

WPL FILM CLUB SCREENING LIST

Jan. 5 & 17, 2017, **Tea with Mussolini** 1999 *117 Minutes*

Franco Zeffirelli, the director of *Romeo and Juliet* offers a heartfelt tale based on his youth in late-1930's Florence, when he was raised by the "Scorpioni," a circle of expatriate British and American women who were drawn to the arts and culture of Italy. The group is dominated by Maggie Smith's imperious widow of the British ambassador, a woman who is as convinced that Il Duce and his Fascists are benign as she is exasperated by the group's other leader, a brash American socialite played by Cher. With war approaching, the women refuse to leave their beloved Italy, and when the British are interned, it falls to the American women and Zeffirelli's younger self to help them survive betrayal, persecution, and likely death at the hands of the Nazis. With a renowned cast that includes Judi Densch, Joan Plowright, and Lily Tomlin, *Tea with Mussolini* is a buoyant love letter to the better angels who rise amidst the worst of times.
Rated PG

Feb. 16, 2017 **Under the Tuscan Sun** 2003 *115 minutes*

Based on the 1996 memoir by Frances Mayes, This film is a Valentine's Card to all that we love about Italy- the romance, the culture, the cuisine, the antiquity, the style—the possibilities. After being tossed out of a comfortable career, marriage, and home in San Francisco, a despairing Frances Mayes (Diane Lane) is talked into a package tour to Italy. On a stopover in the town of Cortona, she encounters an eccentric Englishwoman who helps her glimpse the magic all around her, melting away her skepticism. Before Frances knows it, she has spent the last of her money purchasing a gloriously decrepit villa. Soon she is immersed in renovations, shooing away scorpions, and falling in love with a whole new Old World. *Rated PG-13 (a little bad language)*

Feb. 22, 2017, **Roman Holiday** 1953 *118 minutes*

Starring Audrey Hepburn in a role that launched her career, ROMAN HOLIDAY could be described as a "Mid-20th-Century fairy tale" as a visiting princess flees her numbing formal duties for a few days incognito. She meets an American reporter played by Gregory Peck, who soon catches on to her true identity and a possible scoop of a lifetime. As the two take in the sights and joys of the Eternal City, their growing feelings for each other make for a sublime, if brief interlude as a reporter's opportunity and princess's obligations melt away. *Not Rated*

Mar. 2, 2017 **Miss Pettigrew Lives for a Day** 2008 92 minutes

In the screwball comedy traditions of the 1930s, *Miss Pettigrew Lives for A Day* is equal parts P.G. Wodehouse and P. L. Travers (but without the flying umbrellas). The film stars Frances McDormand as a prim vicar's daughter who has lost her fourth nanny position and is facing destitution on the grim streets of Pre-WWII London. But McDormand's titular Miss Pettigrew is nothing if not resourceful, for with only her stiff upper lip and her ever-so-English wisdom, she bluffs her way into a job for Amy Adam's brassy American showgirl. Here Miss Pettigrew finds her niche juggling the showgirl's rogue's gallery of boyfriends and benefactors, and in the process of navigating the West End glitterati and riff-raff, she has a chance to sparkle and find potential love with an unexpected kindred spirit. *Rated PG-13,*

Mar. 16, 2017 **Local Hero** 1983 111 minutes.

As countless English monarchs have learned to their chagrin, acquiring Scottish real estate is never a simple thing. This is certainly the case in Bill Forsyth's whimsical comedy about a Houston oil man's attempt to purchase a bucolic fishing village for a new refinery and tanker terminal. Played by Peter Riegert, the early-80s yuppie finds a village only too willing to sell up and move out, but as he settles into the ways of the eccentric Highlanders, and the magic of the coastal mountains and northern sky take hold, complications arise that were never covered in his acquisition plan. *Rated PG*

Dec. 7, 2017, **The Philadelphia Story** 1941 112 minutes

It is no overstatement to say that *The Philadelphia Story* is the definitive Katharine Hepburn movie. It was based on a Phillip Barry play specifically written for Hepburn with the idea that it would become her film vehicle back into the good graces of the Hollywood, where she had been labeled as "Box Office Poison." In the process she delivered a spot-on performance as the bristling, independent-minded patrician (in effect playing herself) opposite Cary Grant and Jimmy Stewart, both men in breakout roles. The result was one of the most beloved films of the 1940s, and if there are a few scenes that haven't aged well, they are of the time, eclipsed by Hepburn, Grant, and Stewart's contagious banter and George Cukor's superb direction.

Not Rated

Jan. 11, 2018, **I Know Where I'm Going** 1945 91 minutes

Martin Scorsese is on record for saying: "I reached the point of thinking there were no more masterpieces to discover, then I saw *I Know Where I'm Going!*"

The film certainly has the feeling of an overlooked gem, written and directed by Michael Powell and Emeric Pressberger, the team known for some of the best films to come out of Britain in the 1940s. *I Know Where I'm Going!* travels to the Western Isles of Scotland, following Wendy Hiller as the very English Joan Webster, who is on her way to marry a tycoon holding court on a remote island. The vistas she finds are sublime, however the weather is dreadful, keeping her from her last ferry crossing. Waylaid with the actual Lord of her fiancée's island, Joan Webster becomes immersed in a Highland culture that is at turns gallant and quirky, and soon she begins to question where exactly she is going... *Not Rated*.

