

### **13 Assassins**

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**Dir:** Takeshi Miike                      **Japan**                      **2010**                      **141 mins**                      **Cert: 16**  
**Starring:** Kôji Yakusho, Takayuki Yamada, Yûsuke Iseya, Gorô Inagaki, Masachika Ichimura, Mikijiro Hira, Hiroki Matsukata, Ikki Sawamura, Arata Furuta, Tsuyoshi Ihara, Masataka Kubota, Sosuke Takaoka, Seiji Rokkaku, Yûma Ishigaki, Kôen Kondô  
**Language:** Japanese  
**Formats:** D-Cinema only  
**Available to programme:** July

13 assassins. 200 bad guys. One deadly trap. Set in 1844 yet taking place in a feudal society very different from those in the rest of the world, this Samurai epic tells a bloody tale of politics, betrayal and life lived by the sword.

This is a film that makes no apologies, though it does sometimes seem so deadly serious that one finds oneself half waiting for a joke, and the existence of comedy moments sprinkled throughout means one is forever on one's guard, not quite sure how to interpret events. This is fitting in the first two thirds of the film, as we watch a potentially deadly game of court politics. Ageing samurai Shinzaemon (Kôji Yakusho) is assembling a group of highly trained warriors with a view to bringing down the vicious Lord Naritsugu (Gorô Inagaki), a Caligula-like figure who seems drunk on power and driven to extremes by frustration at his own privilege.

This is a socially as well as practically challenging task. It represents a critical shift in Japanese moral values. "It is a servant's job to die for his master. It is a woman's job to die for her husband," says Naritsugu (who is also fond of cutting up women). By contrast, Shinzaemon adheres to a set of principles he can barely articulate - he wants to stop his enemy because otherwise the people will suffer. Naritsugu scoffs at the very concept of 'the people'. This moral conflict persists throughout the film and helps to balance what is sometimes a cartoonish depiction of the lord's nastiness. It also results in a final instruction from Shinzaemon which, in that cultural context, is extraordinary and perhaps dangerous, issuing in a new age.

In 1844 Japan was on the cusp of change yet many people looked back with romantic yearning to a golden age of the samurai - an age of near constant internecine conflict. *13 Assassins* challenges this glorification of violence but that doesn't stop it from reveling in its display (this is, after all, a Takashi Miike film). The final third of the film is one huge battle, brilliantly choreographed, beautifully shot, and as surprising and unyielding as all the director's work. With lines like "We will turn this quiet little town into a town of death," what's not to love? Audiences looking for an action fix will not be disappointed. One inventive sequence after another will keep you gripped right up until the final drawn-out death.

In many ways this is a formulaic film. It's not exactly surprising, for instance, that the original group of 12 find their 13th member living as an outlaw on a journey through the forest, nor that most of them do not survive the final ordeal. But this is where the film draws much of its humour, and it makes sense to include some mythical tropes in a film centred on the conflict between the myths and reality of war. In the end, there's no shortage of blood and guts. It's a slice of history cut with a specially sharpened blade.  
- *Jennie Kermode / Eye For Film*

## **Angels of Evil**

*Vallanzasca - Gli angeli del male*

**Dir: Michele Placido                      Italy                      2010                      125 mins                      Cert: TBC**

**Starring: Kim Rossi Stuart, Filippo Timi, Moritz Bleibtreu, Valeria Solarino, Paz Vega, Francesco Scianna**

**Formats: D-Cinema only**

**Available to programme: September**

When France glorified its star bank robber of the 1970s in *Mesrine: Public Enemy No.1*, the result was a massive European hit. Italy is now going the same way, having found in Renato Vallanzasca their own version of a bold, ruthless, media-celebrated criminal and using the same “kiss kiss, bang bang” technique of the Gallic screen adaptation and the same television approach which has produced such satisfactory results in the past.

A high-profile profile production, featuring such top stars as Kim Rossi Stuart and Filippo Timi from Italy, Germany’s Moritz Bleibtreu and Spain’s Paz Vega, action-packed and relentlessly galloping ahead, often too fast for its own good, this one will take director Michele Placido once again, whatever the critics might think of this, to the top of the box office at home, with a practically in-built option for a more elaborate TV series already in sight.

Based on the life of a Milanese criminal, Renato Vallanzasca, famous for his daring exploits and bravado personality which got him plenty of media coverage - and on two books relating his exploits - the picture does not commit itself to tell the truth, the whole truth but nothing but the truth, since, as they cleverly point out, there is no such thing in existence.

Neither a rebel against society nor a Robin Hood distributing the loot to the needy, Vallanzasca insists he is a “natural-born thief” but a gentlemanly one with principles of his own, who will take bullshit from no one. He’s a man who’d rather use a gun to scare rather than shoot and whose irreverent goading banter in court and out of it (like boasting he will escape jail even before he was thrown into it) drove both police and judges mad, but naturally delighted the media.

As played by Kim Rossi Stuart, with self-assured spunk and fearless determination, he is bound to come out, regardless of his actions, a full blown popular hero. Condemned to several life sentences mostly for crimes committed by others instead of his own (at least this is his version) he was married in jail to one of his numerous female admirers and has officially buried the hatchet, putting an end to his ongoing war with the law.

Watching Placido’s version of Vallanzasca’s life, however, is a bit like rushing through a mountain of newspapers clips at top speed, accompanied by the sound and fury of machine guns or of an equally loud and bombastic music track which is supposed to keep the tension high at all times.

Apparently having settled on a “highlights from the life of Vallanzasca” formula and giving up any attempt to establish a dramatic structure, the script is populated by insufficiently defined cardboard characters who move around pulling triggers, ordering coffee or delivering clichés, before killing or being killed or simply disappearing from the screen, possibly all the way to the cutting room floor.

The large number of authors brought in to deal with the script may have something to do

with all this. Snippets of plots are left hanging in the air, threats of vengeance remain unfulfilled, lifelong enemies become suddenly allies, and the explanation can't just be "that's how it was".

Restless cutting may well suggest something far more extensive was planned somewhere along the way, but never materialised on screen. Rossi Stuart (also one of the script writers, never really out of the frame, comes out best from all this mess, but the rest, including respected professionals such as Bleibtreu and Timi, contribute their presence rather than their talent. - *Dan Fainaru / Screen International*

### **Apocalypse Now (re-release)**

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**Dir: Francis Ford Coppola                      USA    1979                      153 mins                      Cert: CLUB**  
**Starring: Marlon Brando, Robert Duvall, Martin Sheen, Frederic Forrest, Albert Hall, Sam Bottoms, Laurence Fishburne, Dennis Hopper, G. D. Spradlin, Harrison Ford, Jerry Ziesmer, Scott Glenn**  
**Language: English**  
**Formats: D-Cinema only**  
**Available to programme: July**

"It isn't about Vietnam, it is Vietnam," Francis Coppola famously said of this hallucinatory fresco on the madness of war. Having battled through typhoon weather, Martin Sheen's heart attack, Marlon Brando's ballooning waistline and a two-year edit, one can understand his sentiments, but the result certainly delivers a payload of legendary moments as Sheen's military assassin heads downriver to terminate Brando's errant Colonel Kurtz "with extreme prejudice." There's Robert Duvall's Napalm-high, surf-crazed Kilgore and his Wagnerian helicopter attack, the jungle exploding to the strains of The Doors, freaky-deaky photographer Dennis Hopper and, of course, Brando's Conradian exit-line . . . "the horror" indeed. A psychic journey to the very heart of darkness, it's truly a film like no other.

This new, Coppola-approved digital restoration of the original 1979 release version – rather than the extended Redux version of 2001 – reproduces the expressive contrast of the original Technicolor dye-transfer print. *Apocalypse Now* has never looked better.  
- *Trevor Johnston / Irish Film Institute programme*

### **Armadillo**

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**Dir: Janus Metz                      Denmark, Sweden                      2010    100 mins                      Cert: CLUB**  
**Language: English**  
**Formats: D-Cinema only**  
**Available to programme: July**

It used to be that you had to wait for a big-name movie director to digest the war at hand before you got a definitive screen account, but now documentary makers are getting there first. Embedded with a Danish regiment for a six-month tour of duty in Afghanistan, this striking film gives you the character development, food for thought and edge-of-seat action of a scripted film. There's little for fiction to add. In addition, unlike the similar American documentary *Restrepo*, this looks like a feature film rather than a documentary. The images seem meticulously composed and edited, there are tricks like slow motion and time lapse, plus a looming orchestral electronic score. And the high

contrast, treated colours and crisp focus make it look more like an art movie than your standard war reportage – Claire Denis's *Beau Travail*, perhaps, or *The Hurt Locker*.

Despite all this technique, *Armadillo* faithfully records the routines of modern-day military deployment. There are long periods of downtime alleviated by macho sparring, pornography and computer shoot-'em-up games. Then there are futile attempts at engagement with the locals, who are understandably wary of providing assistance when they're literally caught in the crossfire. "It's not you or the Taliban that gets killed," says one farmer, laughing with despair. "We are the ones that get killed." The closest we come to a central character is Mads, a shy, spotty youth whom we initially see justifying his impending mission to his family by comparing it to football: "You learn so much through practice, but you learn more by playing matches."

When the fighting starts, we're in no doubt that it's match time. The images lose their composure, the horizon tilts, and we're suddenly pitched into the dirt. As convention demands, there's a climactic battle scene, in which Danish soldiers are wounded and Taliban fighters are killed (off camera, although their corpses are depicted). Much of it is relayed through a soldier's helmet cam with barked, panicked orders and crackling gunfire. It's terrifying stuff. This final skirmish sparked some controversy in Denmark since the soldiers shot wounded Taliban, flouting international convention. Having seen these soldiers transformed by the action they initially craved, we're not inclined to judge. The film-makers evidently risked their lives alongside these soldiers, and it's a further mark of their courage that they retained their detachment. - *Steve Rose, The Guardian*

*Winner - Grierson Award for Best Documentary, 2010 London Film Festival*

### **Cave of Forgotten Dreams**

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**Dir: Werner Herzog**                      **France, Germany**                      **2010**                      **95 mins**                      **Cert: G**  
**Language: English**  
**Formats: 35mm & D-Cinema**  
**Available to programme: July**

Werner Herzog has spent a lifetime fascinated by extreme individuals, inhospitable landscapes and what constitutes the essence of the human experience. All these concerns are present in *Cave of Forgotten Dreams*, a fascinating documentary essay in which Herzog is given unique access to the cave art discovered at Chauvet-Pont-d'Arc in France in 1994.

