



fish

Truman

(Spain/Argentina 2015)

DIRECTOR : Cesc Gay

RUNNING TIME : 108mins

RATING : MA+15

Synopsis:

Julián (Ricardo Darin) is surprised by a visit from his old and close friend Tomás (Javier Cámara), who lives in Canada. The two men, accompanied by Julián's faithful dog, Truman (Troilo), share emotional and surprising moments prompted by Julián's complicated situation.

Review: Andrew L Urban

A wonderfully elegant and restrained score, sparingly used, provides the perfect mood for this subtle yet powerful story about male friendship, and man's best friend. Cesc Gay has written about that complicated area of relationships, the one in which a man has to navigate his inner weaknesses to make a genuine friendship with another man. That's just how it is. There are many dangers in such a project, but Gay overcomes them with intelligence, sensitivity and no loss of masculinity. He also overcomes the challenge of telling a sad story without making us sad.

His first great decision after finishing the screenplay was to cast two of the best actors working in the Spanish language: Ricardo Darin as Julián, diagnosed with terminal cancer, and his old friend Tomás, who has moved with his wife to Canada.

The film isn't about cancer, despite the fact that there is one extended scene in a doctor's surgery where Julián reveals his wishes ... The film is really about all the insecurities that infest so many male relationships, including that with a son. Julián's visit (with Tomás) to his son Nico (Oriol Pia) at a university in Amsterdam is one of the dramatic highpoints of this wholly engaging film. The interactions between the three men are superbly observed and performed.

And then there is Truman, the lovely old boxer and Julián's close friend, whose future happiness and comfort are of vital importance to Julián. He 'auditions' potential adoptive owners for Truman and there are several warmly humorous moments between man and dog, revealing much about Julián's character.

Dolores Fonzi plays Julián's sister Paula, a terrific performance in a wonderful role which makes an unusual (but authentic) statement about the grieving process. cont

FILMS IN THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS INC

10.00 am Sunday 30th April 2017

8.15 pm Tuesday 2nd May 2017

Review: (Cont.)

We surely anticipate what will eventually happen to Julián, but Cesc (short for Francesc) ensures that we don't anticipate how sweetly he ends the film.

Source: <http://www.urbancinefile.com.au> accessed 21/10/2016

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COMING UP:

May	<i>Macadam Stories</i> (France)	Sunday 28 th & Tuesday 30 th
June	<i>Labyrinth of Lies</i> (Germany)	Sunday 25 th & Tuesday 27 th

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Some Thoughts On: *A Pigeon Sat on a Branch Reflecting on Existence*

Roy Andersson, who wrote and directed the latest offering in our FISH line up, is obviously mad. But not as mad as the world that he was able to construct on film, which unfortunately touched on all of our lives.

Much of the conversation in the film would not have been out of place in a Pinter or Beckett play. The "Wednesday / Thursday" sequence being a good example.

Andersson's knowledge of early 20th century art was evident in many of his bizarre sequences. The internal shots, showing off Scandinavian architectural detail at its very worst, were like the works of many artists who excelled in painting drabness. The oft repeated street scenes where we stood outside with the lost man in the uniform observing those within the windows, were not only reminiscent of Edward Hopper's 'Night Hawks' (1942), but could have been the works Hopper never got around to painting. The picturesque scene with the woman with baby and pram was also familiar... but escapes me for the moment.

Andersson managed to show us ourselves in all our drabness as we move about in a clichéd world, struggling with empathy and morality, doing that which we loosely call living.

As the film moved on, I started to worry that the director was not going to know when to stop. After all he had so much more material. But then the humour stopped as we were reminded of our history of callousness.

Once again we are grateful to our brave committee for tossing in a film which goes well against mainstream. A highlight indeed. **Alan Purdom**

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Such a great movie was the last showing, loved the subtlety of it ... those wonderful vignettes. How lucky we are to have the opportunity to see such deliciously gentle and sophisticated films.
Leonie and James Furber

More Thoughts On: *A Pigeon Sat on a Branch Reflecting on Existence*

The best absurdist drama provides us all with a good dose of realism.

