



NEWSLETTER 4



Desert Island Films

With nary a cruise ship in sight, your Phoenix Newsletter navigates its way to that idyllic atoll somewhere in the middle of the oceans for another in our series of **Desert Island Films**. And in this issue, we have invited long-time member of the Phoenix, Wendy White, to make her castaway choices. Wendy is a Phoenix Council member, and a key contributor on the film selection committee. As you will see, she will happily go to London to watch new releases, and is a regular at the annual London Film Festival, searching out often obscure gems from around the cinematic world. So, Wendy, hit the beach running, please ...

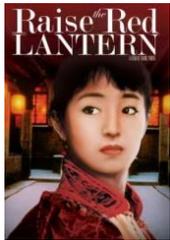
It is an honour to be asked to select my Desert Island Films and very hard to choose! As with Desert Island Discs these movie choices do not necessarily represent my views on the best films ever made - they are chosen for a mix of cinematic and personal reasons. Some films I saw at the time they were released and haven't seen since; some I have only seen many years after they were made and experienced alongside decades of social commentary and review; some I have seen more than once at different times. All this of course makes a difference.

Metropolis (1927) This silent classic still feels fantastically contemporary. Artificial Intelligence is currently a hot topic and here is a 90-year-old film exploring robots, mechanisation, urban society, class and capitalism. The special effects are still interesting and the Art Deco design visually distinctive.

Stage Door (1937) Power, aspiration and stardom have been the thematic meat of many stand-out films like **All About Eve** and **Sunset Boulevard**. Abuse of power in Hollywood is currently headline news. Here is a film full of strong women sharing a bedsit and aiming for the bigtime. A fantastic wisecracking script superbly delivered by actors who all developed long and luminous careers - I salute your contribution Katherine Hepburn, Ginger Rogers, Lucille Ball, Constance Collier and Gail Patrick (who was later a trailblazing executive producer).

Pather Panchali (1955) This movie maximised the potential of black and white film as a medium with incredible use of lighting - all with a then inexperienced director, production team and actors. It explores the tension between artistic dreaming, the poetry of the everyday and the first order demands of life. With a soundtrack of ragas from Ravi Shankar it fuses the spiritual with social realism.

Local Hero (1983) Sometimes films are about individual scenes that stay with you. Trying to describe the Northern Lights from a phone box, Fulton Mackay representing money as grains of sand, Burt Lancaster on the beach finding that human connection triumphs over greed. Deciding on an Oceanographic Institute and astronomical research over destroying a Scottish village for oil seems a simplistic idyll, but we needed something hopeful under Thatcher. What do we need now?!

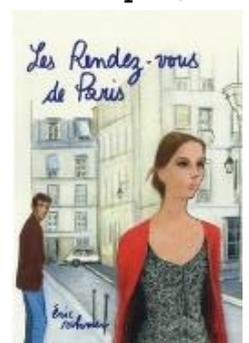


Raise the Red Lantern (1991) A painterly film by the versatile Zhang Yimou - gorgeous to watch with Gong Li starring. The constraint of her experience as fourth wife in a wealthy household with the complex politics and psychological consequences can be seen as a metaphor for China. Full of arresting imagery and an example of the difficulties of film making under the threat of censorship.

Ladybird, Ladybird (1994) I don't think that this is Ken Loach's best film but it is the one that had the most impact on me. Film as exploration of social complexity and injustice is an important element in my love of the silver screen. I don't usually need a box of tissues at the cinema, but at the end of this I left in floods of tears, feeling upset in a way I found I couldn't describe to myself.

Rendezvous in Paris (1996) What I love about many French films is that the emphasis is not on plot, but on characters. Here three interrelated sections are set in various parks around Paris and show the opportunities unique to each individual encounter we have with someone. I was so taken with the inherent optimism of this film and its setting that I went to Paris and visited all of the parks in the film in a weekend!

In the Mood for Love (2000) Here, the clue is in the title - it's all about mood, love (the repressed variety), and food. Fantastic cinematography presents shots essentially of two people passing on the staircase a lot with steamers of rice and dumplings. Well not quite, there is much more to it than that - an outstanding film about loneliness, social constraint, morality and connections.