Herzog's decision to shoot in 3D is the film's greatest asset. It enhances the depth of perspective as we glimpse the art and travel through the claustrophobic caves. Crystals sparkle and it feels like being back among the fireflies on Pandora in *Avatar* as you truly feel you could reach out and touch the stalactites or brush your hand across a painting.

In the production notes, Herzog claims his spiritual awakening came after he saved up for six months to purchase a book with pictures of a horse from the Lascaux cave. He claims 'The shudder of awe and wonder has never left me.' In the final sections of this phenomenal documentary, Herzog simply lets his cameras roam through the caves.

A contemporary form of artistic expression captures an ancient form of artistic expression and allows the audience to share Herzog's sense of awe and wonder. Art

lovers, historians and curious general audiences will consider those sequences worth the price of admission. - *Allan Hunter / Screen Daily*

**Cold Fish**

*Tsumetai nettaigyo*

**Dir: Sono Sion**                      **Japan**                      **2010**                      **144 mins**                      **Cert: CLUB**

**Starring: Fukikoshi Mitsuru, Denden, Kurosawa Asuka, Kagurazaka Megumi, Kajiwara Hikari, Watanabe Tetsu**

**Language: Japanese**

**Formats: D-Cinema only**

**Available to programme: July**

Mild-mannered fish-store owner Shamoto can't catch a break at home. His bratty teenage daughter won't accept her young, prepossessing stepmom; his shy, stressed-out bride is as distant as the proverbial piscine of the title.

Our put-upon hero doesn't look entirely convinced when Murata, an overbearing rival fish-store owner, intervenes in his troubled domesticity, but Shamoto lacks the backbone to say no. There's something troubling and cloven about Murata, a sleazy, ingratiating bully with a Ferrari, from the get-go. Perhaps it's the team of "difficult" adolescent girls he hires to patrol about in tank tops and hot pants. Perhaps it's the way he laughs at really inappropriate moments. Or maybe it's the fact that his enemies keep disappearing. Worst suspicions are quickly confirmed and completely surpassed. But by then Shamoto is in way too deep.

Returning to the out-there fetishist themes of *Suicide Club* and *Love Exposure*, director Shion Sono soon gets operatic with this frenzied chop-'em-up. *Cold Fish* is J-gore, but not as we know it. The body parts are meaty and grimy; the bloodwork bares little resemblance to the geysers and scarlet corn syrup that once defined Japanese genre pictures, nor to the stylish shadows of late-1990s J-horror.

*Cold Fish* is different. It plays with extremes without ever looking like an Asia Extreme title. Its source material is a grisly series of real-life murders and its primary purpose looks to be allegorical.

The reliably cultish Sono wracks a story that was previously popularised as the Japanese *Sweeney Todd* into something far more discombobulating. No character emerges with dignity. The viewer is repeatedly goaded into cheering on the monster. Few taboos are left unmolested. The actors, conversely, retain a chilling grip on a wide spectrum of dysfunctional and downright messed-up behaviours.

In the director's unforgiving swipes at societal sicknesses and national flaws, there are comparisons to be made with Tetsuya Nakashima's recent *Confessions*. There is something, too, of Steven Sheils' 2008 Brit-horror *Mum and Dad*, a decadently black comedy that found grotesque inspiration in Fred and Rosemary West.

It hardly needs to be said that a highly developed sense of humour and a distempered psyche are mandatory. Leave the Fanta. - *Tara Brady / The Irish Times*

## **Cold Weather**

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**Dir:** Aaron Katz      **USA**      **2010**      **97 mins**      **Cert: CLUB**  
**Starring:** Cris Lankenau, Trieste Kelly Dunn, Raúl Castillo, Robyn Rikoon  
**Language:** English  
**Formats:** D-Cinema only  
**Available to programme:** July

*Cold Weather* is good in so many subtle ways, I despair of doing them justice. It's a thriller involving the personalities of its characters, who we get to know surprisingly well. It remains low-key even during its final big chase scene, which only involves one car. The acting is so good, you may not notice it. Although the characters stumble over the plot at least 40 minutes into the film, it's as ingenious as a high-tech Friday night special.

The tone is established by Doug (Cris Lankenau), a mid-20s guy who was studying forensics in college but dropped out for no reason that he ever explains. In an opening scene, he tells his parents "it's a possibility" he may return to school.

For now, he's returned to Portland, Ore., and is sleeping on the sofa at his sister's apartment. He finds a job in a factory that makes those plastic bags filled with ice and spends his time shifting bags from one place to another.

Doug and his sister Gail (Trieste Kelly Dunn) get along fine. No sibling problems. At work, he makes a friend named Carlos (Raul Castillo) and lends him a book of Sherlock Holmes stories. Carlos likes it. Doug's former girlfriend, Rachel (Robyn Rikoon), comes to town from Chicago and gets a motel room while she trains for a job, she says. The four characters spend some time together. No big deal. Carlos asks Rachel to a Star Trek convention. Doug is fine with that. He remains friends with Rachel, but their romance is over with.

Why am I telling you these inconsequential things? Because the movie seems quite willing to spend its running length following the daily lives of nice, low-key, ordinary, even endearing twentysomethings. All four actors, unknown to me, are natural and convincing, like people you would cast with Catherine Keener, if you know what I mean. Cris Lankenau and Raul Castillo as Doug and Carlos do a very difficult thing here, which is to play young male friends without the slightest shadow of Buddy Movie Syndrome.

Carlos grows alarmed when Rachel stands him up on a date. Possibly inflamed by Sherlock Holmes and Doug's studies in forensics, he talks him into an investigation of what he is convinced is a mysterious disappearance.

Now at last there is a plot. About the plot I will tell you nothing, except I could believe in it. I'm not sure Rachel would use the code described here, or that Doug would figure out how to crack it, but never mind. Carlos sensibly says, "We need some common sense." They both enlist Gail, and Doug and Gail find themselves trailing a man in a cowboy hat after having an absolutely realistic sibling conversation about which of them will drive Gail's car.

That's it. Aaron Katz's direction is just about flawless. It's a matter of finding the right tone, established by Doug at the outset, and following it through. It's about a distaste for artificial tension-heightening devices. It's about love of these characters. It's about seeing if smoking a pipe, like Sherlock Holmes did, might help. It's about how an ice

factory gets rid of its excess ice. Some people will find this movie boring. That may be because they've been deadened by thrillers that don't pay any more attention than they do. - *Roger Ebert, Chicago Sun-Times*

### **Countdown to Zero**

**Dir: Lucy Walker**                      **USA**                      **2010**                      **91 mins**                      **Cert: PG**  
**Language: English**  
**Formats: D-Cinema only**

**\*\*\*To book this film as part of the Ambassador Programme please contact Dogwoof Pictures directly\*\*\***

With climate change, overpopulation, global hunger, and a slew of other imminent worldwide disasters at our doorstep, it's easy to forget about the one catastrophe that could deem the rest futile: nuclear annihilation. Lucy Walker's startling look at the evolution of atomic fears and reasons for international disarmament brings the issue back to the forefront of political conversation.

Accident, miscalculation, or madness: three more-likely-than-you'd-like-to-believe reasons for the detonation of nuclear materials. Unfortunately, Walker's investigations into security measures, detection, and the politics of nuclear proliferation don't offer much reassurance regarding any of these possibilities. Images of unassuming metropolitan areas don't put us at ease either.

Ultimately, though, *Countdown to Zero* is about activism and resistance to the absurdly dangerous existence of atomic weaponry. With suggestions of how to encourage the dismantling of the world's nukes, Walker effectively encourages humanity to fight for its right to exist in a world without a doomsday clock nearing zero. - *Seattle International Film Festival 2010*

### **Extraordinary Adventures of Adele Blanc-Sec, The**                      *Les aventures extraordinaires d'Adèle Blanc-Sec*

**Dir: Luc Besson**                      **France**                      **2010**                      **106 mins**                      **Cert: 12A**  
**Starring: Louise Bourgoin, Mathieu Amalric, Gilles Lellouche, Jean-Paul Rouve, Jacky Nercessian, Phillipe Nahon**  
**Language: French**  
**Formats: 35mm & D-Cinema (TBC)**  
**Available to programme: July**

The spirit of Indiana Jones lives on, not in the galumphing heroics of *National Treasure* or *Tomb Raider* but in the daft but charming French action romp *The Extraordinary Adventures of Adèle Blanc-Sec*. It's based on a series of much-loved comic books (by Jacques Tardi) that Luc Besson tried to option years ago and failed. Now, rather Tardily, as it were, Besson has his wish and delivers an action fantasy that goes very broad at times yet never loses its naughty sense of fun.

Set at the end of 1911 in a Paris still clinging to the Belle Époque – the can-can gets an inevitable scene – it starts with the hatching of an egg, nestled in the natural history museum. Out comes a full-size pterodactyl, ready to fly and hungry after 135 million

years gestating. The city is gripped with terror of the winged beast, which the investigating police inspector (Gilles Lellouche) – a distant forerunner of Clouseau – proves useless in tracking. It instead requires the pluck and ingenuity of a young woman, Adèle Blanc-Sec (Louise Bourgoin), just returned from a daredevil escapade in Egypt and seeking the nutty old scientist (Jacky Nercessian) who coaxed out the dinosaur in the first place. And thus, hilarity ensues...

Well, not exactly hilarity – but a sufficiency of spills and thrills to keep the mood buoyant, and it's always a pleasure to look at. Hugues Tissandier's production design animates the public and private spaces quite wonderfully, be it a cluttered apartment of explorer's trophies, a tennis court for un-genteel ladies or the antiques room of a museum. There's even a good joke about the pyramid in the forecourt of the Louvre.