Jan. 23, 2018, **A River Runs Through It** 1992 123 minutes,

After a full career as a professor of English literature, Norman MacLean started writing fiction in his seventies, publishing his semi-autobiographical novel in 1976. Recounting his coming of age in a Montana family where "there was no clear line between religion and fly fishing," MacLean offered an elegiac portrait of his staid minister father and his wild-hearted brother Paul, whose very different life paths were transcended by their bond shared on the banks of the Blackfoot River. In 1991, just after MacLean's death at age eighty-seven, Robert Redford adapted the novella into a film, casting the not-yet-famous Brad Pitt as the MacLean's brother Paul, a no-holds-barred reporter in the Prohibition-era West. What Redford creates is possibly his best film, balancing Maclean's solid prose with the evocative imagery of Philippe Rousselot, who won the 1993 Academy Award for Best Cinematography. *Rated PG*.

Feb. 6, 2018, **Big Fish** 2003 125 minutes

In his later years, Edward Bloom (as played by Albert Finney), has become the quintessential Southern storyteller, a man determined not to let facts ruin the flavor of a tall tale. The problem is that his son (as played by Billy Crudup) can't believe a word he says, despairing that he doesn't really know the man who is his father. *Big Fish* is a magical realist tale about reconciliation. As Edward Bloom nears the end, he offers his son the story of how he as a young man (in the form of Ewan MacGregor) met the loves of his life (Jessica Lange, Alison Lohman, and Helena Bonham-Carter) and all the adventures he had along the way. The film is directed by Tim Burton (*Beetlejuice*, *Batman*, *Ed Wood*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Big Eyes*, *Alice Wonderland*, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* and many, many others). Burton's films are big, vibrant, and often silly, and *Big Fish* is no exception. But there is a sense of heartfelt resolution in this film that transcends the effects-driven whimsy, in no small part to Albert Finney and Ewan MacGregor's performances, but also Burton himself, who made the film not long after the passing of his own parents—determined that the sentiment behind the effort was authentic. *Rated PG-13*.

SERIES- *Hitchcock in the Afternoon*

Feb. 22, 2018 **The Thirty-Nine Steps** 1935 *86 Minutes*

Based on the classic espionage novel by John Buchan, *The Thirty-Nine Steps* involves one of Hitchcock's favorite themes: an innocent man on the run. Robert Donat plays the affable Mr. Hannay, an average fellow who encounters a mysterious woman claiming to be a spy pursued by enemy agents. When she is murdered, Hannay becomes the lead suspect, and his only chance for exoneration is to stay one step ahead of police and spies alike. *Not Rated.*

Mar. 15, 2018, **The Lady Vanishes** 1938 *96 minutes,*

On a train trip across a fascist European country, an elderly English governess disappears. While the authorities insist there never was such a woman on board, the British passengers struggle to sort out the mystery and find menace in every direction. Released during the Munich Crisis, *The Lady Vanishes* was one of Hitchcock's pre-war allegories about a muddled Britain fitfully waking up to the growing threat coming out of Middle Europe. *Not Rated.*

Mar. 29, 2018, **Rebecca** 1940 *130 minutes*

In Hitchcock's first film for an American studio, he adapts the Daphne DuMaurier novel with a young, impressionable Joan Fontaine caught up in a whirlwind courtship with the handsome, brooding Laurence Olivier. When he takes her home to his Cornish estate she finds her herself under the scrutiny of Judith Anderson's ominous housekeeper—a woman who obsessively cherishes the memory Olivier's vivacious late first wife. *Not Rated.*

April 12, 2018, **Rear Window** 1954 *112 minutes*

Laid up in his Greenwich Village apartment with a broken leg, globe-trotting photographer Jimmy Stewart is restless. With his girlfriend Grace Kelly wanting more commitment in their relationship, Stewart instead distracts himself with the comings and goings of his neighbors. Watching with his telephoto lens, Stewart's (and Hitchcock's) voyeuristic instincts take over, and he soon suspects his neighbor Raymond Burr of murderous intentions. *Rated PG.*

April 19, 2018, **North by Northwest** 1959

Cary Grant is the definitive late-fifties ad-man who is accidentally taken by Soviet spies for an American spy. Framed for the murder of a UN diplomat, Grant flees across the USA with the help of a very mysterious Eva Marie Saint, trying to clear his name or at least not get himself killed—whether by car, crop-duster or tossed off Mount Rushmore. *North by Northwest* tops off Hitchcock's full-fifties style, with all of his suspense elements at work, including James Mason as one of his most debonair villains. *Not rated.*

SERIES- 641.5 Food on Film

Jan. 3, 2019 **Julie & Julia** 2009 118 minutes

Flustered office worker Julie (Amy Adams) is at a creative and professional impasse, and in desperation she embraces the life and work of the iconic Julia Child (Meryl Streep), setting out to write a blog involving 542 of Child's recipes in 365 days. Rated *PG-13*.

Jan. 10, 2019 **Eat, Drink, Man, Woman** 1994 124 minutes

Set in Taiwan, Ang Lee's film tells the story of Mr. Chu, a master chef whose Sunday meals with his three adult daughters are both a joy and a challenge as his traditional values conflict with their modern aspirations. *In Mandarin with subtitles. Not Rated.*

Jan. 17, 2019 **Mostly Martha** 2001 109 minutes

Ever-precise Martha is the head chef at a French restaurant in Hamburg. All other concerns in her life are secondary, which proves a problem when she is forced to take in her young niece and also get along with a newly arrived and a very out-of-the-box Italian sous-chef. *In German with subtitles. Rated PG.*

