

newsletter

June -July

BENDIGO

FILM SOCIETY

These Months' Events

Thursday 31 May

7:30 **Manhattan** – Woody Allen, '79
9:30 **Zelig** – Woody Allen, 1983 (10:50)

Saturday 2 June

2:00 Focus on Australian Film
Mallboy – shorts – **Breaker Morant**
Star Cinema \$5/session \$12/day

Thursday 14 June

7:30 **Fat of the Land** – British
Arthouse, 1986
9:00 **Chinatown** – Polanski, 1974 (11:10)

Thursday 28 June

7:30 Early **Edison** Films, 1893-1901
Movie Tone & Cinesound, 1959-61
If It Bleeds... It Leads, 1985
8:30 **Newsfront** – Noyce 1978 (10:20)

Thursday 12 July

7:30 **Das Boot** (The Boat),
Petersen, 1981 (10:50)

Friday 20 July

Mid-Winter Movie Marathon

7:30 **Dr Strangelove** – Kubrick, '63
9:15 **Fritz the Cat** – Bakshi, 1972
10:45 **Blade** – Norrington, 1998
1:00 **Bloodlust** – Wolstencroft, '91
2:45 **Monterey Pop**, Pennebaker, 1968 (4:10am)

Thursday 26 July

7:30 **Wine & Shorts**
9:30 **Paths of Glory** – Kubrick, '57 (11:00)

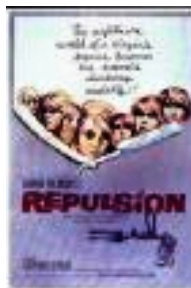
Dear Members and Friends...

If the past two months are any indication, 2001 will be a great season for the BFS. Membership is expanding steadily (but more are needed!) and the movie-program seems to be appreciated by all for its diverse coherence.



Jim Jarmusch's debut, *Stranger than Paradise*, was a bit rough, but indicative of Jarmusch's potential. Perhaps we should follow his maturation through a theme in 2002?

Repulsion demonstrated Polanski's excellence with every frame carefully crafted and the total being truly terrifying, even more impressive as Polanski doesn't need gore to disturb. Mind you, the experience in the projection boot was equally terrifying; I can assure you that an angry 35mm-unit spits out a lot of film!



Apart from straight doubles, we enjoyed two special events. 'Wine & Animations' was a great success: the selection of movies was good (after having seen Bugs Bunny in drag as Brunhilde, opera will never be the same), plenty of wine, appropriate food and a friendly atmosphere emerged spontaneously. A motif picked-up by the big smoke (The Melbourne International Animation Festival in June). The *Brakhage/Soddell-event* again pushed barriers, and that's

what a film society should be about! You'll find a member's review on that night elsewhere in this newsletter.

Hitchcock didn't live up his reputation with *Notorious*, with implausible characters and the noirish-theme corrupted by a love story resulting in a rather bland movie. The other film-noir, Lang's *The Big Heat*, was superb however, and sublimely defined the noir category. Two more noirs to come! *Girl 6* may have been hailed as an interesting exploration of society's sexism and racism. But after exploiting the curiosity element it didn't develop.



Superficially entertaining, at least initially, with plenty of shock-value. (Well, with phone-sex one doesn't talk about ones mother, I guess.) Men were pathetic; the movie tried to dabble into some deeper meaning, but the girl was rather naïve and the movie did not deliver.

I hope you had a chance to watch the re-released copy of Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* at the Star Cinema. At half price for BFS members, that was a great opportunity to reminisce about the late 60ies.




Next months' screenings are detailed in this newsletter. I hope you'll enjoy them and that you will entice your friends to come along.

Meeuwis, President BFS.

\$6.60, 'Kiddy's Entry', at the Star for members of the BFS only

That's right, for the next 6 months Joan, the proprietor of the **Star Cinema** in Eaglehawk, will charge \$6.60 for BFS members. That is great value, **where else can you enjoy excellent movies, a glass of wine and the best seating in Victoria for less than \$10?...**

Don't forget that BFS members enjoy concessional entry at the **Bendigo Cinema**, and a free trial membership with the **Bendigo Library's Music** section. As BFS member, you may take out two CDs (or vinyl or tape of course) for a week, twice during the season. In addition we have reciprocal arrangement with **Heathcote Film Group and the Castlemaine Film Group**. Your BFS membership entitles you free access to their screenings

The committee is working hard to broker more beneficial arrangements with local business; watch this space! Any ideas welcome; if your business can contribute, please contact the committee. 




