



# NEWSLETTER 5

## Desert Island Films

You will all be familiar with Roy Plomley's wonderful DID programme format on Radio 4, so simple yet such a natural classic of the airwaves. So I hope you will forgive us if we bend the medium a little to present the first of an ongoing series with a similar theme based around that which the Phoenix offers you every Wednesday. Thus, we present our first edition of *Desert Island Films*, and our castaway this week is the highly-esteemed veteran of the **Phoenix**, John Marshall. John has seen more films than most people I know, and he is our go-to Council member for a verdict on some of the more obscure movies that come up when we are discussing titles at our Film Selection Committee meetings. He is also a regular at the Turner Sims, travels to Chichester frequently for their weekly film programme, and in season to their Festival events, is a regular at cinemas across London, and he is also a long-time jazz music fan. When I asked him which films he would want to have with him if he were washed up on a desert island, he said it would be difficult to come up with a definitive list; his choice might well change from week to week. However, he has produced an interesting and eclectic list, perhaps inevitably, given his encyclopaedic knowledge of all things cinematic. So cue the music *By the Sleepy Lagoon*, and the sound of herring gulls ... and the gentle tones of either Mr. Plomley or Kirsty Young:

*John, you must imagine a solar-powered DVD player has been washed up on your island, what's your selection of movies that you would want to take with you?*

I have selected a random set of films to study on my Desert Island rather than just pick classics everyone has seen. My choices come in no particular order, but I wanted to add an appropriate comment for each one.

**Seven Samurai** - because it's a classic by a master of cinema, Akira Kurosawa.

**A Night at the Opera** - Marx Brothers - to remind me of my school film society that got me into the world of cinema in the first place.

**Les Parapluies de Cherbourg** - for the clever use of pastel colours to match the feelings of the characters, (sadly, slightly spoiled in the new DVD print - the 35mm original was magnificent).

**Belleville Rendezvous** - the best animated feature so far.

**Harvey** - to remind me of seeing James Stewart acting with a giant invisible rabbit on the stage in London! Yes really!

**Black Orpheus** - so I can recall the balcony seats in the old Woolston Cinema, where the Rio scenes on the mountain top looked like 3D.

**Vertigo** - because Hitchcock is the most underrated British director. He invented many of the techniques we accept as normal today. This is currently reckoned to be his best work, but any of his films would do.

**The Saragossa Manuscript** - so that I can work my way through the multi-layered plot and get the full story sorted out.

**La Règle du Jeu** - another classic by a master of film

making. Renoir's framing gives a picture that could be by his father in nearly every shot.

And of course: **Eva Wants to Sleep** - I tried to get this one back in the UK for years after seeing it at the old Southampton Film Society in 1959. Now I've got my DVD I can't leave her behind!

*Which of your choices would you take if it was down to one DVD?*

Well it would have to be **Eva**. Then I can always explain to the monkeys why it's so important to those of us who remember the Stalin days - everyone else has already heard the story!

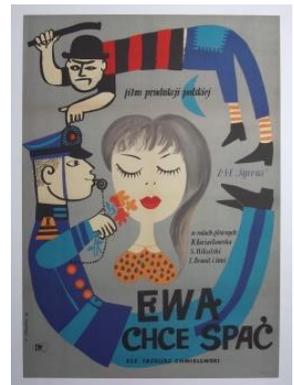
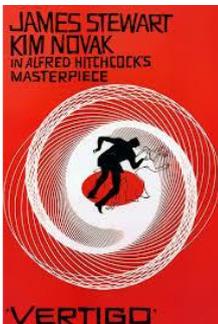
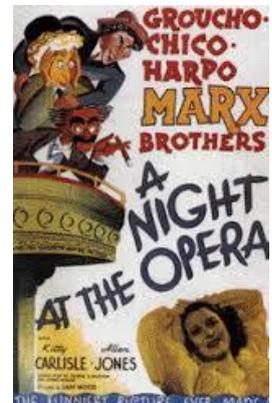
*You can take a first edition of Halliwell's Film Guide (though I'm not sure you'd need it such is your knowledge of so many films), and a copy of The Bible, but you are also allowed a book and a luxury of your choice. What would they be?*

For my luxury I shall take a big photograph album containing pictures of everyone who ever helped or visited the Southampton Film Society and the Phoenix. That will include pretty well all the quality people in my film life; they give me some very wonderful memories, from founder member Kay Smith, who joined on the first day in 1931, to this year's student volunteers.

