say that life is all about taking chances. Not Reuben Feffer (Stiller); a man who calculates risks for a living and is consumed with fears about his own safety every minute of every day. Somehow he finds someone willing to marry him. Unfortunately, on the first day of the honeymoon, his new bride cheats on him with a horny scuba instructor (Azaria). Feffer cannot believe that someone whose world is about getting things right manages to get something so wrong. But, who would've thought, along comes Polly! A former schoolmate turned free spirit, she allows Feffer to have a chance at living life all over again. Over several dates, Polly (Aniston) teaches him how to have fun, and jokes based around toilets and spanking ensue. When Feffer's wife returns, he has to make the hardest decision of his life: return to her or risk everything for Polly.



unsophisticated gross-out level that the other two used so well, and this is clearly Stiller's forte. There is great chemistry between the leads and credit should be given to Aniston as she finally escapes the typecasting she has been trapped within up till now. Azaria shines (or rather, moons) as the nudist Frenchman, but the star bringing the most laughs is Polly's visually-impaired ferret.

The romance may be quite predictable, but with a few twists and turns on the way, you'll be shocked, entertained and delightfully appalled at the lengths the cast go to for laughs. The supporting cast of weird and wonderful personas add to the film; especially Reuben's best friend (Hoffman) as an ego-centric once famous 'star' believing himself to be capable of playing both leads in the production of Jesus Christ Superstar.

If you want a good comedy, *Along Came Polly* will make you laugh the whole way through. It seems a Stiller movie is Stiller good way to spend an evening.

Phil Lurie

WEEK 29

WEEK 30

Stiller once again has teamed up with the creators of the comedy hits *There's Something about Mary* and *Meet the Parents*, and this movie is no exception. The humour is still at the

# Something's Gotta Give

Director: Nancy Meyers  
 Starring: Jack Nicholson  
 Diane Keaton  
 Keanu Reeves  
 Frances McDormand  
 Amanda Peet

no exception. Although it has to be said that some of the love triangles in the film do seem somewhat unlikely! Romance between the, ahem, more mature is not often made the subject of a romantic comedy and many of the laughs are generated as a result of this casting.

Jack Nicholson stars as Harry, a womanising 63 year old who never dates women over 30. At the opening of the film he is enjoying a weekend away with his young girlfriend at her mother's beach house in the Hamptons. Their romantic plans begin to go awry when her divorced playwright mother Erica (Keaton) and aunt also arrive on the scene. Erica is understandably unimpressed that her daughter is dating a renowned bachelor more than twice her age leading to some awkward moments. Things become even worse when Harry suffers a heart attack...



He finds himself being cared for by Erica and local doctor Julian (Reeves). Unable to travel until he recovers, Harry is left living alone with Erica. This is a situation that pleases neither of them! Obviously they hate one another initially but, despite their differences, they are drawn together as time passes.

Harry's relationship with Erica's daughter is an initial obstacle to their blossoming romance. Things are further complicated by Erica's relationship with Harry's handsome, young doctor who is a big fan of her work and is instantly attracted to her.

Writer and director Nancy Meyers knows how to make crowd pleasing movies and this film is

So, it may be predictable and formulaic but what did you expect from a romantic comedy? Having said that, there are enough twists and turns to keep things interesting and there are some truly hilarious moments. The film boasts a very strong cast and doesn't disappoint, although some of the minor characters do seem a little under used. Diane Keaton and Jack Nicholson provide particularly good performances in the lead roles.

If you're looking for a fun, feel good movie then you can't go too far wrong with this one.

Paul Morris



# DEAD END

Director: Jean-Baptiste Andrea  
 Starring: Ray Wise  
 Alexandra Holden  
 Lin Shaye

For the past 20 years, Frank Harrington has grudgingly driven his family to celebrate Christmas with his mother-in-law. This year, he takes a shortcut and the nightmare begins. A mysterious woman in white lurches out of the shadows and sends the Harringtons spinning into a dark vortex from which there seems to be no escape. Signposts point to a town that never materialises, frustration turns to panic, and every time they stop, a hearse appears and whisks one of them away. To make matters worse, the already strained relationships between husband and wife, brother and sister, and boyfriend and girlfriend are stretched to breaking point. The survivors succumb to panic, to madness; deeply buried secrets burst to the surface. We've known it all along, and this film only helps to prove, that Christmas with the family can turn into a living hell.



Dead ends may be a nuisance for the Harrington family, but for the audience, watching them get there is the fun part.

For a horror film, the acting is surprisingly excellent. Ray Wise has a beleaguered, slightly creepy family man act down to near perfect. It seems as if Holden, very good in this, is

building her way up to Hollywood stardom; although at the moment she's best known as Bruce Willis' daughter who dated Ross in Friends.

Clocking in at a brisk 83 minutes, *Dead End* has no superfluous scenes. It's a taut suspense thriller from beginning to end, employing all manner of gimmicks and tricks to scare the audience. Half scary movie and half comedy, the movie will make you laugh and jump at the same time. Although the film isn't operating on a big budget, the visuals are nevertheless impressive. Taking place entirely in one lonely night on a single stretch of asphalt highway flanked by a sea of trees, the film thrives from a tight script that knows where it wants to go and how to get there. Where it really differs and overshadows other horror films is its

canny exploration of family dynamics. Perhaps Andrea is trying to comment that the complex nature of family is far scarier than any monster ever could be.

*Dead End* may not be outstandingly original, or much different from other films in its genre. Nevertheless, it holds the same shock factor, dry wit and twists that fans of scary movies live for.

Dead ends may be a nuisance for the Harrington family, but for the audience, watching them get there is the fun part.

Phil Lurie





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