**Thursday
14 June
9:00
Chinatown,**

Roman Polanski,
USA 1974
cinemascope

Chandleresque private eye JJ Gittes (Nicholson) takes the seemingly routine investigation of an errant husband but is soon caught up in a network of private and public evil. Drought-stricken Los Angeles in 1937 is a disorienting alien place. In this multi-layered narrative, marked

Chinatown – the perfect film

by dark humour, the mysterious Chinatown, where social and moral norms don't operate, acts as a metaphor for pervasive corruption implicating the past, present and future. Starring Jack Nicholson, Fay Dunaway and with a brief appearance of Roman Polanski. 




Sharon Tate and Roman Polanski just after their wedding ceremony in London.

Thursday 14 June

7:30 Fat of the Land, 1986

a Baptist Pork Production in association with Civilian Tragedy

A compilation of short British art-house films 1984-1987: **Procar**, Richard Heslop/Daniel Landin, 19 mins. 1986. **A Nosegay**, **Maggie Jailler**, 16 mins. 1986. **Thou Pluckest Me Out Screaming**, Daniel Landin, 5 mins. 1985. **Epiphany** (excerpt), Certh Wyn Evens, 2 mins. 1984. **The Sluggard**, Joy Perino, 12 mins. 1985. **Language**, Richard Heslop, 6 mins. 1984. **Less Than Useless**, Richard Heslop/Carrie Kirkpatrick, 3 mins, 1986. **The Conversation**, Timothy Burke/Richard Heslop, 4 mins. 1987. 

Bendigo Film Society Inc.

Member of the Federation of Victorian
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Newsletter June – July
volume 1 issue 3

Editor: Meeuwis Boelen
copy for next issue: 20 July

Sponsors




BFS film-noir theme:

17 February
LA confidential, Hanson 1997
22 March
Repulsion, Roman Polanski 1965
3 May
Notorious, Hitchcock 1946
17 May
The big heat, Fritz Lang 1953
14 June
Chinatown, Polanski 1974
26 July
Desire, Emma-Kate Croghan, 1992,
Australia

Wine & Animations

We gratefully acknowledge the following wineries, whose donates made the evening such an animated event:



Big Hill Vineyard,
Connor Park Winery,
Mandurang Valley Vineyards,
Mount Alexander Vineyard,
Passing Clouds Vineyards,
Sandhurst Ridge,
Water Wheel Vineyards. 

Thursday 28 June


7:30 Early Edison Films,

Thomas Edison, UK, 1893-1901, 14min. A compilation of 19 Thomas Edison films, some made for use in kinoscopes others for public projection, averaging less than one minute each. Most are single shot films. Includes what is regarded as the first advertising film.

Movietone & Cinesound,

1959-1961, 15min. The Movietone news reel has two items: boxing between George Barnes and Clive Stewart and the main item, a tribute to Jack Davey's 25 years as commentator for Movietone which must have been filmed only months before his death in October 1959. Items in the Cinesound news reel are: a carnival in Cairns; Menzies leaves for London and Washington; Japanese boy attends school in Australia; women sailors on Sydney Harbour; wedding of professional tennis star Barry McKay and Joanna Lynch.


If It Bleeds ... It Leads

John Adkins, USA, 1985, 14min. An examination of the effects of ratings upon the content of news programs. The focus is on 'spot' news, the term given in America to filmed coverage of accidents, home fires, shootings and other local events involving violence and death. 

Thursday 28 June

8:30 Newsfront

Philip Noyce, 1978, Australia. Two stories of rivalry and ambition. The first rivalry involves two newsreel companies: Cinetone, owned by AG Marwood, a typical Australian working class man made good, and Newco, personified by maverick cameraman Charlie Henderson. The other rivalry involves brothers Len and Frank Maguire, both employed at Cinetone. Through the eyes of Len we are allowed to re-live milestone events of the 50ies, such as the referendum to ban the Communist

Party, Redex round-Australia car trial, The Maitland floods and the Olympic games. But we also become witness to the events that shape and undo Len and Franck's life, Len's deteriorating marriage and Frank decision to step out from Len's shadow and leave for America. As television invades the home and newsreels become a thing of the past, the film becomes a reflection on a passing era and particular quality of working man, loyal, honourable and resourceful. 'Newsfront' is one of the gems of the Australian Cinema Renaissance of the 1970s. 

10% discount off your 2002 ticket we need more members

For every member you recruit, you'll pay 10% less for your 2002 membership. Indeed, recruit 10 members now and receive free membership next year^{#)}.


