

CHLOTRUDIS MEWSINGS

Volume 3, Issue 4

May 2005

OOH LA LA: The 11th Chlotrudis Awards

*Body of Work Award recipient Lucas Belvaux's
The Trilogy sweeps four categories*

By Michael Colford & Hilary Nieuwirk

Chlotrudis Society members, friends, and supporters were pleased to return to the Brattle Theatre for the third time for our annual Awards on Sunday, March 20. Although it was a scaled-down affair compared to last year's gala celebration of the first decade of Chlotrudis Awards and Chlotrudis Society for Independent Film (CSIF), the spirit of the evening was not diminished any.

In accordance with tradition, the night's festivities kicked off with a rollicking multimedia musical number performed by CSIF members, which set the tone for the rest of the evening's celebrations. Presenters and guests included many members of the Boston film community, among them longtime Chlotrudis friend Gerald Peary, film scholar and critic for *The Boston Phoenix*, Boston Globe film critic Ty Burr, local film-makers Lucia Small and Robert Patton-Spruill, as well as representatives from the Independent Film Festival of Boston, the Boston Jewish Film Festival,



John O'Brien

and the Roxbury Film Festival.

Once again, CSIF was honored to welcome both local and international members of the filmmaking community as recipients of this year's special awards. Lucas Belvaux traveled from France to receive the Body of Work Award for writing, directing, and acting in *The Trilogy*, Vermont filmmaker John O'Brien received CSIF's Maverick Award, which honors those filmmakers who best exemplify true film independence, and rising Canadian acting sensation Ellen Page received the third award of distinction, the Breakthrough Award.

Belvaux proved to be an animated presence, his enthusiasm requiring no translation even for those of us who were reliant upon representatives from the French consulate to assist with

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Provincetown International Film Festival

By Chris Kriofske

If you can't make it to Cannes, Berlin, Toronto or Sundance, there's always P-Town. The 7th Provincetown International Film Festival will take place June 15-19 and it's only a short drive or ferry ride away.

Although this year's film lineup won't be revealed until May 23, it has been announced that the Filmmaker on the Edge honoree will be director/screenwriter Mary Harron. She will be on hand to accept the award at a Town Hall ceremony on June 18. Past honorees have included Jim Jarmusch, Todd Haynes, and Gus Van Sant.



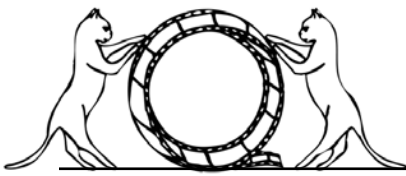
Harron is best known for directing *American Psycho* (2000), for which she won a Chlotrudis Award for Best Screenplay, and *I Shot Andy Warhol* (1996). She has just finished a third film, *The Notorious Bettie Page*, a biopic starring Gretchen Mol (as Page) and Lili Taylor that will be released next year. Her next project is an adaptation of Legs McNeil's oral history of American punk music, *Please Kill Me*.

Other special events scheduled for this year's festival include an opening night party and a clambake and pool party (both at the Crown and Anchor), an evening double feature at the Wellfleet Drive-In, and a Saturday night screening of that audience participation cult classic, *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*.

Many Chlotrudis members have attended the Festival in years past. 2004 featured screenings of future Chlotrudis Award nominees like *Saved!*, *A Home At The End Of The World*, *Dig!*, and *Control Room*, as well as other films like *Guerilla: The Taking Of Patty Hearst*, *We Don't Live Here Anymore*, and *Word Wars*.

Tickets for this year's festival go on sale May 23. General admission is \$10, with most special events \$12 or \$15. Festival passes are also available in the \$100 - \$200 range. For more info, go to www.ptownfilmfest.org

More film festival coverage in this issue:
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communication at other points in the evening. Winning an unprecedented five 'Trudies' over the course of the ceremony, eventually Belvaux found it simpler to leap directly from his chair to the stage, rather than take the stairs, for his acceptance speeches. His intertwined three-some of films -- *On The Run (Cavale)*, *An Amazing Couple (Un Couple Épatant)*, *After The Life (Après La Vie)* -- together called *The Trilogy*, received accolades for Best Film, Director, Cast, and Original Screenplay.

In his acceptance speech for Maverick Award, John O'Brien drew parallels between Belvaux's work and his own Tunbridge Trilogy: *Vermont Is For Lovers* (1992), *Man With A Plan* (1996), and *Nosey Parker* (2003). For these films, O'Brien mined his hometown of Tunbridge (VT) for inspiration, location shooting and casting locally, creating vivid northern New England tableaux by sifting non-fiction and storytelling together in Mike Leigh-fashion.

O'Brien took the stage a second time when *Nosey Parker* won for Buried Treasure, our signature award for films that the organization feels have been unduly overlooked. The 2004 Buried Treasure nominations were another international affair; O'Brien's being the only domestic film among selections representing Hong Kong (*Infernal Affairs/Wu jian dao*), Australia (*The Rage In Placid Lake*), Denmark (*Reconstruction*), and a four-way collaboration between Canada, Germany, South Africa, and the UK (*Stander*).

When Ellen Page came up to accept the Breakthrough Award, it was actually the third time in three days that she was on the Brattle stage. The two days preceding, CSIF was pleased to join The Brattle Film Foundation in presenting the regional theatrical premiere of *Wilby Wonderful*, a charming ensemble film featuring the cream of Canadian acting talent. Ellen Page graciously introduced the film and participated in audience Q&A on Saturday night. CSIF President Michael Colford was also on hand



Ellen Page

to read a personal message from previous Trudy winner, Daniel MacIvor, who wrote, directed, and acted in the film.

CSIF broke somewhat with tradition to award Ms. Page in anticipation of near-future career success, having spotted the young Canadian actress hold her own in *Marion Bridge* (also

written by MacIvor) and her Genie-nominated turn in *Wilby Wonderful*. We have no doubt that, once her latest film, *Hard Candy* screens nationwide later this year, Ellen Page's name

will be on the lips of many. The film made a splash at Sundance, where it generated controversy, much conversation and universal acclaim for her lead performance.

In addition to these special awards, and honoring the greater independent film community with our slate of regular awards, the Awards are a time for CSIF to reflect on the past year. We were pleased to note that our mem-



Lucas Belvaux

bership continues to grow, having passed the 100-member mark at the end of 2004. At the same time, we are able to maintain a healthy sense of humor when things do not go according to plan.

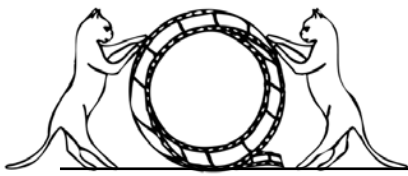
When introducing the awards from November's Short Film Festival, Festival Coordinator Hilary Nieuw Kirk related the misfortune of its falling shortly after the Red Sox's World Series victory and in the same week as the Presidential Election. Despite less-than-deal circumstances, CSIF was pleased to learn that the Short Film Fest was honored with a Special Commendation from the Boston Society of Film Critics (BSFC). Local filmmaker and winner of both Short Film Festival top honors, Justin Fielding, was on hand to accept his awards and treat the audience to an excerpt of his film, *Dwaine's Big Game*, a documentary about a Boston man's pursuit of bowling the perfect game.

With another successful Awards Ceremony behind us, the CSIF Board is already in discussions regarding next year's celebration. For further details and more photographs from the ceremony, check out our website: <http://www.chlotrudis.org/awards/ceremony/eleventh/index.html>

Special thanks to our photographer, Brandon Constant, who again did a spectacular job capturing the excitement of the night's festivities. Thanks also to the Canadian Consulate of Boston, The Charles Hotel, Noir, The Harding House, and The Brattle Theatre for all their sponsorship and assistance in making the eleventh Annual Chlotrudis Awards happen.



See the full list of winners for the 11th Chlotrudis Awards on Page 4.



Letter from the Editor

by Chris Kriofske

When Chlotrudis president Michael Colford asked me if I wanted to become a co-editor of this newsletter, I didn't have to think too long before saying yes.

You see, I once wanted to be a journalist. I'd always loved to write and at some point, I thought if I were to work for a newspaper or a magazine, then I could make a career out of doing what I loved. After getting involved with my high school paper, I chose to major in Journalism as a freshman at Marquette University in my hometown, Milwaukee.



Chris Kriofske

I can only blame MU's requirement that every student had to have a minor in order to graduate for steering me off that path. I easily could've chosen something safe and complimentary like English or Sociology, but instead, I went with Film Studies.

Many students would take one measly film class to fulfill a fine arts requirement. However, if you took SIX of 'em, you had yourself a Film Studies minor, simple as that.

