



JUNE 2019 NEWSLETTER

Hello to all our members,

The Warburton Film Festival is just around the corner. The Festival is a cultural institution for Warburton, and we've assembled a great program for this year.

If you're attending any or all of the screenings, be sure to buy and collect your tickets soon before they sell out.

The committee is also planning new approaches for future Healesville Mini Film Festivals, and we have a couple of fascinating films coming up in our regular program. These include a documentary about a fusion of Indigenous Australian musical tradition and German hymns, and a hard-hitting historical drama about a near-impossible choice during the Nazi occupation of Norway during World War 2.

We hope you enjoy the Film Festival and the Society's future screenings and events.

WARBURTON FILM FESTIVAL

June 14-16

The Warburton Film Festival is almost upon us, and features a diverse, compelling assortment of films from around the world.

Tickets are selling fast, so get in quick.

The **Festival dinner** and the film *Can You Forgive Me* (both on Saturday, June 15) **are both sold out.**

Tickets can be purchased at the **Healesville Memorial Hall**, the **Warburton Arts Centre** and the **YRFS website**. Online purchase links, for individual films and the full program, can be found here:

http://ach.yarraranges.vic.gov.au/Whats_On/Warburton_Film_Festival_2019#.XNkdq6Z9glW

There will be a Grand Opening party at the Oscar's on the Yarra hotel in Warburton at **6 pm** on **June 14**. The entrance will be highlighted.

To attend the Grand Opening party, **all members must collect their tickets** for this event from the Warburton Arts Centre or Healesville Memorial Hall.

If you cannot get to the hotel by car, you can catch a **shuttle bus** to and from the Warburton Arts Centre.

Committee members must reserve your tickets for the opening party and the dinner.

We hope to see you at the Festival.

SHOW US YOUR SHORTS COMPETITION

The Show Us Your Shorts award ceremony will take place at 3:45 pm on *June 15* at the Warburton Arts Centre.

The award categories for this year are **Golden Shorts (Best Film)**, **Best Student Film (Secondary)**, **Best Student Film (Tertiary)** and the **Open Age Best Film**, with a prize pool of \$2000.

FULL PROGRAM:

June 14 (Friday)	Official Grand Opening	6 pm
	<i>Backtrack Boys</i> (2018 Australian documentary, with special guests Catherine Scott – director – and Bernie Shakestaff)	8 pm
	MA 100 mins	
June 15 (Saturday)	<i>Shoplifters</i> (2018 Japanese drama)	9:45 am
	M 121 mins	
	Lunch	
	<i>The Insult</i> (2017 Lebanese drama)	1:15 pm
	M 113 mins	
	Show Us Your Shorts ceremony	3:45 pm
	Festival Dinner (SOLD OUT)	6:00 pm
	<i>Can You Ever Forgive Me</i> (2018 US comedy-drama)	8:00 pm
	MA 106 mins (SOLD OUT)	
	<i>Beast</i> (2017 British psychological thriller)	10 pm
	M 107 mins	
June 16 (Sunday)	Timbuktu (2014 Mauritanian drama)	9:45 pm
	M 97 mins	
	<i>Leave No Trace</i> (2018 US drama)	1 pm
	G 109 mins	
	<i>Wajib</i> (2017 Palestinian comedy-drama)	3:15 pm
	M 96 mins	

THE HEALESVILLE MINI FILM FESTIVAL

The committee has begun the contentious process of deciding the three films for next year's Healesville Mini Film Festival.

We've all offered our suggestions for next year's triple-feature (I'm still holding out hope for an Ingmar Bergman trilogy), and Tom has been earnest and prolific in his brainstorming.

But we would like to hear your ideas too.

The turn-out for the Mini Film Festival has been gradually diminishing over the years. Richard Linklater's *Before* trilogy (*Before Sunrise*, *Before Sunset*, *Before Midnight*), screened last year, had the lowest turn-out of all.

We want to assemble a program with wide appeal to gather a large turn-out, but still challenge our viewers and present them with exciting lesser-known films or revived classics.

