

ARTS ARRAY FILM SERIES - SPRING 2009

The Arts Array Film Series is a cultural outreach program sponsored by Virginia Highlands Community College, the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center, Abingdon Cinemall, Virginia Intermont College, King College, and Emory & Henry College.

Students and employees of the sponsoring institutions are admitted free. General admission is \$7.50.

Each film will be shown at the Abingdon Cinemall at 4 p.m. and again at 7:30 p.m. on the scheduled dates.

For more information, contact Ben Jennings, Arts Array Coordinator, at (276) 739-2447 or bjennings@vhcc.edu.



PETE SEEGER: THE POWER OF SONG
JANUARY 19 AND 20

THE DUCHESS
JANUARY 26 AND 27

I SERVED THE KING
FEBRUARY 2 AND 3

MIRACLE AT ST. ANNA
FEBRUARY 9 AND 10

FEAR(S) OF THE DARK
FEBRUARY 16 AND 17

TOWELHEAD
FEBRUARY 23 AND 24

A THOUSAND YEARS OF GOOD PRAYERS
MARCH 2 AND 3

HAPPY-GO-LUCKY
MARCH 9 AND 10

DARWIN'S NIGHTMARE
MARCH 16 AND 17

SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE
MARCH 23 AND 24

A GIRL CUT IN TWO
MARCH 30 AND 31

RACHEL GETTING MARRIED
APRIL 6 AND 7

SYNECDOCHE, NEW YORK
APRIL 13 AND 14

MILK
APRIL 20 AND 21

CHE
PART 1: APRIL 27
PART 2: APRIL 28

A CHRISTMAS TALE
MAY 4 AND 5

PETE SEEGER: THE POWER OF SONG
MONDAY AND TUESDAY, JANUARY 19 AND 20

This uplifting documentary is a tribute to Pete Seeger, legendary folksinger and composer who thought music could be a force for good, and proved it by writing songs that have actually shaped our times (“If I Had a Hammer” and “Turn, Turn, Turn”) and popularizing “We Shall Overcome” and Woody Guthrie’s unofficial national anthem, “This Land Is Your Land.” The film is both a concert film and a tribute to Seeger’s legacy. Woven into the film are archival footage, home movies from the Seeger family albums, as well as testimony by admirers who represent his influence and legacy: Bruce Springsteen, Bob Dylan, Tom Paxton, Julian Bond, Bonnie Raitt, and many others. (93 minutes)

THE DUCHESS
MONDAY AND TUESDAY, JANUARY 26 AND 27

The best period drama in years features Keira Knightley as Georgiana who in 18th century England is maneuvered by her mother into marriage with the Duke of Devonshire (Ralph Fiennes), a cold and cruel man who is only interested in her as a means of having a male heir. Georgiana is trapped in her unhappy marriage which becomes a preposterous triangle with her husband and his live-in mistress. The biography of Georgiana by Amanda Foreman on which the film is based created a sensation because of the parallels between Georgiana’s life and that of Princess Diana—and the fact that they were related. They were both members of the Spencer family. (110 minutes)

I SERVED THE KING OF ENGLAND
MONDAY AND TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 2 AND 3

Veteran Czech filmmaker Jiri Menzel brings to the screen an adaptation of the great Czech comic-absurdist novel which reflects much of 20th Czech (and European) history. The main character is a Chaplinesque symbol of a nation made cynical after being taken over first by the Nazis and then by the Communists within the span of a decade. The film starts when the main character is being released from a Communist prison camp after serving 15 years, then goes back in time to reflect his picaresque life story—one that is a Forrest Gump-style combination of optimism, cluelessness and moral blindness to the world he is living in. (120 minutes)

MIRACLE AT ST. ANNA
MONDAY AND TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 9 AND 10

Spike Lee has said of his new epic film: “It’s a World War II film—a brutal mystery that deals with historic events and the stark reality of war. But it’s a lyrical, mystical story of compassion and love.” It follows the fortunes of members of the all-black Buffalo Soldiers division in Italy in the last year of the war: Aubrey Stamps, the ranking officer, a leader of reasonableness and dignity; Bishop Cummings, a selfish street survivor and womanizer; Hector Negron, a Puerto Rican radio man and interpreter; and Sam Train, a man-child who is deeply religious and the most compassionate member of the group. (160 minutes)