I'd also always loved going to movies, but until I began taking film classes my junior year, I wasn't too discriminating a viewer. I'd sit through just about anything, from "indie" crossovers like *Pulp Fiction* and *Clerks* to whatever played the local budget theatres (yes, I paid to see a Pauly Shore movie and I can never get that money or time back). One of my first film classes, Film As Art (all film classes at MU had such generic titles) changed all that. We studied what in retrospect was an eccentric assortment, including *The Cabinet Of Dr. Caligari*, *Battleship Potemkin*, *42nd Street*, *North By Northwest* and *To Live*. That last one was my first foreign language film and particularly had an earth-shattering impact: it set into place new parameters for how one could use film to tell a story and vibrantly depict a time and place unfamiliar to me.

Soon, studying film seemed much more resonate and just plain enjoyable to me than sleeping through courses with titles like Media Law or Ethical Problems in Mass Communication. My first film classes also coincided with a Critical Writing course, where I found I had more of a flair for music and film reviewing than by-the-book newswriting. Yet, I was awfully close to earning my Journalism degree, so I'd stayed put. My senior year, I applied to a few Master's programs in Film Studies (rather last minute), and was accepted at Boston University.

Meanwhile, I saw fewer movies at the multiplexes and

gravitated towards Milwaukee's two art house theaters, The Oriental and The Downer (both run by Landmark). They were old, beautiful venues -- especially The Oriental, an ornate art deco palace teeming with grandiose Middle-Eastern motifs. A third-tier city on distribution schedules, Milwaukee tends to play only the more mainstream indie films, so I'd take the bus down to the East Side to see stuff like *Shine* and whatever the latest Woody Allen film was. On occasion, however, I managed to see more idiosyncratic fare like *Waiting For Guffman*, *When The Cat's Away*, and *The City Of Lost Children*.

It wasn't until I moved to Boston in the Fall of 1997 and became a full-time Film Studies student that I started to watch a lot of independent film, in and out of class. Before long, I was renting four movies a week from Videosmith, trying to get caught up on everything from Jim Jarmusch to Jane Campion. Just about all of what I rented was outside mainstream Hollywood: cult classics, documentaries, gay/lesbian films, old and new imports from all corners of the globe. I gradually realized that these films offered alternate and often richer, more complex ways to communicate onscreen and think about and view the world.

While I've long left behind the notion of supporting myself as a journalist (though I still wouldn't mind making a living as a film critic someday!), I'm very happy to work with Hilary Nieukirk on Chlotrudis Mewsings. Speaking of Hilary, don't miss her article on the 11th Annual Chlotrudis Awards. After last year's super-sized ten-year anniversary bash, we aimed for a smaller, scaled-back ceremony. Even without Philip Seymour Hoffman (or Marilyn at the Movies) attending, however, this year's ceremony was pretty lively -- it had some great guests, a tour-de-force opening musical number and a few surprise award winners (not to mention two ties).

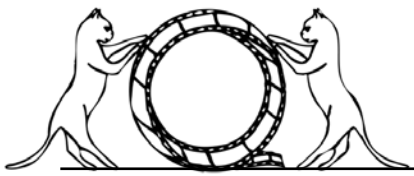
Spring is generally a slow period for new indie films, but the 3rd Independent Film Festival of Boston gave many Chlotrudis members an excellent opportunity to see a wide, wild slate of new movies, some of which won't be hitting theaters for months. If, like me, you missed the festival (I had a good excuse: I was out of town) you'll find this issue's wrap-up invaluable.

You might also enjoy the return of a long-dormant Mewsings feature, the New Member Profile, where you get to learn a little more about some of our new (and, in a few cases, not-so-new) members. I'm coming up on my second anniversary in Chlotrudis but haven't yet completed one. Maybe I'll save it for the next issue -- don't want this to turn into the Kriofske Mewsings newsletter.

Chlotrudis Mewsings is a publication of the
Chlotrudis Society for Independent Film

Co-Editors: Hilary Nieukirk and Chris Kriofske
Layout and Design: Ron Yeany

Visit us on the web at: www.chlotrudis.org



Random Mewsings

Welcome New Members!

It's been a year since we welcomed our new members, for which I apologize. Some of the members who will appear in this welcome will feel like they've been around for a while, and in truth, they have! Last year's goal was to break the 100 member mark, which we did last December. Thom Bowser from San Francisco was our hundredth member, and he came courtesy of our New York correspondent, Bruce Kingsley, who also joined last year and has been very active since then! We'd like to keep on pushing onwards and upwards, with lots of new exciting ways to get involved and to attract new members.

For starters, don't miss the Chlotrudis Mystery Tea coming up on May 15, 3:00 p.m. This is part of the Society's quarterly cocktail parties where members get to know each other better, and have a great time doing so! We've also changed our discounted night at the Brattle Theatre to Monday nights, so now Monday night is Chlotrudis night at the Coolidge Corner Theatre and the Brattle Theatre.

The Society would like to welcome Bruce Kingsley, Jennifer Smith, Carolyn Ziering, David Fishman, Mark Ratte,

Michelle Filleul, David McCarthy, Chadd L. Kline, Christina Cunningham, Denise Guérin, Teresa Speciale, Thomas Gut-tadauro, Jennifer DeForge, Meagan Buckley, Beth Caldwell, Michael Monaghan, Richard Alleman, Thom Bowser, Karen Signorelli, Richard Hall, Allison deSeife, Mary Ann Livingston, J. Brian Turk, Mary Ellen James, David Co, Mou Sen Gupta, Robert Hamilton, Amanda Weir-Gertzog, Martin Sander, and Kimo Linden. For more information about the Chlotrudis Society for Independent Film, and how to become a member, visit our webpage at www.chlotrudis.org, or e-mail membership@chlotrudis.org. There's never been a better time to join Chlotrudis!

Chlotrudis Members: Experience Some Live Theater!

Mass Theatrica is a new and innovative production company, whose mission is to bring a variety of theatre arts genres to the masses, including plays, musical theatre, operetta and opera. Mass Theatrica was founded by Meredith (Merri) Lavine, a member of the Chlotrudis Awards Nomination Committee since 1999 and active opera singer, and Angeliki Theoharis, a well-established mezzo-soprano and director in the Boston area.

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11th ANNUAL CHLOTRUDIS AWARD WINNERS

BEST MOVIE - TIE!

Lucas Belvaux's *The Trilogy*
Spring, Summer, Winter, Fall... and Spring

BURIED TREASURE

Nosey Parker

BEST DIRECTOR

Lucas Belvaux for *The Trilogy*

BEST ACTRESS

Imelda Staunton for *Vera Drake*

BEST ACTOR

Gael García Bernal for *Bad Education*
(*La mala educación*)

BEST SUPPORTING ACTRESS

Virginia Madsen for *Sideways*

BEST SUPPORTING ACTOR

Peter Sarsgaard for *Kinsey*

BEST ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY

Lucas Belvaux's *The Trilogy*, screenplay by Lucas Belvaux

BEST ADAPTED SCREENPLAY

The Saddest Music in the World, screenplay by Guy Maddin and George Toles

BEST CINEMATOGRAPHY - TIE!

Mikhail Krichman for *The Return*
Dong-hyeon Baek for *Spring, Summer, Fall, Winter ... and Spring*

BEST CAST

Lucas Belvaux's *The Trilogy*

BEST DOCUMENTARY

Tarnation

BEST SHORT FILM

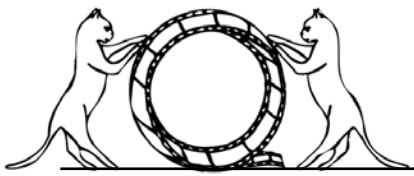
Dwaine's Big Game by Justin Fielding

RUNNER-UP CHLOTRUDIS AWARD

Highway Amazon by Ronnie Cramer

RUNNER-UP AUDIENCE AWARD

Once Upon a Time There Was a King by Massimiliano Mauceri



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On June 5th, 2005 the legendary opera diva Maria Callas comes to life in Mass Theatrica's production of Master Class. This Tony award winning play by Terrence McNally is based on the series of master classes that Callas held at The Juilliard School in the early 70s. Using the stage setting as a classroom venue, and the theater-goers as the observers, we learn about



Karen Fanale

the human complexities and struggles Callas experienced to achieve greatness through her wit, humor and brutal honesty. There are plenty of laughs (mostly at the expense of her "victims", the three students who sing for her) and even a bit of opera dish!

Who fills the shoes of this larger-than-life diva? Mass Theatrica was fortunate enough to cast established local actor Karen Fanale, who not only bears a

striking resemblance to Callas, but also possesses the vocal talent and know-how to accurately portray a legendary opera singer. Ms. Fanale has a variety of film and television credits, including Mystic River, Sex and the City and Law and Order: SVU. Her theater credits include "Nora" in A Doll's House, "Eliza Doolittle" in My Fair Lady and "Aldonza" in Man of La Mancha. Locally, Ms. Fanale has performed with Turtle Lane Playhouse, Pentucket Players, Stoneham Theatre, Boston Bel

Canto Opera and Mass Theatrica.