It would not be nearly so enjoyable, however, without this heroine, at once insouciant and passionate, better-looking than Indy and better-dressed than Lara Croft. She's played with just the right level of pertness by newcomer Bourgoin, outmatching both the clottish authorities at home and the dastardly rival archaeologist Dieuleveult (an unrecognisable Mathieu Amalric) in Egypt. It isn't the kind of story where you worry that the damsel is actually in danger, because there's always an outlandish effect – Patmosis, the Francophone mummy? – to spring her out of a tight spot. But in a market that traditionally favours the male half, Mademoiselle Blanc-Sec proves that, like the wine, she's got bottle. - *Anthony Quinn, The Independent*

## **Farewell**

## *L'Affaire Farewell*

**Dir:** Christian Carion      **France**      **2009**      **113 mins**      **Cert: CLUB**  
**Starring:** Emir Kusturica, Guillaume Canet, Fred Ward, David Soul, Willem Dafoe,  
**Language:** French, Russian, English  
**Formats:** 35mm & D-Cinema  
**Available to programme:** July

The Cold War can seem a lifetime ago, but *L'Affaire Farewell* brings a critical episode from that time humming back to life. Director Christian Carion follows his Academy Award-nominated hit *Joyeux Noël* with another tale that chronicles sweeping conflicts between nations in humanizing detail.

It's Moscow, 1981. KGB spy Sergei Grigoriev (played in a brooding, layered performance by filmmaker Emir Kusturica) has decided to leak documents to the West that would compromise his own country. He has his motives. Pierre Froment (Guillaume Canet from *Tell No One*) is a French engineer working in Moscow. He has no connection to espionage, until his boss draws him into a delicate game. Grigoriev will pass the documents to Froment, who will relay them to French intelligence. Divulging proof of how deeply the KGB has infiltrated the West, the Russian hopes to precipitate an American reaction, and with it the collapse of the Soviet Union.

Carion handles the high-stakes narrative with deft skill, shifting from chambers of power where François Mitterand and Ronald Reagan confer with advisers, to the ground-level manoeuvres that put everything at risk for Froment and Grigoriev. Although there are scenes of tense drama, this is not a car-chase spy thriller. Instead, *L'Affaire Farewell* probes the impact of the spy-versus-spy atmosphere on these two men and their families.

Canet is quietly effective as a man drawn in over his head who may have resources he never imagined. Kusturica is a revelation, giving a performance that uses his physical dominance both to menace and disarm. They're aided by a superb supporting cast that includes Willem Dafoe as the head of the CIA, Alexandra Maria Lara as Froment's wife and Fred Ward in the role of President Ronald Reagan. - *Cameron Bailey, Toronto International Film Festival*

### **Heartbeats**

*Les amours imaginaries*

**Dir: Xavier Dolan**                      **Canada**                      **2010**                      **96 mins**                      **Cert: TBC**

**Starring: Xavier Dolan, Niels Schneider, Monia Chokri**

**Language: French**

**Formats: 35mm & D-Cinema**

**Available to programme: September**

Across the room at a dinner party, inseparable friends Marie (Monia Chokri) and Francis (Xavier Dolan) set eyes on Nicolas (Niels Schneider), a young hipster who has just moved to Montreal from the countryside. Possessing dreamlike beauty, salacious charm and an air of mystery, Nicolas fast becomes the sole object of both Marie's and Francis' interests. After each rapturous encounter, Francis and Marie slide further into their obsessive infatuation with the ever-ambiguous Nicolas, eventually revealing the depth of their respective desperation and loneliness. Throughout their unending search for signs of Nicolas' true intentions, imagining some and ignoring others, they engage in a rivalry marked by petty jealousy and sabotage. In the name of finally capturing Nicolas's oscillating attentions, the pair nearly sacrifice their once rock-solid friendship...

Employing the same dense, anguished emotional charge that informed his debut effort / *Killed My Mother*, Xavier Dolan succeeds in achieving a sophisticated second film as powerful and visually meticulous as his first, yet refreshingly original. This confidently stylish sophomore offering is a study of the fall into love, the agony of fantastical obsession, and the pang of unrequited affection. - *Vancouver International Film Festival 2010*

### **How I Ended This Summer**

*Kak Ya Provel Etim Letol*

**Dir: Aleksei Popogrebsky**                      **Russia**                      **2010**                      **125 mins**                      **Cert: CLUB**

**Starring: Grigori Dobrygin, Sergei Puskepalis**

**Language: Russian**

**Formats: 35mm & D-Cinema**

**Available to programme: September**

Kelly Reichardt's bleak American independent movie, *Meek's Cutoff*, centred on nine people losing their way while attempting to cross an arid, inhospitable part of remote Oregon in 1845. In Alexei Popogrebsky's *How I Ended This Summer*, we have an equally harsh story with a cast of two, set on an Arctic island in Chukotka, at the extreme north-eastern tip of Russia. It is like a gulag designed for two, stuck on the edge of the world and, like *Meek's Cutoff*, it has a pared down quality that invites, indeed virtually compels, the viewer to see it as some kind of allegory.

The film's title suggests an essay a boy might write after an adventurous holiday in some

colourful spot, and indeed one of the two characters appears to be a student performing unfamiliar tasks on an isolated meteorological station. He's the good-looking Pavel Danilov (Grigory Dobrygin), aged around 20, with a silver ring in his left ear and carrying a rifle. We first see him doing readings of various instruments that measure weather and radio activity (this is evidently a contaminated area) as the wind whips around him.

He then returns to the shabby hut he shares with a querulous older man, Sergei Gulybin (Sergei Puskepalis), an experienced meteorologist some 30 years his senior. There is tension between them, first expressed by Sergei revealing that the younger man has forgotten to take cartridges for his gun. In 1984, he tells him, a hydrographer was killed by a bear just a few yards from the hut because he carried no loaded weapon to defend himself.

Sergei is clearly a veteran of the job and the region and has long since adapted himself to a routine to protect him against the state authorities for whom he works and ward off the inner terrors of the solitary life.

To Sergei, this temporary assistant is a frivolous, unreliable figure who goes around wearing headphones that pump pop music into his head and plays violent video games that pit him against snipers. Pavel comes across as a playful figure, swinging on an abandoned radar dish and jumping along a row of oil drums in a dump of old cans and abandoned machinery. Sergei, on the other hand, is a stolid figure whose sole pastime is fishing for Arctic trout out at sea. They almost seem like the last survivors in a post-apocalyptic world and, in a sense, they are.

But every hour or so they communicate with some distant base on a crackling, scarcely audible radio link. Their equipment is antiquated and failing, their food terrible, the place ill-furnished, unpainted and falling apart. This is an official establishment that in the recent past was a hive of activity and common purpose. It has now become neglected in an almost contemptuous way by a state that has given up on self-respect. This emphasises the feeling of despair and pointlessness induced by the work, while the savage grandeur of the surrounding mountains, the snow-covered tundra and relentlessly pounding sea comment ironically upon it.

We learn nothing about the characters by way of direct exposition, only through what we observe. We're not sure how long they've been together, though we do learn that their tour of duty is approaching the end and that Sergei's family are travelling to meet him on the mainland. Trouble looms when Sergei goes off to catch trout as a present for his wife and son, leaving Pavel in charge of the routine reports. While minding the store, the young man gets an urgent radiogram for Sergei about serious family trouble. But when Sergei returns he doesn't – for reasons we're left to infer – pass on the message, and a serious row breaks out over Pavel's laziness and the faking of reports. From this point, everything begins to unravel. Sergei has recalled an earlier incident when a scientist took his gun to a comrade, with only a hole in the ceiling left to show for it. He may possibly be speaking of himself. As the weather suddenly deteriorates, cabin fever gives way to lethal enmity, a cat-and-mouse game ensues and the movie turns into a thriller.

Eight years ago, Popogrebsky made his directorial debut with *Roads to Koktebel*, a road movie in which a penniless, alcoholic former aero-engineer makes a journey with his 12-year-old son from Moscow to a rundown Crimean seaside town where he once worked in happier times. It was a most accomplished work, reminiscent of Tarkovsky and De

Sica. His new film, while hardly mainstream, takes up themes from Koktebel but gradually shunts them into a more conventional direction.

In the earlier film one suspected a lurking allegory about contemporary Russia. Here it is unavoidable. "I would never intentionally put elements of parable into my story," Popogrebsky has said. "However, if the story grows beyond the concrete time and place in which it is set, and if it strikes some universal or personal chord in a viewer, for me this means that my mission has been accomplished." I find it impossible, in the film's complex moral resolution, not to see Sergei and Pavel as representing different sides of Putin's Russia, one shaped by older traditional ways, the other struggling to discover a new set of values.

At the 2010 Berlin festival, Sergei Puskepalis and Grigory Dobrygin rightly shared the prize for best actor, while Pavel Kostomarov's haunting, evocative and at times breathtaking photography received the Silver Bear for artistic achievement. The film itself went on to win the best film award at last year's London film festival. – *Philip French, The Observer*

*Winner - Best Film, 2010 London Film Festival*

## **Jig!**

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**Dir: Sue Bourne      Scotland 2010                      97 mins                      Cert: PG**  
**Language: English**  
**Formats: D-Cinema only**  
**Available to programme: July**

Casting an eye over the ultra-competitive world of Irish Dancing, this intriguing and well made (if overly-broad) documentary offers insights in abundance but lacks the focus to really get under the skin of its subjects. The world these people immerse themselves in from such a young age is truly Irish; like GAA, the rewards are never financial with the dancers seemingly taking part purely for the love of it.

Initially looking at two pre-teen girls from different parts of the world - one America the other Derry - it quickly broadens its scope to Irish Dancers in Russia, the UK and Holland. There is a common goal for everyone involved; to compete and excel at the 40th Irish Dancing World Championships in Glasgow. The film chronicles the training, discipline and sacrifice involved with competing at such a high level.

Offering an eclectic mix of dancers, director Bourne deserves credit for mixing all of the stories skilfully. However, some of the people she introduces us to are far more endearing and interesting than others. Derry youngster Brogen is one of the most adorable, genuine kids you're ever likely to see. Obviously extremely gifted, the young lady has a natural humility and warmth that never feels put on for the camera. Her story alone may have made for a more entertaining film.

The culmination of all the hard work comes in the same place, and through no fault of Bourne, the actual World Championships is a scattershot event with results extremely difficult to follow. Maybe had Bourne known that before choosing her subjects, more tension could have been wringed out of the film's conclusion with much fewer dancers to keep track off.