FEAR(S) OF THE DARK
MONDAY AND TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 16 AND 17

This experimental French film is a compilation of six horror films, all done in vivid black and white animation, punctuated by segments by the graphic artist Blutch featuring an aristocrat holding savage hounds straining at a leash. Each time a hound breaks free, it leaps upon the next story, and occasionally, a victim. There’s a story of a teenage boy who meets the wrong girl. Another tale deals with a small community where people disappear and are never seen again. Then there’s the narrative of a man who doesn’t get the rest he hopes for in an old not-so-abandoned house. (85 minutes)

TOWELHEAD
MONDAY AND TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 23 AND 24

Alan Ball, the acclaimed director of *American Beauty*, has made a bold, dark and shockingly funny coming-of-age story of a 13-year-old Arab-American girl Jasira as she navigates the confusing path of adolescence and newfound sexuality. Sent to Houston to live with her strict Lebanese father, she quickly finds that their neighbors find them a curiosity. Thrown into an unfamiliar suburban world, Jasira must confront racism and hypocrisy at home and at school. She seeks friendship and acceptance from her neighbors—one an Army reservist and the other a meddling but caring expectant mother. (116 minutes)

A THOUSAND YEARS OF GOOD PRAYERS MONDAY AND TUESDAY, MARCH 2 AND 3

Over the years Wayne Wang has been the primary film interpreter of the Asian-American experience in American film, including *Chang Is Missing* and the adaptation of Amy Tan's *The Joy Luck Club*. In this new film, a Chinese widower Mr. Shi travels to America from Beijing to visit his daughter Yilan, whom he has not seen in 12 years, to comfort her on her recent divorce. Mr. Shi immediately starts behaving like a traditional Chinese father, wanting to know everything that Yilan does and where she goes, imposing on her his conservative views of women that clash with the liberated, independent, self-reliant woman Yilan has become. (83 minutes)

HAPPY-GO-LUCKY MONDAY AND TUESDAY, MARCH 9 AND 10

Acclaimed British director Mike Leigh has made a film that is a perfect antidote for these tough economic times—a film portrait of an unceasingly optimistic North London primary school teacher named Poppy, whose cheerfulness isn't a way of hiding from a chaotic, sometimes hostile world, but a means of facing it. Poppy is played by the brilliant Sally Hawkins, who has been winner Best Actress awards around the world for the performance. Surrounded by a wonderful supporting cast, the film is about hitting the groove of everyday life and, nearly miraculously, getting music out of it. (119 minutes)

DARWIN'S NIGHTMARE MONDAY AND TUESDAY, MARCH 16 AND 17

Austrian director Hubert Sauper's acclaimed documentary is a compelling cautionary tale that shows how, in this age of globalization, things can easily evolve in the worst possible of unforeseen ways. In the 1960s a non-native fish was introduced into Lake Victoria in Tanzania, the world's largest tropical lake. The predatory Nile perch was far bigger than its rivals and, in killing off the native species, has had a negative impact not only on the lake, but also on the residents in communities on the lake. The fish became a delicacy in Europe and Japan so an industry grew up to process the fish, but that brought its own miseries: social dislocations, poverty, prostitution and political corruption. (107 minutes)

SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE MONDAY AND TUESDAY, MARCH 23 AND 24

The latest film from British director Danny Boyle, who has displayed great versatility in *Trainspotting*, *28 Days* and *Sunshine*, has now made an award-winning, feel-good film about a young boy Jamal from the slums of Mumbai who is a contestant on the Indian version of "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?" The story of the boy's life unfolds in a series of flashbacks, one game-show question at a time. As Jamal journeys down memory lane, the film introduces his artful-dodger brother Salim, but especially the beautiful, unattainable Latika, the girl of his dreams. The film combines naturalistic scenes of the slums of Mumbai with Bollywood fantasy sequences and dancing in the streets! (116 minutes)