Master Class is directed by Alex Lucchesi, whose credits include projects with Theater-to-Go, Arlington Friends of the Drama and Wakefield Repertory Company.

Starring Karen Fanale as Maria Callas, with Chlotrudis member (and "Hollywood Agent") Meredith Lavine, Matthew Campbell, Shannon Mühs and David Sprinkle.

Sun., June 5, 2005, 3:00 PM
St. Paul's Episcopal Church
15 St. Paul Street, Brookline, MA

- Admission is \$20 and \$18 seniors & students.
- Free on-street parking, accessible by "T" (C and D lines) and wheel chair accessible
- For more information, visit www.masstheatrica.org or call 508-757-8515.

Hal Hartley Visits The Brattle Theatre

The Brattle Theatre will present an Evening with Hal Hartley on Friday, June 3. Hartley will be on hand for the opening of the Boston theatrical run of his latest film *The Girl From Monday*. Many Chlotrudis members will remember Hal from his appearance at the 8th Annual Chlotrudis Awards when he was on hand to accept a special award for Direction in 2002. Hal will introduce his latest film and be on hand for a Q&A afterwards. The Brattle Theatre is currently working on a special reception for Hal. Details will be announced on the website soon.

Chlotrudis member views:

Independent Film Festival of Boston 2005

by Amanda Weir-Gertzog

Like all of you, as I imagine, I'm a bit crazed about movies. But as I have lived in Boston over the past seven years and taken advantage of the Boston Film Festival, The Boston Women's Film Festival (Where did that end up? I used to see it at the Brattle), and the Independent Film Festival I have never had any luck picking what movies to attend. With one exception: I did see Sofia Coppola's *Virgin Suicides* at the Women's Film Festival at the Brattle several years ago. Otherwise, I will not

WEIR-GERTZOG con't on Page 6

by Michael Colford

I have often felt that a festival's third year makes or breaks them, and judging from the high-profile films, strong attendance, increased number of exhibition spaces, and growing organizational power, the Independent Film Festival of Boston is going to make it. Boston deserves a world-class film festival, and for years the city has been saddled with the uninspired Boston Film Festival, which most film buffs avoid by heading

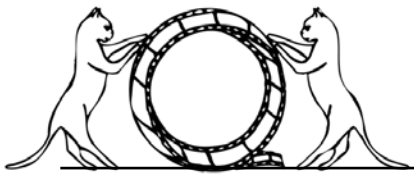
COLFORD con't on Page 7

by Diane Young

Liked:

Are You The Favorite Person Of Anybody? (Short) And what better person to conduct this survey than the earnest and gentle John C. Reilly, brow furrowing when faced with responses he suspects are incorrect? Good turn for Mike White, too. A very simple film, done in b&w. Loved the idea, the execution and the cast. Director: Miguel Arteta. 5 cats.

Casting About. A montage of auditions of about 50 women for three roles.
YOUNG con't on Page 6

**WEIR-GERTZOG continued from Page 5**

name too many names except to say that I try to go to films where actors and directors are present, but always fell for the “big names.” What a trap! That led me to ... *One Eyed King* at the Boston Film Festival starring Billy Baldwin and Chazz Palminteri who were to attend. They did not, but Armand Assante did. Wow. The movie went straight to video. And my husband has never attended a festival with me again.

Too bad for him! I saw four stellar movies at the third Independent Film Festival this past weekend and Steve Buscemi's third directorial outing was my least favorite. And it was pretty damn good. I am just not one for main characters with not many redeeming qualities. At the Q and A afterwards Buscemi answered an audience inquiry as to how he could work with a lead character who was 90% a jerk and he said that he liked to work with characters with problems. I suppose that my main issue was that in *Lonesome Jim*, Jim wished he had some “real world” problems. And I kept waiting for something to be revealed. (Wait! He came home to his parents from NYC because he was attacked? He is taking drugs? Someone stole his drugs? Nope; just an ass.)

Jim Cole's *Sundowning* was the epitome of an independent film. Sometimes I forget and think that if it's at Sundance and has a budget of \$500,000 then that must make it independent. I chose this movie because it dealt with Alzheimer's and looked depressing. What can I say? I'm a big *Breaking The Waves* and *Hanging Garden* fan. The theatre was filled with cast members and their relatives, which I found out because the couple sitting next to me asked who I was related to in the movie. Turned out he was the paternal lead - which made for excellent conversation, but made watching the movie a little precarious, especially when I got a tad emotional. It turns out their budget was \$15,000 and the entire thing was shot in Maine. And when they took the film to a festival in San Jose they were told it would do well in Scandinavia since it was “very Bergman.” No distributor yet, but they're hoping word-of-mouth and the festival awards they keep receiving will help them along.

I then went to *Childstar* although I'll admit to never having seen *Last Night*, which apparently leaves me quite alone in Chlotrudis. (And it appears to not be on DVD yet?) I found *Childstar* to be rather entertaining and a good bash at the Hollywood studio system although I wasn't quite sure what direction I was supposed to be led by McKellar. Was Jennifer Jason Leigh really an evil wench mother taking advantage of her son's acting abilities? Or was she setting him up financially for a time when the industry would eventually toss him aside? Was “Driver” expected to intercede more than he did? And, seriously folks, was Alan Thicke the voice of reason?

Of all of the movies I wanted to see this festival it was *Murderball*. And I kept hearing how crowded it was going to be so I went over to the Brattle at 6pm to line myself up for

the 7pm showing-and was all on my own for about 20 minutes. (I think it eventually sold out?) But I thought for sure that it would be THE movie! And I don't even know where to begin. I only knew that *Murderball* was about wheelchair rugby, but it also integrated several stories about the players, the competing teams, rehabilitation, and recruitment. The best part for me was the very beginning when the camera was jumping from player to player and they were talking about their “don't pity me” experiences. (For example, being asked if they need help into their car after they've already driven someplace or being congratulated for simply for getting out of the house.) That no-holds-barred mental attitude was a perfect introduction to the physicality needed to play “murderball.”

Needless to say, all four of the films were incredible. I wished that I could have seen about 10 more. I did attempt to attend one party, but the one night I could go was the one night they had limited space (very sad). I was always able to get any questions I had answered. Movies started pretty much on time. What more can you ask for? And it's only year number three!

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Much of its strength comes from the editing and camera-work. As another woman in the audience said, you come in expecting to see a movie about acting and you see the beauty of women. Another woman I consulted in the bathroom was struck by the limited features in women's faces. The film was really strengthened by keeping to one gender. Monologues, personal stories, interaction with offscreen director (of this film and the one they are auditioning for) are interspersed with footage of hands, hair, etc. set to powerful music. Some incredible acting, too. Director: Barry Hershey. 5 big cats.

Carmen. A 3-minute minimalist animation of the opera, written, drawn, and sung by Nestor Angeles. 4 cats. You can see it at <http://www.ifilm.com/ifilmdetail/2663076> and hopefully in our next Short Film Festival!

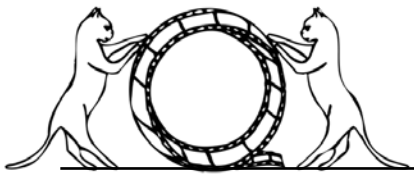
Filmic Achievement. Mocumentary about a bunch of students enering UNY Film School. Hits all the stereotypes among profs and students. I laughed a lot. Director: Kevin Kerwin, who actually learned something in film school. 4 cats.

Didn't like:

Childstar. McKellar's latest about exploitation of kids by Hollywood. Another instance where I got stuck on tone, also found the characters unlikeable and their relationships uninteresting. This topic may have been better explored in a letter to the editor. 2 cats.

Amazing Grace: Jeff Buckley. All the fans of this “tragic musical maverick” whom I spoke to loved the film. I didn't know anything about him; was put off by the fact that the film was, as the director acknowledged, “a tribute,” indeed, worshipful--the only film approved by Buckley's mother. A pleasant enough concoction of interviews, concert footage,

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**YOUNG continued from Page 6**

tour bus videos....I wasn't blown away. But I am listening to Buckley's album now... 3 cats.

Young Rebels. Another docu that I expected to draw me in to something I knew nothing about: here, Cuban hip hop. Maybe it was because I was so tired.... By the directors of last year's IFFB fabulous short "Gowanus, Brooklyn" (now being made into a feature). Not sure about their decisions of what to keep and how to make a story out of it. 2 cats.

COLFORD continued from Page 5

north for the Toronto International Film Festival. (To be fair, the Boston Film Festival has been showing some signs of attempting to do something about this sad state of affairs... too little, too late.) What started as a conversation between two guys at the Sundance Film Festival has blossomed rapidly into the most exciting thing to happen to independent film in Boston in the new century.