Jan. 29, 2019 **Jiro Dreams of Sushi** 2011 81 minutes

In this documentary by David Gelb, Jiro Ono is an 85-year-old sushi master whose modest ten-seat restaurant in a Tokyo subway station has been rated with three stars by Michelin. Considered by many to be Japan's greatest sushi chef, Jiro spends each day finding new ways to perfect his twenty-course tasting menu, and in the process creates a methodical, nuanced universe of cuisine and patrons. *In Japanese with subtitles. Rated PG.*

Feb. 21, 2019 **Today's Special** 2009 99 minutes

Samir is a sous chef in an upscale Manhattan restaurant. Passed over for promotion, he decides to study haute cuisine in Paris, but his father takes sick, obliging him to take charge of his family's struggling Indian restaurant in Queens. Samir grudgingly comes back to his culture—albeit in a very New York way—with family, food, and romance not far behind. *Rated R (for inevitable kitchen profanity)*

Feb. 28, 2019 **Big Night** 1996 109 minutes

In the film that launched their careers, Tony Shaloub and Stanley Tucci are Primo and Secondo, two brothers from Abruzzo who are determined to bring authentic Italian cuisine to the 1950s Jersey Shore. With two very different visions of the American Dream, the brothers struggle with each other as they try to keep their restaurant afloat in spite of the big, loud (and highly successful), red-sauce joint just across the street. *Rated R (kitchen profanity and copious amounts of '50s smoking),*

Mar. 14, 2009 **Three Stars** 2009 94 minutes

For decades, the *Michelin Bib Gourmand* restaurant guide has been the Holy Bible of Haute Cuisine. *Three Stars*, a documentary by Lutz Hachmeister, examines ten restaurants that have received Michelin's iconic top rating. Offering a behind-the-scenes look at celebrity chefs and their high-pressure kitchens in France, Spain, Germany, the Netherlands, Denmark, the USA and Japan, *Three Stars* ponders what it takes to earn a star, keep a star, and whether the acclaim is a blessing or a burden. *Not Rated.*

Mar. 28, 2019 **Chef** 2014 114 minutes

Actor/Director/Producer Jon Favreau took a break from the Marvel Universe to offer a heartfelt tale about the creative process. Favreau plays a celebrity chef whose overheated career crashes but finds redemption running a food truck with his son. *Rated R for Mametesque Profanity.*

Special Evening Presentation-

April 3, 2019 **Chimes at Midnight** 1965 119 minutes

When we think of Orson Welles, the first thing that comes to mind is *Citizen Kane*, and then maybe *The Magnificent Ambersons*, or his performance in *The Third Man*. But just as often (and less charitably), we remember his mellifluous voice shilling wine or trading witticisms with Johnny Carson or the Muppets. Welles had a complicated life, starting as a wunderkind of theatre and radio who was given carte-blanche by Hollywood to make *Kane*. That film was indeed great, but it ruffled a number of powerful people who made sure he never got such clout again. Had Welles gone back to the theatre or contented himself with being a “movie star,” he would have had a solid if not illustrious career. But *cinema* got under his skin, and he spent the rest of his life schmoozing producers and taking whatever roles came his way to finance his films.

By the early ‘60s, Welles was rambling around Europe when he set out to make *Chimes at Midnight*. Ever since he was a boy at the Todd School, it had been his dream to stage a version of Shakespeare’s Henriad cycle. When he was in his early twenties and flush with the cachet of his *Macbeth* and *Julius Caesar* adaptations (as well as the notoriety of his 1938 *War of the Worlds* broadcast) he broached the Henriad cycle again with his *Five Kings*. Drawing from *Richard II*, *Henry IV Parts 1 & 2*, *Henry V*, *Henry VI*, *Richard III*, and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, it was a massive, unwieldy project that crashed and closed on its pre-Broadway tour. His later *Chimes at Midnight* trimmed away the earlier and later Richards and concentrated on the conflict between the haunted, Machiavellian Henry IV and his wayward heir, Prince Hal. Between them Welles played the central role of Sir John Falstaff, the beloved scoundrel who was a favorite of Shakespeare’s audiences with his jovial larceny, legendary gluttony, and heroic cowardice. But where Shakespeare saw Falstaff as the comic foil with moments of pathos, Welles played him as an elegy to “Merrie” Old England, whose very human surrogate son Prince Hal would inevitably reject him in the interest of throne and empire.

Chimes at Midnight took to the stage in 1960 largely as a rehearsal for the film, earning praise on its run in Belfast and dismissal in Dublin. A Spanish producer was eventually found, and with some very questionable bookkeeping, on and off shooting took place in Franco’s Spain in 1965. Welles’ visual style was evident throughout the production, but his limited budget hobbled his audio recording, muddling much of the Shakespearean verse. This was an especially hard outcome for Welles, whose reputation for innovative sound work dated back to his days on radio. The film nonetheless received a good reception at the 1966 Cannes Film Festival, but was lambasted by the *New York Times* the following year, and *Chimes* never received a proper American distribution. For years, only rare, imperfect prints were available due to disputes over the screening rights, but the film’s underground reputation grew, and is now considered a gem of Welles’ later career—his scenes from the Battle of Shrewsbury having been likened to the work of Kurosawa and Eisenstein. In 2016, Janus Films released a restored version of the film and with Criterion Collection distribution, the earlier issues with sound has been addressed.

Perhaps the best reason to see *Chimes at Midnight* is that Welles considered it his best film, having stated in a 1982 BBC interview, “If I wanted to get into heaven on the basis of one movie, that’s the one I would offer up.”

