

Members-Only Screenings Program 2025

Wednesday 5 February

THE PRIME OF MISS JEAN BRODIE – UK – 1969 – 116 min – DRAMA – PG

In 1970, Maggie Smith received the Academy Award and BAFTA for Best Actress in a Leading Role for this film, in which she plays a complex, unconventional teacher in a 1930s Edinburgh girls' school. Worshipped by her students and her married lover, the adoration does not extend to her headmistress. Brodie's eccentricities, and support of Franco in the Spanish Civil War, do not win her any favours. Maggie Smith only got the role when Vanessa Redgrave, who had played Jean Brodie on stage, refused to repeat that 'pro-fascist part'. But it was the role for which Maggie Smith became internationally famous, and it is our tribute to this great and much-loved actor, who departed this world last year at the age of 89, after starring in *The Miracle Club* just the year before.

Wednesday 5 March

SUNDAY TOO FAR AWAY – AUSTRALIA, 1975 –90 min - DRAMA – M

As we prepare for our festival of new Australian films later this month, let's revisit an Australian classic from 50 years ago. A much younger Jack Thompson and Max Cullen star among other familiar faces in 'Sunday Too Far Away', which depicts the life of a sheep shearer at the time of the famous shearers' strike of 1956. It's a tough, isolated, lonely life, with hard men competing to be the top shearer, while dealing with the threat of non-union labour undermining their efforts for better conditions. This was the standout film of the year, winning four major Australian Film Awards and was invited to be screened in the Directors' Fortnight at the Cannes Film Festival.

Wednesday 2 April

THE MEASURE OF A MAN – FRANCE, 2015 – SUBTITLES – 88 min – DRAMA - PG

This is a film about a moral dilemma – how far are you prepared to compromise your principles for a job you badly need? When a factory downsizes and Thierry, a 51-year-old machinist is made redundant, he struggles to find employment. After a year enduring many rejections and humiliations, he finally gets a job as a supermarket security agent. And while he enjoys catching real thieves, he takes less kindly to spying on his co-workers for minor infractions. It's like collaborating with the enemy. Vincent Lindon's performance as Thierry earned him the Best Actor award at the Cannes Film Festival. And director Stephane Brize makes us feel every one of his nuanced emotions – an uncomfortable but engrossing and ultimately rewarding experience.

Wednesday 7 May

MY SAILOR, MY LOVE – IRELAND (Finnish director), 2023 – 102 min – DRAMA - PG

Grace, suffering from the loss of her job and husband, visits her cantankerous old father in a remote part of Ireland. Given the mess in the house, he is clearly not coping, so she arranges a housekeeper. Of course he rudely rejects her at first, but their relationship blossoms, and he enjoys being part of her extended family, to Grace's consternation. Eventually we find out more about Grace's childhood and the reasons for her poor relationship with her father. Finnish film maker Klaus Härö has given us a visually beautiful film about the complications and lasting trauma of family relationships.

Wednesday 4 June

MONSTER – JAPAN, 2023 – SUBTITLES – 126 min – DRAMA/THRILLER - M

Young Minato comes home from school and tells his mother that his teacher Mr Hori humiliated him by calling him a 'pig brain'. She complains to the school, but is not impressed by their insincere apology. Mr Hori then claims that Minato was bullying another child. But where lies the truth? We are shown the many different opinions and versions of events and left to draw our own conclusions. Hirokazu (*Shoplifters*) gives us a fraught tale of two troubled boys, and the harm that can come when family dysfunction, social media, bullying and homophobia combine to create a 'monster' of harm.

Wednesday 2 July

ANNIE HALL – USA, 1977 – 90 min – DRAMA – M

'Woody Allen's nakedly autobiographical film is the Oscar-winning sensation which put him on the map – and it's probably his best film, too.' The film documents the relationship between Alvy and Annie in New York. Packed with witty one-liners such as only Allen can write, and visually original, the film invented a new genre in relationship comedy. The city itself is the other character – in the 1970s, it was dirty, dangerous, and desperate, a kind of repository for all that was bad about the United States. It is perhaps astonishing that a film more about social commentary than romance, took out the Oscar for best picture, ahead of none other than *Star Wars*.

Wednesday 6 August

THE TEACHERS' LOUNGE – GERMANY, 2023 – SUBTITLES – 94 min – DRAMA/THRILLER - M

Following a spate of thefts in a German secondary school, a Turkish boy is initially accused. He is exonerated, but his parents are less than impressed by the school's graceless apology. Then Carla, one of the teachers, has money stolen from her purse. She manages to film another of the teachers in the act of theft. The thief is dismissed, but she has a son who remains at the school and starts rumours about Carla. She is dismayed that the other teachers fail to support her. From there, things begin to unravel. The film is a bitter lesson in self-righteousness – a simple act with the best of intentions can set off a terrible chain of events.