Last year a few Chlotrudis members volunteered for the IFFB, and a few more took in the films. This year we knew that CSIF needed to be more involved. Beth Curran and I began talking with Festival Coordinators Brian Tamm and Nancy Campbell early in 2006, about ways Chlotrudis could help out. We had originally decided that the volunteer organization of the festival had been overwhelming for the IFFB staff last year and thought we could help out. Working with Brian and Nancy, CSIF offered up four team captains (Beth, Hilary Nieukirk, Diane Young and myself) as well as a handful of additional volunteers, Caitlin Buckley, Beth Caldwell, and Carolyn Ziering. Brian, Nancy, and Christine Harbaugh did a wonderful job and orienting the volunteers and keeping things organized, and we had a great time helping out.

More importantly, CSIF felt it important to be more visible at the festival, which is certainly the highest profile event related to independent film in Boston. I spoke with Executive Director, Jason Redmond, and Program Director, Adam Roffman, about co-presenting a film with the IFFB. Fortunately, a perfect candidate was "out there," in the form of Don McKellar's *Childstar*. An official partnership was born.

Despite the fact that I spent about half the time volunteering/working the festival, I was still able to catch four films and attend one party. The IFFB started for me with a lively screening of *Same Sex America*, a documentary about the coming of legalized gay marriage in Massachusetts. Director Henry Corra does a great job mixing up his subjects so that we see that gays and lesbians of all walks of life have an interest in this issue. The audience was clearly invested in the topic as well, with at least one profile couple, a pair of older lesbians, in attendance with their families. 4 cats

Jessica Sanders' *After Innocence* was an emotional and inspirational documentary about men who were wrongfully convicted of horrific crimes, then exonerated 15 - 20 years later due to the emergence of DNA testing. The horror of being innocent and convicted of crimes such as rape and mur-

der is eloquently conveyed by these men as they are finally released from their incarceration only to face criminal records that prevent them from getting good jobs, suspicion from people in their hometowns, and little money to help them get back on their feet. Life has moved on and passed them by, yet they receive no compensation from the government, in fact, some receive anger and resentment from the system that incorrectly imprisoned them for crimes they did not commit. In addition to Sanders and the film's producer, several of the people featured in the film, including two of the exonerated, were in attendance, partaking in a powerful Q&A session after the film.

I attended Hal Hartley's *The Girl From Monday* with much anticipation, being such a fan of the director's deadpan wit, and wry observations on relationships. Hartley goes the science fiction route in *Monday* to tell the story of a society in our near future where sex appeal is one of the highest commodities in the marketplace. Monday is a planet orbiting a star lightyears away from Earth, and one of its inhabitants arrives here, wraps its consciousness in a body, and joins the human race in search of one of its own kind who came to Earth years prior and has become so human that he has not been able to return. As the Girl from Monday searches for her fellow alien, Hartley takes a hard look at the direction our society is headed with regard to commercialism and marketing. While Hartley is in good form with his themes and dialogue, this exposition-heavy film is more of an extended idea rather than a fully-realized story. It's gorgeously shot though, and if you're a Hartley fan, it's recommended.

I ended the festival with the second screening of Don McKellar's *Childstar*. I had introduced both screenings of *Childstar*, but joined several Chlotrudis members to watch the film Sunday evening. McKellar's satire on the entertainment business, particularly in Hollywood, worked much better upon second viewing. I was better able to understand what he was saying in this story of a pre-pubescent, Hollywood superstar who runs away to find a different life. Playing to two packed audiences, and getting great reactions from both, it's clear that there are some fans of McKellar, or at least his quirky, humorous style.

I also attended the Friday night party at the Artists for Humanity building in South Boston. The party was a little slow to get started; it started at 9:00 p.m., but the movies were running until after 11:00 p.m., but the musical entertainment was provided by The Blind King, former members Josh Boughey and Beth Daly's band. Their mellow, rootsy style was perfect for the party. It's just too bad that the echoey acoustics of the room didn't enhance the band's sound.

I was also pleased to read about the Audience Awards announced on Monday after the Festival closed. *After Innocence* was chosen by the audiences as the Best Documentary, and Susanne Bier's *Brothers*, which I enjoyed in Toronto last September, took the best narrative prize. If you missed the IFFB this year, mark your calendar for next year!



Coming Attractions

Boston Jewish Film Festival

We are co-presenting the Israeli documentary, *Keep Not Silent* (2004, 54 minutes, in Hebrew with English subtitles) in the Boston Gay and Lesbian Film/Video Festival on May 15, at 1:30PM at the MFA, with a discussion to follow. Winner of an Israeli Oscar for Best Documentary, Ilil Alexander's stunning debut film boldly documents the clandestine struggle of three women fighting for their right to love within their beloved Orthodox communities in Jerusalem. All three are pious, religiously committed women. All three are lesbians, and members of a secret support group called the "Ortho-dykes." Though their life choices exact a devastating price, these women are committed to confronting their duality, and accept the toll with a profound compassion toward their society. In Hebrew with English subtitles. Co-presented by The Boston Jewish Film Festival and Keshet (description adapted from Women Make Movies).

On June 7, we have our annual work-in-progress event. This is an opportunity for people to purchase their November Festival pass in advance, and at the same time obtain a behind-the-scenes peek at a film in process. This year's work is that of our founder, filmmaker Michal Goldman. Michal is an award-winning independent documentary filmmaker and also founder/president of the Waltham-based Filmmakers Collaborative. Her previous films include *A Jumpin' Night In The Garden Of Eden* (1988), the first film to be made about the Klezmer revival, and *Umm Kulthum: A Voice Like Egypt* (1996). Her current work-in-progress is called *At Home In Utopia*, which explores an ambitious and far-reaching experiment from the '20s when hundreds of Jewish immigrant garment workers built four cooperative apartment complexes in the Bronx. The United Workers Cooperative Colony (the "Coops", NOT Co-op City) reflected radical social values, and was one of the first racially integrated housing projects in New York, and possibly the US. *At Home In Utopia* tells the story of the people who built, lived in, and eventually left these cooperative communities, including renowned architect

Daniel Libeskind, interviewed in the film. The event takes place Tuesday, June 7, 6:30PM-9PM at the Seaport Hotel, Boston, and includes light supper followed by the screening of film clips and discussion with the filmmaker.

In June and July, we offer our annual *Encores And More* program at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston. This year, we bring back these popular films from our November 2004 Festival: Steve Suissa's French tragi-comedy, *Le Grand Role* (2003, 89 minutes, in French with English subtitles); the tempestuous Israeli romance, *Paper Snow*, directed by Lina and Slava Chaplin (2003, 96 mins.); and *The Rashevski's Tango*, the comedy by Sam Garbarski that opened last November's Festival (2003, 97 mins., in French with English subtitles).

The "MORE" this year consists primarily of a tribute to Israeli actress (who divides her time between Israel and France), now also a director, Ronit Elkabetz, who has been invited to attend. Four films are being shown: the sexy *Late Marriage*, by Dover Kosashvili (Israel/France, 2001, 102 minutes), in which Elkabetz co-stars with Lior Ashkenazi (*Walk On Water*); *Alila*, by Amos Gitai (France/Israel, 2003, 122 min.), not seen previously in Boston; and two other Boston premieres: *Or (My Treasure)*, by Keren Ydaya (Mon Trésor, France/Israel, 2003, 100 min.), winner of the Camera d'Or at Cannes last year; and *To Take A Wife* (Ve Lakechta Lecha Isha, Israel/France, 2004, 97 min.), directed by Ronit Elkabetz and her brother, Shlomi Elkabetz in which she gives a searing performance.

Finally, the *Encores And More* series concludes with *The Ninth Day*, by Volker Schlöndorff, famous for his Oscar-winning 1979 film, *The Tin Drum*. *The Ninth Day* (Der Nunte Tag, 2004, 98 minutes) is based on a real-life memoir, and tells the story of Henri Kremer, a priest from Luxembourg imprisoned in the Dachau concentration camp. He is given 9 days (hence, the title) of "freedom" in which to convince the local bishop to support the Nazi occupiers. Again, this film has not been seen previously in Boston.

Museum of Fine Arts

The 21st Annual Boston Gay & Lesbian Film/Video Festival will run May 11-22. This year's festival is coordinated by Amanda Johnston and comprises 11 features, 6 documentaries, and 2 programs of short films. Highlights include:

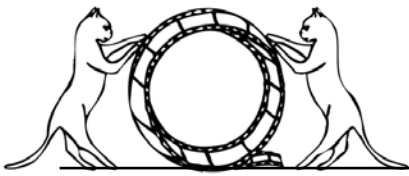
- Women's Opening Night on May 11: Director Alice Wu and star Lynn Chen will be present with their film *Saving Face*.
- Men's Opening Night on May 12: Director Tennyson Bardwell and producer Mary Beth Taylor will be present with their film *Dorian Blues*.
- Closing Night on May 22: Director Patrik-Ian Polk and star Darryl Stephens with *Noah's Arc*.

• Festival postscript on May 30: Director Pawel Pawlikowski and actresses Emily Blunt and Nathalie Press with *My Summer Of Love* on May 30.