Still revealing and enjoyable stuff, those with even a passing interest in Irish Dancing should enjoy *Jig!* - Mike Sheridan, *Entertainment.ie*

### **Julia's Eyes**

*Les ojos des Julia*

**Dir: Guillem Morales**      **Spain**      **2010**      **117 mins**      **Cert: 16**  
**Starring: Belen Rueda, Lluís Homar, Pablo Derqui, Francesc Orella, Joan Dalmau**  
**Language: Spanish**  
**Formats: D-Cinema & limited 35mm TBC**  
**Available to programme: July**

Guillermo del Toro has an exceptional eye for new talent and his latest film as producer, *Julia's Eyes*, directed by Spanish newcomer Guillem Morales, will terrify audiences.

Julia has a degenerative disease and will eventually go blind. Her twin sister struggled with the same illness until she apparently committed suicide. Julia, however, remains unconvinced and investigates the true cause of her sister's death. Convinced that she is being watched but unable to see her observer the audience is left wondering if it's all due to her failing eyesight or is she only imagining things?

Julia undergoes a surgical procedure to save her eyesight and is forced to wear a bandage over her eyes for two weeks. She becomes convinced that the man who she believes killed her sister is entering her house at night. The tension ratchets up as Julia struggles with her fear of sightlessness and becomes increasingly isolated from everyone around her.

Morales's use of the horror genre to frame a woman coming to terms with the onset of blindness is achieved through precise camerawork that augments the suspenseful atmosphere. There is nothing more frightening than an invisible predator and nothing more terrible than not being able to perceive those around you. - *Diana Sanchez, Toronto International Film Festival*

### **Last Picture Show. The (Re-release)**

**Dir: Peter Bogdanovich**      **USA**      **1971**      **118 mins**      **Cert: CLUB**  
**Starring: Ben Johnson, Cloris Leachman, Cybill Shepherd, Ellen Burstyn, Jeff Bridges, Timothy Bottoms**  
**Language: English**  
**Formats: D-Cinema only**  
**Available to programme: July**

Peter Bogdanovich's masterpiece from 1971, co-written with the original novel's author Larry McMurtry, is set in a small, dusty, windblown town in Texas at the time of the Korean war, with shades of John Updike's *Tarbox* and *Peyton Place*. (The last picture in question, which is to say the final feature to be shown in the town's dying movie theatre, is Howard Hawks's *Red River*.) Timothy Bottoms and a heartbreakingly young-looking Jeff Bridges play Sonny and Duane, two boys destined to fall out over their interest in the stunningly beautiful, exquisitely manipulative Jacy, played by Cybill Shepherd. This movie is baked hard in the high summer heat of eroticism and sexual tension. Sonny's affair with a melancholy older woman Ruth (Cloris Leachman) is compelling. It begins

with the awkward teen agreeing to drive her to the clinic for an illness that is never specified and appears later to vanish, perhaps cured by this glorious adventure. The nude swimming-party scene is inspired: shy Jacy strips off on the diving board, stumbles in, and smilingly shows to a handsome naked boy that the watch her boyfriend has given her has stopped. Bodganovich deserves a special laurel for that quietly superb sequence. The cast, including Ellen Burstyn, Eileen Brennan and Ben Johnson, take their leave in quaint "curtain-call" style final credits that, for some reason, made me want to sob. The soundtrack from Hank Williams and others is a joy. Unmissable. - *Peter Bradshaw, The Guardian*

### **Life, Above All**

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**Dir: Oliver Schmitz   South Africa/Germany   2010   106 mins   Cert: CLUB**  
**Starring: Khomotso Manyaka, Lerato Mvelase, Harriet Manamela, Keabaka Makanyane, Aubrey Poolo**  
**Language: Pedi**  
**Formats: D-Cinema only**  
**Available to Programme: September**

A commanding performance from screen newcomer Khomotso Manyaka lights up *Life, Above All*, a moving adaptation of Allan Stratton's bestselling 2004 novel *Chanda's Secrets*. A classic coming of age story is given added dramatic heft by placing it in a South Africa where so many children are obliged to assume adult responsibilities as the AIDS pandemic leaves hundreds of thousands of orphans in its wake.

*In Chanda's Secrets* the lead character is aged sixteen. In the film Chanda (Manyaka) is twelve and more of an innocent. She lives in the small township of Elandsdoorn near Johannesburg. It appears to be a supportive, tight-knit community where people look out for each other. Following the death of her newly born baby sister, Chanda is to discover that Elandsdoorn is really a place where maintaining the appearance of happy normality is more important than acknowledging the truth of a disease that is rife in the country.

There is gossip and speculation but nobody openly admits that Chanda's stepfather Jonah (Aubrey Poolo) is a drunken wastrel or that her mother Lillian (Lerato Mvelase) is gravely ill. Chanda has to figure everything out for herself.

Spotted by talent scouts during a choir performance at her school, Khomotso Manyaka proves to be a screen natural as Chanda. Her eyes blaze with intelligence and compassion, investing the character with a fearless curiosity. Her hunger for the truth makes Chanda a dangerous force in a community comforted by lies and evasions.

She is the one who must challenge authority and take the cares of the world upon her shoulders. Manyaka's completely natural performance makes Chanda an earth mother in the making and she receives excellent support from Keabaka Makanyane as Esther, a loyal friend with a more pragmatic view of the world. The acting is notable throughout with Lerato Mvelase lending a gentle dignity to the longsuffering Lillian and Harriet Manamela adding some fire to the character of Mrs Tafa, a friendly neighbour torn between supporting Chanda's family or remaining a silent figure of reproach within the local community.

*Life, Above All* largely avoids the temptation to sentimentalise or turn preachy letting the obvious lessons from this tale of pride and prejudice speak for themselves. - *Allan Hunter, Screen International*

**Little White Lies**

*Les petits mouchoirs*

**Dir: Guillaume Canet**      **France**      **2010**      **154 mins**      **Cert: 16**  
**Starring: François Cluzet, Marion Cotillard, Benoît Magimel, Gilles Lellouche, Laurent Lafitte, Jean Dujardin**  
**Language: French**  
**Formats: 35mm & D-Cinema**  
**Available to programme: July**

Guillaume Canet has assembled an outstanding cast of some of France's finest actors – headed by the incandescent, Academy Award®-winning Marion Cotillard – to make an entertaining and acutely observed drama of manners. A group gathering is hosted every year by a couple at their beautiful beach house where they kick-off their summer vacation by celebrating the birthday of one of the gang. Fun, fine wine and seafood mix with sun and sand as they all leave their city stresses and inhibitions behind.

But this year is different. One of them is badly injured in a serious motorcycle accident just as they are about to leave Paris for their seaside reunion. His friends flock to his bedside, where their unconscious pal is still alive but in intensive care. What to do? Stay in Paris to be by his side, or leave for their vacation having been assured that there is nothing they can do? By the time they return he should be conscious and up for visitors. After some intense discussion, they decide to head off for enjoyment and relaxation. Over the course of the next week, all the tensions within this group erupt into full daylight.

One of them, happily married, finds to his great surprise that he is wildly attracted to one of his best friends, a man. Claiming he's not gay, he upsets his friend and stirs the suspicions of his loving and loyal wife, who wonders what's amiss. The others all have similar challenges and issues, as a veritable stew of raging hormones and frustrations bubbles to the surface. Some run into old lovers, while others pine for lovers who have no time for them anymore. Through a succession of incidents, the group is pulled apart and dragged together by their ties of loyalty and marriage. - *Toronto International Film Festival 2010*

**Love Like Poison**

*Un Poison Violent*

**Dir: Katell Quillévéré**      **France**      **2010**      **85 mins**      **Cert: CLUB**  
**Starring: Clara Augarde, Lio, Michel Galabru, Stefano Cassetti, Thierry Neuvic, Youen Leboulanger-Gourvil**  
**Language: French**  
**Formats: D-Cinema only**  
**Available to programme: July**

Small communities, Catholicism and burgeoning sexuality - it's a classic, some might say over-familiar, combination in French debut features. But it's rarely carried off with such confidence and subtlety as in *Love Like Poison*, Katel Quillévéré's superb drama, which has already won the 2010 Jean Vigo Prize for first feature.

Fourteen-year-old Anna (Augarde) has returned from boarding school to her village in Brittany, where she lives with her mother Jeanne (Lio) in the house of her elderly, ailing paternal grandfather Jean (Galabru). Anna's father Paul (Neuvic) is absent - he turns up only late in the film - as he and Jeanne have broken up.

One gap between them, it seems, is Jeanne's committed Catholicism, which Paul doesn't share and has only recently become a problem for them. Things are complicated by the increasingly depressed Jeanne's attraction to easy-going young village priest Père François (Cassetti). Anna, meanwhile, is caught between her own religious convictions - she's due for her confirmation - and her teenage sexual stirrings, which are awakened by choirboy Pierre (Leboulanger-Gourvil), a precocious squirt who's in a hurry to get beyond best-friend stage.

Not a great deal happens, but when it does, it means a lot: two funerals, a couple of faintings on Jeanne's part, and a genuinely tense moment between Jeanne and François in which it looks as if he's going to have to do some soul-searching and fast.

There are also some delicate, but boldly handled, scenes of exploratory physicality between the two kids, which Augarde and the engaging Leboulanger-Gourvil carry off fearlessly, but with just the edge of nervousness that the material calls for.

Galabru, generally associated with broader material, brings an imposing sense of crumbling physicality - it's anything but a vain performance, given the actor's age and girth - and has a good time as a blustering rager against piety. Some unsettling sexually-charged scenes between the old man and Anna are carried off with a shrewdly judged tone that shows how much Quillévééré is on top of her material.

The film is beautifully shot by Tom Harari, who captures faces and the Breton landscape with equal sensitivity, and a very individual soundtrack includes English folk songs, church choirs and a highly unconventional Radiohead cover over the end credits. - *Jonathan Romney, Screen International*

## **Mammuth**

**Dir: Benoît Delépine & Gustave Kervern    France    2010    87 mins    Cert: CLUB**

**Starring: Gerard Depardieu, Yolande Moreau, Isabelle Adjani, Benoit Poelvoorde, Miss Ming, Blutch, Philippe Nahon, Bouli Lanners, Anna Mouglalis, Albert Delpy, Bruno Lochet**

**Language: French**

**Formats: 35mm & D-Cinema**

**Available to programme: September**

Gérard Depardieu teams up with subversive farceurs Delépine and de Kervern for a trouble-making road comedy about an old biker heading back to his past.

