



fish

Tanna
(Australia 2015)

DIRECTOR : Bentley Dean & Martin Butler
RUNNING TIME : 100mins
RATING : M

Synopsis:

In one of the last traditional tribes in the South Pacific, a young girl, Wawa (Marie Wawa), falls in love with the chief's grandson, Dain (Mungau Dain). When an inter-tribal war escalates, Wawa is unknowingly betrothed as part of a peace deal. The young lovers run away, but are pursued by enemy warriors intent on killing them. They must choose between their hearts and the future of the tribe, while the villagers must wrestle with preserving their traditional culture and adapting it to the increasing outside demands for individual freedom. Based on a true story and performed by the people of Yakel.

Review: Louise Keller

Lush green forests, crystal waterfalls, an angry volcano and a tribe of life-loving people intent on preserving the customs and traditions of their Vanuatu ancestors form the heart of this cinematic film in which a poignant Romeo and Juliet tale plays out. Winner of the Audience Award at Venice International Film Critics' Week, directors Bentley Dean and Martin Butler have created a stunning visual essay in the unspoilt tropical paradise of Vanuatu's Tanna. Using rich cinematic language, Dean and Butler allow us to observe the tribal customs and traditions of the people of Yakel. Locals who have never acted before bring the largely improvised story to life: an arranged marriage designed to keep the peace between tribes and the two young lovers willing to defy everything for each other. Based on a true story; emotions, traditions, peace - are all at stake.

You're all grown up; a beautiful butterfly, the chief's handsome son Dain (Mungau Dain) tells Wawa (Marie Wawa) as he spies her through the dense greenery. The setting is idyllic - extraordinary trees grounded by enormous roots, waterfalls into which children leap, a man singing as he sweeps leaves with a large tree branch, baby pigs suckling. The traditional face painting for Wawa's initiation ceremony is about to take place; modesty prompts her to hide her developing breasts. But the love story between Wawa and Dain does not follow a smooth path.

A volcano spits its fury in the distance and the undercurrent of intertribal rivalry and war becomes apparent as we learn that Wawa's newly arranged betrothal is the promise between two warring tribes to keep the peace. The lyrics of a traditional song recount the tale. Cont.

FILMS IN THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS INC

10.00 am Sunday 23rd October 2016
8.15 pm Tuesday 25th October 2016

Review: (cont.)

Bentley Dean's cinematography is breathtaking - the saturation of the colours is extraordinary. The film is worth seeing for the visuals alone. The haunting sounds of Lisa Gerrard's distinctive vocalizing is the intoxicating thread with which the narrative holds together - along with Antony Partos' rich score. Dean and Butler spent seven months living with the inhabitants of Tanna while making the film. The result is unique.

For those interested in history, Captain James Cook was the first European to visit Tanna in 1774. Its inhabitants colonised the island about 3,000 years ago from Papua New Guinea. Yakel is one of a few villages that retain the traditional Kastom lifestyle.

Source: www.urbancinefile.com.au Accessed 1/2/16

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Late Thoughts on: *A Family Affair*

If music be the food of love, life and family, play on!

A Family Affair was a documentary to be enjoyed on a range of levels. You could have enjoyed the film simply based on the glorious long shots of the sun-drenched landscapes of Crete and Australia separated by seas, deserts, continents and oceans. You may have enjoyed the sounds and lyrics of the uniquely Cretan music that both celebrated the local and contemplated centuries old ways of living. Perhaps it was, as the title suggested, the film's intimate portrayal of this extended family's powerful bond across the generations, a bond that could be maintained across time and space.

And this is what is unique about film. It is a time and space traveller. We are taken on a journey back in time to witness the transformation of shepherd Antonis Xylouris into Psarantonis, a national and ultimately international celebrity. We follow the path of his son George and his three children to the present, and accompany them across the world. And in a way, it just as much the story of the children as it is the patriarchs. They are a unique blending of Scottish-Australian and Cretan heritage, poster-children for the bounties of multiculturalism.