We have several additional special guests including director Ligy Pullappally with her film *The Journey* on May 14 and Congressman Barney Frank with *Dangerous Living* on May 15. As in previous years, we will again offer Men's and Women's Short Film programs on May 18 and 20, respectively, plus youth and transgender films.

Later in the month, we present two director tributes. May 25 through June 12 we present a retrospective of the films of

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Russian director Kira Muratova, one of the 1960s directors who introduced technical and stylistic innovations to Soviet cinema. Her early experimentalism resulted in dismissal from the Filmmakers Union and much of her work was suppressed until the late 80s, when she finally gained international recognition as one of the most important Russian-language filmmakers of the later 20th century. We will show 8 of Muratova's 14 feature films, including her early films *Brief Encounters* and *Long Farewells* and her incredible post-glasnost masterpieces such as *The Aesthetic Syndrome* and her most recent, *The Tuner*.

Wednesday, May 25 at 6 pm acclaimed documentary filmmaker and former MIT professor Ricky Leacock will be present for a special screening of his recent film *A Musical Adventure In Siberia* on Wednesday, May 25 at 6 pm.

Throughout May we will present 6 engagements:

- Guy Maddin's seventh feature film, *Cowards Bend The Knee* will be shown May 5-14, along with three of his recent short films: *Sissy Boy Slap Party*, *Sombra Dolorosa*, and *A Trip To The Orphanage*.

- Korean director Kim Ki-Duk's tale of twisted love, *Bad Guy*, plays May 5-11.

- May 5-June 19 we present *Tall*, Manfred Kirchheimer's absorbing documentary on the work and rivalry of American architects Louis Sullivan and Daniel Burnham and the ideas and experiments that changed the future of architecture around the world.

- Austrian director Ulrich Seidl's intimate look at the act of prayer, *Jesus, You Know* plays May 6-15.

- We will show *Beyond The Sea* May 26-29, the debut feature from Cuban director Lisandro Pérez-Rey, and possibly the most complete work to date on the infamous Mariel Boatlift of 1980.

- May 26-June 25 we show Buddhist director Khyentse Norbu's (*The Cup*) second feature, *Travellers And Magicians*, the first film made in Bhutan.

The MFA Film Program starts off the summer with a series of Encores and More from The Boston Jewish Film Festival, June 2 through July 7. This series features three of the most warmly received films from the 2004 festival (*Le Grand Rôle*, *Paper Snow*, and *The Rashevski's Tango*) and as well as four Boston premieres (*Alila*, *To Take A Wife*, *The Ninth Day*, and *Or [My Treasure]*). The series also highlights the work of award-winning Israeli actress and recent director Ronit Elkabetz, who appears in four of the films, including *Alila* and *Late Marriage*, a hit in 2002.

We will also show several engagements throughout the month of June:

June 2-23 we show the delightful and uniquely romantic documentary *The Wild Parrots Of Telegraph Hill*. In this entertaining film, Sundance-and-Emmy-Award-winning filmmaker Judy Irving follows formerly homeless musician, writer, and spiritual seeker Mark Bittner as he develops his relationship with a flock of wild parrots in San Francisco.

Kurdish director Hiner Saleem's *Vodka Lemon*, runs June 3-11, filling our screen with gorgeous panoramas of Armenian landscape and sly tragicomic drama.

Argentinean director Lucrecia Martel's acclaimed feature debut *The Swamp (La Cienaga)* June 16-19.

June 30-July 7 we show Pola Rappaport's documentary *Writer Of O*, which reveals the author of the infamous erotic novel *The Story of O*.

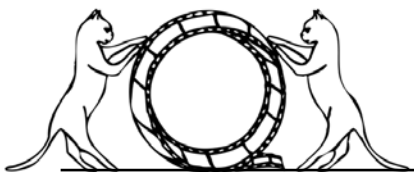
We would also like to announce that our much anticipated annual Boston French Film Festival will run July 7-24. Highlights of this celebration of contemporary French cinema include: *A Toute Suite* by Benoit Jacquot, *Clean* by Olivier Assayas, *The Beat That My Heart Skipped* by Jacques Audiard, *Triple Agent* by Eric Rohmer and many more films by both emerging and established directors.



Vodka Lemon



Cowards Bend The Knee



Marrakech Film Festival Report

by Richard Alleman

Three and a half years ago, in the wake of 9-11, the North African city of Marrakech inaugurated its Festival International du Film in October of 2001. Needless to say, with the climate of fear and uncertainty that prevailed at the time, a film festival in a Muslim country was not exactly a hot ticket. The festival went on, however, and despite the unfortunate timing of its debut, it has become an important annual event on the city's social calendar. The Festival also has started to attract international attention with its mix of films from Europe, the U.S., India, Africa, the Far East, and the Arab world.

Last December, I managed to wangle an official invite to the Fourth Edition of the Festival as a journalist. The line-up of films was impressive. Fourteen in competition (from Argentina, Spain, Thailand, Hong Kong, Finland, France/UK, China, Senegal, Brazil, USA, Russia, Italy, and Morocco); ten out of competition; a special series of Moroccan films from 1958 to the present; another series focusing on the work of Egyptian writer-director Youssef Chahine; yet another featuring Bollywood cult films. If all this were not enough, the Festival also celebrated the careers of Sir Sean Connery and Italian actress Claudia Cardinale, both of whom were on hand.

Presented with this embarrassment of choices, my problem was deciding what to see. Luckily, I know Marrakech well, so I was not overly tempted to sightsee and could devote six days to watching films. I was also lucky in that I was able to rely on the expertise of friend and fellow Chlotrudis member Bruce Kingsley to help with making my decisions.

The headquarters of the Festival was Marrakech's convention center, known as the Palais des Congrès, a monumental Moorish-modern structure halfway between Marrakech's ancient walled medina and its modern quarter—originally laid out by the French colonial administration in the 1920s—known as Guéliz. Here every film was screened in one of the center's two large theaters, but these screenings were open only to official delegates. At the same time, however, all the Festival films were repeated throughout the week at three local movie houses, one of which was the vintage art-déco Cinéma le Colisée in Guéliz. These showings were open to the public, which meant that the local populace as well as tourists could (and did) attend—with tickets priced at a mere 5 dirhams (60¢ U.S.)! The Festival's most exotic venue, however, was the Place Jemaa El Fna, the city's fabled open-air plaza which is a non-stop carnival of food stalls, story tellers, snake charmers, and musicians. Each night of the Film Festival, the Place became a vast outdoor movie theater, where the offerings ranged from Cardinale's 1966 western *The Professionals* to Connery's 1996 Alcatraz thriller *The Rock* to the contemporary Moroccan road film *Le Grand Voyage*.

In addition to all the films, the Festival hosted a number of special events and ceremonies, which were by invitation only.

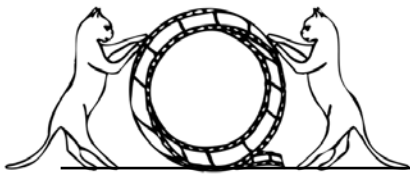
I never quite figured out how these invites were issued, and often I didn't make the cut. A case in point was the official opening of the Festival, which honored the aforementioned Ms Cardinale and Mr Chahine, followed by the Spanish film *El Crimen Perfecto* (*Perfect Crime*), shown in competition. On the other hand, I was invited the next evening to the "Homage Sir Sean Connery," which was little more than a few quick speeches, including one from Laurence Fishburne, who introduced Sir Sean, who in turn said simply how happy he was to be back in Morocco, where he had not only filmed *The Man Who Would Be King* and *Time Bandits* but also won a golf tournament back in the 1970s. Strangely, there were no film clips of any of Connery's movies at this ceremony, although four of his films were shown throughout the week.

Connery's evening was then turned over to Oliver Stone, in town to present a special screening of his turkey, *Alexander*, which had been shot the previous year largely in Morocco and which had been shot down a few weeks earlier by U.S. film critics. Stone's comments were brief, and had a somewhat embarrassing neo-con tone, as he lauded Alexander as a hero for his military efforts in spreading Western civilization to an otherwise barbarian world. In all fairness, the film wasn't as bad as I had expected—and the art direction and cinematography were especially powerful. And while I'm not big on battle scenes, *Alexander's* were extraordinary—especially the India campaign (shot in Thailand) with all those elephants. But far too much sloppy and often confusing storytelling—complete with a flashback within a flashback. Equally messy was the mélange of accents used by the leading players—Irish, Northern English, Royal Shakespeare Company British, American. Surprisingly, the one accent that made sense was Angelina Jolie's Greco-Eastern European rasp. For many in the audience—a number of whom had worked on the shoot—the real star of Alexander was Morocco.