The whole idea of this "recruit-a-member"-campaign is to secure our financial survival for 2001 and to set ourselves up for a great 2002-season.

Sponsorship does help to get the more recent movies in (\$150-200 a pop), but sponsors are more enticed to assist if they see they help more than just a few movie-buffs. So, we need members to get sponsors to get movies.

Other events we've planned are:

- * presence at the *Focus on Australian Film Festival*;
- * saturation of local media;
- * a **free-to-public** *Mid-Winter Movie Marathon*, specially targeting the younger adults;
- * brokering more benefits for BFS members, such as the **\$6.60 entry**

at the Star and **free trial** at the Music Library

* annoying you and everyone else silly with our quest for members. 

^{#)} small print: you need to be a member yourself; ensure that the recruitee identifies you as recruiter; if you recruit 2 partnered members, that will entitle you to 10% only.

If each member recruits one friend only, we'd be right!

membership application

name: _____

(partner: _____)

address: _____

eMail: _____

recruited by: _____

BENDIGO
FILM SOCIETY

half-season \$30

concession \$25

partnered \$45

send a cheque to PO Box 567 Vic 3552
or turn-up

Brakhage

a not-so-silent night

by Tom Burton

(T.Burton@bendigo.latrobe.edu.au)

The last BFS showing for April was way out of the ordinary—a biopic about the experimental silent movie maker, Stan Brakhage, followed by a selection of his films, accompanied by the music of Jacques Soddell and Justin Bull.

Brakhage is totally obsessed by film-making, and still very prolific in his late 60s, despite the inconveniences that result from his bladder cancer surgery. We saw interviews with his ex-wife, Jane, herself a film-maker, whose work I would like to see, his children, critics, friends, his present wife.

Apart from comments on his eccentricities, few bad things were said of him, although we were left to wonder at the childhood of his first family. We had seen very graphic footage of the birth of his daughter, and there she was on screen as a forty-ish woman with her younger brother, who lamented his father's indifference towards him ... except when he was the star of one of his father's 8mm or 16mm film, when he felt wonderful. We heard tales of his abstractedness while working on a project. That the children turned out all right is a tribute to Jane, I think.

Samples of Brakhage's work were scattered throughout this film. My reaction, I fear, to most of these was, "Oh no! Out-of-focus home movies masquerading as art! I wonder where my classic silent home movies are: 'Baby Jonathan Rolls Over' 'Baby Jonathan Walks!' 'Baby Jonathan's Second Birthday'." My reaction to these samples led me to despise the gushing critics who appeared from time to time, and it was curiosity mixed with a large measure of

sense of duty that kept me around after the interval.

And I am glad that I stayed.

Brakhage had made a disparaging remark about putting sound to his films ('Mickey Mouse', he said). I cannot comment upon the justice of this put-down, because I have never seen a complete movie of his without sound, but the combination of Brakhage films and the brilliantly creative music of Jacques and Justin made for a riveting experience I am glad not to have missed.

"Oh no! Out-of-focus home movies masquerading as art!"

I do not have strong memories of all of the short movies. The first, *Mothlight*, was suitably fluttery, and memorable for being first ... and for being a much more pleasurable experience than I had hoped for.

Of the abstract pieces, *The Dante*

Quartet was the one that stood out.

Highly coloured images pouring through the screen to convey something of Dante's *Inferno* carried a terrible beauty, complemented perfectly by the music. Each of the four sections occupied a differently sized or shaped screen, and that was remarkably satisfying. The

images were presented with such a rhythm that maybe, as Brakhage said, music was unnecessary, but the experience with music was very vivid, the sort of thing you hope for in a cinema.

The highlight of the night was the 1971 film *Act of Seeing with One's*

Own Eyes. This was shot in a very busy city morgue, and involved autopsies being performed (up to three at a time). I have to confess that as an anatomist, I was not confronted much by the sight of bodies or of bodies being cut, and being interested in the technique of the pathologists, I enjoyed in a very detached way watching experts at work. I am sure my reaction was not typical.


However, every now and then there were reminders of humanity and of mortality—the glimpse of a face or an old pair of hands turned a cadaver into a person, and I felt grateful every time a white sheet was placed over the deconstructed body, which happened at the end of each dissection. There was a feeling of reverence, and perhaps apology, in the act of covering the body, that I found quite touching.

Again, the music complemented the action perfectly. Muffled, indistinct voices, like those of doctors talking into their recorders were set against a simple repetitive motif and

atmospheric sounds—Jacques would not mind the word 'noise', given the dictum he likes to quote, that music is noise and noise music. Once again, the music caught and accentuated the feeling of the movie.