Sunday 17 August

BALZAC AND THE LITTLE CHINESE SEAMSTRESS – CHINA, 2002 – SUBTITLES – 111 min – DRAMA – M

Two young Chinese boys are sent to a remote village in China for re-education during the cultural revolution, because of their bourgeois backgrounds – one is the son of a dentist and the other plays violin. The granddaughter of the local tailor longs to learn more about the world, and when the boys discover a hidden cache of banned French classic books, they teach the girl to read and write, falling in love with her along the way. Years later we see what has become of the boys, and what is happening in the beautiful valley in which they spent those years - it is about to be flooded to create a dam for hydroelectricity.

Wednesday 3 September

LEMON TREE – ISRAEL, 2008 – SUBTITLES - 106 min – DRAMA – G

The centuries-old conflict in the Middle East, is shown here in human terms. A Palestinian widow in the West Bank tends her lemon grove. However, when the Israeli Defence Minister moves in across the way, his security guards demand she removes the trees, which could shelter terrorists. She refuses to do so, and takes her case to the supreme court, bringing international attention to the case. Along the way, she forges an unlikely bond

with the wife of the Defence Minister. The film deals with the complex web of Israeli politics and Palestinian rights, as well as the themes of loneliness and female solidarity.

Wednesday 1 October

MERKEL – GERMANY SUBTITLES - 95 mins - DOCUMENTARY - PG

Raised in East Germany, and with a doctorate in quantum chemistry, Angela Merkel was working as a research scientist in 1989 when the Berlin Wall came down. The fall of communism came as a relief to her, and it was not long after that she decided to enter politics. By 2005 she was Chancellor of a unified Germany, a post she held for sixteen years. Merkel was not only unusual in being a woman leader in an elite dominated by men, but also a leader who was completely sincere, principled, incorruptible and lacking in greed. Merkel is one of the most important – and least understood – international leaders of the 21st century. Eva Weber's fascinating documentary unfolds many of the layers in which Merkel cloaked herself. Archival footage from her youth and the anecdotes of famous contemporaries reveal a less guarded persona.

Sunday 26 October

LA CHIMERA – ITALY, 2023 – some SUBTITLES – 133 min – DRAMA/COMEDY - M

Arthur, a dishevelled English archaeologist, has a gift for divining hidden Etruscan tombs which contain ancient treasure. He teams up with a rag-tag group of grave robbers who sell the antiquities to a shady dealer for on-selling at a huge profit to collectors. But Arthur was once respectable and in love with an aristocrat's daughter, Beniamina, who is no longer with us. He yearns to be reunited with her in the spirit world, and his grave-robbing raises spirits from the dead, with unforeseen consequences. Set in Tuscany in the 1980s, and described as a 'beguiling fantasy-comedy of lost love: garrulous, uproarious and celebratory', Alice Rohrwacher (*Happy as Lazzaro*) has given us an eccentric romance that will stay with us well after the film ends.

Wednesday 5 November

GOODBYE JULIA – SUDAN, 2023 - SUBTITLES - 125 mins – DRAMA - M

Goodbye Julia follows the story of Mona, a northern Sudanese retired singer in a tense marriage, who is wracked by guilt after covering up a murder. In an attempt to make amends, she takes the victim's southern Sudanese widow, Julia and son, Daniel, into her home. Unable to confess her transgressions to Julia, Mona decides to leave the past behind and adjust to a new status quo. The film skillfully integrates political issues into the context of the story, allowing us to see how social status, religion and politics affect people's lives. Its visual language captures the essence of Sudan - vibrant colours, dusty streets and sun-soaked landscapes. Mohamed Kordofani's assured directorial debut delivers tension-filled and thought-provoking drama, always maintaining a glimmer of hope. It raises profound questions about identity, belonging, and love under harsh circumstances. Engaging, engrossing viewing!

Wednesday 3 December

THE COLOUR OF PARADISE – IRAN, 1999 – SUBTITLES - 89 mins – DRAMA - PG

A film by Iranian writer-director Majid Majidi (*Children of Heaven*, 1999) this tells the story of Mohammad, a blind Iranian boy, and his father, Hashem. Although Mohammad is physically blind, it's Hashem who cannot see. The film explores blindness not only as a state, but as a metaphorical inability to see or understand others. The sightless Mohammed is extraordinarily receptive to all the non-visual messages that nature sends him. We enter his world, experiencing his joys and pains, his delight in nature, his love for his grandmother, his wish to be treated like a normal member of the community. The performances Majidi elicits from his cast of non-professional actors are truly remarkable. Filmed in beautiful meadows and mountains, full of wildflowers and wheat, this is a visually magnificent and heart-wrenching movie.