Although I didn't make the opening ceremony, I did attend a press conference on the first day of the festival, where the Jury was introduced and later took questions. President of the Jury was Sir Alan Parker, who when questioned "what is a good film?" answered: "one which can hold me from beginning to end and make me feel as well as make me think." Parker, like everyone else, said how happy he was to be in beautiful Marrakech, and also, like everyone else, bemoaned the fact that a schedule of seeing three films a day left very little time for sightseeing and shopping.

In answer to an Arabic-speaker's question regarding how Parker felt about the power that the U.S.A. exerts over the film business, Parker pointed out that "as a British director who has made most of my films in the U.S., the American system has been good to me...but U.S. control of world cinema is a concern—it's not good that every cinema in the world is dominated by one country. I come from the European tradition of a more political cinema—but we can't be too snobby. U.S. cinema for the most part works because it communicates." Besides Parker, other Jury members included

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Brazilian writer Paul Coelho (whose best-selling novel *The Alchemist* is scheduled to be produced by Laurence Fishburne and possibly shot in Morocco); U.S. actress-director Rosanna Arquette; Italian actresses Laura Morante and Valeria Golino, Ivory Coast screenwriter-director Henri Duparc, Egyptian film critic Samir Farid, and Moroccan producer Sarin Fassi-Fihri.

But on with the festival. My plan was to see 12 films and to concentrate on films that I would not normally be able to see in the U.S. So I sidestepped *Sideways*, which was in competition, and many of the oldies being shown as part of the various “homages.” I was not entirely successful in my planning, as I missed a number of films that fellow festival-goers raved about—such as Chinese director Xiao Jiang’s *Cultural Revolution coming-of-age* opus *Electric Shadows*, and Russian filmmaker Dmitry Meskhiyev’s *Svoi (Our Own)*, a tale of three Russian soldiers on the run from the Nazis in the early days of World War II. Still, I saw a half dozen films that I found exceptional and which I highly recommend should they come to the U.S. in cinemas, at festivals, or on video/DVD.

At the top of my list was the Senegalese film *Moolaadé*. One of the 11 films in competition at the festival, this tale of how a group of village women bucked the tribal establishment to fight the practice of female circumcision (or more accurately, genital mutilation) featured haunting cinematography that transported us not just to a West African village but took us inside it. At the same time, the film had a strong story and sensitive performances—notably that of the actress playing the leader of the revolt, Fatoumata Coulibaly, who along with the film’s writer/director Ousmane Sembene, was at the Festival in person.

Another standout was the French-German-Israeli co-production *The Syrian Bride*, directed by Eran Riklis of Israel. A human and often comic look at the vagaries of the Arab-Israeli conflict, the film focuses on a middle-class Syrian Muslim family living on the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights. It is the wedding day of Mona, one of the daughters, who is engaged to a Syrian TV star on the other side of the border. Because of the political situation, most of the preparations for the wedding take place on the Israeli-occupied side of the fence, whereas the actual wedding will be held on the Syrian side, without the participation of Mona’s family, since they are forbidden to travel there. And once Mona crosses over to Syria, she will not be able to return to the Golan. Although politics enter into the film—as they must, given the territory—Riklis has not made a political film. Instead he gives us a portrait of a contemporary Syrian Muslim family—the stern father, who will not forgive one of his sons for marrying a Russian woman... his strong wife, who wants to go back to university against her husband’s wishes... the hip teenage daughter who’s dating the son of a suspected collaborator with the Israelis... and the super-cool womanizer son Marwan who lives in Italy. All are struggling to live relatively normal lives, despite the highly

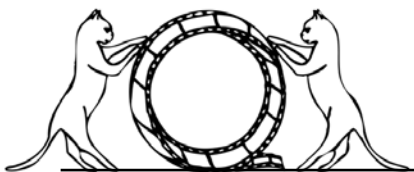
abnormal circumstances they find themselves in. Riklis also doesn’t take sides—the Israeli border official, for example, is as much a buffoon as is his Syrian counterpart.

Another Israeli film that takes on the Arab-Israeli conflict in an original way was *Mur (Wall)*, a chilling documentary by Simone Bitton, an Israeli of Moroccan-Jewish descent, that details the building of the controversial wall being erected by the Sharon government to separate Israel from much of the West Bank and Gaza. Bitton lets the wall tell the story, with long sequences of the monstrosity rising slowly, ominously... then its being covered with graffiti... and ultimately stolen shots of Palestinians slipping through the structure, showing how pointless the whole project is. Although there is very little dialogue, there are occasional interviews and comments—from an arrogant Israeli Defense Minister (“Both sides of the wall are ours”) to a kibbutz-nick who sees the folly of it all but who nonetheless hasn’t lost hope (“As long as we talk about it, there’s hope... silence indicates hopelessness”). In the end, *Wall* offers no answers to one of the world’s most agonizing political conflicts. But it does raise many questions.

I also saw two fine modern Moroccan films at the Festival. Both were road films. *Tenja*, directed by Moroccan-born, Paris-based Hassan Legzouli, follows the surreal journey of Nordine, a young French Moroccan, who, obeying his late father’s last wish, takes his corpse for burial to the Berber village in southern Morocco where he was born. What follows are a series of misadventures as Nordine smuggles the body in the back of his van on the ferry across the Straits of Gibraltar to Tangier. Once in Morocco, Nordine meets an assortment of crazy locals—notably a hash-smoking hustler named Mimoun—and winds up traveling with a beautiful young Moroccan woman (Nora) who has just been dumped by her wealthy lover. Together Nordine and Nora drive south, first to Casablanca, and then into the deep south amidst increasingly beautiful mountain scenery. A romance of sorts develops, but it’s all very discreet, and real—and there’s no syrupy happy Hollywood ending. There’s also a bit of Magic Realism at play, with the father in the back of the van coming to life in several sequences. When the travelers reach the village, Nordine, who’s spent all of his life in Europe, gets a new understanding of who he is and where he comes from. And as in *Moolaadé*, we are treated to an insider’s look at a world that few Westerners have ever seen. A sensitive, touching film with superb performances by Rosehdy Zem as Nordine, Aure Atika as Nora, and Abdou El Mesnaoui as Mimoun.

In Moroccan director Ismael Ferroukhi’s *Le Grand Voyage*, we again find a Europeanized North African son on the road with his father. Only this time the father is very much alive; an elderly, traditional, deeply religious man—despite the fact he has lived in France for decades—he has called upon 20-year-old Réda to drive him from France to Saudi Arabia to make the hadj (pilgrimage) in Mecca. The two have nothing in common (father reads the Koran as Réda dreams of, and sneaks cell-phone calls to, his French girlfriend) and there is constant

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tension between them as they encounter a blizzard in Bulgaria, a conman in Turkey, near starvation in Syria, and a prostitute in Jordan. After many misadventures—some comic, some quite touching—the odd couple finally reaches Mecca, and we are treated to rare footage of this holy Saudi Arabian city filled with millions of pilgrims at the time of the hadj. By the end of the film, although again there is no cliché denouement, both father and son have a new appreciation of one another. They have both made a grand voyage—as have we. Kudos here to Moroccan actor Mohamed Majd, whose portrayal of the father was one of the best performances of the Festival.

Another amazing performance was that of Vera Farmiga as the drug-addicted young mother in Debra Granik's *Down To The Bone*, which was in competition at the Festival. I am amazed that this gritty little film seems not to have found distribution in the U.S. It is well worth seeing—although it was somewhat bizarre for me to be transported to the wilds of Upstate New York from downtown Marrakech!

Not quite in the same league, in my opinion, was another film in competition called *Producing Adults*, from Finnish director Aleksis Salmenperä. The action of the film revolves around a fertility clinic, where its resident psychologist wants to have a child with a long-term boyfriend who does not. Although pregnant with comic possibilities, only some of them were realized, and the film never seemed quite sure if it was a comedy or a serious look at relationships in post-industrial society. It was probably both—but it just didn't work for me and ultimately *Producing Adults* reminded me of a minor Woody Allen opus, made slightly more watchable thanks to its Scandinavian location.

The most unusual film I saw at the Festival was from legendary Egyptian director-screenwriter Youssef Chahine, who, in Arab cinema, is a cross between Fellini and Douglas Sirk. Five of his many films were screened as part of the Festival's Chahine homage. I caught his most recent effort, the *2004 Alexandria-New York*, a semi-autobiographical epic that starts with a famous Egyptian filmmaker's visit to New York to receive an award. There he meets up with his first love, whom he originally met while a student at the Pasadena Playhouse in Los Angeles in the 1950s. Using frequent flashbacks as well as scene shifts between L.A. (it was quite amusing to see how contemporary Cairo was dressed to double as 1950s Hollywood!), New York (where some location shooting was done), and Egypt, the story ultimately centers on the son—now a successful dancer in New York—the director didn't know he had sired with his former drama school girlfriend. Discovering who his father really is, the son refuses to accept him and also has trouble with his newly revealed Arab background. There's a bit of everything in this film: politics, romance, coming of age, coming to terms with one's past, and even a few musical production numbers for good measure. It's a messy but riveting film—and makes me want to see more of Chahine's work.

