

This will be the fourth year that the Village Theatre has screened a Classic Cinema program. As with the other years, we have selected a varied range of Classic movies. Musicals, comedy, historical spectacle, romance and one or two that are hard to categorise. So, here’s this year’s lineup. See Programme for screening times, ratings & length of film.

**Sunday 5th May.**

**Meet Me in St. Louis, 1944**. Directed by Vincent Minnelli, starring Judy Garland and child actor, Margaret O’Brien who won an Oscar for her performance. It’s an MGM movie from Hollywood’s golden age, in glorious Technicolor.

Meet Me in St. Louis follows the Smith family through the cycle of the seasons in a year leading up to the 1904 World’s Fair. The two older sisters deal with life, love and their dread of the family’s move to New York. The film captures the spirit of another time, horses, carriages, innocence, an age of leisure. There are great dance routines and Judy Garland belts out some songs: The Trolley Song, The Boy Next Door, Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas.

Peter Bradshaw in The Guardian on Meet me on St. Louis’s rerelease in 2011 wrote: “An unmissable big screen experience.”

**Sunday 19th May**.

**Strangers on a Train, 1951**. This year’s Alfred Hitchcock movie, with great performances by Robert Walker, Farley Granger and Ruth Roman. The story is taken from a novel by Patricia Highsmith whose somewhat malevolent writing is well suited to Hitchcock. Highsmith also  provided the source material for the Ripley films.

Strangers on a Train has the usual Hitchcock twists and turns. It’s a great ride with several famous sequences, like the Mt. Rushmore scene in last years North by Northwest.

**Sunday 2nd June**.

**The Graduate, 1967**. Directed by Mike Nichols, starring Dustin Hoffman and Anne Bancroft (Mrs Robinson), and Katherine Ross. A coming-of-age story. “Feels as sly, modern and bracing as it must have in 1967”, Tom Huddleston, Time Out 2017, five out of five stars.

Interesting to think about the film if the Mrs Robinson and Benjamin Braddock roles were reversed. It’s a bit of a time capsule.

Great Simon and Garfunkel soundtrack.

**Sunday 16th June**.

**Funny Girl, 1968**. Directed by William Wyler, starring Barbra Streisand and Omar Sharif. Streisand won the best actress Oscar for this, her first screen performance. Funny Girl was adapted from the hit Broadway musical of the same name. In the film version Streisand reprises her role on Broadway as Fanny Brice who rose from the ranks of Brooklyn vaudeville to headline the Ziegfeld Follies.

“In Barbra Streisand, Funny Girl thumps down an ace”, Penelope Houston,

The Spectator. Funny Girl is a “star vehicle” for Streisand. Great songs, an amazing voice.

**Sunday 30 June**.

**The Lion in Winter, 1968**. Directed by Anthony Harvey, with Katherine Hepburn and Peter O’ Toole. It’s 1183 AD, and King Henry 11 ‘s (O’ Toole) three sons all want to inherit the throne, but he won’t choose. When Henry allows his imprisoned wife Eleanor of Aquitaine (Hepburn) out for a Christmas visit, they all plot to force him to make a decision. A right royal stew. The story is fictional but the lead up roughly factual.

Roger Ebert writing in The Chicago Sun Times in 2004: “One of the joys which movies provide too rarely is the opportunity to see a literate script handled intelligently. The Lion in Winter triumphs at this difficult task”.

Katherine Hepburn shared the Best Actress Oscar with Barbra Streisand for her role in Funny Girl. The screenwriter, James Goldman, also won an Oscar.

**Sunday 14 July**.

**Belle de Jour, 1967**. Directed by Louis Bunuel, with Catherine Deneuve, Jean Sorel, Michel Piccoli and Genevieve Page. Bunuel, a Spaniard, a surrealist (his first two films were collaborations with Salvador Dali) and a lifelong antagonist of the bourgeoisie. David Thomson in the New Biographical Dictionary of Film says of Bunuel: “I believe he is one of the greatest of directors.”

