



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Our renewals have taken place with a minimum of fuss, thanks to our hard-working Membership Secretary Helen Jones. We briefly had a link on our website for new members and this has been taken down because we are FULL! Please remind your friends that their membership starts in July and that everyone's cards will be posted after the June screening. YOU WILL NEED YOUR LILAC CARDS FOR THE JUNE SCREENING (For the less artistic lilac = purple).

At present we are mulling over many reviews of films so that we can choose another great range of thought-provoking works of art for our pleasure and enlightenment. We hope that you will enjoy our selections.

It is good cinema weather so we look forward to seeing you at the Empire.

With best wishes from your committee,

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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We are grateful to our sponsors : EMPIRE CINEMA

ACE INTERNET SERVICES HIGHLAND CREATIVE

FILMS IN THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS INC

10.00 am Sunday 15th June 2025

8.15 pm Tuesday 17th June 2025

From the Membership Secretary:

Our membership renewal process has gone really well and we thank all members for embracing the online experience; our retention rate is excellent.

The Committee encourages you to continue to use our website as an ongoing resource and reminds you once again that you can also easily access information about your membership by logging into the member's profile on the top right-hand side of the website.

Please keep all of your information up to date at all times and feel free to email me via the email address on the website if you need any assistance.

Our email delivery system helps us to carefully monitor that each monthly newsletter is delivered, and on the rare occasion that we detect that an email has bounced we will advise you individually, so if you feel that the newsletter has not been delivered, we encourage you to thoroughly check your email delivery application (Spam, Trash etc) first.

Thank You

Helen Jones

Membership Secretary

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My Favourite Cake
[Iran 2024]

[15th/17th June 2025]

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

DIRECTOR : Maryam Moghaddam & Behtash Sanaeeha

RUNNING TIME : 97 mins

RATING :

Synopsis:

A bittersweet hugely affecting portrait of aging and being open to the possibilities of love.

Review: Sonia Nair

It's impossible to write about this Iranian film without referencing the repression its two co-directors Maryam Moghaddam & Behtash Sanaeeha, faced in the making of it. The directors have had their passports confiscated and are facing a court case for crossing several Iranian government 'red lines' in their new film starring Lili Farhadpour and Esmaeel Mehrabi.

"The main issue was always the hijab." Behtash Sanaeeha told The Guardian the Iranian government ordered the withdrawal of scenes with Lili Farhadpour's hair uncovered. Sanaeeha and fellow director Maryam Moghaddam refused and were banned from leaving the country.

Cont.

Mahin is a 70-year-old widowed mother of children who have migrated overseas. She lives by herself in a well-appointed home in Tehran with a beautiful garden, a passion project that she's lovingly cultivated over the past few decades. Mahin leads a simple, solitary life of maintaining her hearth and home, watching rom-coms late into the night as she battles insomnia, and conversing with friends she barely sees in person anymore. It might be enough if Mahin wasn't struggling with the indignities of old age — most notably, acute loneliness.

Cinematographer Mohammad Haddadi favours long, sweeping shots that situate Mahin in the larger context of a city she no longer recognises, and which isn't kind to an ailing body. We see her struggle to transport her groceries home, visit an old hotel she used to frequent to enjoy an old drink that's no longer on the menu, and contend with newfangled technology that she feels alienated by, from QR codes to ride-sharing apps.

Her increasingly strong desire to meet someone, masked by her need to use some old food vouchers, sees her venture to a pensioners' restaurant where she notices an older single man, Faramarz (played with a pleasant diffidence by the fantastic Esmaeel Mehrabi). Engaging in some light stalking, Mahin discovers Faramarz is a taxi driver and waits until he finishes his shift, after which she asks him to drive her home. Thus, begins an extraordinary night that will define both of their lives.

If the impressionistic montages of Mahin's solitude evoke a certain sadness, Faramarz's life story is even more devastating. A disillusioned war veteran who sustained lifelong injuries from his time as a lieutenant, Faramarz leads a joyless existence battling financial precarity and without the comfort or companionship of children and friends, something Mahin at least has from afar.

