



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

The most recent polling of our members to change the screening time for Tuesday evenings showed that there is no majority popularity for an earlier time slot. So we have delayed the decision until 2027. Status quo.

Our AGM is on 20th September during which we elect or re-elect our committee. Our lovely member Milena has been headhunted to run an art gallery in Brisbane so we are eager to replace her. Our aim is to achieve a gender balance, and at present we are female heavy (but not literally).

Please consider self-nominating before the AGM if you love film as an art form and as a medium. Our monthly meetings are on Wednesday mornings.

Best wishes to all, especially to our new members,

Roz Garwen.



FILMS IN THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS INC

President: Roz Garwen 4886 4142 & 0414 820 890

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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 16th August 2026

8.15 pm Tuesday 18th August 2026

Calle Malaga [Morocco/Spain 2025]

DIRECTOR: Maryam Touzani RUNNING

TIME: 116 mins RATING: M

Synopsis:

A spirited 79-year-old Spanish woman who has spent her life in Tangier's Spanish quarter finds her life upended when her daughter returns from Madrid determined to sell the family apartment

Review: David Rooney

For those of us who have loved Carmen Maura since the first of her seven features with Pedro Almodóvar 45 years ago, watching her expressive face in *Calle Málaga* is its own wondrous reward. Now 80, the veteran Spanish actress shines in a rare later-life leading role as a woman suddenly robbed of her independence only to seize it back and run with it for as long as it lasts.

Those turns of fortune would be legible even if this were a silent movie; we watch the vibrancy drain from Maura's eyes in moments of defeat and sorrow, only to return with a glint of mischievous triumph, and later, invigorating sensuality.

The film was inspired by and is dedicated to director Maryam Touzani's grandmother, part of the large Spanish community in Tangier that had fled the Franco regime and settled in the Northern Moroccan city in the 1930s. It doesn't match the subtlety or complexity of Touzani's gorgeous 2022 Cannes discovery *The Blue Caftan*, about a queer relationship triangle. But it does have comparable intimacy, delicacy and suppleness that draw you in, making even the more predictable story beats forgivable. Most of all, it has Maura in magnificent form.

In poignant scenes at intervals throughout, Maura's María Ángeles visits the cemetery where many from her circle of friends, along with her husband, are buried. As she lovingly tends the graves and at one point assembles the pieces of a broken tombstone like a jigsaw puzzle, it's impossible not to think of the exquisite opening of Almodóvar's *Volver*, in which women from the pueblo gather to wash their ancestors' burial sites in an annual tradition.

Like *Volver*, *Calle Málaga* also deals with a testy mother-daughter relationship. At first, Maura is delighted to welcome her daughter Clara (Marta Etura), on one of her infrequent visits from Madrid, as are the neighbours and shopkeepers who have known her since childhood. But Clara soon bluntly informs her mother that a messy divorce and the difficulties of raising her kids on a nurse's salary have made it necessary for her to sell the Tangier apartment, which her father put in her name to avoid complications.

The film strikes a melancholy note in its observations of how a parent and child can grow apart, as María Ángeles talks of the difficulty in reconciling the happy child Clara was with the bitter adult she has become.

Touzani, who co-wrote *Calle Málaga* with her husband, producer and fellow director Nabil Ayouch, shows her customary sensitivity in suggesting the ways in which a physical space can contain an entire lifetime of precious memories. If the script is a tad heavy-handed in making Clara seem almost indifferent to her mother's suffering, Touzani is too generous a director not to allow the character some redeeming displays of conscience before the domestic drama plays out. Likewise, Abslam reveals a softer side, forcing María Ángeles to admit to Josefa that maybe he's not the "cabrón" she thought.

Given no choice, María Ángeles acquiesces to her daughter's wishes and moves into a seniors' home, but no sooner has Clara returned to Madrid than María Ángeles checks herself out with some convincing deception and returns to her now-emptied apartment to begin again.