Mulholland Drive (2002) I like a good mystery, a hint of *noir* even better. So I have to go for David Lynch's masterpiece. Am I sure what it is all about? No. Do I love a film where the viewer is invited to interpret the film in multiple ways? Yes. Psychologically interesting, this film about identity is for me the modern day **Vertigo**. It also challenges the idea of narrative and I am curious about the different ways we can tell a story, or even ask the question, what is a story?



Blue is the Warmest Colour (2013) The most recent of my film choices and proof that some long films are worth the screen time. I saw this on a rainy afternoon at the Renoir in London and instantly insisted that we show it at the Phoenix. A film that realistically captures both the waxing and waning of a relationship and the impact of our cumulative experience over time. It is also very hard to make a film that has a lot of sex in it well and to a purpose.

Well, we shall arrange for a screen, a decent bluray/dvd player and enough solar and wind power so you can watch this fascinating and eclectic selection. Which of your ten would you want if you could only take one film?



Well, I think it has to be **In the Mood For Love** – because who isn't?

And what about a book and a luxury item – you will already have a copy of *The Bible* and *Halliwel's Film Guide* as you wade ashore?

Aha, yes my luxury. The only time I have been on an island that seemed to me like a "desert island" was in the Perhentian Islands in Malaysia. The sand was so hot bare feet would burn and an egg would fry (I actually watched someone do it). So sun tan lotion for me so I can enjoy my time on the island without being burnt to a crisp.

And as for my book choice, I have never read it, so it is the time for Proust and *In Search of Lost Time*, which does seem apt. Although if I was picking one I had already read it would be *A Suitable Boy* by Vikram Seth - long, lots of characters and the best book not to make the Booker shortlist (I am still grumpy about this even now). And a final plea! If am allowed to take the *Complete Works of Shakespeare* too, could it be the Arden edition in individual volumes? I can then take individual plays around the island and learn the parts without having to lug them all around!



Marcel Proust
A la recherche
du temps perdu

Thank you very much Wendy, it looks like you will be kept seriously and contentedly busy on your faraway isle!

A reminder, if you needed one, that the tenth **Southampton Film Week** will draw to a close on November 19th. Still to come in the programme are the following events:

Thursday November 16th

The Race is On - Preview Screening Feature Documentary - University of Southampton, Highfield Campus, Building 46 Time: 7pm Price: Free

Exposure Filmmakers Screening Short Film Screening plus Q&A God's House Tower, Winkle Street, Southampton SO14 2NY Time: 8pm Price: £3

Friday November 17th

Cult in the Vault: The Lost Boys Feature Screening (15) Lankester Vault, High St, Southampton SO14 2BS Time: 8pm Price: £5

Saturday November 18th

Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone Feature Screening (PG) Harbour Lights Picturehouse, Ocean Village, Southampton SO14 3TL Kids' Club: Exclusively for children and their parents or carers. Unaccompanied adults are not admitted. Time: 10.30am Price: £2

Sunday November 19th

Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs Feature animation screening (U) plus fancy dress and heritage activity Doc+Sleepy+Sneezy+Happy+Bashful+Dopey+Grumpy 12.30pm Mayflower Theatre, Commercial Rd, SO15 1GE Time: 2pm Price: £5

And running continuously until Saturday

Angel:legnA Moving Image Exhibition God's House Tower, Winkle Street, Southampton SO14 2NY Price: Free - no booking required

Membership records

We keep our record-keeping to a bare minimum! An Associate Member's record of information is solely what was on the application form. Just the email address is used so we can keep you informed about this year's programme and any last minute changes to our programme (this is usually in the form of a MailChimp mailout – you can unsubscribe from these at any time). The form is finally used to mail out next year's leaflet. For full members we do keep a computer-based record containing your name, address, email and phone number as given on the last application form we received from you. The issued card number is kept on paper. Membership forms are securely disposed of after the season is complete. If you do not renew then we delete the computer record after three years. We only use the data we have for Phoenix purposes. The emails are held by a reputable bulk mail service (currently MailChimp) and scrubbed and renewed every year. If you unsubscribe from our MailChimp mailouts, your details are immediately removed from that location. Our FaceBook page has no links whatsoever to your data. The data is kept Phoenix confidential. Please ask a Council member if you have any queries about this.

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