

HIGHGATE FILM SOCIETY - SEASON 2021-22

23 September 2021 RADIO DAYS

USA 1987, 85 mins. Dir. Woody Allen.

Starring Mia Farrow, Dianne Wiest, Diane Keaton and others

With an ensemble cast, and narrated as well as directed by Woody Allen, *Radio Days* is a bittersweet, nostalgic look back on an American family's life during the golden age of radio, using popular music from the 1930s and 1940s to link together dozens of vignettes from a kaleidoscopic host of characters. Ambitious in scope, yet perfectly balanced and beautiful to look at, this is a warm, affectionate tribute to the radio, and one which Allen himself regarded as his best, most confident work.

21 October 2021 THE MISFITS

USA 1961, 125 mins. Dir. John Huston.

Starring Marilyn Monroe, Clark Gable, Eli Wallach and Montgomery Clift

An elegy for the death of the Old West, this is also the final film made by the two legendary stars Gable and Monroe. While filing for a divorce in Nevada, the beautiful but jittery Roslyn Taber befriends and moves into the home of three men, each of them misfits in the modern world. She finally begins to feel at peace in her desert surroundings, but that sense, and the group's friendship, is threatened when she discovers that a plan is afoot to capture and sell wild mustangs for slaughter. Receiving great acclaim for its script - written by Arthur Miller specifically for his wife, Marilyn Monroe - *The Misfits* is considered by critics to be a masterpiece.

25 November 2021 A BOUT DE SOUFFLE (BREATHLESS)

France 1960 (re-released 2010), 87 mins. Dir. Jean-Luc Godard.

Starring Jean-Paul Belmondo and Jean Seberg

One of the most influential examples of 'nouvelle vague' cinema, and bringing international attention to French styles of film-making, *A Bout de Souffle* is widely regarded by critics and the public alike as among the best films ever made. Jean-Paul Belmondo stars in his break-through role as Michel, a charming villain whose life of hitherto petty crime takes a more sinister turn when he kills a policeman while driving a stolen car. Penniless and with nowhere else to go, he hides out in the Paris apartment of a friend, an aspiring journalist, but when she learns that he is being investigated for murder, she begins to question her loyalties.

16 December 2021 THE PHILADELPHIA STORY

USA 1940 (re-released 2015), 112 mins. Dir. George Cukor.

Starring Cary Grant, Katharine Hepburn, James Stewart and John Howard

A classic romantic 'screwball' comedy, *The Philadelphia Story* introduces us to Tracy Lord, a Philadelphia socialite who has recently divorced from her husband, yacht-designer and member of her social set, CK Dexter-Haven. Tracy is preparing to marry George Kittredge, a *nouveau-riche* man of the people, when she meets Macaulay Connor, a reporter for the famous *Spy* magazine who has been assigned to cover the wedding. Uncertain about her feelings for all three men, Tracy must decide which of them she truly loves. Sophisticated, witty and intelligent, *The Philadelphia Story* earned six Academy Award nominations, and was a major box-office success.

20 January 2022 CESARE DEVE MORIRE (CAESAR MUST DIE)

Italy 2012, 77 mins. Dir. Paolo and Vittorio Taviani.

Starring Salvatore Striano, Cosimo Rega, Giovanni Arcuri and Antonio Frasca

Set in the high-security Rebibbia Prison outside Rome, this thought-provoking, award-winning docu-drama follows the auditioning of some of Italy's most notorious prisoners through to their final performance of Shakespeare's Julius Caesar. As rehearsals progress, the inmates come to see the relevance of the play's themes to their own lives and attain some sense of the fulfilment and hope that artistic expression can bring. Director Paolo Taviani said that he hoped cinema-goers would 'say to themselves or even those around them... that even a prisoner with a dreadful sentence, even a life sentence, is and remains a human being'.

24 February 2022 THE DOUBLE LIFE OF VERONIQUE

Poland/France 1991, 98 mins. Dir. Krzysztof Kieslowski.