The audience for this night of experimental cinema was on average younger

than usual. It was a challenging night, and a very rewarding one.

After the confrontation of *Romance*, and the challenge of *Brakhage*, we were ready to be entertained by *comedy* or *Hitchcockian* suspense, both of which were on offer at the next showing. 


Tom is a Senior Lecturer in the School of Health & Environment at La Trobe University, Bendigo, and teaches subjects in anatomy and environmental sciences. Tom's research is on the hand-musculature in frogs. For this he spends time in North Queensland (trying to catch a species that only calls at night after rain) and many hours over a dissecting microscope. With this, Tom has acquired quite a reputation and recently had the honour bestowed of having a frog ligament proposed to be named after him. (That is not the same as *being* named after a bodily part.) Tom has an encyclopedic memory for muscles, ligaments, bones, and movies. For the last he has been extremely valuable with the development of this year's program.

THURSDAY 12 JULY

7:30

DAS BOOT (THE BOAT)

WOLFGANG PETERSON 1981

An extraordinary depiction of life aboard a German U-boat and the courage of those who manned it. Much of the film was shot in a real submarine to create a genuinely claustrophobic feeling. Though it features little dialogue, the anti-Nazi sentiments of the story are clearly evident. 



THURSDAY 26 JULY


7:30

9:30

Wine & Shorts

Desire, Emma-Kate Croghan, Australia 1992 10min. A series of classic film-noir tropes cleverly strung together to make a riveting 10min story. **Chicken Soup**, Kenny Schneider, USA 1973 14min. A humorous nostalgic demonstration by a German immigrant couple how to make chicken soup, kosher style. **Mongrel's Funeral**, Peter Maguire, Australia 1985 32min. A small country community is drawn together by the death of a "mongrel". But it's not until his mates gather in the pub to bolster courage, that they are able to express real sorrow. **Naked Intent**, Chris Begley, Australia 1998 14min. A loose door number on a hotel room leads to surprises all around. **Hot Curry Cowboy**, Justin Hutchison 1992 18min. A stranger arrives in Australia and lands a part in a commercial. On the set he meets a 'real' cowboy and the two are pitted in an ultimate showdown.

Paths of Glory

Stanley Kubrick USA 1957. A compelling anti-war film about the absurdities and horrors of war. Based on Humphrey Cobb's novel, and co-written by Kubrick and Jim Thompson, 'Paths of Glory' looks at the political machinations and power plays that ultimately decide who lives and dies in times of war. The film's central courtroom drama focuses on the efforts of Colonel Dax (Kirk Douglas) to free three French soldiers accused of cowardice for wisely retreating from a suicide mission. Rather than appealing to our sense of humanity this is an anti-war film which appals through a biting, ironic detachment. 



Friday 20 July – F R E E to Public Mid-Winter Movie Marathon

7:30 **Dr Strangelove or ...**, Stanley Kubrick, UK 1963. With the Cuban Missile Crisis fresh in viewers' minds, the Cold War at its frostiest, and the hydrogen bomb relatively new and frightening, here was a film about what could happen if the wrong person pushed the wrong button – and it played the situation for laughs. 9:15 **Fritz the Cat**, Ralph Bakshi, USA 1972. The first animated feature to contain nudity and four-letter words. Since its release, it has become an adult "classic" – a film everyone wants to see simply because it was naughty and often banned. 10:45 **Blade**, Stephen Norrington, 1998. From the opening sequence of the film that depicts a nightclub with a difference, this vibrant mixture of martial arts and rock video provides a very different take on the vampire genre. Based on characters included in "Marvel comics". 1:00 **Bloodlust**, Richard Wolstencroft, Australia 1991. Yamaelle wrote: At first glance, this movie has got everything a psycho wants: a vampire story filled with hyper-violence, drugs, gore, sex, some fanatics zealots and even a gay necrophiliac cop! But then, this movie is a succession of bad story, bad acting, bad music, and awful videotaping. The scenes of sex are ridiculous, the gore not very impressive, and those vampires reflect in a mirror and don't even fear daylight! I'd say it can still be fun to watch, if you have friends and enough beer. 2:45 **Monterey Pop**, DA Pennebaker, 1968. Documentary on the 1967 International Pop Festival.

in collaboration
with



All films are shown at the Campbell Theatrette in the Bendigo Library, Hargreaves Street.

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

Membership \$30 half-season, \$25 concession, \$45 partnered. To join, send a cheque or turn up.