I think we were the pigeons sitting in the dark of the cinema reflecting on our collective existence – as brief as it may be. What a fascinating film, at least for this little black duck. I suspect that Andersson is a real fan of Samuel Beckett and in particular, *Waiting for Godot*. His pair of travelling salesmen in no small way resemble Beckett's Vladimir and Estragon. Both sets of characters wander and wait for something to happen in their lives – an answer, some joy, even a simple diversion from the day to day drudgery and repetitiveness of existence.

However, Andersson has created in his absurdist film, a character far more sympathetic, more in keeping with Stoppard's Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. The 'cry baby' Jonathan, is genuinely empathetic. He acknowledges his own fear of death in his desire not to meet his beloved parents in heaven. In the meantime he wants people to have fun in his role as a novelty salesman. As a peddler of fantasy, Jonathan is a vehicle for Andersson himself, most importantly, when he provides one of the central themes of the film through the rhetorical question; "Is it right using people only for your own pleasure?"

In the preceding scenes we have witnessed historical representations of Sweden's Charles XII's disastrous war against the Russians, followed by a confronting Terry Gilliam style metaphor of the machinery of slavery, viewed with self-satisfaction by the aging remnants of European colonialism sipping on their champagne. Our cruelty and oppression are not just applied to our fellow man however, other creatures also suffer at our hands. The electrocution of the restrained monkey as the lab assistant blithely conducts a phone conversation was hard to watch. It was absurd, yes, but also deeply moving and affecting.

For relief or respite, there were moments of simple human pleasure, but they often focused on the young; lovers at the beach, the mother playing with her gurgling child (adeptly juxtaposed by the screaming child of the slave as they entered the machine) and the children at their concert who take great delight in each of their presentations.

For the rest of the film, people sit at bars or wait at bus stops like Orwell's Winston Smith, waiting for their inevitable deaths. They are governed and anesthetised by the illusion of routine. The apartment manager reminds our pair that the residents must get up for work tomorrow. The confused commuter at the conclusion of the film is a pariah for believing that it does not feel like a Wednesday! Like the obedient marching and singing soldiers, they are as bound as that poor monkey.

The best absurdism reveals the deepest truths. **Paul Williams**

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This film inspired more members to send reviews than any other recently shown. Thank you all [Ed.]

Message from the President

Today, we are posting out membership renewal forms to all current members. If you intend to renew your membership for the next diverse season, we would advise that you do so immediately ~ or sooner!! If renewals are not received by May 5th, your re-joining cannot be guaranteed as we will then be offering memberships to some very keen newcomers to FISH. To avoid disappointment, please get your details back to us as soon as you can. If you are unable to renew straight away, you can bring your renewal form and payment along with you to our next screening and hand them in to our collecting committee members at the cinema door, (our next screenings taking place just before the deadline!!)

Wow. What an extraordinary film *A Pigeon Sat on a Branch Reflecting on Existence* proved to be. Apart from all the humorous, mundane and repetitive foibles and idiosyncrasies of our species, two scenes stood out for me: The horse in the cafe as a proud army marched off to war, returning later defeated and dejected. The misplaced arrogance and pride and then war induced damage clearly on display. The second was the revolving copper drum which was used as an instrument of horror by colonial forces for the pleasure of the 'masters of war.' Having viewed a documentary by war photographer McCullin on ABC TV only two nights before, which exposed the most hideously cruel and murderous treatment of innocent non-combatants across a dozen different theatres of war, the surreal and absurd depictions of human cruelty in the film were only a mild hint at the REAL lethal insanity of war, that continues unabated to the present day. So where is the actual absurdity, in the film or the reality it alludes to?

Thank you to our film reviewers for their insightful comments ~ they are very much appreciated. (Incidentally, the word 'Boliden' which was written on the revolving copper drum was, according to my research, the name of a Swedish mining company that was associated with several environmental disasters.)

So next we're off to see the Spanish/Argentinian film, *Truman*. (Note: this is NOT *The Truman Show* starring Jim Carey!!) I hope to see you there for another interesting/challenging and/or diverse cinematic experience.

Yours in film, Ross Armfield



FILMS IN THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS INC

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