Starring Irene Jacob, Philippe Volter, Sandrine Dumas and Aleksander Bardini

The Double Life of Veronique is multi-award-winning director Krzysztof Kieslowski's most mesmerising, atmospheric and beautifully-shot film, exploring the themes of identity, spirituality and human intuition through the characters of Weronika, a Polish choir soprano, and Veronique, a French music teacher. The two women, both exquisitely played by Irene Jacob, do not know each other, but they share a mysterious and emotional bond – echoed in the haunting music which threads through the film - that transcends language and geography.

27 February 2022 at 2pm, an HFS Special Showing (Tickets £10) TOPSY TURVY

UK 1999, 160 mins. Dir. Mike Leigh.

Starring Jim Broadbent, Timothy Spall and Lesley Manville

A witty and entertaining dramatisation of the story of the famous partnership between the lyricist William Gilbert and the composer Arthur Sullivan. With a wealth of authentic Victorian detail, this account of the lives of the musical duo concentrates on the good-natured antagonism between the two creative geniuses, focusing on the turning point on their road to fame and riches - the production of *The Mikado*.

24 March 2022 SALT OF THE EARTH

France 2014, 110 mins. Dir. Wim Wenders and Juliano Ribeiro Salgado.

The universally acclaimed *Salt of the Earth* is a powerful testament to life and work of the Brazilian social-documentary photographer Sebastiao Salgado. Throughout his 40-year-long career Salgado - who self-describes as 'a witness to the human condition' - used his photographic projects to explore the social and economic circumstances in some 120 countries, illuminating to unforgettable effect how the environment and humans are exploited to maximise profit for the global economy. Co-directed by his son Juliano alongside Wim Wenders, the documentary allows Salgado space to reflect on and explain the background to some of his photographs, taking us on a journey from hope to despair to some kind of hope again.

28 April 2022 BLACK ORPHEUS

Brazil 1959, 107 mins. Dir. Marcel Camus.

Starring Breno Mello and Marpessa Dawn

Winner of the Academy Award for best foreign-language film and the Cannes Film Festival's Palme d'Or, *Black Orpheus* brings the Greek myth of Orpheus and Eurydice to the 20th-century favelas of Rio de Janeiro during Carnival time. With its eye-popping photography and ravishing bossa nova soundtrack, *Black Orpheus* is a film to be luxuriated in - a sensational and rewarding feast for the eyes and ears.

19 May 2022 DISTANT VOICES, STILL LIVES

UK 1988 (re-released in 2007), 84 mins. Dir. Terence Davies.

Starring Pete Postlethwaite, Freda Dowie and Angela Walsh

Set in a tightly-knit working-class community in 1940s and 1950s Liverpool, this remarkable film successfully blends drama and music: popular songs from the era are sung by members of the cast in pubs, round the piano, in the street. Music is, in fact, the backbone of the film, giving the characters a voice beyond their otherwise difficult lives. *Distant Voices* chronicles the early life of the family under a domineering father, while *Still Lives* sees the children grown up and moving away into the brighter 1950s. Described as 'Britain's forgotten cinematic masterpiece' when the film was re-released in 2007, the film was also ranked third in a poll to find the 100 best British films of all time.

16 June 2022 GENEVIEVE

UK 1953 (re-released in 2017), 86 mins. Dir. Henry Cornelius.

Starring Dinah Sheridan, John Gregson, Kay Kendall and Kenneth More

A major hit when it was first released, *Genevieve* is as fun to watch today as it was then - a true classic comedy. Quintessentially British, beautiful to look at, with ebullient performances from its four lead actors, and a fabulous musical theme, it is a lively and genial delight. Two couples, one driving their beloved Genevieve, the other driving their vintage Spyker, set out to race from London to Brighton: the competition between them soon revs up to the max, with each driver devising increasingly ingenious ways to sabotage the other in the hope of winning.