Festival-goers will be familiar with the no-holds-barred comedies of provocateurs Delépine and Kervern - including wheelchair road movie *Aaltra* and proletarian revenge tale *Louise-Michel*. The duo are up to their usual tricks - and in vivid colour - in *Mammuth*, the story of a man, a mission and a motorbike. Serge (Gérard Depardieu) is an abattoir worker who retires only to find that he doesn't have a pension and needs to

track down paperwork from his former employers. Hitting the road on his Mammuth bike, he has a series of variously humiliating and inspiring encounters - including a reunion with a long-lost cousin, the cue for one of the most outrageous sight gags in recent cinema. Isabelle Adjani makes an eerie appearance as a woman from the past, while outsider artist Miss Ming makes her distinctly oddball mark. Above all, the screen is filled - and then some - by Depardieu, casting vanity, long hair and often clothes to the winds.

Reconnecting with the spirit of Bertrand Blier's *Les Valseuses*, Depardieu clearly hits it off a treat with the directors, whose anarchic cheek and up-yours radicalism are, despite a new-found lyricism, here in full force. - *Jonathan Romney, BFI London Film Festival 2010*

### **Meek's Cutoff**

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**Dir:** Kelly Reichardt      **USA**      **2010**      **104 mins**      **Cert: PG**  
**Starring:** Michelle Williams, Bruce Greenwood, Will Patton, Zoe Kazan, Paul Dano, Shirley Henderson, Neal Huff, Tommy Nelson, Rod Rondeaux  
**Language:** English  
**Formats:** 35mm & D-Cinema  
**Available to programme:** July

Philip French once dubbed the western genre 'a voracious bastard of a form, open equally to visionaries and opportunists'. Kelly Reichardt's austere, resolutely enigmatic and desolately beautiful pioneer fable suggests she's both at once, paring the western audaciously back to the bone and infusing it with her trademark minimalism.

*Meek's Cutoff* is simultaneously cerebral and astonishingly cinematic, a historical road movie that stretches the inhospitable landscapes and marginal living of *Wendy and Lucy* (2008) in intriguing directions. Reichardt is the mistress of signalling much from minute details, transforming the serene opening image of settler women wading across a river, straight out of N.C. Wyeth's pioneer paintings, with the terse, tension-inducing 'LOST' scratched into a branch by Thomas Gately. Her spare vision seems the embodiment of novelist Marilynne Robinson's suggestion, heading up the press notes, that alongside the noisy male myths of gunplay and conquest, there is one - mostly perceived by women - of 'a West dominated by space and silence'.

There's plenty of both here, surrounding a small wagon train of three settler couples, trudging through the sun-baked Oregon High Desert in 1845, increasingly mistrustful of their blowhard guide Stephen Meek as water, and his blustering excuses, run low. Watching their struggle, *Meek's Cutoff* creates a parallel Old West, one stripped of the traditional trappings of action sequences, expressive characterisation and widescreen. Its Academy ratio gives a claustrophobic, domestic feel - you jump when the camera, roaming over firewood foraging, ends on a pair of Indian feet. Though one could glimpse *The Searchers* (1956) in its lunar landscapes, or *Days of Heaven* (1978) in its detached mood and often eerie beauty, the film's small, inward-looking narrative and headily large themes make it a piece of considerable originality.

Time, like the wagon-train, moves molasses-slow here, and Jon Raymond's subtle scripting locates the drama within the pioneers' predicament as they bicker over whether to trust Meek, or the Cayuse Indian they eventually capture to guide them, who may be leading them to water, or to massacre. What invests us in their plight is Reichardt's

lingering obsession with the wheel-mending, bread-kneading, water-rationing, hardscrabble materiality of pioneer life, a close-up view of the women's West unearthed recently by historians. We're riding shotgun, feeling the precarious struggle for survival as Michelle Williams's stoical, compassionate Emily shares food with her struggling neighbours, and Shirley Henderson's journey-frayed mother reminisces about the easy life her father's pigs led by comparison.

However, the film's unswerving severity, with muttered dialogue as heavily rationed as water (it's as taciturn as *True Grit* is prolix) and the corraling of its cast in Christopher Blauvelt's gorgeous but distancing long-shots, leads the viewer to scrabble restlessly for meaning. The political allegory aligning Meek's cowboy bluster with the Bush years is a tad heavyhanded, even more so when young wife Millie's rants about the Indian's rock-scratched petroglyph 'signals' suggest today's hysteria about terrorism. Rather more effective are the film's glancing but resonant hints at biblical allegory, feminist fable or the reimagining of macho pioneer melodramas such as *The Way West* (1967).

Raymond's concentration on the fracturing community rather than the individual, part of the film's upending of genre norms, also means that only Bruce Greenwood's garrulous Meek and Michelle Williams's expertly nuanced Emily, wary and warm in equal measures as she reluctantly defends the Indian against Meek's kneejerk racism, register strongly. But while its overarching ambiguity can infuriate, most notably in a daring and frustratingly oblique ending, it's also its strongest suit. What's manifest in *Meek's Cutoff* isn't destiny, but the difficulty of gauging truth, whether it concerns what's over the hill, or within a human heart. - *Kate Stables, Sight & Sound*

### **My Dog Tulip**

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**Dir:** Paul & Sandra Fierlinger      **USA**    **2009**      **82 mins**      **Cert: Club**  
**Featuring the voices of Christopher Plummer, Lynn Redgrave, Isabella Rossellini**  
**Language: English**  
**Formats: D-Cinema & limited 35mm**  
**Available to programme: August**

JR (Joe) Ackerley (1896-1967) was one of the great literary editors of his day (working on the BBC's now sadly defunct weekly the *Listener*), a writer of fastidious prose and as openly gay as he could have reasonably been at a time when homosexuality was a criminal offence. In his 60s, he wrote two rightly celebrated semi-autobiographical novels inspired by his Alsatian bitch, Queenie, both moving, extremely funny and rather daring for their day.

In *We Think the World of You*, published in 1960 and filmed in 1988 by Colin Gregg, an Alsatian bitch called Evie becomes the subject of contention between a sad, middle-aged queen (Alan Bates) and the family of his butch, working-class ex-lover (Gary Oldman).

In its companion piece, *My Dog Tulip*, published in 1956, Queenie is called Tulip (Ackerley's many gay friends thought the Alsatian's real name would raise titters) and it has been made into an exquisite animated film by the American husband and wife team of Paul and Sandra Fierlinger.

This labour of love, narrated by Christopher Plummer as Ackerley, largely uses the

original text to describe the author's eight years with Tulip, the closest, most perfect friend he's ever had, and his discovery that dogs have quite different identities from humans. The Fierlingers retain the detailed descriptions of Tulip's bowel movements and sex life that troubled many readers 50 years ago, but which are essential elements in achieving realism and avoiding sentimental anthropomorphism.

With surprising accuracy, they capture that far-off Britain of the 1950s, using a subdued palette and gentle line that draw on the British artists of the period. One thinks especially perhaps of the book illustrator Edward Ardizzone, though according to Ackerley's biographer, Peter Parker, Lucian Freud did some preparatory drawings for the original book. The Fierlingers also match Ackerley's wit in the way they switch between fully realised graphic work for the realistic sections and rapid sketches for his flights of fancy. A classic book, a film to cherish. - *Philip French, The Observer*

### **One Hundred Mornings**

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**Dir: Conor Horgan**                      **Ireland**                      **2009**                      **83 mins**                      **Cert: 15A**

**Starring: Rory Keenan, Ciarán McMenamin, Kelly Campbell, Alex Reid**

**Language: English**

**Formats: 35mm & D-Cinema**

**Available to programme: July**

*One Hundred Mornings* has an intriguing opening. A thirtysomething guy, whose name we eventually learn is Jonathan (Ciarán McMenamin), walks out onto the porch of a reasonably well-kept cabin that's in the middle of what appears to be rather picturesque country. Jonathan smokes a cigarette, potentially savoring the country morning as any person might, and walks over to the driveway and opens a car door. He tries the radio inside, which doesn't work, sighs and closes the door and returns to the inside of the cabin. Jonathan is clearly a little pensive, a little disappointed, but above all, quite resigned, and so we can tell that this business with the car radio has become a daily ritual.

This low-budget Irish drama concerns a breakdown of society, and first time writer-director Conor Horgan has a nice eye and ear for disturbingly intimate little incidents that tell us more than any series of expository speeches could ever hope to. We're never given the source of the breakdown, but we're able to gather—with the title as an especially helpful hint—that this societal collapse is quite recent and is, of course, rather unexpected and awfully inconvenient. The setting is somewhere in the country near Dublin (we're told at one point that that city is a somewhat walkable distance away), and there seems to be, from what we can tell, no damage to the actual environment. But electricity no longer exists and food and medicine is dwindling, which inevitably leads to the survivors going tribal, as they say. In addition to Jonathan, there's his wife Hannah (Alex Reid), and another younger couple Mark (Rory Keenan) and Katie (Kelly Campbell). The men are reliable and given to uttering few words, while the women are rather dishy in a believable everyday way. Nerves are beginning to fray though, and a recent infidelity threatens to accelerate the deterioration of the already-strained relations between the foursome, who're basically trapped in the cabin.

The world has ended so many times in cinema that it's hard for a filmmaker to really shock us anymore. Horgan's somewhat novel hook is the time period in which he chooses to set *One Hundred Mornings*. While most films concern either the race to stop

the end of the world or the ultra barbarous wasteland that awaits us hundreds of years in the future, Horgan instead concentrates on a society's transitional phase from unchallenged civility to survival-of-the-fittest amorality. Horgan, refreshingly, doesn't push the material in our faces: He favors a number of medium shots with precise but not too fussy blocking that reveals the shifting dynamics of the foursome with confidence and precision. This film, which can't afford to blow cities up for our amusement, trades in minute details that slowly add up to something rather disturbing. One image in particular—of a female character being taken by carriage to the nearby village so as to almost certainly serve out her life as a prostitute—has the primal power of a fairy tale. (The performances are also every bit as sturdy and believable as the pared, disciplined writing, and direction.)