Not Rated (but with old English bawdiness and one very intense battle scene),

Series- Massachusetts on Film

May 2, 2019 **Little Women** 1994 *115 minutes*

There have been several versions of Louisa May Alcott's coming of age tale set in 1860s Concord—with Kathrine Hepburn playing Jo in 1933 and Saoirse Ronan playing her in this year's release. Having checked with various staff members at the WPL, we will be screening their favorite version: Gillian Armstrong's adaptation with Wynona Ryder, Claire Danes, Susan Sarandon, (and Deerfield Village playing the Town of Concord). *Rated PG.*

May 9, 2019 **Thirteen Days** 2000 *145 minutes*

No film series about the Commonwealth would be complete without the Kennedys, but the question is: *which one to show?* All have factual inaccuracies, but Bruce Greenwood's crisp performance as JFK and Stephanie Romanow's cameo as Jackie highlight this political thriller about the Cuban Missile Crisis. Technically not set in the Bay State, which is just as well, as Kevin Costner's Boston accent would make Vaughn Meader cry. *Rated PG-13.*

May 23, 2019 **The Russians are Coming!** 1966 *126 minutes*

In a decidedly different take on the Cold War, Norman Jewison presents a comedic tale about a Soviet submarine that runs aground on an island off the coast of Massachusetts. With a breakout performance by Alan Arkin as a befuddled Commissar and a number of venerable Yankee character actors, the film's parody of Cold War hysteria rankled the John Birch Society and astonished the Kremlin with its balanced depiction of panicked islanders and funny Russians. *Not Rated, 1966*

June 5, 2019 **The Thomas Crown Affair** 1968 *104 minutes*

Norman Jewison returns to Massachusetts and actually films in-state, offering an exercise in essential cool as he sets icons Faye Dunaway and Steve McQueen against a backdrop of fusty old 1967 Boston. McQueen plays a jaded millionaire who stages a heist of his own bank (for the fun of it), only to find himself in a romantic duel with Dunaway's oh-so-glam insurance investigator. Consider it an historic artifact involving lots of 60's innuendo, smoking, and ecological damage.

Rated R, with some violence (mild by current standards)

Series- *The Dames: Actresses who have been awarded the Order of the British Empire*

Jan. 16, 2020 **Gosford Park** 2001 138 minutes

Although not a prequel, Robert Altman's tart adaptation of Julian Fellowes' script became the model for *Downton Abbey*. Set during a hunting weekend in 1932 at a country estate, the film charts the intrigues of both the upstairs guests and downstairs staff as they seethe and scheme their way up and down the social ladders. With Dames Maggie Smith, Helen Mirren, Eileen Atkins, and Kristin Scott-Thomas.

Rated R with smoking, drinking, profanity, murder, and English naughtiness.

Feb. 6, 2020 **Agatha** 1979 105 minutes

In 1926, after her marriage collapsed, Agatha Christie disappeared for eleven days, setting off a media fracas and a mystery that was never adequately explained. Director Michael Apted of the *7-56 Up* series offers a speculation of what happened, starring Dame Vanessa Redgrave, who plays Christie with a mixture of frail inhibition and methodical cunning as she is at turns investigated and wooed by Dustin Hoffman's acerbic American journalist.

Rated PG with smoking, brief violence, and English reticence.

Feb. 13, 2020 **The Children Act** 2018 105 minutes

In this adaptation of the Ian McEwan novel, Dame Emma Thompson plays a hard-pressed Family Division Judge facing the repercussions of a ruling involving medical treatment for an unwilling teenaged Jehovah's Witness.

Rated R with English phlegmaticism and jurisprudence.

Feb. 20, 2020 **My Brilliant Career** 1979 100 minutes

As part of the Australian New Wave of the 1970s, this film features a breakout performance by Judy Davis (not a Dame but should be) as a late-nineteenth century woman determined to rise above of the social constraints of her backcountry world.

Rated G with Australian exuberance and English Jackaroos

Feb. 27, 2020 **Sense & Sensibility** 1995 *136 minutes*

Considered one of the best cinema adaptations of Jane Austen, Dame Emma Thompson both wrote the screenplay and stars opposite Kate Winslet CBE, Alan Rickman, Hugh Grant, and Tom Wilkinson in this beloved Regency-era comedy of manners. Directed by Ang Lee, this film launched a wave of Austen productions.

Rated PG with one passing reference to infidelity, and English wistfulness.

THE COVID INTERVAL

Series- The Dames Resumes

April 14, 2022 **Tea with Mussolini** 1999 117 minutes

In an encore of the WPL Film Club's debut screening, Dames Maggie Smith, Judi Dench, and Joan Plowright star alongside Cher and Lily Tomlin in Franco Zeffirelli's heartfelt account of his boyhood in fascist-era Florence and the English and American expatriate women who looked after him.

Rated PG with smoking, drinking, brief violence, and English Scorpioni.

May 5, 2022 **Howard's End** 1992 105 minutes

Dame Emma Thompson and Helena Bonham Carter CBE star opposite Vanessa Redgrave and Anthony Hopkins in Merchant & Ivory's adaptation of the E.M. Forster novel about two progressive sisters drawn into a chauvinistic upper-class Tory family.

Rated R with smoking, drinking, brief violence, and English bloody-mindedness.

May 19, 2022 **Julia** 1977 117 minutes

Dame Vanessa Redgrave is the title character in this adaptation of Lillian Hellman's problematic memoir *Pentimento*. With Jane Fonda cast as Hellman, the film relates the author's 1937 journey across Europe to help her childhood friend, an anti-Nazi activist. With Jason Robards as Dashiell Hammett, Hal Holbrook, and a very young Meryl Streep.