Each Mini Film Festival has heretofore showcased the work of a single director (Krzysztof Kieślowski, Rolf De Heer, Asghar Farhadi, Richard Linklater and Akira Kurosawa), but we have realised that this approach may stifle our creativity with the program (and, in some cases, be too obscure for wide appeal).

We may take a thematic approach to future Mini Film Festivals, or gather films that illustrate the evolution of a social idea, a historical event or a technique in filmmaking.

I think it would be cool if we did a *King Kong* triple-feature, as each major *King Kong* film represents a dramatically different era of special effects. Willis O'Brien pioneered stop-motion animation with the original 1933 film; the Dino de Laurentis-produced 1976 remake featured realistic monster suits and animatronics (and Kong climbs the newly-built World Trade Centre instead of the Empire State Building); Peter Jackson's 2005 remake used CGI to astonishing effect.

The committee will release a survey in the coming months to gauge your interests and hopes for the next Mini Film Festival, but you are welcome to submit your ideas through this newsletter.

FRITZ'S POEM

The Other Side of Hope

May 2019

The Movie in May: 'The Other Side of Hope'
Shows how refugees from war are trying to cope.
The film was good and a welcome distraction
From all the spin of the election.
There was a bit of black humour on the whole.
There was kindness and help, friendship too
Amongst the rejection refugees went through.
Like the poker game, it was weird and unfair,
Unpredictable happenings everywhere.
It did not teach anything new.
Just reinforced the thing I always knew:
Living here and now is simply the best
And I'll enjoy that and forget the rest.



F.R.

STAR RATINGS AND REVIEW FOR *THE OTHER SIDE OF HOPE*



3.4 from Healesville

3.2 from Warburton's viewers

3.3 overall

The Other Side of Hope is an endearing but unfocused comedy-drama about the hardships endured by refugees and businessmen alike in modern Europe.

The film draws some slight parallels between the experiences of Waldemar (Sakari Kuosmanen), a hapless businessman who buys a restaurant, and Khaled (Sherwan Haji), a Syrian refugee who seeks asylum in Norway and wants to find his lost sister Miriam (Niroz Haji).

Khaled fled civil strife in Syria, and embarked on a long, arduous journey to gain asylum in Norway. Waldemar just separated from his wife, and everyone in his social circle (including himself) has unsuccessful businesses in the current economic climate.

While Khaled lives in effectively a legal limbo until he is eventually sentenced to deportation, and finding his sister is a major motivation for him, there is very little lasting urgency in his or Waldemar's plot-threads. Moreover, their respective situations are tonally too different – Khaled's life is sombre and grounded, while Waldemar's is subtly absurd – to mesh together well.

Waldemar and his colleagues discuss the poor performance of their restaurant, and consider new styles of cuisine to increase revenue. We see Waldemar naively turn his restaurant into a sushi joint, only to fail hilariously, but there is no fallout from this failure. Waldemar and Khaled gradually bond while working together, and when Khaled finally receives word of Miriam's whereabouts, Waldemar graciously arranges for her to be smuggled into Norway. After they set up this plan, Miriam arrives in the harbour **literally in the next shot**.

Save for embarrassment, there are no dramatic consequences to the restaurant's misguided culinary experiment, and through the quick cut to mission accomplished, Miriam's reunion with Khaled comes across as weirdly easy.

Dramas can often afford to be slow-paced and relatively uneventful. This genre derives tension from personal hardship and character development, and a slow pace allows the viewer to immerse themselves in the important minutiae of their lives. This is why I love character dramas such as *The Hunt*, *Sunshine Cleaning*, *The Seventh Seal* and *Take This Waltz* so much.

But even slow films still need **conflict** – some obstacle for the main characters to overcome, and a tangible sense that they may lose – and *The Other Side of Hope* is oddly lacking in tension for a film about the European refugee crisis.

The Other Side of Hope has an authentic low-key feel, with little non-diegetic music, and some fun dry humour. The film also places strong emphasis on the enriching power of music, as Khaled clearly loves the country music performed at various points throughout the film.