Their night together unfolds tentatively and gently at first, before gathering momentum as they wine, dine, dance and begin to chart their shared future together.

Moghaddam and Sanaeieha imbue this incredibly affecting sequence of events with levity and humour. If it seems unbelievable that two strangers would immediately hit it off to the point they'd consider sharing their lives with one another, despite the grave risks, the chemistry and rapport between Farhadpour and Mehrabi puts paid to any doubts.

There's a clear class and gender divide separating how Mahin and Faramarz have inhabited their lives up to this point, but with both uncannily the same age, there's their collective shared histories and cultural emblems to draw upon as they exchange anecdotes, musings and personal digests. Like the dangers that pervaded the making of this film, an undercurrent of tension ripples beneath, as Mahin and Faramarz live in fear of evoking the ire of Iran's repressive regime — symbolised here by Tehran's morality police.

The film is skilfully layered with recollections of what life in Iran was like pre-revolution, when women weren't mandated to wear hijabs and alcohol could be consumed freely. The personal costs of this are manifold — Mahin and Faramarz's already constricted lives are constrained further by unspoken, oppressive rules that abound about gender — and this fear is an all-encompassing pall that blankets their every action.

But if *My Favourite Cake* excels at depicting the ignominies of ageing, it also succeeds at illustrating its boons. Mahin stands up to the morality police to defend a young Iranian woman threatened with arrest for not fully covering her hair with her hijab. In a way, this same fearlessness motivates her to pursue Faramarz who, armed with a similar openness, responds to her overtures in kind. An uproarious scene of Mahin entertaining her friends early in the film underlines the kinship and candour of lifelong friendships.

When the film veers in a direction quite unexpected, Moghaddam and Sanaeeha manage the tonal shift superbly.

My Favourite Cake posits the question: what would happen if, among the constellation of lonely disparate people contained in one metropolis, two of them dared to dream of something better for themselves, a life that invited the other in and savoured the joys of companionship?

Source: www.abc.net.au ~ Sonia Nair 13/12/24: Edited extracts accessed 24/3/25

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Some thoughts on: *Hammar skjold – Fight for Peace*

What a film. This outstanding work was simply superb. Friends and family asked the customary post screening question, 'Did you enjoy the film?' Enjoy, no, but appreciated to the point of heartfelt engagement and sadness, would be my response. My feelings were based on two levels. The technical and the emotional.

This beautifully produced biopic was a combination of terrific casting, wonderful sets and photography, a tight script and an extremely effective use of actual news reports and film footage from the early 60's. A truly great example of the filmmaker's craft, which enabled the heart of the film to be delivered so convincingly.

What an engaging, roller coaster of a ride we were taken on, culminating in the final, tragic aeroplane crash. A good man and organisation trying to bring peace to a country being torn apart by desperate colonial powers inducing and promoting civil war, in order to continue extracting the wealth of the newly 'created' nation.

This was an in-depth examination of the complex contradictions of the human condition. Good Vs Evil. It is so hard to reconcile our species, which can fight so hard for peace, fairness, prosperity and progress, while others are prepared to kill, plunder, usurp power and use war to achieve their own agendas.

This film also raised questions for me over the effectiveness of the United Nations in so many situations. Despite many successful outcomes since its creation, many member nations have simply ignored resolutions if it suits them. This was depicted very effectively in '*Hammar skjold*'. Right now, in the world, this 'blind eye' is being clearly practised in the Ukraine, the Middle East, South East Asia and Africa, still.

I had never heard of the wonderful Secretary General, Hammarskjold, and his extraordinary leadership and his achievements with the United Nations, nor the tragic circumstances of his final mission, before seeing this moving and inspiring film.

Once again, FISH has educated, entertained and provided a cinematic gem for purposeful thought and discussion.

Thank you FISH, from a very grateful.....

Ross Armfield.

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COMING UP

July	<i>All We Imagine as Light</i> [India]	Sunday 20 th & Tuesday 22 nd
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