



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

We have had some very positive feedback from our last films and we thank our members for their thoughts. It is interesting to hear from you. Obviously we are influenced by our own life experiences but we learn so much about others from our cinema experiences, too.

We have had a lot of consultation and fun choosing films up until March. It is another good range of genres and countries of origin. We are grateful to Gerard of the Empire Cinema for his help. Are you aware that the Empire has a new source of international ballet and opera films? Consult their website.

Please remember our **AGM is at 9.30 am on SUNDAY 22nd September** in our cinema. All members are welcome. It will be short (by necessity as our film begins at 10 am). If you are not tempted, please remember that doors will be closed at 9.30 before the screening and members will wait in the foyer.

Best wishes to all.

Roz Garwen



FILMS IN THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS INC

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TEXT ONLY minimum 24hours notice

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Membership is closed

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ACE INTERNET SERVICES HIGHLAND CREATIVE

FILMS IN THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS INC

10.00 am Sunday 22nd September 2024

8.15 pm Tuesday 24th September 2024

Farewell, Mr Haffmann

[France 2022]

Spoiler alert : You may prefer to read this review after the screening

DIRECTOR : Fred Cavayé

RUNNING TIME : 116mins

RATING : M

Synopsis:

During the Nazi occupation of Paris in WW II, master jeweller Mr Haffman sends his family ahead to a safe zone while tying up loose ends in his flourishing shop. He comes to an agreement with the assistant he barely knows, that he will return after the war to reclaim his shop

Review: Alex First

It is May 1941 and Joseph Haffmann (Daniel Auteuil) runs a small jewellery shop. He's noted for his fine craftsmanship. Haffmann sees the situation in occupied Paris worsening and understands the urgency of arranging safe passage out of the country for his wife and three children. Haffmann promises to follow behind shortly, but first he enacts a plan to hand ownership of the shop (and the residence attached to it) to his relatively new employee. That man, Francois Mercier (Gilles Lellouche), who works with the aid of a calliper, is married to Blanche (Sara Giraudeau). Mercier aspires to open his own jewellery business one day, so while this unexpected arrangement with Haffmann comes out of the blue, he welcomes it ... even though Blanche does not.

The deal is that Mercier will take over and change the signage on the shop to reflect his name, only to hand the business back when Haffman is able to return after the war. In return, Haffmann will then help Mercier open his own shop. The deal done, Haffmann leaves with a handshake. However, as the German presence becomes overwhelming, escape ultimately becomes impossible. The dynamic between Mercier, his wife and Haffman inevitably changes.

While you could question certain plot elements, there's no doubt the story is compelling. Unease and discomfort are always close at hand. The key roles are well played. Auteuil is credible as a decent, hardworking man caught in a dangerous position. Lellouche captures the transition in Mercier, in a movie in which power shifts. Giraudeau shows vulnerability, compassion, fear and horror as Blanche.

The screenplay by director Fred Cavayé and Sarah Kaminsky from a play by Jean-Philippe Daguerre maintains and builds interest. Intensity is the name of the game. The question is how will Haffmann and the Merciers end up?

Some Thoughts on: *Totem*

I could at first make neither head nor tail of this film but gradually realised that it was in the style of a home movie, with a cinema screen the size it would have been for a 16 mm film.

The camera focuses on young Sol but we “visit” as it were, all the other members of this large and noisy family as if just checking out what they’re doing at any particular moment. There’s a lot of chaos and fun in the little vignettes of various family members but we keep being drawn back to Sol and her questions about the world and about death which we realise are actually questions about her father. The adults are loving and tolerant but do not know how to answer her questions and address her fears. Finally it is the wonderful carer, hired (though not yet paid) to look after Tona, who bothers to listen properly to Sol and realises that she believes that because she is not able to see her father, he no longer loves her. That beautiful scene where she tells Sol how utterly and completely her father loves her is followed by the equally beautiful scene between Sol and Tona, where they’re soon joined by Sol’s mother.

Wasn’t the young actor extraordinary? The wonderful mimed rendition of the operatic aria had comedic moments and we realise we’d seen the rehearsal for this at the start of the film. But the aria is, apparently, from the mad scene of Donizetti’s *Lucia di Lammermoor* and the English translation is “Sprinkle with Bitter Mourning”. Another of the many paradoxes of the film where life and death are both equally on display.

I never really sorted out who were the various aunts (Tono’s sisters) but you had the sense that in this family, things were always noisy and chaotic. The party for Tona’s birthday which was of course also his farewell, was a celebration of life, despite the impending death and subsequent grief and loss and sorrow.

