

2008 : Season Two (Ed3)

Patron: Bruce Hodsdon

Screenings fortnightly on
Wednesdays at 7:30 pm
unless otherwise stated.
National Film & Sound Archive
McCoy Cct, Acton, ACT

ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP \$45
or 6 months \$30 or 3 months \$15
Membership covers entry to all screenings.

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Programme produced by John Carroll

July 9

MADAME DE...

Print courtesy of the National Film and Sound Archive.

(France/Italy 1953) 105 min.

Director: Max Ophuls Cast: Danielle Darrieux,
Charles Boyer, Vittorio De Sica



Madame de... (Darrieux) sells the diamond earrings that her husband gave her as a wedding present. The jewellery is given and sold to various members of Madame de...’s extended circle until it comes back to her and

starts to affect her relationships with both her husband (Boyer) and her dashing Italian diplomat lover (De Sica). This film is famous for its elaborate camera movements, its graceful style, its sets, its costumes and of course its jewelry. *Madame de...* has some claim to being Ophuls’ greatest film, and thus one of the great works of world cinema. [JS]

July 23

PYGMALION

Print courtesy of the National Film and Sound Archive.

(GB 1938) 96 min.

Directors: Anthony Asquith & Leslie Howard
Cast: Wendy Hiller, Leslie Howard, Scott
Sunderland, Wilfred Lawsons

Early adaptation of the famous George Bernard Shaw play retains much of the eloquent wit and



bite of the original as the sexes (represented by Henry Higgins and Eliza Doolittle) do battle over all manner of subjects. Fine performances all round in a delightful film that even cantankerous old GBS himself is said to have liked. [DH]

August 6

KUMONOSU JO (Throne of Blood)

Print courtesy of the National Film and Sound Archive.

(Japan 1957) 110 min.

Director: Akira Kurosawa Cast: Toshiro Mifune,
Isuzu Yamada

Kurosawa (as writer and director) transposes Shakespeare’s *Macbeth* from mediaeval Scotland to feudal sixteenth-century Japan. Washizu (Mifune) is a samurai warrior who is told by a witch that he will become Emperor. He and his scheming wife Asaji (Yamada) plot



and murder so that the prophecy is fulfilled, but it ultimately leads to Washizu’s downfall. It has been said that the stylised use of images in the film is visual poetry that replaces the poetry of Shakespeare’s text, instead of a more literal translation. There is much reference to Japan’s Noh theatre, as well as the history of the samurai class. This film is considered by some to be the best cinematic adaptation of the Bard’s “Scottish Play”. [TM-J]

August 20

A TOWN LIKE ALICE

Print courtesy of the National Film and Sound Archive.

(UK 1956) 116 min.

Director: Jack Lee Cast: Peter Finch, Virginia
McKenna

In this moving drama of survival during World War II, a group of British women and children is forced by the Japanese to trek through the jungle. No Japanese officer will take responsibility for them and they are threatened with starvation and disease. An Australian (Finch) helps them to survive and he forms a relationship with the group’s leader (McKenna). His passion for his hometown, Alice Springs and his determination to survive and return there inspires the group to continue against the odds. Stoic understatement injects a quiet intensity into the drama. [RK]



September 3

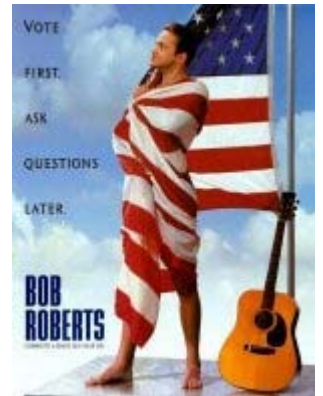
BOB ROBERTS

Print courtesy of the National Film and Sound Archive.

(USA 1992) 102 min.

Director: Tim Robbins Cast: Tim Robbins

This is a mockumentary look at the Senate campaign of conservative folk singer Bob Roberts (Robbins), and the lone reporter trying to foil him. Marking the directorial debut of Robbins (who would next go on to make *Dead Man Walking*), the film uses satire, cameo appearances by real-life media people and songs penned by Robbins himself to look at American politics in a way that will probably be forever relevant (and particularly now in another US election year). [TC]



September 17

DRUMS ALONG THE MOHAWK

Print courtesy of the National Film and Sound Archive.

(USA 1939) 103 min.

Director: John Ford Cast: Claudette Colbert,
Henry Fonda, Edna May Oliver, John
Carradine

Gilbert ‘Gil’ Martin (Fonda), a civilized man from the East coast colonies, finds himself a loving bride, Magdalen a ‘Lana’, (Colbert) and takes her West to start a homestead in the Mohawk Valley. Gil joins the American militia, but when the Indians attack the rebellious colonists, instigated by the British, their home and belongings go up in flames, and Lana loses their baby. Destitute, they move and find a wealthy old widow, who is happy to put them up in her fine estate in exchange for help from both of them, but the horrors of war catch up, and even the fort isn’t guaranteed safe. Ford’s first film in colour. [BD]



October 1

PAISÀ

Print courtesy of the National Film and Sound Archive.