The catch? There isn't really much of one in this case, except that the conclusion of the film—like the conclusion to most films that trade on our fears of traditional society's end—is inevitable to the point of being a little predictable, as a situation this dire leaves little room for spontaneity or even much character development or personality. Horgan is a talent to watch though; he appears to be a storyteller with instinct and maybe even a little elegance. Movies might need him. - *Chuck Bowen, Slant Magazine*

### **Oranges and Sunshine**

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**Dir:** Jim Loach      **UK, Australia**      **2010**      **105 mins**      **Cert: 15A**

**Starring:** Emily Watson, David Wenham, Hugo Weaving.

**Language:** English

**Formats:** 35mm & D-Cinema

**Available to programme:** July

*Oranges and Sunshine* is a deeply moving study of emotionally scarred adults who were illegally deported as children to Australia from Britain in the 1940s and '50s. Toplining a superb Emily Watson as Margaret Humphreys, the British social worker who brought the shameful secret to world attention in the late '80s, this standout debut by Jim Loach, son of director Ken Loach, will make a strong claim for arthouse berths everywhere.

Rona Munro's finely chiseled adaptation of Humphreys' 1996 book "Empty Cradles" astutely avoids flashbacks of youngsters being herded onto boats. Set entirely in the 1980s, the movie opens with Margaret (Watson) more or less stumbling onto the life-changing story when confronted in Nottingham by Charlotte (Federay Holmes), an Australian woman who wants "to find out who I am."

Margaret discovers Charlotte is one of thousands of British youngsters who were unlawfully removed from children's homes and "unfit" (i.e., unwed) mothers and sent to Australia "for their own good." The heartbreaking stories Margaret hears will bring tears to most eyes. Without a hint of sensationalism or manipulation, deportees discuss the emptiness of never having felt a proper sense of identity. Others confess to feeling worthless after years of mental and physical abuse in orphanages, many of them church-run.

Watson is perfect as the upright, compassionate and fiercely determined champion of victims' rights. Weaving has rarely been better than as the empty Jack, and Wenham brings a sharp edge as the prickly Len. - *Alissa Simon, Variety*

## Outside The Law

*Hors La Loi*

**Dir:** Rachid Bouchareb      **France, Algeria**      **2010**      **127 mins**      **Cert: CLUB**  
**Starring:** Jamel Debbouze, Roschdy Zem, Sami Bouajila, Bernard Blancan, Chafia Boudraa, Sabrina Seyvecou, Assaad Bouab  
**Language:** French/Arabic  
**Formats:** 35mm & D-Cinema  
**Available to programme:** August

The story between Algeria and France is vast, complex and sometimes bloody. Algerian-French filmmaker Rachid Bouchareb has taken it upon himself to tell that story on the epic scale it deserves. In his Academy Award®-nominated *Indigènes*, which screened at the Festival in 2006, he followed three Algerian brothers who sign up to fight for France in the Second World War. *Hors la loi* follows those same brothers – played by major French stars Jamel Debbouze, Sami Bouajila and Roschdy Zem – as the hard certainty of the war gives way to social unrest, political idealism and the allure of organized crime.

An iconic prologue in 1925 establishes the stakes. As a young boy tends the dry soil of his ancestral home in rural Algeria, French gendarmerie appear over the crest of the hill. With one colonial decree, the officers displace the family from their home forever, setting the tone for this story of struggle and strife. Twenty years later, the siblings have relocated to Sétif, where they now face a daily struggle against French colonial oppression. When the infamous Sétif massacre leaves the family broken and scattered across the globe, the brothers each take their own path to right the injustices inflicted upon their peoples.

Abdelkader (Bouajila), the intellectual, becomes the leader of the Algerian Independence movement, believing all-out war is the only answer. Messaoub (Zem), the eldest, is stoic and distant after returning scarred – both figuratively and literally – from fighting in Indochina. Saïd (Debbouze), the youngest, is an avid boxing fan and dreams of training the first Algerian boxing champion. Unlike the other two, Saïd wants no part of the revolution, and turns instead to pimping and running cabarets in the seedy dancehalls of Pigalle. As Abdelkader and Messaoub become more and more zealous in their quest for justice, the destinies of the brothers intersect and collide in the French capital.

Sweeping, dramatic and grand in scale, *Hors la loi* has the feel of *The Godfather* or *Once Upon a Time in America*. With the spirit of generations of north Africans in mind, Bouchareb brings the Algerian legacy of resistance to life, through the eyes of those who lived it. - Cameron Bailey, *Toronto International Film Festival 2010*

## Patagonia

**Dir:** Marc Evans      **UK**      **2010**      **118 mins**      **Cert: CLUB**  
**Starring:** Duffy, Marta Lubos, Matthew Gravelle, Matthew Rhys, Nahuel Perez, Nia Roberts  
**Language:** English  
**Formats:** 35mm & D-Cinema  
**Available to programme:** August

'A nation without a language is a nation without a heart,' goes the Welsh proverb. Never has an idiom more eloquently captured the collective ethos of a people, but its ripples extend much further than you might think.

In 1865 this ancient Brythonic tongue forked like the red dragon's when 163 Welsh settlers took a patch of green, green grass to Argentina, a world away from the soot-dampened prospects of the coalfields. The stone setters of the Y Wladfa colony believed in Patagonia and, as Marc Evans' exquisite, sprawling road movie suggests, their dreams and identity have not yielded to centuries of expired calendars and ocean currents.

The rolling ewe-dashed Valleys sharply juxtapose the arid Andean foothills, but Evans frames these contrasting landscapes in a way that subconsciously encourages you to detect similarities, not differences. Indeed, while Patagonia tells two distinctly separate stories, their themes intersect over common ground.

One narrative thread follows Cerys (Marta Lubos), a frail but feisty pensioner who tricks her young neighbour Alejandro (Nahuel Pérez Biscayart) into chaperoning her on a pilgrimage to her ancestral homeland. Clutching a weathered tin of cherished heirlooms, Cerys determinedly sets about locating the family farm where she was born, disregarding the cataracts and diabetes that otherwise dictate her life.

The second traces a thirtysomething Welsh couple's journey west. Rhys (Matthew Gravelle) has been sent to photograph the chapels of Patagonia, and his girlfriend Gwen (Nia Roberts) has decided to tag along to cleanse and unwind in the aseptic Argentinean sun. Their relationship has hit the rocks since discovering they are unable to conceive, but when Gwen's head is turned by local alpha male Mateo (Matthew Rhys) their future together is brought into question.

*Patagonia* is spiced with moments of intense passion and melodrama – as well as humour in the chance romance that blossoms between Alejandro and a vivacious Cardiff girl (Duffy) – but the core ingredient is the metaphorical kinship that exists between our two female protagonists. Each place and character, though distinctively and intimately rendered, comes together in absolute alchemical harmony.

If previous features *My Little Eye*, *Trauma* and *Snow Cake* belied Evans' filmmaking voice, *Patagonia* is a loudhailer that announces the Carmarthen son as one of British cinema's most promising talents. - Adam Woodward, *Little White Lies Magazine*

## **Pina**

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**Dir: Wim Wenders                      Germany                      2011                      103 mins                      Cert: CLUB**

**Featuring Regina Advento, Malou Airaudo, Ruth Amarante, Jorge Puerta**

**Language: English/German**

**Formats: D-Cinema only**

**Available to programme: July**

Words are the enemy in Wim Wenders's mysterious, submersive and captivating 3D tribute to German dance pioneer Pina Bausch, who died in 2009 just as Wenders, the director of *Buena Vista Social Club* and *Wings of Desire*, was beginning to make this film. One by one, the dancers of the Tanztheater Wuppertal, the company she ran for 36 years, talk of her unwillingness to explain herself in words. 'Dance for love,' one of her colleagues remembers her saying, recalling it as one of the few instructions he received from Bausch in years of working with her. 'Go on searching' and 'What are we longing

for?’ are two other rare comments which the dancers recall her sharing with them.

Wenders takes his cue from Bausch’s Trappist approach to making art. We don’t hear or see him. And while he nearly embraces a talking-head element in his otherwise deeply unconventional film, he pulls back from the actual talking bit: we see Bausch’s colleagues, filmed in close-up for Wenders’s camera, but they are silent and we only hear their words. There’s also little of Bausch herself apart from a few cleverly inserted snippets of footage of her dancing or sitting, smoking, behind her desk in the rehearsal room.

Where words have real power is in the memories of Bausch we hear from her dancers. From those we can imagine an intuitive and collaborative artist – a woman whose presence is powerful even in her absence. Mostly, though, Wenders gives us performance. We see extracts from four of Bausch’s pieces, ‘Le Sacre du Printemps’, ‘Kontakthof’, ‘Café Muller’ and ‘Vollmond’, performed at the Tanztheater Wuppertal. Helped by a sensitive, uncynical use of 3D technology, these sequences draw us deeply into the work and are as far as possible from any traditional idea of ‘filmed theatre’. Wenders takes his camera on stage so that in a scene from ‘Le Sacre du Printemps’ the dancers interact with the lens as if the technology is a performer, not an interloper.

We go outside too, into the post-war, rebuilt and sun-dappled mittel-European mundanity of Wuppertal, near Dusseldorf, and it’s here that the film takes on a magical quality as solo dancers or pairs of dancers perform pieces to express their memories of Bausch. One dances on pointe, with raw veal in her shoes, in front of a factory. Another performs on the grass verge of a dual carriageway. A finale sees the entire ensemble perform along the ridge of a quarry.

The beauty of Wenders’s film is that his imagery and gaze on Bausch’s work has the same essential, uncluttered and wryly funny quality as the work itself. Some will come to this film full of knowledge of Bausch. For others, it will be as fresh and novel as Wenders’s approach to turning dance into cinema. Both, I think, will find it entrancing and truly inspiring. - *Dave Calhoun, Time Out London*

### **Le Quattro Volte**

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**Dir: Michelangelo Frammartino    Italy    2010    88 mins    Cert: CLUB**

**Starring: Giuseppe Fuda, Bruno Timpano, Nazzareno Timpano**

**Language: Italian**

**Formats: 35mm & D-Cinema**

**Available to programme: September**

Grave, beautiful, austerely comic, and casually metempsychotic, Michelangelo Frammartino’s *Le Quattro Volte* is one of the wiggliest nature documentaries—or almost-documentaries—ever made.

The 42-year-old Frammartino’s second movie is virtually without dialogue, yet filled with the sounds of the world and intensely communicative. *Le Quattro Volte* is at once casually mystical and doggedly materialist, visually sophisticated and knowingly archaic. It’s a homespun Pythagorean meditation on the harmonious nature of the universe and the transmigration of souls shot in rural Calabria—the hilly land where, some 2,500 years ago, the Greek thinker invented mathematics and, according to tradition, preached

to the animals.

