



## MAY NEWSLETTER

Hello to all our members,

Mid-2019 is an exciting time, both for the Film Society and for cinema in general.

The committee has finalised the program and events for the Warburton Film Festival, including the opening party at Oscar's in Warburton, and our judging is complete for the Show Us Your Shorts short film competition. This year's Festival looks to be a very exciting one.

In April, *Avengers: Endgame* concluded the eleven-year Marvel Cinematic Universe experiment with a thrilling, deeply-affecting, character-rich adventure, and *Endgame* is on track to become the highest-grossing film of all time (not adjusting for inflation – *Gone With The Wind* still holds that honour when inflation is accounted for).

I've been looking forward to May for months.

May 16 is the release date of *John Wick 3: Parabellum*, the final entry in perhaps the most polished, compelling and subtly funny action franchise of the decade.

*Brightburn*, which comes out on May 23, is a superhero horror film that subverts the classic, wholesome Superman origin story by portraying a bullied young boy with superpowers who essentially becomes a slasher villain when he lashes out from his repressed rage.

And on May 30, *Godzilla: King of the Monsters* comes out.

This should be a noteworthy release even for cinephiles with no interest in "kaiju" (giant monster) movies.

With over thirty films across **65 years**, *Godzilla* is one of the longest-running franchises in cinema history, and these films are iconic both for their early grave social commentary on the nuclear age (the 1954 original is a dark, serious thriller) and for their later camp appeal.

When you think of Japanese cinema, there's a good chance you'll think of Akira Kurosawa, Studio Ghibli or *Godzilla* (and, if you're weird like me, the Lynchian cyberpunk horror film *Tetsuo: The Iron Man* from 1989).

The third American *Godzilla* film (after iterations in 1998 and 2014), *King of the Monsters* will be the first Hollywood appearance of famous monsters Rodan, Mothra and King Ghidorah, who were allies and/or enemies of *Godzilla* in the Japanese films.

This is a slightly bare-bones newsletter, I'm afraid. Fritz and I both missed *Still Life*, last month's film. I've hit a bit of a slump in my mental health, so I didn't feel up to watching *Still Life* on iTunes to review it for the newsletter.

Thankfully, our upcoming film *The Other Side of Hope* and May's aforementioned blockbuster releases should work wonders in mending my mental state, and I hope you enjoy these films as well.

## WARBURTON FILM FESTIVAL

June 14-16

We have assembled an engaging, multicultural collection of dramas, thrillers and documentaries for this year's Warburton Film Festival, which will be held from June 14-16.

Tickets for the films and other events are selling fast, so get in quick.

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

An opening party, with music, wine and nibbles, will be held at Oscar's on the Yarra in Warburton at **6 pm** on **June 14**. The entrance to Oscar's will be highlighted, and if

you cannot reach the hotel yourself, you can catch a shuttle bus from the Warburton Arts Centre.

**Committee members must buy their tickets for the opening party and the 6 pm dinner on June 15.**

The Festival will also feature the Show Us Your Shorts short film competition. This feature has been great for supporting young and emerging filmmakers, as a majority of winners have gone on to pursue enriching further careers in film.

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:

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

## STAR RATINGS FOR *STILL LIFE*



3.9 from Healesville

4.0 from Warburton's viewers  
3.95 overall

### MAY'S SCREENING

*The Other Side of Hope*

2013 Finnish comedy-drama

Rated M

100 minutes (approx.)

**WARBURTON SCREENING:** Tuesday May 14

**HEALESVILLE SCREENING:** Tuesday May 21

### JUNE'S SCREENING

*The Songkeepers*

2017 Australian documentary

Rated G

84 minutes (approx.)

**WARBURTON SCREENING:** Tuesday June 11

**HEALESVILLE SCREENING:** Tuesday June 18

## ALTERNATIVE FILM SPOTLIGHT



*FMV Games*

This month, we're looking at an entire medium of semi-cinematic media: interactive movie video games.

Along with big advances in graphics hardware, the adoption of CD-ROMs in the early nineties dramatically increased the speed and especially the storage space of computer media. This empowered game developers to craft far bigger, more complex games.

“FMV” (Full Motion Video) refers to a video game format that uses pre-recorded video sequences as a major element of the gameplay experience. With CD-ROMs now enabling the compression of long stretches of video onto a disc, developers saw an opportunity to create video games with a truly cinematic feel and even physical actors.

Full-motion video was primarily employed in the adventure genre (a genre built on puzzles and atmosphere). Most early FMV adventure games, such as *Myst*, *The 7th Guest*, *Phantasmagoria* and the *Tex Murphy* series, consisted mainly of real actors spliced into static computer-generated environments. But as the FMV technique gained popularity and video compression formats improved during the nineties, many games would enhance their narratives using long dramatic or expository video clips (known as “cut-scenes”).

During the height of the FMV fad, these adventure games attracted big film actors, who would perform in filmed cut-scenes to bridge the gameplay sections.

The celebrated space thriller games *Wing Commander III* and *IV* starred Mark Hamill, John Rhys-Davies and Malcolm McDowell. *Privateer 2: The Darkening*, a *Wing Commander* spin-off, starred Clive Owen and had John Hurt and Christopher Walken in major supporting roles. These games' cut-scenes were filmed on real sets and had impressive production values.

*Frankenstein: Through The Eyes of the Monster* starred Tim Curry. The *X-Files Game* from 1995 featured the cast of the TV show, along with extensive real-set cut-scenes. *The Daedalus Encounter* starred Tia Carrere. *Ripper* had a phenomenal cast, featuring Walken, Rhys-Davies, Burgess Meredith, Karen Allen, David Patrick Kelly and Paul Giamatti.

Having gained cinematic presentation, some developers decided to push the limits of theme and taste in gaming. The horror adventure game *Phantasmagoria* became notorious for its adult content, including gory violence, torture, sex and a rape scene; this was especially controversial coming from Sierra, a company previously known for their kid-friendly fantasy games.

Cut-scenes in games are still common, but the FMV format fizzled out by the late nineties for several reasons.

Some great titles notwithstanding, most FMV games were very corny and had poor acting and production values, and the video quality itself was, by necessity, small and grainy. Even with over 700 MBs of space on a CD-ROM, full-motion video had to be compressed to such a small, low-resolution (near-garbled) state for home computers of the time to even play it.

Moreover, FMV adventure games often came on multiple CDs; the minimum was three or four, but *Ripper* came on six discs, and *The Black Dahlia* came on eight. Players had to switch discs very frequently to access new areas or chapters in the plot.

The adventure game format felt antiquated by the late nineties, and real-time 3D shooters and platformers were a more fast-paced, higher-resolution and more convenient alternative for gamers.

But the FMV format never died. Independent developers have kept the format alive with recent games such as *Late Shift*, *The Infectious Madness of Doctor Dekker*, *Contradiction: Spot the Liar!* and *Tesla Effect*, all of which sold well and received positive reviews.

Some recent real-time 3D blockbuster games also cast big-name actors in digitised forms, with the actors (through motion-capture) actively providing the expressions and movements for their likenesses in the game. Ellen Page and Willem Dafoe starred in *Beyond: Two Souls* in 2013, and Kevin Spacey played the main villain in *Call of Duty: Advanced Warfare* in 2014.

The FMV era was a short-lived but innovative synthesis of film and video games, and just as technological advances such as sound, colour and 3D spurred exciting new ways to make movies, the invention of the CD-ROM was the catalyst for this era of cinematic video games.