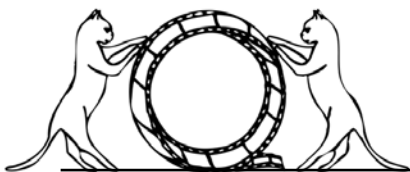
I also was amused by what Chahine wrote in the Festival program, which reminded me of the director played by

Marcello Mastroianni in Fellini's *8 1/2*. "I have been asked to jot down a few lines about my present feelings. Here they are! I have been swallowing 15 pills a day, emptying my bladder 17 times an hour under the effect of those very drugs which are allegedly good for my heart condition. I've been fighting like hell to stop smoking, stop being in a foul mood because of dumb president Bush's re-election...and to crown it all I am totally devoid of inspiration for my new script. The world is a shit hole! Am I expected to say everything's fine? The only glimmer of hope is that I know I'll soon be in Marrakech, this wonder of a city which works miracles when you are depressed."

The closing ceremonies of the Festival were appropriately festive. Outside the Palais des Congrès, troops of turbaned Gnoua (African trance dancers) and Berber musicians in long robes and brocaded kaftans entertained on a vast expanse of Moroccan carpets. Inside, the evening began with actress Marisa Berenson, representing the United Nations, presenting the *Unesco* Fellini Medal to the International Marrakech Film Festival for its role in promoting cultural diversity. The award was accepted by Prince Moulay Rachid, younger brother of Morocco's King Mohamed VI and President of the Film Festival Foundation.

Next came the Festival awards. There were four categories: best female performance, best male performance, Prix du jury, and the grand prize—L'Etoile d'Or—for best film. And the winners were: Vera Farmiga for her stunning performance in *Down To The Bone*... Bogdan Stupke for his work in the Russian film *SVOI* (Our Own)...both *Mooladé* and *Xiao Jiang* (*Electric Shadows*) tied for Prix du jury...and winning the Etoile d'Or for best film was Alexander Payne's *Sideways*. The *Sideways* win surprised me and seemed a rather safe choice.

The closing film was Gurinder Chadha's *Bride And Prejudice*, introduced by the strikingly beautiful Indian actress Aishwarya Rai. Since I had a very early plane to catch the next morning, I darted out before the screening and the gala dinner that followed. On my way back to my digs in the medina, I passed through the great Place Jemaa El Fna, where the Franco-Egyptian film *Bab El Chams* (*The Gate Of The Sun*) was playing to a huge throng amidst the smoke of the outdoor restaurants and the drums of the singers and dancers. I only had time to take in a bit of this four-and-a-half hour-plus saga of a Palestinian refugee family that covers a half a century... and I was again confronted by the Festival conundrum of so many films, so little time. But despite the fact that there were many more films that I would like to have seen, it was still an enthralling six days of film-going in a remarkable city...and I recommend this festival to any film lover with a sense of adventure. I would also recommend, however, that they allot a few days before and/or after the Festival for sightseeing, especially if they don't know Morocco. Next year's event is set for early October. Watch this space for further details as they become available...and feel free to e-mail me (REAlleman@aol.com) with questions or if you wish suggestions. (www.festivalmarrakech.wanadoo.ma/eng/foundation.cfm)



Rough Cut: *Turntable*

by Janet Young

Chlotrudis can be a great resource for filmmakers seeking an informed eye on their works-in-progress. A team of four CSIF members recently joined Robert Patton-Spruill of FilmShack Productions to screen a rough cut of his new feature film *Turntable* and give our feedback.

Patton-Spruill describes his work as “Urban New Wave” or “film noir in the hood”---updated settings of classic French films made in the Boston neighborhood of Roxbury and drawing on Boston talent. *Turntable* tells the story of Vincent, a live-and-let-live nightclub DJ who struggles to escape the tentacles of the crime world that has enmeshed his father and brothers. Knowledgeable viewers will recognize the film as an homage to Truffaut’s *Shoot The Piano Player*.

Warmly welcomed at FilmShack’s headquarters by Patton-Spruill, his business partner and spouse Patty Moreno, and producer E.J. Walton, our team took a quick tour of the FilmShack facility, which provides equipment rentals and postproduction facilities for independent filmmakers in the Boston area. Then we settled in front of a small monitor to watch the film. We knew in advance that the music soundtrack hadn’t



Turntable

been selected and the sound editing wasn’t final, but also that if it seemed that a scene or piece of dialogue was obviously needed for the film to hold together, chances were that footage had already

been shot and we could suggest re-incorporating it.

Says screening team member Chadd Kline of the experience, “What I found was that the film was **substantially** more complete than I thought and it was great! The plot and characters taken on a ‘surface’ level makes for compelling viewing, but the fact that this is all based on a French New Wave movie makes it even more astonishing to people ‘in the know.’” Beth Curran adds, “I really appreciated the chance to remind myself how to view a film critically...since college I’ve tended to avoid it, not wanting it to interfere with my full enjoyment of whatever it is I’m watching. This process reminds me that I can do both.” Here was one situation in which no one was going to accuse us of being over-analytical.

Afterwards, Robert and his associates listened to our questions and comments with remarkable open-mindedness. Says

20 Questions with Chlotrudis Society

New Chlotrudis member profiles.

1. Name

Thom Bowser

2. Chlotrudis Awards Affiliation (e.g., Member, Nominating Committee, Board of Directors)

Member

3. How did you get involved with Chlotrudis Awards?

From Bruce Kingsley’s and Michael Colford’s urgings

4. What is the first movie you remember seeing in the theatre?

Bambi

5. What movie character would you most like to be?

Lestat de Lioncourt from *Interview With The Vampire*

6. Have You Ever Walked Out On A Movie? Which One And Why?

The biopic of the artist who painted *The Scream*, the film was duller than his paintings.

7. Which movie have you seen the most times in the theatre? Overall?

Help! (23 times); same

8. What movie is your guilty pleasure? (A critically reviled film)

The Hulk

9. What is your favorite movie treat?

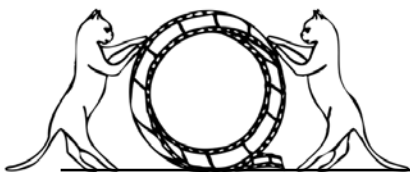
Popcorn

20 QUESTIONS continues on Page 14

Chadd, “It was wonderful to hear his responses to all the criticism because it was obvious that he had spent a lot of time with similar questions and issues and he had made conscious choices one way or the other. It was exciting to understand his artistic vision in this way.”

Beth says of Robert and E.J., “I’m sure that was difficult on some level for them, to be that open so late into the post of the film, you know? And yet they were really gracious and very receptive to what we offered.” She adds that some of the film’s most violent yet evocative scenes have continued to reverberate with her weeks later.

Beth speaks for the entire screening team when she says, “I definitely want to do this again, and definitely want to see the final cut of *Turntable!*”



20 QUESTIONS continued from Page 13

10. Where do you sit at the movie theatre?

In the third row, middle

11. What is your favorite line from a movie?

"And at the instant he knew, he ceased to know."

12. Have you ever attended a Film Festival? Which one(s)?

Yes; San Francisco, New York

13. What's the best movie to watch on a rainy day?

Maurice

14. What's on your mouse pad?

The X-Men

15. What is your favorite CD/album?

Angst by KMFDM

16. What is your favorite website?

IMDb (us.imdb.com)

17. Who is your favorite Power Puff Girl, or if you don't have one, other favorite animated character?

I'm not an animation fan

18. Who is your celebrity crush?

Giovanni Ribisi

19. Where did you go/are you going on your last/next vacation?

Amsterdam; Anywhere exciting

20. What is your favorite independent film?

Big Eden

1. Name

Beth Curran

2. Chlotrudis Awards Affiliation (e.g., Member, Nominating Committee, Board of Directors)

On the Board of Directors, doing the PR/press stuff

3. How did you get involved with Chlotrudis Awards?

I went to see a triple feature at the Brattle during the last Women's Film Festival - *Marion Bridge* / *Whale Rider* / *Rub & Tug*. Chlotrudis was co-presenting *Marion Bridge*, and during the Q&A with Wiebke, right after I asked the question, "How do crazy Canadian film fanatics like myself find more films to see - why does the distribution suck?" Michael stuck his head in to say, "Talk to me afterwards." So I did, and here we are.

4. What is the first movie you remember seeing in the theatre?

It was one of those cheesy Disney films, something like *The Fastest Man In The World*, a kind of riff on the Tarzan thing, with a guy raised in the African safari (conveniently he's white, blond and blue-eyed) who runs with the springbok, or something like that. I was probably around 5.

5. What movie character would you most like to be?

Well, growing up I was obsessed with looking like Louise Brooks, or any very pale brunette of the '20s or '30s. Otherwise, I don't really have a 'character I aspire to be.'

