

THE-REX

M A G A Z I N E

HEPBURN OR CRUZ...?
BROKEN EMBRACES
OCTOBER...

"possibly Britain's most beautiful cinema..." (BBC)

OCTOBER 2009 Issue 55
www.therexberkhamsted.com

01442 877759
Mon-Sat 10.30-6pm Sun 4.30-6.30pm

Gallery	4-7
October Evenings	11
Coming Soon	25
October Films at a glance	25
October Matinees	27
Rants and Pants	40-41

SEAT PRICES:

Circle	£8.00
Concessions	£6.50
At Table	£10.00
Concessions	£8.50
Royal Box (seats 6)	£12.00
or for the Box	£66.00
All matinees £5, £6.50, £10 (box)	

BOX OFFICE:	01442 877759
Mon to Sat	10.30 – 6.00
Sun	4.30 – 6.30

Disabled and flat access: through the gate on High Street (right of apartments)

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THE ADVANCED BOOKING LIST (ABL)

From 1st January 2010 the ABL will run the normal calendar year (Jan to Dec). It is open to 500 names only. Current holders will be eligible to re-apply for half. The remaining 250 places will go on sale on 7th November at 10.30am. For full details of how and when to apply turn to page 4.

FILMS OF THE MONTH



A harrowing parable from South Africa 2009
District 9 Fri 9 Oct 7.30/ Sat 10 Oct 7.00



A comedy of bad manners from Italy 2008
Mid-August Lunch Mon 19/Tue 20 Oct 7.30



Through a child's eyes from Poland 2009
Tricks Mon 26 Oct 7.30

THE ADVANCE BOOKING LIST (ABL)



This is the queue...

The ABL entitles you to:-

- A confirmed listing posted to you monthly, first class.
- At least one week's advanced booking, ahead of general release.
- £1.50 off your ticket. (except for 'royal boxes').
- Up to six seats per show, including your own. (Five at usual prices).
- Up to half the House. No titles will be sold beyond half capacity (150 seats). This is to ensure that nothing sells out before general release.

We have tried everything to be fair, to ensure nothing sells out, and everybody has a good chance. There will not be on-line bookings. Nor will it ever be an exclusive club.

Already there are fantastic films on release this year. We'll select the best of them alongside classics and Rex come-backs. Even on the ABL, if for some reason you miss your time slot, come on the door and try the raffle. We'll always try to get you in.

Starting 2nd January 2010 the ABL will run the normal calendar year (Jan to Dec). It is open to 500 names. Current holders will be eligible to re-apply for half. A letter will go out to you early in October. The remaining 250 places will go on open sale on Saturday 7th November at 10.30am.

This is to ensure that those who've been asking about the list will have a chance to join it. Existing holders will have the opportunity to renew up to 250 places early in October. Date to be sent by post. This all sounds very 'legal' stark and serious, but by enjoying past misunderstandings, we are careful to spell things out and are happy to repeat it. (See bullet point box).

Fees: Last year 2008/09 the ABL was £175. This new year, January 2010 it will be £150. This reduction reflects the current state of affairs. It is worth noting our ticket prices have risen twice in five years and will only do so next year when the new levy of criminal VAT, or any new clawing tax, is announced.

A SHORT HISTORY...

The Rex was a phenomenon right from the start. For over two years during early restoration works and the fundraising needed to pay for it, we had a stall on the Saturday market. We were there to raise funds, awareness and answer questions. Such obvious transparency didn't stop rumours that I'd run off to somewhere that sounded like Phuket with the money and a steady flow of floozettes. They said it would never happen, it was all talk, a confidence trick. Who can blame them? There was nothing to go on but a derelict building and a half-baked idea that it could re-open as it was built almost seventy years earlier as a glorious single screen cinema. Luckily, I didn't care and never let it get me down. Being rejected by banks, slow progress and the selling off of the foyer as a separate bar, got me down but never gossip, ridicule or casual slander.

Now coming up to our first five years, we seem to be doing okay. Some who were at the forefront of the campaign to discredit and deride, have come around. They are welcome.

However, there is new unrest. Some of those earliest supporters who dismissed all of the above to give us £60 knowing they might never see it again, feel let down. I apologise without reserve and hope they/you will see this was never intended, but accidental due to the experience of our opening year: 2004/5.

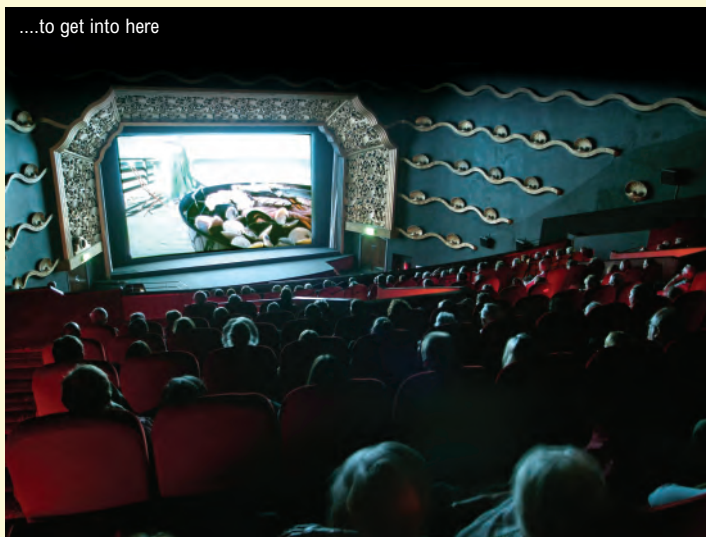
For many, pushing up the price of the Advanced Booking List (ABL) has

Advanced Booking List (ABL)

- New ABL starts 2nd January 2010
- It is open to 500 individual names
- 250 will come from current ABL holders
- 250 will go on open sale on 7th Nov 10.30
- Current ABL holders will be notified early October
- Fee for the year 2010 (Jan-Dec) £150
- See the other box to decide if it's worth it to you.

Note: Though some shows sell out quickly, overall it is much easier to get a ticket than it was, no matter what the rumours say.

....to get into here



probably put your hope of renewal out of reach (the ABL replaced membership three years ago).

All along I made clear it would never be a members-only club. Quite the opposite. This too has created its own special difficulty.

When we opened in Dec 2004, those who paid their £60 on a wing and a prayer became our first year's members. It didn't take long to notice many didn't come very often, if at all. Instead, an audience grew from those who might have been oblivious to the restoration, but enjoyed the pictures and loved coming to the Rex. Throughout that first year, we made sure those early members were given full priority for bookings and special events.

However we couldn't ignore the growing audience for whom regular visits meant two or three times a month. This has since grown to twice/three times a week! They have become Rex fans, often not knowing or caring what film they have come to see.

Hence we had to think on our feet. During that first year we had no rules, no departments, no business structure. We literally made it up as went along. This wasn't anarchy or dismissal of proper business practice. Simply, we didn't know what we were doing. As it has turned out, this was the best thing to have happened. Rules were made as things were spotted and/or problems arose. We were refunding tickets on a call that the cat was on-

heat or there was a programme on the television about Finland!

The notion of membership started rumours of elitism. So we studied the benefits of membership. The best was not a reduced ticket price, but advanced warning of next month's programme before it was opened for general release.

For the first two years we had over 1200 members. This meant films were selling out before the magazine /programme was printed.

By September 2005 four or five titles were sold out before it was published. On one hand this was great, but on the other the new rumours of 'you can't get in – you have to be a member' were damning. We had to stop it. Hence 'rules' were invented. It took a further year to get it right.


Membership status was discouraged from the beginning and any notion of it was caught early on, but not soon enough for those who are used to using the word 'member' as a blunt instrument. Hence, 'But, I'm a member' became a demand for immediate attention. It had to go. Hence the ABL was established with a limit of 500 names. Like everything we have made up as we've gone along, it has come from understanding what we're doing and how it might work better. So far it works – better! As long as International and independent filmmaking grows and excels as it has for the past five or six years, next year should be pretty good. Come and see.