The movie's title translates to "*The Four Times*" but, not simply seasonal, it projects four states of being (human, animal, vegetable, and mineral). From dust to dust: *Le Quattro Volte* begins with a wheezing, grizzled old man and his herd of goats emerging out of the smoke rising from a charcoal kiln; the movie ends with the charcoal haze of what was once a mighty fir tree drifting across the screen. In between, the goatherd gathers up dust from the floor of the village church, which he mixes in water and drinks each night as a medicinal elixir. It evidently works—the morning after he misplaces his daily packet of church sweepings, he dies.

The moment is stunningly casual. *Le Quattro Volte* is a movie in which animals have at least as much presence as humans. The goatherd's persistent cough merges with the clamor of his charges' conversational baas and tinkling bells. A third of the way through, Frammartino orchestrates a bravura 10-minute take, observing in discreet long shot the crossroads in front of the old man's Spartan home at the edge of town. As costumed villagers prepare for their annual Good Friday Passion play, the goatherd's dog trots around, marking his territory and barking at them; chased off, the irreverent creature returns to unblock the wheels of their parked truck and free it to gently roll down the hill.

Frammartino, a university film teacher and self-described maker of interactive video pieces, is something like a combination of Michelangelo Antonioni and Jacques Tati. His minimalism is highly orchestrated. The movie's canine performance received a spontaneous round of applause at the Cannes screening where I saw it and was subsequently awarded the festival's unofficial "Palm Dog." (According to Frammartino, the sequence took two weeks to shoot, and the pooch, imported from the city, was the movie's "only true professional.")

Crowd-pleasing as the dog's trick is, the following scene is no less striking: Looking, one imagines, for their bedridden herder, the goats have invaded the old man's house; in the movie's signature image, one stands inexplicably perched atop a wooden table, piteously bleating. Man has been displaced from the center of the world, but, if one follows the filmmaker's logic, his soul migrates first into a newborn kid (the birth scene rivals that of the baby camel's appearance in Sergei Dvortsevov's *Tulpan*) and then, once the kid is separated from the herd and lost in the snowy forest, into the sheltering tree that becomes the movie's ultimate protagonist.

The fir lives through the winter (a home to lichen and ants) only to be cut down and stripped of its bark in a mildly riotous, vaguely pagan spring ritual that involves the entire village. Inevitably, what can only be described as the tree's corpse is turned into charcoal—dust in the wind, some of which, also inevitably, will settle on the church's stone floor. I can see how, given its highfalutin premise, exquisitely shot recurring locations, and irresistible animal behavior, *Le Quattro Volte* could induce a nagging sense of calculated ethno-funk, but this skeptic found it pretty darn sublime. - J. Hoberman, *The Village Voice*

## **Red Hill**

**Dir: Patrick Hughes      Australia      2010      97 mins      Cert: Club**

**Starring: Ryan Kwanten, Steve Bisley, Tom E. Lewis, Claire Van Der Boom, Christopher Davis, Kevin Harrington, Richard Sutherland, Ken Radley, John Brumpton**

**Language: English**

**Formats: D-Cinema only**

**Available to programme: July**

Rugged landscapes, a sheriff's posse and something spookin' the livestock - these are solid Western ingredients, but Patrick Hughes's brisk, inventive *Red Hill* gives them a new spin by placing them in a modern-day Australian police story. This hugely entertaining cross-genre tale of a rural manhunt contrives to meld cop and cowboy elements into a rattling nail-biter.

Atmospheric opening shots of mist-covered mountain country establish Red Hill's classic Western flavour – and show us that we're not in the usual flat terrain of Australian outback drama. Arriving in this landscape is Shane Cooper (the likeable, no-fuss Kwanten), a young city policeman married to Alice (Van Der Boom). A regular-bloke type, sensitive-souled and somewhat gauche, Shane has taken this posting because pregnant Alice has been advised she needs country air and (ha!) peace and quiet.

The locale is Red Hill, a remote one-horse town – and the horse belongs to chief inspector Old Bill (Bisley), a reactionary hard-liner who takes a dim view of his city-boy new recruit. Barely has Shane reported for duty than news comes of a prison break-out by the much-feared, horribly disfigured Aboriginal convict Jimmy Conway (Lewis). Conway heads for Red Hill, and is soon leaving a trail of corpses and getting the jump on Old Bill's posse. Shane quickly realises that a man's gotta go what a man's gotta do – and if he has to do it on horseback, so much the better.

In 1976, John Carpenter famously turned John Ford's Western *Rio Bravo* into his thriller *Assault On Precinct 13*. Here Hughes reverses the process, folding a modern cop drama back into the iconography of the Western. He also retains some Carpenter-style pulpy elements – ample bloodshed, an apparently indestructible silent nemesis, plus lashings of atmospheric darkness.

At times, the film skirts perilously close to predictability. But to see old-school conventions confirmed rather than subverted proves to be a source of much pleasure – and makes it all the more enjoyable when Hughes throws a witty curveball, as he does late in the film when a hugely incongruous deus ex machina stalks onto the scene.

Well cast with grizzled old-timers and snarling rednecks, the film is essentially a three-man show, with Shane facing up to Old Bill (an ironclad performance from Steve Bisley) on the one hand, and Tom E Lewis's genuinely scary but oddly affecting Conway on the other.

The pay-off is predictable, as Shane learns that the bad guys aren't always who they seem, but it's utterly satisfying. *Red Hill* is a tour de force by commercials director Hughes - making his feature debut as director, producer, writer and editor - and this labour of love should win him some international repute. Tim Hudson's widescreen

photography capitalises magnificently on the poetic terrain of Victoria's high country. -  
*Jonathan Romney, Screen International*

## **Snap**

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**Dir: Carmel Winters**      **Ireland**      **2010**      **86 mins**      **Cert: 16**  
**Starring: Aisling O'Sullivan, Stephen Moran, Pascal Scott, Eileen Walsh, Mick Lally, Adam Duggan**  
**Language: English**  
**Formats: D-Cinema only**  
**Available to programme: July**

The phrase "psychological drama" is somewhat overused in criticism. After all, what film, play or book is not driven by conflicting tensions within its characters' psyches? Even the hollow ciphers that inhabit Dan Brown adaptations exhibit crude signs of inner struggle.

*Snap*, the first feature from Carmel Winters, hitherto an acclaimed playwright, is, however, very much the real thing. This densely layered, relentlessly harrowing piece is not short on formal experimentation: different film media rub abrasively against one another; contrasting acting styles alternately lean towards mannered artificiality and uncomfortable, messy naturalism.

But, at its heart, *Snap* is a rigorous attempt to disentangle the warring strains within its protagonist's troubled brain. You couldn't say it was fun to watch. But it unquestionably signals a real surge forwards for Irish cinema.

Our base camp in this complex journey is the bland, soulless flat belonging to Sharon (Aisling O'Sullivan). A film crew has been invited into her home to consider the aftermath of an obscure trauma.

Everything about Sharon speaks of bitterness and aggression. She scowls at the overhanging boom microphone. She snaps at the unfortunate director. Before long, however, she is opening up a discussion about "the marks on the kid's body". She explains that her son doesn't smoke and – after pulling out newspaper reports featuring photographs of a body – explains that certain visible welts could be due to impetigo, a contagious skin infection.

Sharon appears to have become some sort of local pariah. Hate mail falls through her letterbox. Photographers lurk in her back garden. In one of several bitterly ironic outbursts, she describes her home as the "cradle of evil".

This part of the protagonist's story, presented via the documentary film crew's footage, is intercut with scenes showing Stephen (Stephen Moran, excellent), Sharon's teenage son, interacting with a young boy. We see Stephen – alternately friendly and menacing – playing records on a gramophone and making faces out of the child's food. Has the unfortunate tyke been kidnapped?

A third strand features home footage shot by Sharon's father. Gradually, hints towards the characters' motivations emerge.

*Snap* is not without its outbursts of grim humour. The late, great Mick Lally, making his

last appearance on film, turns up as a drunken layabout whom Sharon picks up in a chip shop for a bout of unlovely carnal fumbling. For the most part, however, this is an impressively serious attempt to explain why ordinary people do extraordinary things.

Not all of it works. Though the superb O'Sullivan delivers her lines with jarring sincerity, some of her speeches reveal their origins in a one-woman play. There is an overly theatrical tone to the grander pronouncements and, at times, the voice feels like that of an internal monologue dragged blinking into unwelcome sunlight.

But these odd misjudgments of tone don't detract from the impressively cinematic ambience of the piece. Much of the credit for the fact that the film looks so much like a film (not something you could say of every domestic release) should be put the way of cinematographer Kate McCullough.

Previously lauded for her work on *His & Hers*, McCullough manages the tricky feat of blending a variety of stocks and media into an unexpectedly cohesive whole. The eventual decision to employ split-screen could, in less adept hands, have come across like shameless gimmickry.

A recent winner of the Dublin Film Critics Circle's prize for best Irish film at the Jameson Dublin International Film Festival, *Snap* feels like a real original. It is to the film's credit that – being so strange, you see – one can hardly imagine where the director will go next. Be brave and give it a go. - *Donald Clarke, The Irish Times*

### **Sweetgrass**

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**Dir: Ilisa Barbash, Lucien Castaing Taylor USA 2009 101 mins Cert: CLUB**

**Language: English**

**Formats: 35mm only**

**Available to programme: August**

Tracing the very last sheep drive up Montana's Beartooth Mountains to summer pasture, *Sweetgrass* offers a one-of-a-kind experience. Its visuals range from sheep-level close-ups to soaring overviews, while its complex source soundtrack seamlessly melds human and ovine contributions. At once epic-scale and earthbound, Ilisa Barbash and Lucien Castaing-Taylor's startling documentary plays like a mad cross between Howard Hawks' *Red River* and *Grass*, Merian Cooper's paean to vanishing nomadic traditions.

*Sweetgrass* showcases an elemental intimacy between man and animal. Initially, those beasts are only sheep, definitively asserted in the pre-title shot as Castaing-Taylor's camera zeroes in on one blue-tagged specimen that placidly stares back. In the claustrophobic confines of the shed, the sheep are held fast between the legs of men shearing them; inside a barn, newborn lambs are yanked from their mothers' bodies or dragged off to nurse in separate stalls.