Belle de Jour won the Golden Bear prize at the Venice film festival. It is elegant and darkly humorous. Deneuve’s performance as a bored bourgeois housewife who works in a high-class brothel weekday afternoon under the pseudonym Belle de Jour is outstanding. Her customers don’t just want sex, they want fantasy. The film can be seen as a shrewd commentary on the hypocrisy of social relations and sexual politics.

“Belle de Jour is more interesting and provocative than the great run of pictures one ever sees. Bunuel’s handling of colour is gorgeous. And the acting is impeccable” said Charles Champlin LA Times 2018.  Penelope Houston in the Spectator, said “Belle de Jour has the almost daunting, fragile flawlessness of the perfect crystal.”

**Sunday 28 July**.

**The Trial, 1962**. Directed by Orson Welles, starring Anthony Perkins, Jeanne Moreau, Romy Schneider, Elsa Martinelli and Welles himself as the tyrannical Advocate charged with defending Joseph K, an office worker arrested to stand trial but never told the charges. The film is Welles’ take on the Franz Kafka novel.

“The Trial is Welles’ finest film since Citizen Kane … apart from Kane no other film of Welles’ bears so clearly the stamp of his personality … Anthony Perkins as Joseph K gives the best performance of his career.” Peter Cowie, The Cinema of Orson Welles.

 Welles said of the film: “Say what you will but the Trial is the best film I ever made.” Possibly because unlike many of his other films The Trial had no Producer or Studio interference in its making. The film speaks the language that all people who fear a government without soul hear. It’s a jet-black comedy.

The high contrast black and white photography and the expressionistic images are amazing. Much of the film was shot in an old abandoned Paris railway station.

**Sunday 11 August**.

**Ran, 1985**. Directed by Akira Kurosawa (Rashomon, Seven Samurai, Ikiru ). Ran (chaos in Japanese) is an elegant and very spectacular film (no CGI) set in 16th century Japan based on the Shakespearean tragedy King Lear. Kurosawa made an earlier Shakespeare Samurai film, Throne of Blood, based on Macbeth. Ran was nominated for four Academy Awards, including Best Director and Best Cinematography, it won the BAFTA for Best Foreign Language Film.

Like the Shakespeare play Ran is about an old man of wealth and power who wishes to hand over his responsibilities to his children but underestimates how their newly gained power will corrupt them. A nation divided; chaos follows. Ran also raises the question about the place of humankind in the natural world.

Jonathon Romney, The Observer 2016 said “Ran was the last proper epic from Japanese maestro Akira Kurosawa, and it’s a magisterial achievement.” Five stars. Michael Wilmington, Chicago Tribune, 2014 said “Ran is one of cinema’s greatest works, a film of true tragic vision.”

**Sunday 25 August**.

**Brief Encounter, 1946**. Directed by David Lean, with Celia Johnson, Trevor Howard and Stanley Holloway. Based on the play by Noel Coward. Last year’s Classic Cinema’s David Lean was Great Expectations.

Brief Encounter is set-in post-war England. A married woman falls for a doctor, also married, she meets at a railway station. Passion and middle-class restraint collide. Brief Encounter was nominated for Academy Awards for Best Director, Best Leading Actress and Best Screenplay.  It won the Palm d’ Or at the 1946 Cannes film festival.

Kate Muir, The Times (UK) called Brief Encounter “One of cinema’s classic love stories.” Five stars. Anthony Quinn in The Independent (UK said it was “The loveliest period piece imaginable.”) Brief Encounter is a classic romance, one of cinema’s greatest.

**Sunday 8th September**.

**Apocalypse Now, 1979**. Directed by Francis Ford Coppola (The Godfather films), with Marlon Brando, Martin Sheen and Robert Duvall. The film is Coppola’s Vietnam War epic. He took Heart of Darkness - the journey up the river -Joseph Conrad’s story about the cruelties of colonialism and turned it into a 20th Century story about neocolonialism.

Philip French, The Guardian 2011 said “Apocalypse Now is not merely the greatest film to come out of the Vietnam experience but one of the great works about the madness of our times.”

Apocalypse Now is a big screen cinema experience.

**Note: All films start at 4 pm except Funny Girl and Apocalypse Now which start at 3 pm.**