Rated PG with smoking, drinking, profanity, and violence involving Nazis.

Series- June Pride

June 16, 2022 **Sunday Bloody Sunday** 1971

Although shot in 1970, this film is years ahead of its time with its naturalistic depiction of a gay relationship. Directed by John Schlesinger fresh off of *Midnight Cowboy*, the film stars Peter Finch and Dame Glenda Jackson as middle-aged Londoners who are both in love with the same twenty-something artist.

BE ADVISED- This film is rated R with smoking, drinking, profanity, nudity, depictions of intercourse, and precocious children smoking pot (1970 was still part of the Sixties).

June 23, 2022 **The Birdcage** 1996 117 minutes

Given the recent “Don’t say Gay” initiative of Florida’s governor, here is a film set on Miami’s South Beach belting out the word in grand style. Based on the 1978 *La Cage aux Folles*, the film features Robin Williams and Nathan Lane as Armand and Albert Goldman, two life-partners who own a drag club where Albert is the star attraction. The managed chaos of their daily life is upended when Armand’s son announces he wants to marry the daughter of an ultra-conservative senator played by Gene Hackman. To please the son they both adore, Armand and Albert set out to pass as straight for their new in-laws. *What could possibly go wrong?* Few remakes manage to transcend their source material, but under the direction of Mike Nichols, this film is a big-hearted send-up of the culture wars, with love and compassion offering a lesson for the current decade.

BE ADVISED- The film is rated R with smoking, drinking, profanity, semi-nudity, and utter outrageousness.

June 30, 2022 **Carol** 2015 118 minutes

Based on novel *The Price of Salt* and set in 1952, when same-sex love stories were expected to end in shame and tragedy, Patricia Highsmith’s tale broke with convention in its depiction of two very different women drawn into an affair. Therese, as played by Rooney Mara, is a young department store clerk who encounters Cate Blanchett’s very glamorous but indifferently married Carol. As their attraction develops, they must navigate the social constraints of the period, balancing their love against the costs that come with their relationship.

BE ADVISED– This film is rated R, with copious amounts of 50’s era smoking and drinking, brief nudity, profanity and Eisenhower-era ennui.

Series Finale- *The Dames*

July 7, 2022 **Wings of the Dove** 1997 102 minutes

This film could be described as one of the best “Merchant & Ivory” films—even if neither of them had anything to do with it. Based on the Henry James novel and with cinematography that could have been by John Singer Sargent, this film catches both the élan and squalor of the Edwardian era—when falling from society often meant utter destitution. Helena Bonham Carter is at her incandescent best as Kate, a debutante facing a precarious choice: she can marry the poor journalist she loves (Linus Roache), or stay in the good graces of her benevolent but dominating aunt (played by an icy Charlotte Rampling). Instead Kate contrives a third path when she befriends a dying American heiress who is kind, generous, and smitten with Kate’s lover. A devil’s bargain is struck when they travel to Venice and Kate steers the man she loves into a relationship with the heiress, and her pragmatic instincts soon collide with loyalties and desires. This is a radiant film—as glorious as it is bittersweet—with the Italian locations never more sublime.

BE ADVISED, this film is rated R, with smoking, drinking, drug use, and brief nudity.

Summer Cinema (not a series)

July 14, 2022, **The Namesake** 2006 122 minutes

Based on the novel by Jhumpa Lahiri and directed by Mira Nair, this film tells the story of a Bengali couple (Irrfan Khan and Tubu) who relocate to suburban New York, where their children try to balance heritage with the expectations of the surrounding American culture.

Please Note: This film is rated PG-13 with smoking, drinking, mild sexuality, and a transportation calamity.

July 28, 2022, **Babette's Feast** 1987 102 minutes

In the spirit of the Film Club's series "641.5 Food on Film," we are now able to present this adaptation of Isak Dinesen's short story about two sisters in a desolate 19th century Danish fishing village. Devoted to their minister father, they turn away all romantic overtures, but take in Babette, a well-regarded chef who has fled the 1871 Siege of Paris. Years pass and when Babette comes into money that could take her home, she devises an elaborate thank you to the sisters who offered her sanctuary.

Please Note: Unlike previous screenings this year, there are no cautions required for this heartfelt G-rated film.

Aug. 4, 2022, **This Beautiful Fantastic** 2016 92 Minutes

With some challenging films planned for the coming weeks, it seemed only right to start August with a confectionary fable starring *Downtown Abbey* alum Jessica Brown Findlay as an obsessive-compulsive librarian engaged in a test of wills with her curmudgeonly neighbor.

BE ADVISED: This film is rated PG, with very mild British profanity and otherwise brimming with twee stylization.

Aug. 11, 2022, **Leave No Trace** 2018 109 minutes

Debra Granik, an alumni of Brandeis and Mass Art, follows up on her directorial debut *Winter's Bone* with an adaptation of the Peter Rock novel *My Abandonment*, a story about a teenage girl (Thomasin Harcourt McKenzie) living in an urban forest with a father haunted by his combat experiences.

BE ADVISED: This film is rated PG with depictions of drug use and PTSD, as well as fraught, off-the-grid situations.

Aug. 18, 2022, **The Journey** 2016 94 minutes

In 2006, after years of stalled initiatives, the Protestant Unionist and Catholic Nationalist leaders of Northern Ireland met in Scotland to hammer out a power sharing agreement. Then Prime Minister Tony Blair and his Irish counterpart Bertie Ahern were desperate to avoid another impasse, and they contrived a meeting between former IRA hardliner Martin McGuinness (Colm Meaney) and the ferociously doctrinaire politician Ian Paisley (Timothy Spall), two men who had never once spoken to each other. What was said in their arranged journey back to Ulster has not been disclosed, but this film surmises how their encounter played out—all the while under the frantic watch of the British Intelligence establishment.