6. Have you ever walked out on a movie? Which one and why?

I really wanted to walk out on *The Joy Luck Club* but didn't, because I thought my friend was into it - turns out she hated it as much as I did! Otherwise, another friend and I walked out of *What About Ed?* a really horrible comedy with Richard Dreyfuss and Bill Murray. When I'm by myself, though, I won't walk out of a film (filmfests are exempt from this rule, however) - it's kind of a thing. If I hate the story, I focus on the actors. If that doesn't work, I focus on the cinematography, then editing, then sound ... something, anything to turn to silk!

7. Which movie have you seen the most times in the theatre? Overall?

Lord Of The Rings - Fellowship: 12 times; *Rocky Horror Picture Show* - 9 times; *Moulin Rouge!* - 6 times; *Hedwig And The Angry Inch* - 5 times; *Willy Wonka And The Chocolate Factory* - 5 times; once we get down closer to 2 times, I lose track. There are a lot.

8. What movie is your guilty pleasure? (A critically reviled film)

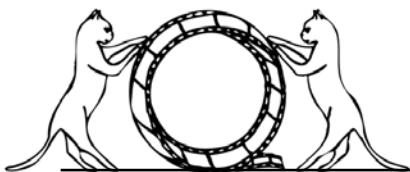
Let's see. Definitely at the top of my list is *Point Break*, starring Keanu Reeves and Patrick Swayze. Another one I like is *B. Monkey*, which is just so bizarro cast-wise. I want to meet the person who thought, "Hey, Asia Argento and Jared Harris, now THERE's a hot combo for our leads!" (Although you could argue that they both have fathers who've made horror classics - Dario's *Suspiria* and Richard's *Macarthur Park*) Meanwhile, Rupert Everett gets paired off with Jonathan Rhys-Meyers, who is perhaps even prettier than Rupert was during his own pouty boy-toy age. If only there was a 'making of' collection out there somewhere, I could die happy...

9. What is your favorite movie treat?

I'm old-fashioned - it's popcorn (battered of course) or nothing.



Beth Curran



20 QUESTIONS continued from Page 14

10. Where do you sit at the movie theatre?

It totally varies. Just, not on the edges, unless I have no other choice.

11. What is your favorite line from a movie?

Good lord, 25% of what I say is a line from a film - my favorites are from *Willy Wonka*, because most folks don't know what film they're from, but know that something is up with them: "I'm sorry, all questions must be submitted in triplicate." "You should open your mouth a little wider when you speak." "Strike that - reverse it!" "Stop. No. Wait. Come back." "If the good lord had intended us to walk he wouldn't have invented roller skates."

12. Have you ever attended a Film Festival? Which one(s)?

I'm going to restrict my answer to only those festivals that are multi-day, full-on with passes and parties type festivals, since there are so many smaller types around that I've done (Women's, Jewish, GLBT, etc.) Independent Film Festival of Boston (3x); Provincetown (soon to be 3x); Toronto (soon to be 2x)

13. What's the best movie to watch on a rainy day?

Sorry, I tend to curl up with a book on rainy days! When I do feel like flicking out on those days, I like to do a 'dumb-smart' double feature type deal, of whatever's out there in new releases.

14. What's on your mouse pad?

Oh god - okay, this was a gag gift, alright? A picture of Christopher Meloni, glaring at Chris Keller (Oz) with his arms crossed over his chest.

15. What is your favorite CD/Album?

At the moment it's Interpol's *Antics*.

16. What is your favorite website?

I'm listing the sacred three: IMDb (Internet Movie database), MRQE (Movie Review Query Engine), Netflix

17. Who is your favorite Power Puff Girl (or if you don't have one) or other favorite animated character?

The redhead, definitely the redhead.

18. Who is your celebrity crush?

Highbrow (my head) - at the moment, Maggie Gyllenhaal (good for her, not backing down despite the wingnuts frothing at the mouth over her comments)

Lowbrow (my, um, heart)- Angelina Jolie.

What's brilliant about these two picks? They are interchangeable! Angelina doing her UN work? Highbrow! Maggie in *Secretary*? Lowbrow!

19. Where did you go/are you going on your last/next vacation?

Hmm - my last vacation was to New York, and my next vacation is to Provincetown for the filmfest.

20. What is your favorite independent film?

Jeez, save the really tough question for last, why don't you? There's no way I can answer that!

1. Name

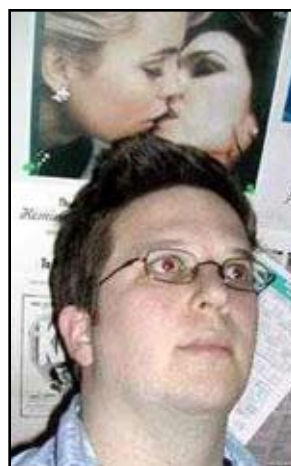
Ned Hinkle

2. Chlotrudis Awards Affiliation (e.g., Member, Nominating Committee, Board of Directors)

Member

3. How did you get involved with Chlotrudis Awards?

Connections through the Brattle. It's mainly Stephen Brophy's fault.



Ned Hinkle

4. What is the first movie you remember seeing in the theatre?

Star Wars

5. What movie character would you most like to be?

Bogart as Marlowe in *The Big Sleep*

6. Have you ever walked out on a movie? Which one and why?

Braveheart! Because it was crap!

7. Which movie have you seen the most times in the theatre?

Overall?

In the theatre it's probably a toss-up between *Touch Of Evil* and Cocteau's *Orpheus*. Overall, a toss

up between *Repo Man* and *Monty Python And The Holy Grail*.

8. What movie is your guilty pleasure? (A critically reviled film)

Hudson Hawk!

9. What is your favorite movie treat?

I like ice cream bon-bons.

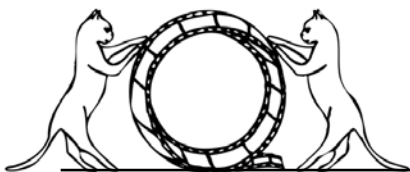
10. Where do you sit at the movie theatre?

As close as I can without breaking my neck.

11. What is your favorite line from a movie?

Too many to mention, but "Let's go get sushi and not pay," from *Repo Man* is an all-time favorite. And "Are you a Mexican or a Mexi-CAN'T," from *Once Upon A Time In Mexico* is a favorite at the moment.

12. Have you ever attended a Film Festival? Which one(s)?



20 QUESTIONS continued from Page 15

Many: Boston, Seattle, Montreal, Tribeca, and, most recently, Toronto!

13. What s the best movie to watch on a rainy day?

Any film noir.

14. What's on your Mouse Pad?

Nothing.

15. What is your favorite CD/Album?

Waaaay too many to mention! (Although Superchunk's On The Mouth is up there).

16. What is your favorite website?

<http://www.homestarrunner.com/>

17. Who is your favorite Power Puff Girl, or if you don't have one, your favorite animated character?

Who cares about stinking Powerpuff Girls!?! I like MOJO-JOJO

18. Who is your celebrity crush?

To my potential embarrassment I must admit to a crush on Katie Holmes.

19. Where did you go on your last/next vacation?

Toronto for the Toronto Film Festival.

20. What is your favorite independent film?

Down By Law and/or *Eraserhead*

1. Name

Marlin May

2. Chlotrudis Awards Affiliation (e.g., Member, Nominating Committee, Board of Directors)

Member

3. How did you get involved with Chlotrudis Society?

Michael wrote a comment on Ron's Blog - Leatheregg, or he emailed Ron directly.

4. What is the first movie you remember seeing in the theatre?

Bambi

5. What movie character would you most like to be?

Rick Deckard (*Blade Runner*)

6. Have you ever walked out on a movie? Which one and why?

Star Crash - Because it was horrible, and they violated physical laws in the first 5 minutes of the film.

7. Which movie have you seen the most times in the theatre? Overall?

In a theatre - *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*; Overall - *Blade Runner*

8. What movie is your guilty pleasure? (A critically reviled film)

Barbarella

9. What is your favorite movie treat?

Coke

10. Where do you sit at the movie theatre?

10th to 15 row, center

11. What is your favorite line from a movie?

"I watched C-beams glitter in the dark near the Tannhauser gate. All those moments will be lost in time...like tears in rain."

12. Have you ever attended a Film Festival? Which one(s)?

Sundance in 2004.

13. What s the best movie to watch on a rainy day?

I usually read on rainy days.

14. What s on your mouse pad?

Marvin the Martian

15. What is your favorite CD/Album?

Current Favorite - Such Fine Particles of the Universe by Bubblemath

16. What is your favorite website?

Honestly, Google.

17. Who is your favorite Power Puff Girl, or if you don't have one, your favorite animated character?

Currently - Spike Spiegel (*Cowboy Bebop*)

18. Who is your celebrity crush?

I don't do that.

19. Where did you go on your last/next vacation?

Key West

20. What is your favorite independent film?

Currently - *Donnie Darko*



Marlin May