(Italy 1946) 120 min.

Director: Roberto Rossellini **Cast:** of 1000s

Rossellini with Federico Fellini as a co-writer set six stories in the context of the US march through Italy in 1943 and 1944. Each episode involves a different situation and group of actors in a new district of Italy. The film starts in Sicily



and ends up by the River Po in northern Italy. The common theme is communication or lack of it, particularly between the Italians and the Americans, who are variously seen as invaders, liberators or fair game for the poverty stricken locals. The tone, too, varies from wry humour to tragedy. The film often seems more like a documentary than a composed movie but the neo-realistic style powerfully conveys the bitterness of war, using amateur actors and real locations effectively. [JMcG]

October 15

NOTHING SACRED

Print courtesy of the National Film and Sound Archive.

(USA 1938) 74 min.

Director: William A Wellman **Cast:** Carole Lombard, Fredric March

Written by Ben Hecht who also co-wrote *The Front Page* which became Hawks' classic *His Girl Friday*, this biting fast-paced satire has an elderly, drunken doctor misdiagnosing a young



woman (Lombard) as having a rare terminal illness. An ambitious New York reporter (March) picks up the story. When he learns that the diagnosis is wrong, he convinces her to go along with the charade for the publicity. She is built up by his newspaper into a national heroine. Comic misunderstandings abound until she is inevitably exposed as a fraud. The reporter has to resolve a tricky situation. This film was one of the first in colour. [RK]

October 29

EXOTICA

Print courtesy of the National Film and Sound Archive.

(Canada 1994) 104 min.

Director: Atom Egoyan **Cast:** Mia Kirshner, Elias Koteas, Don McKellar, Victor Garber, Arsinée Khanjian, Sarah Polley, Calvin Green, David Hemblen, Peter Krantz, Jack Blum, Damon D'Oliveira, Billy Merasty, Ken McDougal

The club *Exotica* is the central point in a Canadian city (presumably Toronto, though it is not named) for the stories of an auditor, a DJ, an erotic dancer, a pet store owner and a babysitter to unfold, reveal and intertwine.



Egoyan made this just before his well-received *The Sweet Hereafter*, and the slow burn of the plot and revealing developments towards the end are similar in esoteric feel. Marketed as an "erotic thriller", the eroticism isn't conventional and the thrills are softly handled. [TC]

November 12 (6:30pm)

6:30pm - Annual General Meeting

Come along and have your say.

7:30pm - NIGHT AND THE CITY

Print courtesy of the National Film and Sound Archive.

(UK 1950) 94 min.

Director: Jules Dassin **Cast:** Richard Widmark, Gene Tierney, Googie Withers, Hugh Marlowe, Francis L. Sullivan, Herbert Lom

London noir. En route to France, courtesy the McCarthy witch hunt, where he would create the epochal fusion of Euro and Hollywood sensibilities that is *Rififi*, Fox's Zanuck detoured activist director Jules Dassin to England to safeguard his investment in Gerald Kersh's downbeat novel, now too 'hot' a project for Hollywood. Seizing the Red Scare metaphor of the frantic American pursued abroad, Richard Widmark gives a

career-highlight portrayal of the downwardly mobile hustler kept aloft only by his own hot air. With cinematography showing its German Expressionist roots, *Night and the City* does for London what Reed and Welles did for Vienna in *The Third Man*. [RW]



November 26

BRIEF ENCOUNTER

Print courtesy of the National Film and Sound Archive.

(UK 1945) 86 min.

Director: David Lean **Cast:** Celia Johnson, Trevor Howard

Director David Lean was a master of intimate drama and *Brief Encounter* is arguably his finest work. An ordinary middle-class wife, contentedly married and the mother of two children, meets a similarly settled doctor one day while on a weekly shopping visit to a town



near that in which she lives. The casual and innocent acquaintance, renewed on successive weeks, suddenly ripens into a deep affection by which both are shaken and shocked. Noel Coward wrote the screenplay based on his own play and it is beautifully complemented by a soundtrack resonating with Rachmaninoff's second Piano Concerto. [JS]

December 10

A NIGHT AT THE OPERA

Print courtesy of the National Film and Sound Archive.

(USA 1935) 90 min.

Director: Sam Wood **Cast:** The Marx Brothers, Kitty Carlisle, Allan Jones, Margaret Dumont, Sig Rumann



Considered by many lovers of the famous brothers to be up there with *Duck Soup* as the funniest of the MB films. In this, the Brothers get involved in the world of opera and create the usual havoc. The straight musical scenes (and the love interest) are provided by Carlisle and Jones. This is the one with the contract scene between Groucho and Chico ending up with the mythical "sanity clause". [DH]



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