COMING SOON TO YOUR OWN BACK YARD...

Welcome to developments in your own back garden ltd. Which of course nobody wants except those little devils who own the gardens. Tut-tut shame on you. Ellesmere Road and George St are at the heart of the conservation area set in the Latin Quarter's left bank of the Grand Union. Full story in R&P pages 40-41.







The Cheek of It!

An Evening of Burlesque

It was all corsets and seams and feathers and tassels, with the odd washing machine thrown in. Our first stab at Burlesque was an enjoyable evening with the emphasis on fun and the sending up of the whole thing. Some girls in the audience turned up in all the (well not much) gear. Worth doing again just for them.



Pics: Ms Charles



OCTOBER EVENINGS

The Third Man

Thu 1 7.30, Sun 11 6.00



The Third Man remains among the one of the best British thrillers with Harry Lime taking the noir trilby for the best villain's name in cinema history. "Reed and Greene's sardonic vision of smiling corruption is deliciously realised with superb location work and the raised eyebrow of Anton Karas' jaunty zither score..." (*Time Out*)

Although his screen time is famously scanty, Orson Welles' Harry Lime haunts each scene: everywhere and invisible, he's a smirking Cheshire cat of a villain, a superb case study in shameless charisma as poisonous contagion. Audiences, like many of the characters, have tended to fall for his charms, fondly recalling the privilege of being taken into his confidence rather than the rotten core it conceals. The film, however, is less charitable, pursuing the performer backstage into the sewers, sick bowels of the city he lords it over. Playing American heroics against British pragmatism, It is suffused with irony yet ultimately serious-minded: without personal responsibility, it says, there is no hope for civilisation – however charming the smirk.*(crits)* "In Italy, for 30 years under the Borgias, they had warfare, murder and bloodshed, but they produced Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, and the Renaissance. In Switzerland they have brotherly love. They had 500 years of democracy and peace, and what did that produce? - The cuckoo clock!" (Harry Lime/Graham Greene) Exquisite.

Director: Carol Reed
Starring: Trevor Howard, Joseph Cotton, Orson Welles, Alida Valli, Bernard Lee
Certificate: PG
Duration: 115 mins
Origin: UK 1949
By: Optimum Releasing

Mesrine: Public Enemy No.1

Fri 2 7.30

Director: Jean-François Richet
Starring: Vincent Cassel, Ludivine Sagnier, Mathieu Amalric, Olivier Gourmet
Certificate: 15
Duration: 133 mins
Origin: France/Canada 2008
By: Momentum Pictures

"If Soderberg's two part Che biopic left you cold, here's the art house anti dote, a fast, sexy and exciting true life saga with the bonus of having no political baggage." (*Can't remember*)

A story so epic it had to be chopped in two. They all say that. So let's see.

The coolest man in France. The coolest anywhere. Check out his early films.

Vincent Cassel stars as the criminal Jacques Mesrine in this muscular dramatization of his life in two parts.

You need to see this second to see how, and why, his capture became a matter of national security.

Part Two of the César-winning modern gangster classic... As Mesrine continues to evade and frustrate the law, he becomes increasingly burdened by his own bloated celebrity, and begins to question his thrilling but lonely existence.

"In a continuation of his Raging Bull-style metamorphosis, Cassel concludes his world-class performance that might propel director Richet's ultra-stylish films into the league of benchmark gangster classics *The Godfathers 1&2* and perhaps *Once Upon A Time In America*."

(Guardian) Who cares? It is so well made and stylishly finished, poor Johnny's hapless Public Enemies will pale.

The French know how to make films. Hollywood and the Brits don't.

That's all.



Dorian Gray

Sat 3 7.00, **Sun 4** 6.00,
Mon 5 7.30

This couldn't have come at a better time for the worst of all generations. 'You have all you need - youth and beauty' (daring near-enough an Oscar Wilde quote) describes today's terrible reality/celebrity/low-life. It is driven by dunce television/tabloids peddling ugly-absolute for our 'entertainment'. TV is a medium which "knows the price of everything and the value of nothing" (*real Oscar*).

To say Wilde was far ahead of his time would be for him a gross understatement and a vulgarity beneath his contempt. Yet he might relish that his story of gross vanity is being told in an age of gross vanity. The gem at the centre of his salutary tale is that vain beauty is transitory and empty. It has no talent, skill or intelligence. It is celebrated for itself, by itself. The Picture of Dorian Gray tells of a pretty boy, lured by his own vanity into a world of indulgence and depravity, not to mention the selling of his soul in exchange for eternal botox... Happily, many used to the value of nothing might be enlightened by Oscar's wit and observations.

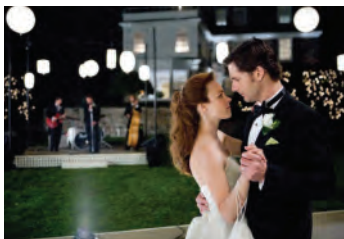
On the other hand they may see only the action and the tits. Nevertheless, come for his vision and a mere glance at the best lines you will ever hear.



Director:	Oliver Parker
Starring:	Colin Firth, Ben Barnes
Certificate:	15
Duration:	112 mins
Origin:	UK 2009
By:	Momentum Pictures



The Time Traveller's Wife



Director: Robert Schwentke
Starring: Eric Bana, Ron Livingston, Rachel McAdams
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 107 mins
Origin: USA 2009
By: Entertainment Film Distribution



**Tue 6 7.30, Wed 7 7.30,
 Thu 8 7.30**

“This is a romantic weepie wrapped inside a science fiction movie boxed within a mystery puzzle Robert Schwentke directs this screenplay by Bruce Rubin, who is also responsible for that other mushy paranormal outing, *Ghost* (Patrick Swaze RIP).

It wants desperately to engage our hearts but for long stretches will leave most of us scratching our heads.” (*Telegraph*)

Henry, a Chicago librarian suffers from a genetic disorder called Chrono Impairment which lets him vanish without warning and travel through time and space. Returning, he always bumps into a younger woman called Clare...?

Actually, she's not so much young as positively illegal. The first time they meet she is just six years old and he is hiding in a bush in his birthday clothes! Later she will tell him: “You're my best friend. I've been waiting for you all my life.”

(Children frightened of the dark, tall trees and naked men, most welcome).

“In this adaptation of Audrey Niffenegger's 2003 best seller, Eric Bana is the (wooden) dreamboat who when he gets excited, pops off to another decade. Rachel McAdams falls for him and never dwells on the downside, especially after he turns up with a winning lottery ticket. Sadly, the comic possibilities are ignored”. (*Playlist*) But I'm sure you'll see them. Come for a short space in time.

District 9

Fri 9 7.30, Sat 10 7.00



Rectifying the gap in our programming - when it comes to heavy handed South African political allegorical sci-fi, Neill Blomkamp's "District 9" is a cracking, violent and downright weird take on the age old alien invasion thread.

1982, Johannesburg, South Africa. An alien spacecraft crash lands and its occupants, arthropod-like 'Prawns', are forcibly held in a government detention centre which rapidly becomes a slum – the titular District 9.

2010, Johannesburg, South Africa. District 9's inhabitants top 1.8million, and are being forcibly relocated elsewhere. But what happens when the military field operative responsible for the move turns out to be closer to the aliens than when he first started out? Satirising the real-life District 6; the forced removal of slum dwellers in the city, the xenophobic nature of some of its citizens and the racism of the old South Africa itself, District 9 is a grimy, gory, hulking sci-fi monster of a film, circa 1980s! But don't let this put you off.

"What makes Blomkamp's film so radical is the clarity and force with which it proves that science fiction can tell us as much about the world we live in as any social documentary." (*Telegraph*)

Worth it if you can stomach it. No, not just worth it. Come and stomach it.