BE ADVISED— This film is rated PG-13 with archival images of sectarian violence, terse parochial language, and all manner of political scheming—whether Hibernian or Britannic.

Aug. 25, 2022, **On the Basis of Sex** 2018 120 minutes

As a companion piece to the documentary *RGB*, this solid biopic stars Felicity Jones as Ruth Bader Ginsburg in two crucial periods of her life. The first part is set in 1956 when she was attending Harvard then Columbia Law Schools, graduating at the top of her class—only to be denied employment at the all-male law firms of the period. The second part jumps forward to 1970 when she and her husband appealed a tax case on the grounds of sexual bias against a man to set a precedent for overturning the layers of entrenched sexist legal code.

BE ADVISED— This film is rated PG with smoking, drinking, profanity, references to sexuality, and fusty chauvinists in judicial robes.

Sept. 1, 2022, **A Good Year** 2006 117 minutes

Directed by Ridley Scott of *Alien* and *Blade Runner* fame, this comparatively “small” film came about when Scott and his neighbor in Provence, the writer Peter Mayle came up with a fish-out-of-water story involving an Englishman who inherits a French vineyard. The premise of the English abroad could be a genre of its own, with *Enchanted April*, *A Room with a View*, and *The Durrells of Corfu* being prime examples. In *A Good Year*, the Englishman is of a particularly arrogant variety, played by Russell Crowe, a high-wire London financial trader looking to make a quick sale of his uncle’s dilapidated chateau. Complications soon arise in France, mirroring Crowe’s character in the nuances of the local culture, while memories of his roguish uncle (Albert Finney) and romance with of local restaurateur (Marion Cottillard) awaken his better instincts.

BE ADVISED: This film is rated PG-13 with smoking, drinking, profanity, sexuality, and an uncomfortable swim in an empty pool.

Sept. 8, 2022, **Kedi** 2016 77 minutes

It has been suggested that, unlike dogs, cats were never domesticated—they simply arrived and let humans adapt.

This seems to be true in Istanbul, where hundreds of thousands of stray cats co-exist alongside the city's residents. In *Kedi*, documentary-filmmaker Ceyda Torun follows the lives of seven of those cats and the people who look after them. The resulting film is both wistful and meditative, offering a glimpse of the city's essential humanity without ignoring Istanbul's hard edges.

BE ADVISED: This film is not rated but shows the day-to-day perils the cats face navigating an urban environment. Some rough language, both human and feline.

Series- New York Onscreen

Sept. 22, 2022 **My Man Godfrey** 1936 94 minutes

For our fall series, *New York Onscreen*, the question has been about where to start. With so many aspects of the city having been depicted on film (many of which we won't be able to cover) we decided to reach back to the "golden age" of cinema when Manhattan's original skyscrapers were sprouting while its residents were reeling from the Great Depression.

My Man Godfrey is considered one of the best of the screwball comedies, a genre whose veiled social commentary often portrayed the super rich as ditzy wastrels oblivious to the day-to-day world.

In *Godfrey* the wastrels are the Bullock family, headed by Eugene Pallette, a self-made tycoon appalled by how decadent his family has become, having burned through a string of servants. But a mysterious new butler arrives to set them right, only to come under the scattershot charms of Carole Lombard, the flightiest of the Bullock daughters. William Powell plays Godfrey the all-knowing butler with a poignant charm and a few secrets of his own, as the hard winds of the Depression has some lessons for all of them.

BE ADVISED— This film is unrated, but contains smoking, drinking, minor violence, mild sexual innuendo, and Hays Office editorializing.

Sept. 29, 2022 **Brooklyn** 2015 117 Minutes

Faithfully adapted from Colm Tóibín's novel, this film relates New York's ongoing immigration experience, as seen through the eyes of Ellis Lacey, a young Irish woman. Played by Saoirse Ronan in her breakout performance, Ellis leaves her small town in County Wexford for better prospects in early '50s Brooklyn. Once there, she finds herself in a mirror Irish community wedged in among all the borough's other ethnicities. At first Ellis is bereft with homesickness, but slowly she adapts to the New York hustle and bustle, finding love and fulfillment—only to have old obligations test her new loyalties. With Domhnall Gleeson, Emory Cohen, Julie Walters, and Jim Broadbent.

BE ADVISED: This film is rated PG-13, with period smoking, drinking, profanity, and sensuality, as well as Irish difficulties with swimwear.

Oct. 6, 2022 **The Wedding Banquet** 1993 106 minutes

Directed by Ang Lee, this film offers a bittersweet tale about, Wai-Tung Gao, a gay Taiwanese man living happily in New York while also trying to appease the traditional obligations of his family back home. Set in a time before same-sex unions were recognized in the U.S., Wai-Tung hatches a plan with his American partner to please his parents by having a lavender marriage with a Chinese neighbor in need of a green card. The Gao family arrives to provide a very elaborate traditional wedding, complicating the lives of everyone involved as the cultural and generational divides are laid bare.

BE ADVISED: This film is rated R, with drinking, profanity, sexuality, brief nudity and a superb performance by Nelson Chao as Wai-Tung.