My book will be **A Voyage to Purilia** by Elmer Rice, now out of print. This was published in 1930 and describes a planet/country where everyone behaves as they did in the movies at that time; e.g. no-one ever buys a ticket for a train - they always run after it and jump on it as it rounds a bend. Of course this is easy as trains only travel slowly round bends in the movies!

And you'll notice there's still no Luis Buñuel, David Lean, Zhang Yimou, Orson Welles etc. etc. Forget the desert island, I'm staying here!

John



**Thank you, enjoy the film! დიდი მადლობა და ისიამოვნეთ ფილმი**  
(the same, in Georgian, just in case you didn't know!)

**Samba**

Another winner from the **Intouchables** team.

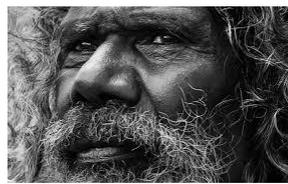
Magnifique! Du désespoir, de la tendresse, de l'humour mais surtout de la tristesse!

Top notch, should be major box office.

The brighter side of asylum seeking.

Mediocre, far too long, poorly written, hardly deserving of excellent actors.

**Att: 174 84.3%**



**Charlie's Country**

Visually stunning and sensitively captured the bleak mood of cultures on the edge.

Man's injustice to man.

White man's justice?

Beautifully slow and measured. Lovely colours and fabulously spare music.

A face that won't be easy to forget

**Att: 170 83.2%**

**La French (The Connection)**

Absolutely riveting.

The most boring film I've seen for ages.

Brilliant film which held its tension right through to the end.

A driven allegory that reflects the global situation. Excellent filming thoroughly strident in concept.



Great camerawork and soundtrack, and a re-appearing white MGB!

Black, real, life.

**Att: 166 83.8%**



**Still Life**

Beautiful, brilliant, British film.

A+++

Perfect economy of script, setting & music. The best so far this season.

What a little gem, very poignant.

It's amazing how a boring dapper little man from the council can hold your rapt attention and help so many other people's lives.

Slower than paint drying, and why the ridiculous ending?

**Att: 162 86.25%**

**Far From the Madding Crowd**

All human life is here. Lovely to have the singers and players here at the start.

Gorgeous, moving, compelling, just as good as it was in 1967.

Silly accents!

Must read the book now.

I feel sorry for the sheep!

**Att: 121 86.9%**



**Leviathan**

What an incredibly bleak and powerful film. Very thought-provoking.

Good music and photography, but so slow.

My heart has not stopped pounding, brilliant.

Pure evil.

Kafka-esque enough to drive you to drink.

Too much vodka!

**Att: 160 78.6%**

**The Salt of the Earth**

I wish the world could see this film, brilliant at all levels.

Deeply saddening, eye-opening, but with joyous ending and hope.



Sublime images of our planet, people and wildlife; very arresting.

Absolutely mesmerising.

A massive film with a massive message. How fitting to show it on Armistice Day. Should be compulsory viewing for politicians and business people alike.

**Att: 190 93.5%**

**The President**

Outstanding, left me drained.

Unremittingly grim, even the credits.

Started off like the Russian Revolution, ended up like the Libyan one. Nothing changes in 90 years.

A lesson for the world perhaps. We cannot build a world on revenge, try love.

Let's have another Georgian film.

Beautiful acting.

**Att: 135 85.3%**



There is nothing like a feel-good film for Christmas to close our Autumn term and **Pride** fits the bill Welshly well. So from all the Phoenix Council to all our members



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