As with other grey-empowerment films like *Thelma*, there's a touch of corniness in María Ángeles' determination and resilience, which extends to a hint of blackmail to stop the real estate agent from blabbing to Clara. But Maura never overdoes the feisty granny bit. She keeps the character so warm and grounded that most viewers — especially those over a certain age — will be happy to go with it.

Source: www.thehollywoodreported.com ~ David Rooney 3/10/25 Edited extracts accessed 18/5/26.

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COMING UP:

September	<i>A Thousand Lines</i> [Germany]	Sunday 20 th & Tuesday 22 nd
October	<i>The President's Cake</i> [Iraq/Qatar/US]	Sunday 18 th & Tuesday 20 th
November	<i>The Thread</i> [France]	Sunday 15 th & Tuesday 17 th
December	<i>The Golden Spurtle</i> [Australia]	Sunday 13 th & Tuesday 15 th
February '27	<i>Number 24</i> [Norway]	Sunday 14 th & Tuesday 16 th

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Some thoughts on: *It Was Just an Accident*

There is nothing 'accidental' in this laudable, beautifully nuanced exploration of man's innate humanity. While the opening close-up scene is of a seemingly regular family driving through the night, the young girl 'dancing' to an overly loud song on the radio, there is a protracted sense that such normality will not last. Similarly, the concluding scene, is one of the ordinary – a family preparing for a celebration until the extended extreme close-up from behind of a motionless Vahid listening to an uneven gait behind him. This is followed by the unexpected blackout concluding the film. These two every day, unexceptional scenes bookend Vahid's twenty-four-hour filmic timeline to resolve issues from his past ... but nothing in the film maker's crafting is accidental: settings, diegetic sounds, limited shot selection, silences, disjointed plot, characters are by design.

How is it that film maker Jafar Panahi, subjected to the brutalities of an extremist regime, can have such a light touch in exploring Vahid's desire to avenge his mistreatment at the hands of a perceived perpetrator? But a light touch it is. Seeking confirmation from a disparate group of fellow victims – a photographer, a bride (and groom), a volatile fellow detainee - that a captured Peg Leg is his former captor, this unlikely quintet spend much of the film in the back of Vahid's borrowed van with the possible former torturer (now gagged, drugged and tied up in a tool box) while they attempt to confirm his identity and decide his fate. Such a scenario could lend itself to vindictive violence but not so in this film. Threatening tension is deftly, unexpectedly broken by comic relief: a less than decorous bride, a gormless Vahid paying generous gratuities, an unexpected phone call. The use of gesture, silence, close-up shots in confined spaces dominates shot selection, intensifying tension and immediacy.

The qualifier 'just' in the title indicates nothing was deliberate – not the initial injury to the dog, not the breakdown of the car, not the birth of a son. Perhaps like Vladimir and Estragon in Beckett's "Waiting for Godot" (obliquely alluded to in one of the few wide angle, sparse scenes where they are unable to enact their decision to bury their hostage) or Stoppard's *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern* in the eponymous play, Vahid is just an ordinary man at the behest of accident, happenchance or fate, a man unable to control his destiny despite his goodness, his humanity, his circumspect decisions.

While there are reminders that this film is backgrounded by an authoritarian regime (the necessity of the father to attend the birth, the grafting security personnel, the officious hospital receptionist), this film is not about powerful bureaucracies, officials or governments – it is about unassuming individuals caught between seeking personal justice and fear of replicating the brutality they experienced. The cathartic resolution occurs in an emotionally loaded, red tinted scene using a close-up lens where the protagonists and victim confront and defend their personal perspectives of shared past experience.

It was just an accident that precipitated this relatively modest, suspenseful, compassionate, engaging filmic narrative representation of the enduring personal trauma inflicted by repressive regimes. Such was a salutatory, but appropriate, reminder to those of us enjoying a gentle Sunday morning or Tuesday evening respite.

Rae Spence.

** Many thanks to our guest reviewer for her most insightful comments. [Ed.]

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## **TYCHO! Beyond the Baton**

Dear Films in the Southern Highlands,

*TYCHO! Beyond the Baton* is a new documentary exploring the extraordinary life and music of Maestro Tommy Tycho and his significant impact on the cultural landscape of Australia.