Oct. 27, 2008, **Me and Orson Welles** 2008 114 minutes

Before Orson Welles stormed Hollywood with *Citizen Kane*, he was the wunderkind of New York, blazing an insolent trail with his Mercury Theater troupe. This film by Richard Linklater explores that period, offering a look into Welles' renowned "Blackshirt" adaptation of *Julius Caesar*, as experienced by a high-school student cast in a small but pivotal role. Played by Zac Efron, the teen-ager comes under Welles' charismatic sway, only to find that the great man could also be a tyrant—often taking credit for the work of his collaborators. *Me & Orson Welles* is an engaging a back-stage story, but what makes it notable is the performance of English actor Christian McKay, who catches the mischievous charm and rapacious ego behind the Welles legend.

BE ADVISED: This film is rated PG-13, with smoking, drinking, profanity, and sexual overtones, as well as Shakespearean (and theatrical) back-stabbing.

Nov. 10, 2022, **The Apartment** 1960 125 minutes

Vienna-born director Billy Wilder (*Sunset Boulevard*, *Double Indemnity*, *Stalag 17*, *Some Like It Hot*), was known for nothing if not his sardonic style and this film is considered one of his sharpest. Set in a mammoth insurance company, Jack Lemmon plays a humble office schlub who pines for Shirley MacLaine's elevator operator, but he is at the mercy of his bosses, who sing his praises so long as they can use his Manhattan apartment for their affairs. Enter head boss Fred MacMurray, who finds out about the arrangement—only to use it for his own affair with MacLaine. *The Apartment* is a ribald comedy with some hard scenes, and it should be noted that Fred MacMurray was so convincing as a heel that he was repeatedly accosted by angry fans after the film was released—prompting him to play the lovable father in *My Three Sons*.

BE ADVISED— This film is rated TV-PG, and contains smoking, drinking, period sexual references, a punch in the nose, an attempt at self-harm and Eisenhower-era office dynamics.

Dec. 1, 2022, **The Devil Wears Prada** 2006 109 minutes

Based on the novel by Lauren Weisberger, having gone into development even before publication, this look into the New York fashion world has both a sparkle and a distinct edge. The sparkle comes from Anne Hathaway, who plays an aspiring journalist starting a job assisting the editor of a prestigious fashion magazine. The edge in this film emanates from Meryl Streep's editor, a character modeled on Anna Wintour and a woman as nuanced as she is tyrannical. Considered one of the most vibrant performances of her career, it has been said that Meryl Streep walked away with the film, but Stanley Tucci also stands out, as does Emily Blunt, who landed a breakout role as Hathaway's forever exasperated co-worker.

BE ADVISED— This film is rated PG-13, with drinking, profanity, sexual overtones, work-related stress, a bad encounter with a taxi, divas, but no smoking (the film is notable for not depicting any tobacco use in an otherwise nicotine-ridden industry).

Dec. 8, 2022, **If Beale Street Could Talk** 2018 117 minutes

Based on the novel by James Baldwin and set in the early 70s Harlem, this film tells the story of Tish and Fonnies, two childhood friends who have started a romantic relationship. Fonnies hopes to be an artist, but life becomes progressively more difficult when Tish becomes pregnant and Fonnies is arrested on trumped-up charges. At turns heartbreaking and infuriating, this story about love struggling to prevail amidst oppression proves to be a supremely resonant journey.

BE ADVISED— This film is rated R, with smoking, drinking, and intense moments of profanity, sexual intercourse, sexual harassment, domestic violence as well as chronic structural and institutional racism.

Dec. 22, 2022, **Bell, Book, and Candle** 1958 106 minutes

It takes a lot to make New Yorkers flinch, and in Christmastime Greenwich Village, a circle of witches amidst the Beatniks and Bohemians raises nary an eyebrow. If anything, buttoned-down publisher James Stewart stands out, catching the eye of shop-owner witch Kim Novak, who casts an enchantment spell on him with the help of her bongo-playing warlock brother Jack Lemmon and ditzy aunt, Elsa Lancaster. Stewart soon finds himself bewitched, bothered, and bewildered—learning fast that a sorceress' love is a complicated thing.

Is this a silly movie? Absolutely—as it's a Hollywood take on 'exotic' non-conformism playing off against uptight fifties 'togetherness.'

BE ADVISED— This film is rated TV-PG, with smoking, drinking and problematic sculpture.

Dec. 29, 2022, **The Age of Innocence** 1993 139 minutes

For a man who has made his name depicting the gritty underside of New York, it would seem strange that Martin Scorsese would want to adapt Edith Wharton's novel about polite society in 1870s Manhattan, but beneath the gilded manners of the Victorian Era lurked social instincts as harsh anything found in his gangster films.

Daniel Day-Lewis plays Newland Archer, an upstanding attorney engaged to young Winona Ryder and a comfortable, compartmentalized life lies before them, with his creative and intellectual interests discretely kept private. But when Archer encounters his fiancée's cousin, who is being ostracized for having fled a disastrous marriage to an abusive Polish count, he takes a stand on her behalf. Archer soon finds a kindred spirit in the radiant Countess, played by Michelle Pfeiffer, and with each mannered and mindful interaction they are drawn to each other. But passion—let alone divorce—in that period was the stuff of scandal, and the cost of social banishment could be dire, as Scorsese depicts amidst lush imagery and resonant performances.

BE ADVISED— This film is rated R, with smoking, drinking, glimpses of nudity and otherwise nasty behavior among the Four Hundred.

Jan. 5, 2023, **Moonstruck** 1987 102 minutes

With broad, vibrant brushstrokes, Norman Jewison directed this film starring Cher as an Italian-American widow faced with a second chance at love. Set in Brooklyn Heights amidst a tradition-bound family, Cher's character is engaged to Danny Aiello but finds a soul-mate in his brother, Nicholas Cage and needless to say, complications arise on the road to *Amore*.