(research: Simon Messenger)

Director: Neill Blomkamp
Starring: Nathalie Bolt, Sharlto Copley, Jason Cope, Sylvaine Strike
Certificate: 15
Duration: 112 mins
Origin: South Africa 2009
By: Sony Pictures Releasing

Home

Mon 12 7.30

Director: Ursula Meier
Starring: Olivier Gourmet, Isabelle Huppert
Certificate: 15
Duration: 98 mins
Origin: Belgium, France, Switzerland 2008
By: Soda Pictures

With nods to Hitchcock and Polanski, the film tells of a family whose isolated idyll stands at the edge of a disused motorway. The family have incorporated the asphalt wasteland in to their own private domain: exuberant games of late night roller hockey break the silence; a paddling pool and an arm chair straddle the lanes; the family's satellite dish is hooked from the crash barrier in the central reservation.

Judith the eldest daughter follows a daily routine of sunbathing. Julien the youngest is up for any adventure. Dad Michel is forcibly upbeat, the family clown and cheerleader. It's Isabelle Huppert's cool matriarch Marthe who is the enigma here. At first she appears to be the calm eye of the domestic hurricane. but increasingly it becomes clear that she's the most fragile link in the family chain and the house is vital to her stability. One night Julien, the youngest child, mentions he has seen a car on the motorway...

"It's tempting to search for some kind of allegorical symbolism in this rather stylised story, arguing that family harmony is increasingly compromised by pressures of an encroaching modern world?"

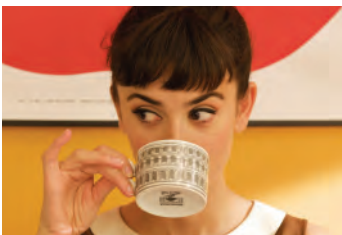
Swiss-French director Ursula Meier's technically accomplished debut is a road movie that goes no where, both narratively and literally." (*Sight & Sound*) It is eerily compelling. Come and see.



Broken Embraces



Director: Pedro Almodovar
Starring: Penelope Cruz, Lluís Homar
Certificate: 15
Duration: 128 mins
Origin: Spain 2009
By: Warner Brothers



Tue 13 7.30, Wed 14 7.30

Another Pedro Almodovar film, another melodramatic tale starring Penelope Cruz. Whilst the inevitability regarding the Spaniard's casting decision has taken most of the picture's column inches, there's no denying the two are a tour de force. The film centres around Harry Caine (Lluís Homar), a blind screenwriter who, led by unfortunate familial circumstances in his present, is forced to recall a series of lengthy flashbacks involving an ill-fated affair between himself and wannabe actress Magdalena (Cruz) some years earlier. Caine's past begins to catch up with him, as it would appear that the party he wronged with his affair has unfinished business to attend to...

"An impossibly succulent thing to behold. There's something poignant, too, about the movie's wedding of creative impulses and being head over heels in love. Sex, artistry, delirium: no one knows these things like Pedro, or sticks them in more devastating couture." (*Times*)

"After the film is over, its images and characters may well vanish into the air leaving little or no residue in your memory, yet I defy anybody to watch it without a tingle of pure moviegoing pleasure." (*Guardian*)

Yes, we defy you to watch Penelope Cruz without a tingle in your moviegoing pleasure.

(*Simon Messenger*)

Point Break

Thu 15 7.30



Special Agent FBI agent Johnny Utah or Arthur Bootle (Reeves) is partnered with Angelo Pappas (Busey) an experienced agent who is more than committed to his work. Hmmm.

They are investigating the number of robberies committed by a group calling themselves the Ex-Presidents.

They wear better masks (but that wouldn't be too hard) of Presidents Reagan, Nixon, Carter and Johnson. Pappas believes the Ex-Presidents are a group of surfers?

So in true B-movie fashion, he sends young agent Johnny undercover to mix with it surfers on the beach...?

Homo-erotica eat your (friend's) pants. The problem is, Utah can't surf.

With a little 'help' of Tyler (Petty) a competent and non-too plain female surfer, Utah begins to gain the respect of local surfer Bodhi (Swayze).

But uh oh, Utah begins to form a close bond with Bodhi...

It's okay, it's a mullet thing.

With all true respect to Patrick Swayze, this is said to be the best of his starring roles. With this and three other films never lapsing from cult status, he is not far off De Niro in the cult dept.

As for Kathryn Bigelow, her gift for macho direction comes home beautifully with The Hurt Locker (Sat 24th).

Director: Kathryn Bigelow
Starring: Keanu Reeves, Patrick Swayze, Gary Busey
Certificate: 18
Duration: 122 mins
Origin: USA 1991
By: Twentieth Century Fox

COMEDY NIGHT

Fri 16 7.30



Robin's Book Club...

Robin Ince's Book Club was set up in 2004 in a small pub basement. Despite its diminutive stature it was nominated for a Time Out award, a Chortle and The British Comedy Award (somehow being pipped to the trophy by Little Britain).

It mixes readings from odd books found in charity shops with musicians, top of the pops dancing and other treats.

After retiring the show in 2007, Robin occasionally dusted it off, a la the Frank Sinatra's farewell concerts, for the Hay, Latitude and End of the Road Festivals.

It now comes to The Rex with a full cast and books about locusts. Guests include Just a Minute regular **CHRIS NEILL**.

Accordianist and occasional orchestral arranger for Jarvis Cocker **MARTIN WHITE** (why would Jarvis Cocker need an 'orchestral arranger'?).

Perrier award winner **WAEN SHEPHERD** from BBC3's 'Ideal Joanna Neary'.

NEIL EDMOND, writer of fabulous new BBC2 sitcom Hometown and star of Radio 4's The Consultants.

The show will remind you why you don't go out any more. Come and see mostly radio book readings and some light accordion playing - and meet Robin's parents.



500 Days of Summer

Sat 17 7.00



Joseph Gordon-Levitt (Brick, Mysterious Skin) and Zoëy Deschanel (Almost Famous, most indie boy's wet dreams) star in music promo video director Marc Webb's first feature length film.

Gordon-Levitt plays Tom, an architect working as a writer at a greetings card company. Falling head over heels in love with his boss' assistant Summer (Deschanel), Tom attempts to demonstrate his concrete belief in the nature of true love, against Summer's much more cynical world view. Is there a happily ever after...?

This is probably the most refreshing, realistic romantic comedy ever; no slush, no saccharine (and if there is, it's beautifully played with tongue firmly in cheek).

"A film that exposes the scrofulous reality of romance must have Richard Curtis et al getting twitchy. No tearful kisses at American airports? No happy ending? What does (500) Days mean for the future of the romcom? What does it mean for the future of love..? There's no place for sentiment in these post-romcoms, and no place for Jennifer Aniston either." (*The Guardian*) Remember your first obsessive teenage crush? Here it is, in glorious technicolour. Hopefully you can laugh at it by now, and if not, this probably isn't the film for you.

(*Simon Messenger*)

Director: Marc Webb
Starring: Joseph Gordon-Levitt, Zoëy Deschanel
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 95 mins
Origin: USA 2009
By: Twentieth Century Fox

Casablanca

Sun 18 6.00

Director: Michael Curtiz
Starring: Humphrey Bogart, Ingrid Bergman, Paul Henreid, Sydney Greenstreet, Claude Rains, Peter Lorre, Conrad Veidt
Certificate: U
Duration: 102 mins
Origin: USA 1942
By: Park Circus Films

"Of all the gin joints in all the towns in all the world she walks into..." possibly Britain's most beautiful cinema?

On a shortlist of all-time classic screen love stories, Casablanca must be close to the top. Come and enjoy every second of every line you've heard a million times. You know the story but just in case: Bogart plays to his greatest-type, the seen-it-all, battered, laconic, tired, wisecracking nightclub owner Richard (Rick) Blane. The ethereal Bergman who left him waiting on that rainy Parisienne platform years before, walks into his bar and back into his life – cue: "moonlight and love songs never out of date, hearts full of passion jealousy and hate, woman needs man and man must have his mate, that no one can deny..."