Once the drive starts, however, the sheer number of sheep (some 3,000) makes this herd an unstoppable force — a river of white, flowing up and down hills like some primeval juggernaut that men, horses and dogs struggle to control, not always successfully.

The herders' materials are primitive: teepees made of branches and canvas, stoves as

old as the hills, worn saddles. The rhythmic, sing-song urgings of the shepherds mingle with the bells and the bleatings of the sheep, along with the shepherds' walkie-talkie chatter, in a deafening clamor. Woven throughout is the heavy breathing of men and horses pushed to exhaustion in the thin, cold mountain air.

Once the herd reaches the highlands (the months-long drive compressed to mere minutes of film), only two men are left to watch: John Ahern, a weatherbeaten veteran, and the much younger Pat Connolly, who has a tougher time adjusting. Frustrated beyond measure, Connolly begins to curse the sheep and, at one deliciously comic point, his countless epithets echo peevishly as the camera slowly retreats to encompass the grandiose sweep of the land... - *Ronnie Scheib, Variety*

### **TT3D: Closer to The Edge**

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**Dir: Richard De Aragues**    **UK**                      **2011**                      **103 mins**                      **Cert: 15A**  
**Language: English**  
**Formats: D-Cinema only**  
**Available to programme: July**

*TT3D: Closer to the Edge* is a film about the TT, the world-famous motorcycle race that takes place on the Isle of Man every year. Racing along public roads on bikes just inches apart - with speeds hitting 200mph - drama, tension and tragedy all combine to thrill the audience and tell a very moving human story.

Packed with high speed, thrilling 3D coverage of the races, *TT3D* also explores the very human story behind the visor. A fascinating insight into man's enduring obsession with speed, thrill-seeking, risk-taking and the will to win. The races take place along public roads packed with spectators who have come from all over the world to watch bikes racing just inches apart. With speeds hitting 200mph the TT has a reputation for excitement, courage and danger.

Rarely a year goes by when someone isn't killed: every rider knows that each race might be his or her last. Riders pit their skills against each other with a determination to win and push themselves beyond their limits in their bid to become "King of the Mountain".

The film follows the leading riders taking part in the 2010 race (Northern Irish racer Michael Dunlop features), in particular Guy Martin and Ian Hutchinson. Martin is a lovable rogue who doesn't play by the rules, but his determination to win his first race pushes him to the limit. Hutchinson is dedicated, focused and works hard to stay at the top.

The film is about their battle to become the ultimate rider in the most dramatic and record-breaking year in TT history. The race has always called for a commitment far beyond any other sporting event, and many have made the ultimate sacrifice in their quest for victory. A story about freedom of choice and the strength of human spirit; it's also an examination of what motivates those rare few, this elite band of brothers who risk everything to win. Filmed in stunning 3D, *TT3D: Closer to the Edge* is a story about what it means to be truly alive. - *Belfast Film Festival 2011*

## **Two in The Wave**

*Deux de la Vague*

**Dir: Emmanuel Laurent**      **France**      **2009**      **90 mins**      **Cert: CLUB**

**Language: French**

**Formats: D-Cinema only**

**Available to programme: July**

This documentary about the friendship and eventual estrangement between François Truffaut and Jean-Luc Godard starts with pictures of Truffaut's triumph in Cannes in 1959, where his direction of his feature debut *Les quatre cents coups* won him the Golden Palm. While Truffaut and his young protagonist (and alter ego) Jean-Pierre Léaud enjoy all the attention, Godard is sitting slightly frustrated in Paris in the editorial office of the film magazine Cahiers du Cinéma writing reviews.

One year later, it's his turn when *À bout de souffle* embarks on its triumphal journey. The Nouvelle Vague is born. Nine years later, their friendship ends at the same festival in Cannes: Godard embarks on his committed phase and reproaches Truffaut for being apolitical. This results in a fierce quarrel, after which their ways part.

The documentary includes beautiful archive material and well-chosen film excerpts. Their friendship and their break-up embody the story of French cinema. Exploring the archives and the films of the two New Wave directors, and leafing through the press of the period, *Two in the Wave*, takes us back to a prodigious decade that transformed the world of cinema. - *Moscow International Film Festival 2010*

## **Way, The**

**Dir: Emilio Estevez**      **USA**      **2010**      **128 mins**      **Cert: 12A**

**Starring: Martin Sheen, Deborah Kara Unger, Yorick Van Wageningen, James Nesbitt, Emilio Estevez**

**Language: English**

**Formats: 35mm & D-Cinema**

**Available to programme: July**

Four years after his impressive ensemble biopic *Bobby*, actor-director Emilio Estevez returns with another ambitious drama that also features his father, Martin Sheen. *The Way* is a touching film about the testy yet unbreakable bond between father and son, as well as the supportive, familial connections that can form among strangers.

Tom (Sheen), an American ophthalmologist, is informed that his son (Estevez) has been killed in a freak accident on a pilgrimage along the Camino de Santiago, also known as The Way of Saint James, in the northwest of Spain. Upon arriving in France to collect his son's remains and return to the United States, Tom is hit with a profound sense of sadness and quickly changes his plans. Equipped with his deceased son's guidebook and backpack, he embarks on the 800km pilgrimage from the Pyrenees to Santiago de Compostela in an attempt to honour his son's memory by finishing what he had started.

Along the way, Tom encounters several eccentric travelers, each with their varied motivations: a gregarious Dutchman (van Wageningen) wants to lose weight, a Canadian woman (Unger) hopes to quit her addiction to cigarettes, an Irish author (Nesbitt) struggling to write a travel book. Their apparent weaknesses frustrate the stoic and determined Tom, yet the farther they travel together the more they come to form a

surrogate family unit and support each other through their various tribulations.

Set against gorgeous vistas of France and Spain, *The Way*, like all great road trip movies, depicts how travelling through an unknown land can lead to greater self-knowledge and understanding. A moving and potent character study buoyed by a great soundtrack and an immensely likable cast, this is a journey of self-discovery that follows four very different people as they learn to better love themselves and each other. - *Cameron Bailey, Toronto International Film Festival*

### **Win Win**

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**Dir: Tom McCarthy                      USA                      2011                      105 mins                      Cert: 15A**  
**Starring: Paul Giamatti, Amy Ryan, Bobby Cannavale, Jeffrey Tambor, Burt Young**  
**Language: English**  
**Formats: 35mm & D-Cinema**  
**Available to programme: July**

Writer-director Tom McCarthy's forte is establishing a well-defined character then throwing intruders into this character's world to change things up dramatically. In *The Station Agent* it was Peter Dinklage's reclusive dwarf who had his life adjustment with strangers who would eventually become friends. In *The Visitor* Richard Jenkins' dessicated professor got his life spiced up dramatically by a group of refugee squatters. *Win Win* gives us Paul Giamatti as a ground-down New Jersey lawyer who can't bring himself to tell his long-suffering wife, Jackie (Ryan), that his failing practice isn't meeting the family's never-ending bills. Things are dispiriting all around him. He and Vig (Jeffrey Tambor), the sadsack accountant with whom he shares an office, can't get their boiler repaired. Mike's best buddy Terry (Bobby Cannavale) is bitterly preoccupied with his ugly divorce. And the high-school wrestling team of puny boys and oddballs Mike coaches with Vig and Terry are utterly hopeless.

An unethical opportunity presents itself when a new client slipping into senility, the elderly, prosperous Leo (Burt Young), resists being placed in a retirement home. Leo has no relatives on the scene so Mike gets himself appointed Leo's legal guardian, stashes the old man in care and banks a generous monthly fee for doing absolutely nothing. Then the grandson no-one knew Leo had arrives, a troubled 16 year-old runaway called Kyle (played by very effective newcomer Alex Shaffer), who had hoped to move in with his grandad. Mike has some fancy footwork to do, but after he discovers the unlikely Kyle (peroxided, pierced, tattooed) is a star athlete, he persuades Jackie they should take the unfortunate young lad in. The bills are getting paid, the wrestling team starts winning for once and Mike is beginning to relax. The fool.

Confusion, deception and unforeseen complications from this one untruth prevail as the basically decent Mike keeps jumping out of the frying pan into the fire. Some of the situations are as absurd as those you'd find in a television comedy, but they are so well orchestrated and acted that you really don't mind the tidy, happy solutions hit upon after a succession of emotional domestic and professional crises. Fans of McCarthy's previous gems may sniff at the less bizarre circumstances and less alienated characters in a cosier tale. But connoisseurs of his work will savour the flavour in an ensemble of tasty characters (Cannavale, Tambor and the kids are a treat), and another improbably sympathetic demonstration of dour-droll from Giamatti. - *Angie Errigo, Empire Magazine*

## **You Will Meet A Tall Dark Stranger**

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**Dir: Woody Allen**                      **UK**    **2010**                      **98 mins**                      **Cert: 12A**  
**Starring: Anthony Hopkins, Antonio Banderas, Freida Pinto, Gemma Jones, Josh Brolin, Kelly Harrison, Lucy Punch, Naomi Watts**  
**Language: English**  
**Formats: 35mm & D-Cinema**  
**Available to programme: July**

Woody Allen is in a virulent mood, and it suits him. This inspired piece of misanthropy is a London-set dissection of two unhappily married couples: Alfie (Hopkins) has taken up with call girl Charmaine (the spectacular Punch); his wife, Helena (Jones), is drowning her sorrows in psychic malarkey; their daughter, Sally (Watts), is smitten with her boss (Banderas); and her schlub husband, Roy (Brolin), is tempted by a new, alluring neighbour (Pinto).

Allen even reprises the transcendent final shot of Chaplin's *City Lights* — and his own *Purple Rose of Cairo* — so that he can further twist the knife on his characters's delusions.

Why does the film feel so essential? Perhaps because of that tall, dark stranger - whom Roy identifies in a tossed-off aside - lurking just outside the frame. It isn't the first time death has figured in an Allen movie, but the way he grapples with it here (leaving each character at a moment of irresolution comparable to staring down the man with the scythe) is much more potent and direct. This love letter to the Reaper and his unknowable timetable is a bracing addition to an erratic, yet indispensable oeuvre. - *Keith Uhlich, Time Out New York*