BE ADVISED— This film is rated PG, with smoking, drinking, infidelity, mild profanity and lots of red sauce.

Jan. 12, 2023, **The Thomas Crown Affair** 1999, 113 minutes

As cinematic confections go, the two *Thomas Crown Affairs* are notable in that they are windows into the times that made them. The first film, released in 1968 and set in Boston with Steve McQueen and Faye Dunaway, is an exercise in mid-sixties cool. But in the story of a bored tycoon who stages a robbery for kicks, only to find himself falling for the investigator, there was a distinct sense ennui from that period.

In the 1999 remake with Pierce Brosnan and Rene Russo, there is no languor whatsoever, as the film embraces Giuliani's New York in all its hubristic glory, with the city coming across as flush, fun, benign, and safe—an illusion that would be swept away two years later. But the film is undeniably buoyant, with Brosnan's unflappable, unknowable billionaire meeting his match in Rene Russo's insurance investigator. If Faye Dunaway played the role in 1968 as the embodiment of glam, Russo is a force of nature, determined to bring down Thomas Crown—all the while enjoying the chase until their affections catch up with them. The third star of the film is Dennis Leary, his acerbic persona in top form as a jaundiced but ethical police detective who provides a reality check as Brosnan and Russo's cat-and-mouse romance grows ever more intense.

BE ADVISED— This film is rated R, with smoking, drinking, profanity, sexuality, nudity, art theft, corporate leveraging, musical appropriation, getting tasered, and snagging a seat at Cipriani's without a reservation.

Jan. 19, 2023, **The Automat** 2021 79 minutes

Before there was McDonald's, before there was Howard Johnson's, there was Horn & Hardart's Automat, once the largest restaurant chain in America. The Automats were essentially cafeterias with food portions behind coin-operated glass doors, which may not sound all that appetizing from today's perspective, but from the 1920s to the '50s New Yorkers saw them as the height of modernity, and by most accounts the food was good. This documentary is full of fond memories about the rise and fall of a Gotham institution, with reminiscences from Mel Brooks, Colin Powell, Ruth Bader Ginsburg, Carl Reiner, Elliott Gould, and Howard Schultz.

BE ADVISED— This film is rated TV-PG, with drinking, mostly profanity, sexual overtones, urban decline, 5-cent coffee, well-remembered pie, and Mel Brooks singing.

Jan. 26, 2023, **Radio Days** 1987, 88 minutes

To do a New York On-Screen series without a Woody Allen film is like depicting FDR without the cigarette holder or the Titanic without the Iceberg.

Toxic analogies aside, he is obviously a problematic figure, but seeing how there are bigger, louder New Yorkers who have done nasty things and retired to the Sunbelt, we might as well show one of his films. The question is— which Woody?

There are the obvious choices: his breakthrough *Annie Hall* or *Manhattan*, which celebrated the city but also presaged his demons. The choice has not been an easy one, but we decided to go with *Radio Days*, a nostalgic comedy-drama about an extended working-class family on Rockaway Beach in Queens during the Golden Age of Radio. Although not part of the cast, Allen narrates the film from the perspective of Joe, a boy whose world is shaped by the family radio—its music and programs emanating from glittering, far-away Manhattan.

BE ADVISED— This film is rated PG with smoking, drinking, mild profanity, off-screen violence, sexuality, nudity, lots of kvetching, and Woody Allen.

Feb. 2, 2023, **The Intern** 2015, 121 minutes

There are certain actors who are New York icons, and Robert DeNiro is one of them. From *Taxi Driver* to *Raging Bull* to *A Bronx Tale*, to Martin Scorsese's *New York, New York*, he has owned the city with fierce performances. For all the intensity of those roles, DeNiro's gravitas is also evident in this genial film by Nancy Meyer, where he plays a bored retiree who takes an intern position at an online start-up run by Anne Hathaway. Surrounded by co-workers who could be his grandchildren, DeNiro finds himself in a new century, applying his years of experience and hard-earned wisdom with endearing results.

BE ADVISED— This film is rated PG-13, with drinking profanity, a suggestion of infidelity, and a slew of new economy millennials.

Feb. 9, 2023, **The Thin Man** 1934 91 minutes

For the week before Valentine's Day, we screened a number of films depicting a romantic New York. We decided to go with a classic involving a married couple whose chemistry is so engaging and effortless that for years many people assumed that William Powell and Myrna Loy were actually married. The film is a comedic whodunit, involving a retired detective and his socialite wife who find themselves solving a crime. Along the way, two engage in rapid-fire pre-Hays Code banter while celebrating the end of Prohibition at every turn.

BE ADVISED— This film is TV-PG, with smoking, copious amounts of drinking, off-screen murder, and a Wire Fox Terrier trying to steal scenes.

Feb. 16, 2023, **The Terminal** 2004, 124 minutes

Inspired by the experiences of Mehran Nasser, who lived at Charles De Gaulle Airport for fifteen years, this film stars Tom Hanks as Viktor N., an Eastern European traveler stuck at a JFK terminal. Having arrived in New York only to discover that his country is having a violent coup, Viktor is stuck in bureaucratic limbo, unable to enter the US or return home. But Viktor is a resourceful soul, and his initial wanderings up and down the concourses become the first steps towards finding a community of fellow travelers.

Please Note— This film is rated PG-13, with smoking, drinking, profanity, bullying, threatened self-harm, and the unauthorized use of luggage-scanners.