We dedicate this screening of Casablanca to Peter Clark who played Capt Renault (Claude Reins) in the Boxmoor Arts Centre's live theatrical production in black n'white n'grey on the Edinburgh Fringe 1983. When he replaced his vast collection of vinyl with CDs, he gave me his precious LP turn-table and amp on permanent-loan (it is now) and still in use. Peter died Aug 2002 aged 55. Here's looking at you kid...



Mid-August Lunch

Mon 19 7.30, Tue 20 7.30

Co-writer of the savagely bleak *Gomorrah*! “Gianni Di Gregorio writes, directs and ‘acts’ in this wry comedy of a middle aged idler living with his mother in a flat on the outskirts of Rome. He is behind with his rent, so grudgingly accepts the task of looking after the

superintendent’s mother and aunt over the Ferragosto (mid august) holiday, cooking, cleaning and tending to their every whim while (miraculously) managing to keep his cool aided here and there by cheap local plonk.” (*Time Out*)
The plot is directly inspired his own experience of looking after his widowed mother during her last years. Indeed the whole production has a home made quality to it, from the interiors to the cast, made up entirely of non professionals among whom we find him and a couple of old friends. Shooting in natural light provides a rather sombre atmosphere, which might at first appear strange if not technically poor, but which in fact reproduces well the funeral darkness of Italian houses at the height of summer, shutters closed to keep out the searing heat.

“What is original about it is its gentle fusion of the lyrical with quiet desperation. There is no room for cheap sentimentality or sudden accelerations of narrative. There are no punch lines, no melodramatic or absurd situations.” (*S&S*) Don’t miss.



Director: Gianni Gregorio
Starring: Gianni Di Gregorio, Valeria De Franciscis
Certificate: U
Duration: 75 mins
Origin: Italy 2008
By: Artificial Eye



Julie and Julia

Wed 21 7.30, Thu 22 7.30

This is story of accidental ambition, producing the most unlikely television star 55 years before reality TV and long before Britain had television or a fridge!

It intertwines the lives of two happily married women who, though separated by time, are searching for something meaningful...

Child was the first American woman to study at Paris's famous Cordon Bleu cooking school, and the popularity of her book, *Mastering the Art Of French Cooking*, led to a TV series and a cooking career that made her a household name. She steered eaters away from the canned, frozen and processed and promoted foods that were fresh and flavourful. (Where did it all go wrong?)

The film alternates between Julia and her husband's life in 1950s Paris and 50 years on, Julie's married life in a cramped New York apartment.

"The larger issues of food and cooking in a woman's life are left on the side of the plate. The result is a film that's charming, funny – especially when Streep is on screen, broadcasting her superb impression of the tall, charismatic, high-pitched Child – but leaves you with a dissatisfaction with modern life that no culinary masterpiece can relieve." (*Time Out*) Does anybody really want to see a film about food and happily married couples?

Sounds like *Mamma Mia* on gas mark 6 heading for the toilet.



Director: Nora Ephron
Starring: Meryl Streep, Rachel McAdams
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 123 mins
Origin: USA 2009
By: Sony Pictures Releasing



Funny People

Fri 23 7.30



Lads writer/director Judd Apatow helms “Funny People” starring Adam Sandler as George Simmons, a wildly successful comedian who, at the height of his career, learns he has leukaemia, and is given a year to live.

Thrust into a deep depression, Simmons re-evaluates his life, and decides to return to stand-up. Singling out struggling young comic Ira Wright (Rogan) as his joke writer-cum best friend, they embark on a ‘bromance’ as Simmons struggles to right wrongs (love, parents, etc.) before his time runs out.

Without resorting to sentimentality, or denying any of its caustic nature Funny People is actually funny! Hence, wringing a rich, dark vein of humour from the most unexpected of places.

“The movie doesn’t turn out to be as dark or as sad as first appears. One of the most enjoyable films of the year.”

(*Guardian*)

“This is Apatow’s poisoned valentine to the comedy business.” (*Standard*)

With a cameo list as long as his arm; the odd-coupling is ludicrous. James Taylor, Sarah Silverman and RZA (RZA?) with a soundtrack by Paul McCartney, Wilco and Robert Plant. It goes far beyond usual Apatow territory. Or “In Apatow’s third film as writer director there is rich dynamic in the juxtaposition of male-bonding, penis jokes and Sandler revealing his inner asshole.” (*Playlist*) You choose.

(research: Simon Messenger)

Director:	Judd Apatow
Starring:	Adam Sandler, Seth Rogen
Certificate:	15
Duration:	145 mins
Origin:	USA 2009
By:	Universal Pictures (UK) Ltd

The Hurt Locker

Sat 24 7.00

Director:	Kathryn Bigelow
Starring:	Jeremy Renner, Anthony Mackie, Brian Geraghty, Guy Pearce
Certificate:	15
Duration:	131 mins
Origin:	USA 2009
By:	Optimum Releasing

An intense portrayal of elite soldiers who have one of the most dangerous jobs in the world: disarming bombs in the heat of battle. When a new sergeant, James (Renner), takes over a highly trained bomb disposal team in a violent conflict, he surprises his two subordinates by recklessly plunging them into a deadly game of urban combat. As the men struggle to control their wild new leader, the city explodes into chaos and James’s true character reveals itself in a way that will change each man forever. Based on first-hand observation by journalist Mark Boal, who was stationed with a special bomb unit, the film couples grippingly realistic action with intimate human drama to portray soldier psychology in a high-risk profession where men volunteer to face deadly odds. (*IMDB*)

“War is a drug says The Hurt Locker and every addict has a different reason to feel guilty and alone” (from the new mag *Filmstar* “where the film is the star”) Bigelow deliberately uses Renner, an unknown face to take the lead.

By discarding the baggage which comes with a star, we can see the human being. “Bigelow and Mark Boal plant the viewer directly in to the dizzying heart of the action.” (*Playlist*) It looks like being one the most moving films of the year. Don’t miss.



Julie and Julia

Sun 25 7.00



This is story of accidental ambition, producing the most unlikely television star 55 years before reality TV and long before Britain had television or a fridge!

It intertwines the lives of two happily married women who, though separated by time, are searching for something meaningful...

Child was the first American woman to study at Paris's famous Cordon Bleu cooking school, and the popularity of her book, *Mastering the Art Of French Cooking*, led to a TV series and a cooking career that made her a household name. She steered eaters away from the canned, frozen and processed and promoted foods that were fresh and flavourful. (Where did it all go wrong?)

The film alternates between Julia and her husband's life in 1950s Paris and 50 years on, Julie's married life in a cramped New York apartment.

"The larger issues of food and cooking in a woman's life are left on the side of the plate. The result is a film that's charming, funny – especially when Streep is on screen, broadcasting her superb impression of the tall, charismatic, high-pitched Child – but leaves you with a dissatisfaction with modern life that no culinary masterpiece can relieve." (*Time Out*) Does anybody really want to see a film about food and happily married couples?

Sounds like *Mamma Mia* on gas mark 6 heading for the toilet.

Director: Nora Ephron
Starring: Meryl Streep, Rachel McAdams
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 123 mins
Origin: USA 2009
By: Sony Pictures Releasing

Tricks

Mon 26 7.30

Director: Andrzej Jakimowski
Starring: Damian UI, Ewelina Walendziak
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 96 mins
Origin: Poland 2009
By: New Wave

"A child's eye-view of a Polish provincial backwater, it places a hazy, late-summer filter on a world of communist concrete. It may be a tad self-consciously quirky, but it's handsomely shot and the two central performances are magnetic." (*Wendy Ide Playlist*)

Unfolding on location in a small town and mostly on its streets, *Tricks* follows six-year-old Stefek and, to a lesser extent, his 18-year-old sister Elka, over a few days one summer. Elka tries to spend time alone with her boyfriend when she's not swotting up Italian, which she hopes will get her a smart job to can flee the dull village and her dishwashing. Stefek tries to influence destiny with his mind! He attempts to persuade a man who changes trains at the local station to spend more time in town because he might be his estranged father?

