

**HIGHGATE FILM SOCIETY**  
**Season 2023-2024**

21 September 2023

**PARALLEL MOTHERS**

*Spain 2021, 120 mins. Director Pedro Almodóvar. Starring Penélope Cruz, Milena Smit, Israel Elejalde.*

Two women, Janis and Ana, coincide in a hospital room where they are going to give birth. Both are single and became pregnant by accident. Janis, middle-aged, doesn't regret it and is exultant. Ana, an adolescent, is scared, repentant and traumatized. Janis tries to encourage her while they move like sleepwalkers along the hospital corridors. The few words they exchange in these hours will create a very close link between the two, which by chance develops and complicates, and changes their lives in a decisive way.

19 October 2023

**CASQUE D'OR**

*France 1952, 94 mins. Director Jacques Becker. Starring Simone Signoret, Serge Reggiani and Claude Dauphin.*

This Belle Epoque tragedy tells the story of an ill-fated love affair between Marie (Signoret) and Georges (Reggiani). It was loosely based on an infamous love triangle between the prostitute Amelie and the Apache gang leaders, Manda and Leca, which was widely and sensationally reported in 1902. Signoret is a demi-mondaine known for her golden hair (casque d'or), unhappily involved with Roland, a member of a local gang headed by Felix Leca (Dauphin). She meets and falls in love with Georges (Reggiani), a former criminal who is trying to go straight and works as a carpenter. This relationship causes jealousy among the gang members and leads to major disruptions in their lives. The film is in black and white and captures the beauty and danger of the doomed love affair.

16 November 2023

**LUNANA, A YAK IN THE CLASSROOM**

*Bhutan 2019, 109 mins. Director Pawo Choyning Dorji. Starring Sherab Dorji, Ugyen Norbu Lhendup*

A young teacher in Bhutan, Ugyen, wishing to become a singer in Australia, is sent to complete his training in a very remote village in the Himalayas, Bhutan. He treks reluctantly for days only to find a village of 56 people with no electricity or running water. This is a charming film, set in spectacular scenery. The local people have never seen a camera before. The eager and welcoming children turn the young man into an inspiring teacher who learns to love the culture and the community. A captivating and humorous film, with wonderful scenes of yaks.

7 December 2023

**OPERATION MINCEMEAT**

*UK/USA 2021, 128 mins. Director John Madden. Starring Colin Firth, Matthew Macfadyen, Kelly Macdonald, Penelope Wilton, Johnny Flynn, Jason Isaacs.*

The film is based on Ben Macintyre's book of the same name which describes the true story of the extraordinary plan to deceive the Germans in the Second World War. It is set in 1943 as the Allies are determined to launch an all-out assault on Fortress Europe. But they face an impossible challenge - to protect a massive invasion force from entrenched German firepower and avert a potential massacre. The film had its world premiere at the 2021 British Film Festival in Australia and was released in the United Kingdom on 15 April 2022.

18 January 2024

**EVERYTHING WENT FINE (Tout c'est bien passe)**

*France 2021, 113 mins. Director François Ozon. Starring Sophie Marceau, André Dussollier, Géraldine Pailhas, Charlotte Rampling.*

In this powerful family drama a daughter is forced to reconcile with her father and their past after he contacts her with a devastating final wish. When André (André Dussollier) suffers a debilitating stroke and calls on his daughter Emmanuele (Sophie Marceau) to help him die with dignity, she finds herself faced with a painful decision. Charlotte Rampling appears in a cameo role as André's ex-wife.

15 February 2024

### **BEAU TRAVAIL**

*France 1999, 90 mins, Director Claire Denis. Starring Denis Lavant Michel Subor and Gregoire Colin.*

Loosely based on Melville's 1888 novella *Billy Budd*, the film is an allegorical story set in a French Foreign Legion camp in Djibouti. Galoup recalls his once glorious life leading troops, his once happy regimented existence until the arrival of a promising young recruit Sentain plants the seeds of jealousy in Galoup's mind. He feels compelled to stop Sentain coming to the attention of the Commandant he admires but who ignores him. This jealousy will ultimately lead to both men's destruction. Parts of the soundtrack are from *Benjamin Britten's* opera *Billy Budd*. Cinematographer *Agnes Godard's* stunning visual work conveys the complex emotions, the savage power games of an all-male world in an unforgiving desert landscape. *Beau Travail* was voted 7<sup>th</sup> in the BFI 2022 Sight and Sound Greatest Films of All Time Poll.

14 March 2024

### **UTAMA**

*Bolivia 2022, 87 mins. Director Alejandro Loayza Grisi. Starring Luisa Quispe, José Calcina and Santos Choque.*

Set in the Altiplano a high plateau in the Bolivian Andes, the film is a gentle study of the daily life of an old farming couple facing the end of their way of life in a time of climate change. With breath taking cinematography and naturalistic performances *Utama* touchingly captures love and traditions in a changing world. Virginio spends his days grazing his llamas and walks greater distances to find any vegetation. Sisa keeps house and walks miles with the village women to fetch precious water as the well is empty. Their grandson comes to visit from the city and tries to convince them to leave and move to the city as their way of life is unsustainable. They must face the effects of a changing environment, the importance of tradition and the meaning of life itself. The director's first film, it is a visually stunning, simply told story in a dazzling landscape and masterfully integrated music. The film won the Grand Jury Prize at the Sundance Film Festival.

18 April 2024

### **THE QUIET GIRL**

*Ireland 2022, 94 mins. Director/Screenplay Colm Bairéad. Starring Carrie Crowley, Andrew Bennett.* Irish coming-of-age drama film. The dialogue is mostly in Irish. Set in 1981, the film follows a withdrawn nine-year-old girl from a large neglectful family where her mother is once again pregnant. She experiences a loving home for the first time when she spends the summer on a farm with distant relatives. Beautifully crafted film, tenderly sensitive acting, and fine photography. A bitter-sweet tale.

16 May 2024

### **SAINT OMER**

*France 2022, 122 mins. Director Alice Diop. Starring Kayije Kagame, Guslagie Malanda.*

Laurence Coly is a student and Senegalese immigrant accused of leaving her 15-month-old daughter on a beach to be swept away by the tide in Berck. Rama, a literature professor and novelist, travels from Paris to Saint-Omer to observe the trial of Laurence Coly and write about the case. Rama, who is four months pregnant and, like Coly, is in a mixed-race relationship, feels a personal connection to Coly. She plans to write a modern-day retelling of the Greek Medea myth about the case. The film is based on a true story. Alice Diop, the film director, attended the trial.

13 June 2024.

### **BELFAST**

*UK 2021, 97 mins. Directed by Kenneth Branagh. Starring Kenneth Branagh, Catriona Balfe, Jamie Dornan, Jude Hill, Ciaran Hinds, and Judi Dench.*

This film shows the life of a working-class Protestant family in Belfast during the Troubles, from the point of view of Buddy (Jude Hill) a nine-year-old boy. Buddy's father works in England while his mother, older brother and grandparents live in Belfast. In August 1969 a group of Protestants attack the houses and businesses of Catholics in Buddy's street. The residents set up a barrier to prevent further conflict, but the film shows how the need to take sides permeates all relationships, even among the children. His parents are divided about whether to move to England but when they decide to leave, Buddy breaks down at the thought of leaving. A confrontation with a local criminal and sectarian rabble persuades the family of the necessity of seeking safety in England. The film won an Oscar for Best Original Screenplay and won Outstanding British Film at the BAFTA Awards.