The penultimate scene where Sol stares into the candles of the birthday cake, is like - or perhaps, is - a trance and the various sounds all become one sound. We know then that Sol accepts the reality of what is happening and will at some stage be ready to receive the truth of her father’s death, even despite her fears and grief. I thought the final brief scene of the room with the stripped bed was masterful – poignant and under-stated. In fact despite the noise and clamour of this family, I thought the whole film was a beautiful understated way of looking at death and grief and loss, without ever sentimentalising it or downplaying its enormity.

Trish Topp

Many thanks for your insightful comments Trish. [Ed.]

COMING UP

October	<i>Last Night of Amore</i> [Italy]	Sunday 20 th & Tuesday 22 nd
November	<i>Goodbye Julia</i> [Sudan]	Sunday 17 th & Tuesday 19 th
December	<i>Mad About the Boy</i> [UK]	Sunday 8 th & Tuesday 10 th
February '25	<i>The Road to Patagonia</i> [Aust.]	Sunday 16 th & Tuesday 18 th
March	<i>Citizen Kane</i> [USA]	Sunday 16 th & Tuesday 18 th

***** Annual reports from Roz Garwen [President] & Deborah Blay [Treasurer] appear below.**

President's Report 2023-4

2023-4 has been a busy FISH year for our committee. We naively thought that transition to everything digital would be easy. But it wasn't. Thankfully we had Highland Creative to do the time-consuming work for us (and we suspect that a lot was pro bono). We will return to a maintenance budget with them for 2024-5 as they update our website regularly and send out our monthly newsletter. As you know, membership registration and renewal are totally on line. Our website has been customised to our needs, at this stage as a one-off cost.

We are all more than aware of the increase of the cost of living. You can see from our Treasurer's Report that our screening costs have had to go up a lot because of increased electricity and insurance bills, as well as film rentals.

The good news is: our postal costs are greatly reduced; we don't have to pay for a PO box anymore; our printing costs are much smaller; and online payment is so much more efficient for our wonderful volunteers.

The bad news is: we will have to increase membership fees in 2025-6, we estimate to \$80-85 per annum. This is dependent upon screening costs. This is still excellent value for 11 films.

We continue to delight in cinema as a medium and we are convinced that the big screen is the best viewing.

Western society has become increasingly visual. Cinema is vital for examination of ideas, and for educating us to look for commonality in different societies. Our 2023-24 films have come from Lebanon, France, South Korea, the United Kingdom, Morocco, Spain, Finland, Italy and India.

Cinema is an art form. As Helen Garner said (in her preface to her film script of *The Last Days of Chez Nous*), co-operation of director, writer and actors is paramount. Everything is to be reinvented through the viewers' eyes. A tiny twitch of a facial muscle (impossible to write) can transform an entire sequence. Think Michael Kitchen in Foyle. It's visual chemistry on screen.

This is what unites us!

Roz Garwen

Treasurer's Report 2023-2024

FISH EOFY 2024

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<u>INCOME</u>	2024	2023
SUBSCRIPTIONS		
CASH	260.00	
MEMBERSHIP (2023)		26,864.00
STRIPE (m'ship 2024)	25,632.64	
 INTEREST from 0049603053/2501	 579.18	 370.00
	-	-
TOTAL INCOME	<u>26,471.82</u>	<u>27,234.00</u>
<u>EXPENSES</u>		
Film hire /screening	21,780.00	18,534.00
Printing	339.70	809.00
Postage	526.63	1,650.00
Computer/Internet	7,566.44	1,306.00
Admin/Committee	-	292.00
P O Box	-	153.00
Dept Fair Trade	<u>54.24</u>	<u>54.24</u>
TOTAL EXPENSES	<u>30,267.01</u>	<u>22,798.24</u>
 Surplus/Deficit	 - 3,795.19	 4,435.76

Fish has three Accounts

		Opening	Closing
0049603053/2501	Term Deposit	15,000.00	15,000.00
004903053/V501	Savings Account	2,951.86	83.78
0049603053/1201	Working Account	<u>14,869.80</u>	<u>17,914.61</u>
 TOTAL		 32,821.66	 32,998.39

NOTES

FY 2024	\$	7,566.44	To establish an online payment system using Stripe Software and to customise website, mostly one off.
			Screenings 2023 \$1694/each and 2024 \$1980 each
FY 2024	\$	3,960.00	The amount outstanding to the Empire for the 2024 year but only invoiced on 13/08/2024 and paid 14/08/2024

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Deborah Blay Treasurer