"Bathed in summer light, 'Tricks' offers a warm and intelligent portrait of childhood. The direction and photography, both calm and observational, soak up Stefek and Elka's surroundings while staying close to the siblings: in fact, how near we get to anyone depends entirely on how close, Stefek is to them.

It's a subtle film that gradually lets you in. (*Time Out*)

"A cunning confidence for a film-maker to invest seemingly mundane everyday details with imaginative resonance and genuine emotional punch." (*RT*) Don't miss.





Director: Jon Amiel
Starring: Paul Bettany, Jeremy Northam, Jennifer Connelly, Toby Jones
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 108 mins
Origin: UK 2009
By: Icon Film Distribution Ltd



Creation

Tue 27 7.30, Wed 28 7.30

Released in this, the two hundredth anniversary year of Charles Darwin's birth, Jon Amiel's "Creation" is a masterful biopic of the life of the acclaimed naturalist.

Darwin (Paul Bettany) has returned from his (in)famous Beagle voyage, and is settling down to married life with his wife Emma (Bettany's real life wife, Jennifer Connelly), to work on his seminal "On The Origin Of The Species".

Devastated by a family tragedy and burdened by his growing disenchantment with his Christian faith, Bettany paints a sympathetic, yet realistic portrait of Darwin – a man torn between love for his devoutly religious wife, and his own scientific curiosity.

"...Paul Bettany and Jennifer Connelly bring an intimacy and chemistry to the screen that is effortlessly powerful...a beautiful film, a tonic to the hysteria of the far side of the Creationist sect and the militant atheists." (*Times*)

Notably, at the time of us going to press, the film has been unable to find a US distributor. This, a country that opened last month's "Antichrist" across a number of screens... Give us depravity, despair and casual mutilation any time over Evolution.

"It would be a great shame if those with religious convictions spurned the film out of hand as they will find it even-handed and wise." (*Hollywood Reporter*)
 No they won't.

(research: Simon Messenger)

Fish Tank

Thu 29 7.30

Directors: Andrea Arnold
Starring: Michael Fassbender, Katie Jarvis
Certificate: 15
Duration: 123 mins
Origin: UK 2009
By: Artificial Eye

Two feature films, two Cannes Jury Prizes (the first, *Red Road* 2006). Andrea Arnold's incomprehensible directorial run continues with *Fish Tank*.

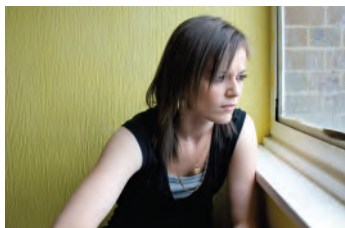
It stars Katie Jarvis (scouted at a railway station screeching at her boyfriend) as fifteen year old Mia, a vulnerable but headstrong girl, living with her single mum and little sister on an Essex estate. Mia has two releases from her miserable, violent existence; her passion for 'dancing' and a scrawny horse.

Her mum brings home new boyfriend Connor (Fassbender) who lavishes praise on her 'dancing'. "Though it's hard to tell if this is friendly, fatherly or filthy"

(*Mail*)

"If Ken Loach were ever somehow called on constitutionally to nominate a successor, it would surely have to be Arnold." (*Guardian*) What vain, sweeping largesse. Loach is a genius. Arnold is lucky. Critics know fuck all and slobber to share it.

"Brilliantly and sensitively buzzes with life and offers its very own take on our world. It delivers in spades attitude, humour, sadness, love, anger and hope – all wrapped up in a way of telling stories that is very much the director's own...an intimate drama of grey areas and all the better and more thoughtful, and thought-provoking, for it." (*Time Out*) Or: the gritty 'real-life' Lottery funded New-Clothes that wins prizes at swanky red-carpet festivals? You choose.



The Soloist

Fri 30 7.30, Sat 31 7.00



The Soloist is based on the experiences of Los Angeles Times columnist Steve Lopez, whose career and marriage are foundering when one day he stumbles into a life-changing encounter with a homeless musician named Nathaniel Ayers. At first sensing a great story, Lopez soon realises there is much more at stake. Ayers was once a brilliant music student at Julliard until a crippling case of schizophrenia forced him out. Now homeless, he still possesses his soul and talent. Determined to help this potential genius regain the life he lost, Lopez strikes up an intensely complicated relationship with Ayers that will take them both miles from where they started. In young twerp Brit director Joe Wright's first Hollywood movie, he manages to avoid sticky sentimentality (does he?). However, which story is he telling? Is it about the debilitating effects of schizophrenia? A talented musician trying to find his inner song again? A lost reporter who throws himself into a friendship only to forget his own dire straits? It's hard to say. Hence, you may leave with more questions than answers. Perfect.

One of the chief attributes of *The Soloist* is its pitch-perfect casting. The two leads drive it. They movingly recreate a unique and frustrating friendship. This alone makes an otherwise uneven film, worth seeing. (*mixed reviews*) You decide.

Director: Joe Wright
Starring: Jamie Foxx, Robert Downey Jr
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 117 mins
Origin: France, UK, USA 2009
By: Universal Pictures (UK) Ltd

COMING SOON

New releases

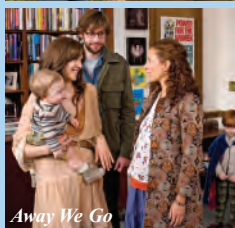
Dr Parnassus
 Citizen Kane
 Birdwatchers
 Away We Go
 Je Veux Voir

Back by demand

District 9
 Julie & Julia
 The Time Traveller's Wife
 Welcome To The Sticks



Je Veux Voir



Away We Go



Birdwatchers



Dr Parnassus

OCTOBER FILMS AT A GLANCE

Please check times carefully and watch out for early shows.

1	THU	DORIAN GRAY	2.00
1	THU	THE THIRD MAN	7.30
2	FRI	MESRINE: PUBLIC ENEMY NO 1	7.30
3	SAT	GI JOE	2.00
3	SAT	DORIAN GRAY	7.00
4	SUN	DORIAN GRAY	6.00
5	MON	DORIAN GRAY	2.00, 7.30
6	TUES	THE TIME TRAVELLER'S WIFE	12.30, 7.30
7	WED	THE TIME TRAVELLER'S WIFE	2.00, 7.30
8	THU	KIND HEARTS AND CORONETS	2.00
8	THU	THE TIME TRAVELLER'S WIFE	7.30
9	FRI	DISTRICT 9	7.30
10	SAT	SHORTS	2.00
10	SAT	DISTRICT 9	7.00
11	SUN	THE THIRD MAN	6.00
12	MON	DISTRICT 9	2.00
12	MON	HOME	7.30
13	TUES	DORIAN GRAY	12.30
13	TUES	BROKEN EMBRACES	7.30
14	WED	BROKEN EMBRACES	2.00, 7.30
15	THU	COCO BEFORE CHANEL	2.00
15	THU	POINT BREAK	7.30
16	FRI	ROBIN INCE COMEDY NIGHT	7.30
17	SAT	THE RAILWAY CHILDREN	2.00
17	SAT	500 DAYS OF SUMMER	7.00
18	SUN	CASABLANCA	6.00
19	MON	CASABLANCA	2.00
19	MON	MID-AUGUST LUNCH	7.30
20	TUES	MID-AUGUST LUNCH	12.30, 7.30
21	WED	JULIE AND JULIA	2.00, 7.30
22	THU	JULIE AND JULIA	2.00, 7.30
23	FRI	FUNNY PEOPLE	7.30
24	SAT	CLOUDY WITH A CHANCE OF...	2.00
24	SAT	THE HURT LOCKER	7.00
25	SUN	JULIE AND JULIA	6.00
26	MON	THE THIRD MAN	2.00
26	MON	TRICKS	7.30
27	TUE	CLOUDY WITH A CHANCE OF...	12.30
27	TUE	CREATION	7.30
28	WED	CREATION	2.00, 7.30
29	THU	HAIRSPRAY	2.00
29	THU	FISHTANK	7.30
30	FRI	THE SOLOIST	7.30
31	SAT	CURSE OF THE WERERABBIT	2.00
31	SAT	THE SOLOIST	7.00



O C T O B E R M A T I N E E S

ALL MATINEES: Balcony £5.00 • Table seats £6.50 • Royal Box seats £10.00
Matinee Warning: May contain babies

Dorian Gray

Thu 1 2.00, **Mon 5** 2.00,
Tue 13 12.30

This couldn't have come at a better time for the worst of all generations. 'You have all you need - youth and beauty' (daring near-enough an Oscar Wilde quote) describes today's terrible reality/celebrity/low-life. It is driven by dunc television/tabloids peddling ugly-absolute for our 'entertainment'. TV is a medium which "knows the price of everything and the value of nothing" (*real Oscar*).

