

NEWSLETTER

April - May
2004

BENDIGO FILM SOCIETY

Bendigo Film Society Inc.

Member of the Federation of Victorian
Film Societies A14539Z

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Newsletter April - May
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Dear Members and Friends...

Well, we're off and screening - new cabling and a new whiz-bang projector.

What a great Mini Film Festival we had at the end of February. Thank you Telstra Country Wide. The five films were a good sample of what 2004 holds for members. My personal favourite was *Italian for Beginners*. A delicately balanced, slightly black comedy-romance. We'd like to get some feedback about the Festival, so if you have a comment to make, catch one of the committee at a screening.

Some of you may have seen Clint Eastwood interviewed by Michael Parkinson a week or so after the Festival. He explained his minimalist acting style. I look forward to seeing *A Fistful of Dollars* (April 15th) to catch up with Eastwood again.

There will be a Discussion Group following the screening, so think about participating over a drink. No homework or preparation is required. This is the first discussion group for a while and we are keen for it to be enjoyable and informative.

From a Committee perspective, the Festival was very successful in that we signed up a dozen new members. While we have more members than at the same time last year we are still well short of our target, so constant promotion of the BFS is an on-going request of all members.

At the March screenings I have indicated that the BFS needs a person to coordinate publicity. If you are interested in the position please contact me.

I look forward to seeing you 'at the flicks'. **Kevin Vallence - President**

Sponsors



2004 membership new / renewal

BENDIGO FILM SOCIETY

name: _____

(partner: _____)

address: _____

eMail: _____

Telephone : _____

full-season \$49
concession \$39
partnered \$69

Send a cheque to
PO Box 567 Vic 3552

BULLETIN BOARD

We need someone to join the Committee to help promote the BFS to encourage more members. Please speak to one of the committee if you would like to help!

There are some great film docs on television at the moment. For the night owls on Sunday evenings, the ABC is screening "Music Behind the Scenes" which explores how music is used in film.

Coming Events

Thursday 1 April

7:30	Cinesound Review (Aust 1954) Captain Celluloid vs the Film Pirates Episode 3 (Louis McMahan USA 1968)
8.10	The Seventh Seal (Ingmar Bergman, Sweden, 1957)

Thursday 15 April

7.30	<i>A Fist Full of Dollars</i> (Sergio Leone, Italy 1964)
9.15	Discussion Group at a nearby venue

Thursday 29 April

7:30	Princess Margaret: this is your life (British Movietone News, Britain, 1960) Captain Celluloid vs Film Pirates No 4 Unmasked (Louis McMahan, USA, 1968)
8.10	Anna Karenina (Clarence Brown, USA, 1936)

Thursday 13 May

7:30	Michael (Three to Go) (Peter Weir, Aust, 1970)
8.20	Blazing Saddles (Mel Brooks, USA 1974)

Thursday 27 May

7:30	Toula (Three to Go) (Peter Weir, Aust, 1970)
8.20	Jubal (Delmar Daves, USA 1956)

Bendigo Film Society Inc

Venue: Campbell Theatre in the Bendigo Library, Hargreaves St

Some of the movies have not been classified; content may challenge or offend or not be suitable for children

Membership \$49 yearly, \$39 concession, \$69 partnered. To join, send a cheque or turn up

The Bendigo Film Society reserves the right to substitute film titles, should the need arise

ROBERT ALTMAN by David Vallence (2003)

Robert Altman's body of work in many ways resembles the rich but somewhat unstructured style of filmmaking that he has become known for. He flew B-24's during the Second World War and made industrial documentaries in the early 1950's, but not before inventing a tattooing machine designed for the identification of dogs.

After some early projects, Altman directed two episodes of *Alfred Hitchcock Presents* in 1957 and was subsequently fired. But the exposure allowed him to establish himself, and he continued to develop his craft in the television industry during the rest of the 50's and 1960's. He worked as a director on a range of series including *Bonanza* and *The Kraft Suspense Theatre*. He was often in conflict with the TV networks for refusing to edit projects down to a manageable size, or for insisting on the inclusion of political subtexts.

Robert Altman began making feature films in the late 1960's, and in 1970 found commercial and critical success with *M.A.S.H.*, a black comedy about the Korean War. He resisted offers to make big budget Hollywood films, and instead spent the early 1970's on successive projects that challenged established cinematic genres and critiqued American culture. Despite not being as commercially successful as contemporaries Robert Altman was recognized as an influential contributor to a creatively re-energized American cinema.

In 1975 he made *Nashville*, a meditation on Americana that received 5 Oscar nominations and featured over 20 major characters. *Nashville's* innovative narrative technique using overlapping storylines and a large ensemble cast, became something of an Altman trade-mark, and can be seen in films such as *A Wedding* [1978] that had over 50 major roles, as well as *Short Cuts* [1993], and *Gosford Park* [2001].

During the remainder of the 1970's, Robert Altman continued to produce a provocative body of work that mainstream audiences and critics often had difficulty with. *Popeye* [1980], a musical starring Robin Williams, failed to live up to expectations, and Altman responded by selling his production company and giving up his career as a Hollywood filmmaker. He turned instead to theatre, where he directed the Ed Graczyk play *Come Back to the Five and Dime, Jimmy Dean, Jimmy Dean* on Broadway. He also worked on a range of innovative television projects including a docudrama about Richard Nixon called *Secret Honour* [1984], and a 5 episode HBO series called *Tanner 88* about a fictional politician, that was shot amongst actual politicians during that years presidential election.

In 1993, Altman returned to the big screen and found critical and box-office success with *The Player*, a sharp satire of the Hollywood studio 'scene' that received 3 Oscar nominations. This was followed by *Short Cuts*, a snapshot of contemporary Los Angeles that was reminiscent of *Nashville* in its knowing portrayal of American life. During the rest of the 1990's, Altman's idiosyncratic approach to filmmaking continued to occasionally mystify critics and audiences. *Pret-a-Porter* [1994] and *Kansas City* [1996] were poorly received, and *Gingerbread Man* [1998] was re-cut by the film's producers after a disastrous preview screening. But true to form, Altman shrugged off these disappointments and made *Gosford Park* in 2001, which received universal acclaim and for which he won Best Director at the Golden Globes.

Robert Altman is self-effacing about his art and believes that film is really an actor's medium. Nevertheless, his genuinely innovative approach to narrative structure, and his continuing ability to offer an affectionate as well as critical eye on his subjects, marks him as one of the few genuine American auteurs.

NEXT MONTH WE FOCUS ON WESTERNS
Please send your contributions by 14 May