The film often feels like a tamer David Lynch film, with its subtly bizarre characters and weird logic in Waldemar's narrative. The ambience of Waldemar's restaurant is

reminiscent of the Black Lodge in *Twin Peaks*, and the opening, in which Khaled emerges from a pile of coal on a cargo ship, looks almost like a scene from *Eraserhead*.

The Other Side of Hope is a fun yet sobering film with some uplifting moments, but the film's bleak and whimsical elements clash, and the plot is lacking in defined, lasting tension.

JUNE'S SCREENING

The Songkeepers

2017 Australian documentary Rated G 84 minutes (approx.)



An uplifting film about the unifying quality of music, *The Songkeepers* is a documentary about a group of Indigenous Australian women singers who travel to Germany to perform German hymns in their Indigenous language.

WARBURTON SCREENING: Tuesday June 11

HEALESVILLE SCREENING: Tuesday June 18

JULY'S SCREENING

The King's Choice

2016 Norwegian historical drama Rated M 133 minutes (approx.)

WARBURTON SCREENING: Tuesday July 9

HEALESVILLE SCREENING: Tuesday July 16

ALTERNATIVE FILM SPOTLIGHT



Duck and Cover

PSA/Educational film

Directed by Anthony Rizzo

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IKqXu-5jw60>

Released in 1952, *Duck and Cover* is an educational short film produced by the US Federal Civil Defense Administration. Screened for American schoolchildren during the '50s, this nine-minute short film instructs its viewers on safety procedures in the event of a nuclear attack, and offers a glimpse into the fascinating juxtaposition of fatalism and optimism in American society during the early Cold War.

The film's "mascot" is a turtle character named Bert, who is introduced ducking for cover from a stick of dynamite held out by a foolish monkey. This whimsical intro establishes the title and the motif of 'duck and cover'.

The film's advice is methodical and straightforward, and therefore very accessible to young viewers, and the filmmakers instil the necessity of nuclear preparation without being alarmist.

The narrator likens nuclear safety to road rules and fire departments, indicating that we have rules and emergency services to keep people safe, and we have rules to keep people safe from the atomic bomb as well.

The short film describes how during an atomic attack, you must duck to the ground and cover your head and neck, wherever you are; this will be relatively effective in protecting you from the blast heat and shrapnel. If you hear a warning siren, get indoors for better protection, and ask an adult for help if you don't know where to go.

'You will know when it comes. We hope it never comes, but we must be ready,' the narrator says of an atomic bomb attack. 'Yes, we must all get ready now, so we know how to save ourselves if the atomic bomb explodes near us,' he insists later. This short film does not frame an atomic bomb attack as inevitable, but still tells its viewers to be vigilant and protect ourselves should one happen, like with any disaster.

Scholars have hotly debated the accuracy of this film's nuclear safety advice, but I find *Duck and Cover* to be a very straightforward, engaging and rather charming film.

It speaks to the magnitude of '50s post-war optimism that a nuclear attack was seen as very survivable through the good old 'duck and cover' mantra, and you could teach such a devastating topic through a warm, calm narrator and a whimsical animated turtle.

As the optimism of the '50s gave way to mass social upheaval, demoralising proxy wars and recurring nuclear threats in the following decades, nuclear-related media became considerably bleaker.

The Day After is a 1983 telemovie with a truly harrowing depiction of nuclear war and the suffering of everyday people caught within.

In *Godzilla 1985*, Godzilla destroys a Soviet nuclear submarine; the Soviets accuse the Americans, who deny responsibility, and tensions escalate to a possible nuclear exchange. The Japanese prime minister is conflicted on whether to reveal that Godzilla had destroyed the submarine; this announcement would defuse the aforementioned tensions, but plunge his own people into panic.

Protect and Survive (named after a British campaign of nuclear safety education during the '80s) is a chilling 2012 Doctor Who audio drama in which main characters Ace and Hex are trapped inside a time-loop of a nuclear attack in an alternate-history 1980s.

There is a naivete to *Duck and Cover*, but also a confidence, focus and upbeat spirit that I find encouraging. If there is a genuine threat of nuclear war in the future, I hope we bring some of *Duck and Cover's* optimism to our preparations.