To say Wilde was far ahead of his time would be for him a gross understatement and a vulgarity beneath his contempt. Yet he might relish that his story of gross vanity is being told in an age of gross vanity. The gem at the centre of his salutary tale is that vain beauty is transitory and empty. It has no talent, skill or intelligence. It is celebrated for itself, by itself. The Picture of Dorian Gray tells of a pretty boy, lured by his own vanity into a world of indulgence and depravity, not to mention the selling of his soul in exchange for eternal botox... Happily, many used to the value of nothing might be enlightened by Oscar's wit and observations. On the other hand they may see only the action and the tits. Nevertheless, come for his vision and a mere glance at the best lines you will ever hear.



Director: Oliver Parker
Starring: Colin Firth, Ben Barnes
Certificate: 15
Duration: 112 mins
Origin: UK 2009
By: Momentum Pictures



GI Joe

Sat 3 2.00

Director: Stephen Sommers
Starring: Marlon Wayans, Dennis Quaid, Joseph Gordon-Leavitt, Channing Tatum
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 118 mins
Origin: USA 2009
By: Paramount International Pictures

This 12A is for that age group who sometimes miss out in the Saturday afternoon kids slot. So, a mindless blockbuster for you, based on the action man rival in which a team of elite soldiers uncover a secret plot to take over the world.

Next to this, Transformers 2 looks like Mid August Lunch. Still, it's got Sienna Miller in tight rubber, so one for the dads.



The Time Traveller's Wife

Tue 6 12.30,
Wed 7 2.00



"This is a romantic weepie wrapped inside a science fiction movie boxed within a mystery puzzle Robert Schwentke directs this screenplay by Bruce Rubin, who is also responsible for that other mushy paranormal outing, Ghost (Patrick Swaze RIP).

It wants desperately to engage our hearts but for long stretches will leave most of us scratching our heads." (*Telegraph*)

Henry, a Chicago librarian suffers from a genetic disorder called Chrono Impairment which lets him vanish without warning and travel through time and space. Returning, he always bumps into a younger woman called Clare...?

Actually, she's not so much young as positively illegal. The first time they meet she is just six years old and he is hiding in a bush in his birthday clothes! Later she will tell him: "You're my best friend. I've been waiting for you all my life."

(Children frightened of the dark, tall trees and naked men, most welcome).

"In this adaptation of Audrey Niffenegger's 2003 best seller, Eric Bana is the (wooden) dreamboat who when he gets excited, pops off to another decade. Rachel McAdams falls for him and never dwells on the downside, especially after he turns up with a winning lottery ticket. Sadly, the comic possibilities are ignored". (*Playlist*) But I'm sure you'll see them. Come for a short space in time.

Director: Robert Schwentke
Starring: Eric Bana, Ron Livingston, Rachel McAdams
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 107 mins
Origin: USA 2009
By: Entertainment Film Distribution

Kind Hearts & Coronets Thu 8 2.00



In the years after World War II, there emerged from the Ealing Studios a series of comedies so dry and droll, so literate and cynical, that the phrase “Ealing comedy” described them and no others. Many starred Alec Guinness, then in his 30s and so anonymous in appearance that while dressed as Hitler for a costume fitting, he stepped outside and failed to raise the eyebrow of a passing policeman. Little wonder his autobiography is titled Blessings in Disguise. In *Kind Hearts and Coronets* he plays eight different members of the same family, of both genders and a six-decade age span, by doing relatively subtle things with makeup, posture and behaviour. Because he ‘nobody’ he could be anybody. In this, one of his most renowned performances, he comes up with lines like... “It is so difficult to make a neat job of killing people with whom one is not on friendly terms.” A masterpiece.

Director: Robert Hamer
Starring: Joan Greenwood, Dennis Price, Alec Guinness, Valerie Hobos, Audrey Fields, Miles Malison, Cliff Morton, Hugh Griffith
Certificate: U
Duration: 101 mins
Origin: UK 1949
By: Optimum Releasing

Shorts Sat 10 2.00

Director: Robert Rodriguez
Starring: Jon Cryer, William H. Macy, Leslie Mann, James Spade
Certificate: PG
Duration: 89 mins
Origin: USA 2009
By: Warner Brothers

In Rodriguez’s day-glo, madly hyper-active way, he tells the story of a suburban community almost entirely employed by a creepy corporation which manufactures a weird all-purpose handset, like an iphone made out of black lego.

When local kids discover the magic multi-colored wish stone at the end of a rainbow, chaos ensues.

The fragmented structure (the film consists of five jumbled episodes, or shorts) may be confusing for some youngsters and Rodriguez too obviously follows the whims of his own imagination, irrespective of the effect on the action.

If only it wasn’t so frantic.

A moment just to calm down would be great. Come and see.



District 9

Mon 12 2.00



Rectifying the gap in our programming - when it comes to heavy handed South African political allegorical sci-fi, Neill Blomkamp's "District 9" is a cracking, violent and downright weird take on the age old alien invasion thread.

1982, Johannesburg, South Africa. An alien spacecraft crash lands and its occupants, arthropod-like 'Prawns', are forcibly held in a government detention centre which rapidly becomes a slum – the titular District 9.

2010, Johannesburg, South Africa. District 9's inhabitants top 1.8million, and are being forcibly relocated elsewhere. But what happens when the military field operative responsible for the move turns out to be closer to the aliens than when he first started out? Satirising the real-life District 6; the forced removal of slum dwellers in the city, the xenophobic nature of some of its citizens and the racism of the old South Africa itself, District 9 is a grimy, gory, hulking sci-fi monster of a film, circa 1980s! But don't let this put you off.

"What makes Blomkamp's film so radical is the clarity and force with which it proves that science fiction can tell us as much about the world we live in as any social documentary." (*Telegraph*)

Worth it if you can stomach it. No, not just worth it. Come and stomach it. (*research: Simon Messenger*)

Director: Neill Blomkamp
Starring: Nathalie Bolt, Sharlto Copley, Jason Cope, Sylvaine Strike
Certificate: 15
Duration: 112 mins
Origin: USA 2009
By: Sony Pictures Releasing

Broken Embraces

Wed 14 2.00

Director: Pedro Almodovar
Starring: Penelope Cruz, Lluís Homar
Certificate: 15
Duration: 128 mins
Origin: Spain 2009
By: Warner Brothers

Another Pedro Almodovar film, another melodramatic tale starring Penelope Cruz. Whilst the inevitability regarding the Spaniard's casting decision has taken most of the picture's column inches, there's no denying the two are a tour de force.

The film centres around Harry Caine (Lluís Homar), a blind screenwriter who, led by unfortunate familial circumstances in his present, is forced to recall a series of lengthy flashbacks involving an ill-fated affair between himself and wannabe actress Magdalena (Cruz) some years earlier. Caine's past begins to catch up with him, as it would appear that the party he wronged with his affair has unfinished business to attend to...

"An impossibly succulent thing to behold. There's something poignant, too, about the movie's wedding of creative impulses and being head over heels in love. Sex, artistry, delirium: no one knows these things like Pedro, or sticks them in more devastating couture." (*Times*)

"After the film is over, its images and characters may well vanish into the air leaving little or no residue in your memory, yet I defy anybody to watch it without a tingle of pure moviegoing pleasure." (*Guardian*)

Yes, we defy you to watch Penelope Cruz without a tingle in your moviegoing pleasure.

