

FILM STUDY 2023

January 2023

When the Film study group met online we discussed 2 comedies that we'd watched on BBC iPlayer.

Wild Men, a 2021 Danish film was about a man in midlife crisis who'd fled his family and normal life and was trying to live wild in the scenic Norwegian mountains, who encountered difficulties shall we say.

Whilst many in the group didn't find it all funny, others enjoyed its quirkiness and possible message about what's important in life. There was debate about the meaning of the escaped pet rabbit seen happily grazing at the end but many just thought the film tried too hard to be both a comedy and a drama.

Fortunately those who didn't enjoy that film really liked **Eaten by Lions**, a British 2018 film about brothers Pete and Omar who go in search of an estranged father when their beloved Gran dies. This was generally found to be charming good fun with a mix of pathos and comedy as well as insights into British Pakistani culture, and some wacky clothes thrown in.

It was nice to see so many British character actors in their element, but some found it too daft to be funny.

February 2023

A good discussion of our *Powell and Pressburger* selections, **A Matter of Life and Death** from 1946, which was voted one of the 100 Best British Films and **Black Narcissus** from 1947.

Both films had their enthusiasts, but on balance I think we felt that they were both showing their age and perhaps should be seen as important milestones in the history of British Cinema.

March 2023

Very interesting discussion of **Cold Summer of 1953** (1988) and **Colour of Pomegranates** (1969), our soviet film choices. What struck all of us was how different they are from Hollywood and UK films made at the same time.

We liked **Cold Summer**, finding similarities with westerns (a sort of **Magnificent Two**) but with a lot of political messages about the miseries of the gulag and subsequent exile for 'politicals' who had been arrested on totally trumped up charges.

Pomegranates was fairly incomprehensible by very beautiful - a sort of art house assertion of Armenian identity, culture and history with a hint of sexual politics thrown in. Interested in finding out about Soviet Cinema?

We are returning to the subject in May when we choose the films and discuss them at our June meeting. We meet on line, so you can join us from the comfort of your own home. Our next films to watch are on the theme of youth.

April 2023

We had an enjoyable meeting talking about the films on the theme of youth, which has again shown how we all like different films.

The 2 films were **Lad, a Yorkshire Story** and **Ups and Downs** set in Northern Ireland, and as Tony pointed out the genre could have been catchily named 'lads maturing through illegal tractor driving!'

The low-budget *Lad...* was a generally enjoyed coming of age story about 13 year old Tom, and his family, seen coping with loss, life and love. Tom is helped by the mentorship of a Yorkshire

Parks ranger, as was the writer/director himself. Though there was sadness there was hope at the end, and it had many strengths as a film, not the least of which was the wonderful scenery.

Ups and Downs had a young man with Downs as the main character and he is shown feeling restricted by his family's ideas of what he can do in life. What he really wants to do is enjoy rock music at a gig in Belfast. He's shown to be manipulative and angry at being defined by his disability. Many enjoyed this film too though others found it a bit predictable with uninteresting cinematography.

October 2023

Very interesting discussion of our two October Films: ***Crossfire*** and ***Blackbeard the Pirate***.

For once we were more or less unanimous that ***Crossfire*** (1947) continues to grip as a well-crafted film noir (Robert Ryan as outstanding villain, shadowy and disorienting B+W photography), while ***B the P*** looked dated and poor quality. Robert Newton as Blackbeard reprised his earlier role as Long John Silver ('Aaarh, Jim lad' plus rolling eyeballs, gnashing teeth and grimaces) to the point of self-parody.

November 2023

We had a great discussion at our November zoom meeting looking at two films featuring Peter Cushing: ***Cash on Demand*** (1961) and ***Tales from the Crypt*** (1972).

We all liked the first and admired the script, plot and direction. Cushing's acting was a revelation, too.

Tales from the Crypt, is a portmanteau film and had mainly negative reviews, although some of us like particular sections. It can be seen perhaps as a distant forerunner of the current vogue for films based on comic book characters.