The film showcases the genius of Tommy Tycho AM MBE through rare and archival material and interviews with a wide variety of well-known Australian entertainers, such as Ray Martin, Julie Anthony, Simon Tedeschi, James Morrison, John Foreman and many more.

*TYCHO! Beyond the Baton* will be screening at the Empire Cinema Bowral on Sunday 16th August at 2.30pm followed by a Q&A featuring Dr Samuel Cottell, the foremost expert on Tycho, and local Southern Highlands identity, along with the Director and Producers.

The quality of the film's narrative has been recognised by Academy Award Winning Director Bruce Beresford - "the way the story was pieced together, the editing, marvellous".

Thank you

Kind regards

**Vicky Tycho - Executive Producer**

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Notice of the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of FISH

[Films In The Southern Highlands Inc.]

to be held on **Sunday 20th September 2026 at 9:30am**

(before film screening - cinema open at 9am))

AGENDA

1. Attendance and Apologies
2. Minutes of previous Annual General Meeting
3. Business Arising
4. Treasurer's Report
5. President's Report
6. Election of Office Bearers and Committee Members for **2026-2027**
7. General Business

Nominations from any member wishing to join the committee must be received by:

9th September 2026

The Committee meet monthly on a Wednesday morning, 10.15am – 12 noon

FILMS IN THE SOUTHERN HIGHLANDS INC – NOMINATION FORM

I,....., accept nomination for the position of
(Print Name)

President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, Committee Member (circle position).

Signed Date

Nominated by

Seconded by

President's Report for AGM 2025-2026

We welcome new members to Films in the Southern Highlands, and, of course, we delight in maintaining our relationship with our many long-standing friends. We now have 384 members, slightly above our ideal number. Our retention rate is excellent.

Our hard-working team of voluntary committee members is to be thanked, in particular Liz Stevenson and Helen Jones. Liz researches films from many sources and creates the monthly newsletter. Helen has the huge task of supervising membership renewals (becoming less onerous as we are more used to on-line payments), and of compiling the detailed list of members. Virginia Romney is our Minutes Secretary, Simon Woffenden is Treasurer, Deborah Blay monitors our guest policy, Sue Hanrahan is our Administration Secretary and Sandra Gillespie is our Vice President. Ross Armfield is our Emeritus Reviewer- In- Chief, very ably assisted by Trish Topp and several others.

We owe much thanks to Highland Creative, a small local firm which maintains the website and helps with administration and computer efficiency.

Of course, we owe much gratitude to the staff at The Empire Cinema, particularly to Gerard Aitken who is so very helpful.

The films shown this last FISH year have been of many genres and have come from India, China, Denmark, Chile, Spain, Iran, USA, Australia, France, Norway and Italy. We hope you enjoy those we have chosen for our new FISH year.

ROZ GARWEN

FISH EOFY 2026

INCOME

2026

2025

Subscriptions

\$30 003.65

\$29 866.99

Interest (TD ...8947)

\$339.32

TOTAL INCOME

\$30 342.97

\$29 866.99

EXPENSES

Film hire &
screening

\$15 840.00

\$25 740.00

Printing

\$239.40

\$215.70

Postage

Computer/Internet
(Highland Creative)

\$4 633.79

\$1 363.26

Stripe (membership
software)

\$176.81

Office Supplies

\$15.06

\$384.29

Dept Fair Trade

\$57.00

\$56.25

TOTAL EXPENSES

\$20 785.25

\$27 936.31

Surplus/(Deficit)

\$9 557.72

\$1 930.68

FISH has 2 accounts:

		Opening Balance	Closing Balance
1.	201558947 Term Deposit	\$7 500	\$7500
2.	0049603053/1201 Working Account	\$27 345.29	\$36 902.88

NOTES

Postage reflects nil costs as the 26/27 new membership cards were mailed out after the EOFY 30/6/26

Members may also notice a difference in the film hire costs from year to year. This also reflects the timing of accounts from The Empire.

Simon Woffenden (Treasurer)