(*Simon Messenger*)



Coco Before Chanel

Thu 15 2.00



Directed by Anne Fontaine, *Coco Avant Chanel*, tells the story of the young Chanel, who works as a seamstress by day, sings for a rowdy crowd at night and dreams of stardom and life in Paris.

It follows Coco's relationships with two men. First the French aristocrat Balsan (played by Benoît Poelvoorde), who befriends her in the bars where she sings. He introduces her to high society and 'accepts' her as his lodger??

The second is the Englishman Arthur "Boy" Capel (Alessandro Nivola), her real true love and the man who urges her to follow her dream.

"Audrey Tautou gets a chance to deepen and broaden her gamine image, wittily suggesting that Coco's childhood in a Catholic orphanage later influenced her simple designs. Tautou has won much praise for this film, depicting Chanel's hectic, glamorous life as an adult in 20s Paris - but the film stops short of the second world war..." (*Guardian*)

"Just as well, apparently... It is one of the clearest, brightest films to reach our screen. Beautifully shot in period without a blemish. The colours, the light, long still shots are joy to be lost in for the afternoon.

Director: Anne Fontaine
Starring: Audrey Tautou, Benoît Poelvoorde, Emmanuelle Devos, Alessandro Nivola
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 110 mins
Origin: France 2009
By: Optimum Releasing

The Railway Children

Sat 17 2.00

Director: Lionel Jeffries
Starring: Jenny Agutter
Certificate: U
Duration: 109 mins
Origin: UK 1970
By: British Film Institute

A rare treat for the whole family in this or any autumn.

This the gorgeous original with the gorgeous Jenny Agutter, the gorgeous Bernard Cribbins and a gorgeous script. It perfectly captures the English landscape at a time when children waved at steam trains.

It is an innocent tale about innocence, pride and good manners; about hardship, adversity and the once lovely friendships between children and grown-ups. Is it sentimental? I can't tell and don't care. Watched again and again as a family, it has all the ingredients of a great adventure story where we believed every word and willed a happy ending - every time!

Now is your chance to choke back a new tear on the big screen, and give new children the chance to be lost in the simple beauty of the original *Railway Children* ... And being the father of girls, "Daddy ... my daddy!" as the steam clears on the platform, is for ever and gladly heartbreaking.

Even writing those words is enough in the choking-back-a-tear dept...

There are no explosions and nobody dies in a hail of bullets. Bring your grandparents and don't fidget.



Casablanca

Mon 19 2.00



“Of all the gin joints in all the towns in all the world she walks into...” possibly Britains’ most beautiful cinema?

On a shortlist of all-time classic screen love stories, Casablanca must be close to the top. Come and enjoy every second of every line you’ve heard a million times. You know the story but just in case: Bogart plays to his greatest-type, the seen-it-all, battered, laconic, tired, wisecracking nightclub owner Richard (Rick) Blane. The ethereal Bergman who left him waiting on that rainy Parisienne platform years before, walks into his bar and back into his life – cue: “moonlight and love songs never out of date, hearts full of passion jealousy and hate, woman needs man and man must have his mate, that no one can deny...”

We dedicate this screening of Casablanca to Peter Clark who played Capt Renault (Claude Reins) in the Boxmoor Arts Centre’s live theatrical production in black n’white n’grey on the Edinburgh Fringe 1983. When he replaced his vast collection of vinyl with CDs, he gave me his precious LP turn-table and amp on permanent-loan (it is now) and still in use. Peter died Aug 2002 aged 55. Here’s looking at you kid...

Director: Michael Curtiz
Starring: Humphrey Bogart, Ingrid Bergman, Paul Henreid, Sydney Greenstreet, Claude Rains, Peter Lorre, Conrad Veidt
Certificate: U
Duration: 102 mins
Origin: USA 1942
By: Park Circus Films

Mid-August Lunch

Tue 20 12.30

Director: Gianni Gregorio
Starring: Gianni Di Gregorio, Valeria De Franciscis
Certificate: U
Duration: 75 mins
Origin: Italy 2008
By: Artificial Eye

Co-writer of the savagely bleak Gomorrah! “Gianni Di Gregorio writes, directs and ‘acts’ in this wry comedy of a middle aged idler living with his mother in a flat on the outskirts of Rome. He is behind with his rent, so grudgingly accepts the task of looking after the superintendent’s mother and aunt over the Ferragosto (mid august) holiday, cooking, cleaning and tending to their every whim while (miraculously) managing to keep his cool aided here and there by cheap local plonk.” (*Time Out*) The plot is directly inspired his own experience of looking after his widowed mother during her last years. Indeed the whole production has a home made quality to it, from the interiors to the cast, made up entirely of non professionals among whom we find him and a couple of old friends.

Shooting in natural light provides a rather sombre atmosphere, which might at first appear strange if not technically poor, but which in fact reproduces well the funeral darkness of Italian houses at the height of summer, shutters closed to keep out the seering heat.

“What is original about it is its gentle fusion of the lyrical with quiet desperation. There is no room for cheap sentimentality or sudden accelerations of narrative. There are no punch lines, no melodramatic or absurd situations.” (*S&S*) Don’t miss.



Julie and Julia

Wed 21 2.00, **Thu 22** 2.00



This is story of accidental ambition, producing the most unlikely television star 55 years before reality TV and long before Britain had television or a fridge!

It intertwines the lives of two happily married women who, though separated by time, are searching for something meaningful...

Child was the first American woman to study at Paris's famous Cordon Bleu cooking school, and the popularity of her book, *Mastering the Art Of French Cooking*, led to a TV series and a cooking career that made her a household name. She steered eaters away from the canned, frozen and processed and promoted foods that were fresh and flavourful. (Where did it all go wrong?)

The film alternates between Julia and her husband's life in 1950s Paris and 50 years on, Julie's married life in a cramped New York apartment.

"The larger issues of food and cooking in a woman's life are left on the side of the plate. The result is a film that's charming, funny – especially when Streep is on screen, broadcasting her superb impression of the tall, charismatic, high-pitched Child – but leaves you with a dissatisfaction with modern life that no culinary masterpiece can relieve." (*Time Out*) Does anybody really want to see a film about food and happily married couples?

Sounds like *Mamma Mia* on gas mark 6 heading for the toilet.

Director: Nora Ephron
Starring: Meryl Streep, Rachel McAdams
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 123 mins
Origin: USA 2009
By: Sony Pictures Releasing

Cloudy With a Chance of Meatballs

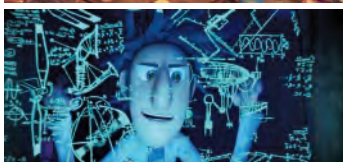
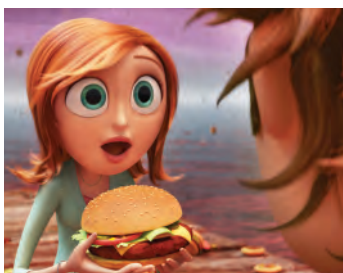
Sat 24 2.00, **Tue 27** 12.30

Directors: Phil Lord, Christopher Miller
Voices: Bill Hader, Anna Faris, James Caan
Certificate: U
Duration: 90 mins
Origin: USA 2009
By: Sony Pictures Releasing

Based on a 1978 kids book (which explains its very 70s line in cuisine) it is a sly parable of unfettered consumption in which a plucky young inventor lavishes his hometown with meatball hailstorms and spectacular spaghetti tornadoes.

One moment our hero is mooning over a winsome weathergirl the next he's tussling with a gang of gigantic rotisserie chickens that lash at him with fleshy wings and bare-bone legs.