A GIRL CUT IN TWO MONDAY AND TUESDAY, MARCH 30 AND 31

The latest work from French master director Claude Chabrol, who is frequently referred to as the French Hitchcock, was inspired by the scandalous American murder in the early 1900s of celebrated architect Stanford White, shot dead by the jealous young millionaire who married White's teenage mistress, a showgirl. In this French version, the Stanford White character has become a successful novelist, the young man a pharmaceutical heir, and the young woman an innocent TV weather girl. Chabrol's interest is in the young woman's misadventures in the upper-middle-class world of vipers. ((110 minutes)

RACHEL GETTING MARRIED MONDAY AND TUESDAY, APRIL 6 AND 7

After a detour into documentaries, Jonathan Demme directs his best film since *Silence of the Lambs*. Anne Hathaway gives one of the best performances of 2008 as a self-indulgent and spoiled sister Kym who has been granted a leave from a rehab center to attend her younger sister Rachel's bi-racial marriage. Under the stress of the weekend wedding, the family's dysfunction is highlighted in poignant, comic and even tragic ways. Kym wants desperately to fit in, to be the center of attention, even though it's her sister's wedding. Debra Winger stars as the mother, Bill Irwin as the father, and Rosemarie Dewitt as Rachel. ((113 minutes)

SYNECDOCHE, NEW YORK
MONDAY AND TUESDAY, APRIL 13 AND 14

By far the most mind-blowing film of the year is Charlie Kaufman's *Synechdoche, New York*. Known for time shifts, multiple storylines, and bizarre fantasy elements, Kaufman is the screenwriter of *Being John Malkovich*, *Adaptation*, and *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind* who has now directed his first film. The story focuses on a small-town theater director (Philip Seymour Hoffman) whose wife has left him and his health is suddenly deteriorating. Facing what he senses is imminent death, he gathers a huge cast of actors and begins reconstructing New York City in a gigantic warehouse. The idea is to have the cast explore all of the truths not spoken among the mundane details of their lives. (123 minutes)

MILK
MONDAY AND TUESDAY, APRIL 20 AND 21

Gay Rights Activist. Friend. Unifier. Politician. Fighter. Icon. Hero. His life changed history and his courage changed lives. In 1977, Harvey Milk (played by Sean Penn in one of the great acting performances of the year), was elected to the San Francisco Board of Supervisors, becoming the first openly gay man to be voted into major public office in America. Forging coalitions across the political spectrum, from senior citizens to union workers, Milk changed the very nature of what it means to be a fighter for human rights, until his murder in 1978 by former supervisor Dan White (played by Josh Brolin). (128 minutes)

CHE
PART 1: MONDAY, APRIL 27
PART 2: TUESDAY, APRIL 28

Comparable to David Lean's epics, *Lawrence of Arabia* and *Dr. Zhivago*, Steven Soderbergh's *Che* tells the story of Latino revolutionary Ernesto "Che" Guevara. Starring Benecio Del Toro, Part 1 on Monday ("The Argentine") recounts Guevara's background and his role in the Cuban revolution alongside Fidel Castro. Part 2 on Tuesday ("The Guerrilla") dramatizes Guevara's failure as he attempts to overturn the government of Bolivia. More like historical reporting than political filmmaking, *Che* gives us the upward trajectory of a man who led a successful revolution and the downward trajectory of a man fighting for a failed one. (262 minutes)

A CHRISTMAS TALE
MONDAY AND TUESDAY, MAY 4 AND 5

Made by France's leading director Arnaud Desplechin, *A Christmas Tale* focuses on the matriarch of the family (played by the iconic Catherine Deneuve) who is facing her mortality. She has been diagnosed with leukemia and her three children and one grandchild return home for the holidays, where they undergo tests to determine if any of them are suitable bone marrow transplant donors. More like a cross between an Ingmar Bergman film with an avant-garde experiment than a sentimental Hollywood movie, *A Christmas Tale* has characters addressing the camera, bits of romantic fantasy, a mock-noir montage, snippets of other films, and a soundtrack flooded with music. (152 minutes)