In an increasingly globalised world, where the boundaries of race and culture are being challenged, eroded and transformed, we are reminded that family, in whatever form it takes, is the glue that binds us together; connects us to the past, sustains us in the now and provides hope for the future. So, I suspect we all left the cinema feeling just a little happier and just a little more grateful for the 'music' in our lives. **Paul Williams**

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Some Thoughts On: *The Crow's Egg*

I think I can say on behalf of most of Sunday's audience we left the cinema with a smile on our faces in a 'Capraesque' (is this a real word?) haze of good will and a win for the little guy(s). We witnessed an Indian version of the impact of globalisation, in combination with a rigid caste system and mind boggling inequality. Trees could be chopped down in Westconnex style dispassion, young children unable to be educated and wandering the railway tracks for spilled coal and a slum community at the whim of corrupt 'leaders' and bosses.

In the midst of all this were two brothers, Periya and Chinna, desperately intent on having their share of the global pizza. Their resilience and ingenuity were admirable and their ultimate 'victory' may very well be inspirational to the downtrodden who witness the film, if they can afford it. It certainly made me feel better about the world... for a little while.

But leaving the cinema was like the aftermath of a really rich meal.... "For I have had too much"... and other voices rumbled in my head. Wait, the boys decided that their grandmother's slum-made pizza was superior? Okay, that ticked ironic ending and loyalty to family boxes, but did it also put them back in their place through their own volition. The leaders and bosses remained in place and ultimately, nothing changed. The conclusion was a manipulative Hollywood cliché, but I did enjoy the meal while it lasted.

Paul Williams

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COMING EVENTS:

Thursday 10th November 2016 - 6pm for 6:30pm

The Empire will screen *The Light Between the Oceans* in aid of the local Cancer Assistance Network, Can Assist.

Tickets \$25 [include light refreshments] and are available at the Empire box office.

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COMING UP:

November	<i>Tehran Taxi</i> (Iran)	Sunday 20 th & Tuesday 22 nd
December	<i>Alex & Eve</i> (Australia)	Sunday 11 th & Tuesday 13 th
February '17	<i>The Nightingale</i> (China)	Sunday 12 th & Tuesday 14 th

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Message from the President

Our AGM was held before the Sunday screening on the 18th September. The current committee were returned unchanged. I look forward to working with them again over the next season as we endeavour to maintain the very high standard we have achieved over the last few years. Speaking of which, our first task is to select the next four films in our 16/17 season which will take us through to June next year. We shall inform you of our choices and the dates that the Empire gives us to screen them as soon as we have them locked in. Thank you to the Empire for enabling the AGM to proceed so smoothly. Thanks also to my committee colleagues, (those that weren't abroad that is), for their efforts on the day, to long term member Rob Spence for once again acting as our returning officer and, finally, to those members who made the effort to attend and support us in the cinema.

As discussed at the AGM, our financial surplus gradually grows as more and more members receive their Newsletters via email. We like to support community/charity groups, where we can, with this surplus from time to time. If you know of or are involved with such a group, who you feel deserve, and would benefit from, some of our limited support, please pass their details on to us. Whilst not promising anything, we will certainly examine and duly consider any requests that come the committee's way via the membership.

Meeting Jane Scott, (the producer of *Shine*), was a great thrill a few weeks back at the Empire. The afternoon was a real success as the film itself held up very well after 20 years. A very interesting Q & A session with Jane and the screenwriter topped off a very special event. Thanks to the Empire for making tickets available to our members.

After the warmth and charm of *The Crow's Egg* set in the slums of Chennai, we set off for a cinematic destination unvisited by FISH before, as we proudly bring *Tanna* to the big screen. This film comes with some reputation and hence, anticipation. I look forward to gathering with you all in late October to judge it for ourselves. 'Til then,

Yours in film

Ross Armfield.



FILMS IN THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS INC

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