The film itself is a veritable buffet of the bland and the bizarre, the sweet and the sour, and all tastes are catered for along the way. And its funny



The Third Man

Mon 26 2.00



The Third Man remains among the one of the best British thrillers with Harry Lime taking the noir trilby for the best villain's name in cinema history. "Reed and Greene's sardonic vision of smiling corruption is deliciously realised with superb location work and the raised eyebrow of Anton Karas' jaunty zither score..." (*Time Out*)

Although his screen time is famously scanty, Orson Welles' Harry Lime haunts each scene: everywhere and invisible, he's a smirking Cheshire cat of a villain, a superb case study in shameless charisma as poisonous contagion. Audiences, like many of the characters, have tended to fall for his charms, fondly recalling the privilege of being taken into his confidence rather than the rotten core it conceals. The film, however, is less charitable, pursuing the performer backstage into the sewers, sick bowels of the city he lords it over. Playing American heroics against British pragmatism, it is suffused with irony yet ultimately serious-minded: without personal responsibility, it says, there is no hope for civilisation – however charming the smirk. (*crits*)

"In Italy, for 30 years under the Borgias, they had warfare, murder and bloodshed, but they produced Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, and the Renaissance. In Switzerland they have brotherly love. They had 500 years of democracy and peace, and what did that produce? - The cuckoo clock!" (Harry Lime/Graham Greene) Exquisite.

Director: Carol Reed
Starring: Trevor Howard, Joseph Cotton, Orson Welles, Alida Valli, Bernard Lee
Certificate: PG
Duration: 115 mins
Origin: UK 1949
By: Optimum Releasing

Creation

Wed 28 2.00

Director: Jon Amiel
Starring: Paul Bettany, Jeremy Northam, Jennifer Connelly, Toby Jones
Certificate: 12A
Duration: 108 mins
Origin: UK 2009
By: Icon Film Distribution Ltd

Released in this, the two hundredth anniversary year of Charles Darwin's birth, Jon Amiel's "Creation" is a masterful biopic of the life of the acclaimed naturalist.

Darwin (Paul Bettany) has returned from his (in)famous Beagle voyage, and is settling down to married life with his wife Emma (Bettany's real life wife, Jennifer Connelly), to work on his seminal "On The Origin Of The Species".

Devastated by a family tragedy and burdened by his growing disenchantment with his Christian faith, Bettany paints a sympathetic, yet realistic portrait of Darwin – a man torn between love for his devoutly religious wife, and his own scientific curiosity.

"...Paul Bettany and Jennifer Connelly bring an intimacy and chemistry to the screen that is effortlessly powerful... a beautiful film, a tonic to the hysteria of the far side of the Creationist sect and the militant atheists." (*Times*)

Notably, at the time of us going to press, the film has been unable to find a US distributor. This, a country that opened last month's "Antichrist" across a number of screens... Give us depravity, despair and casual mutilation any time over Evolution. "It would be a great shame if those with religious convictions spurned the film out of hand as they will find it even-handed and wise." (*Hollywood Reporter*)

No they won't.

(research: Simon Messenger)



Hairspray

Thu 29 2.00



Back for half-term... a little nostalgia.

Hairspray was our big Christmas film 2007! Where did all that time go?

The fat girl dances, makes good and gets the boy in this remake of John Waters' 1988 sparky, dirty and edgy original. This is not edgy in the slightest, nor dirty but sparky it is.

Taken more from the hit musical than his original screenplay, it zings from start to finish, with only a dull preachy bit in the middle. (The West End show still sells out to rave audiences).

Forget the West End, our seats are better and the film has no terrible English/American accents only terrible American ones.

"Though not as scabrous, as sharp or even as musically memorable as John Waters' original, it retains much of his big-hearted sensibility (he cameos as the happy flasher)" (*Time Out*)

They're all fabulous, Nikki Blonsky wins on points but doesn't steal it from Travolta in chunky, old wife drag.

Walken's unrivalled weirdness makes it all the better to watch him dance, and the ever gorgeous Ms Piff is not scared to act the goat.

Drop the ironing and leave the kids with a stranger...

Director: Adam Shankman
Starring: Nikki Blonsky, John Travolta, Michele Pfeiffer, Christopher Walken
Certificate: PG
Duration: 116 mins
Origin: USA 2007
By: Entertainment Film Distribution

Wallace & Gromit: Curse of the Were-Rabbit

Sat 31 2.00

Director: Nick Park
Voices: Helena Bonham Carter, Ralph Fiennes
Certificate: U
Duration: 96 mins
Origin: UK 2005
By: Paramount International Pictures

Back for fun... a far-from-scary Halloween treat for children of all ages up to 102...

Synopses: The cheese-loving Wallace and his ever faithful dog Gromit - the much-loved duo from Aardman's Oscar-winning, clay-animation - star in this comedy adventure, marking their first full-length feature film. It's 'vege-mania' in the village, and our two enterprising chums are chasing around collecting veggie eating 'pests', mainly rabbits, with their humane pest-control outfit, "Anti-Pesto." With only days to go before the annual Giant Vegetable Competition, business is booming, but plasticine man and dog are discovering that running a "humane" pest control outfit has its drawbacks as their west Wallaby Street home fills to the brim with captive rabbits!

Directors Nick Park and Steve Box have created yet another utterly delightful slice of Aardman animation which remains perversely original and very English in its perfectly underplayed humour. "The sheer charm of Wallace And Gromit: The Curse Of The Were-Rabbit is sure to delight audiences of all ages with its infectious humour and wonderfully tactile 'clay-mation'". (synops) Still fabulous the fifteenth time around... Bring the street. It won't be back for ages...



LEAVE US ALONE...

What do these four pictures have in common? Lets start with the smug, the bland and the ugly – the new scissor sister terrorists: Cowell, Kate and Green. They would come right at the top of the leave-us-alone chart, were it not for the ease with which we can switch them off, or flick past them in a magazine hoping you don't flick into Sam Taylor-Wood or Lily Allen. No, the top of the leave-us-alone list is reserved for those faceless developers you can't flick past. Slime, Deposit and Dollar at your service. Like our three lovelies, they are taking over the world, without a weapon of mass destruction, a white cat or comrade Kleb.

More importantly they are taking over or invading our small, streets and gardens and trees. This tiny world we inhabit of terraced streets and higgledy back gardens is under threat from big fisted jollheads who know the price of everything and the value of nothing. They want our tiny world, not to live in, but to destroy and move on like a mob of cackling 12 yr olds who've just cleaved some innocent's face in three and left him for dead. None of them will leave us alone to get on with life where things are familiar. To make their grubby they must all interfere in our lives. When they're not terrorising us for being in the wrong street at the wrong time, or



threatening to build an entertainment empire to rival Disney, they are terrorising us with planning permission. They don't need an ideology to hide behind. They don't need a disguise (though nobody knows who they are or what they look like). They don't need explosives or a gun. All they need is golf clubs. In between penis jokes, they make their deals on expansive golf courses set in beautiful woodland while they plot to destroy our visibility.

These are the casual dealmakers who control everything and like the Cowell, Green trio there's probably only three faces controlling all the planning permission needed to build right across Berkhamsted...? This particular moment has been brought about by the proposal to build five houses across three back gardens in Ellesmere Road. Two gardens are pictured (one here the other earlier on the ABL page). For all of the paper proposals, public meetings, crowded planning meetings and appeal after refusal, after appeal, it is still a considerable threat. It's gone on for ages. There have been government inspectors and experts for and against and from what I can gather there has been no serious mention of the Conservation Area. Forgive me but I thought that word conservation meant



Philip Green, Kate Moss and Simon Cowell. The smug, the bland and the ugly.

Pic: Richard Young

conservation; conserving, preserving and declaring an historically important or already crowded enough to stay as it is. Therefore to be left alone. Can we build in your garden in a conservation area? Answer No, full stop. Next!

For a moment imagine the films Cowell will produce. Starring Kate Moss and his smirking face, heroine (literally) and hero in Top Shop costumes, with music by The Minkys. No, you've all made enough money to support big cars, mistresses, several houses, a few pitbulls and the whole of Nigeria. You don't need any more... So, Slime Deposit (non-returnable) and Dollar – Smug, Bland and Ugly, leave us alone.



This is the site of the new gateway proposal at Bank Mill Lane (more in November)