

# High interest at South Bank

Cub's Dmitry Tolonen ventures South of the Thames, and visits the National Film Theatre.

The National Film Theatre and MOMI complex, situated on the South Bank, is an experience aside from the other attractions in the variety of entertainment and education offered nearby. True, as a building and as far as it continues the 1960's functionalist-orientated style, it leaves, one would presume, a lot to be desired (visually). Or, does it?

To state so would be superficial. As a building, especially one fulfilling a conceptual space, it should then also be thought of and appreciated (or refused) on such merits.

To further complicate matters however, we could contrast the building with the National Theatre - designed to look empty when not inhabited by people - and continue the argument from above that in these two similar buildings we are in fact witnessing the reflection of two different sorts of medium:

The cinematic and the theatrical or, 'each building reflects the medium it sets out to promote'.

In this respect the NFT, in its use of glass-facades and maze-like passages, contributes to the idea of the voyeuristic counterpart and discovery of the cinematic experience - as similar treatment at the NT will in creating the feeling of participation and openness in the theatrical experience.

But the use of glass in the NFT is

even more intriguing, when we recall the traditional 'in-doors' nature affixed to cinema, and with the danger of contradicting myself, one could argue that it was more ambitious in its agenda than the NT in willingness to mutate itself into "inclusive of the 'outside' ". More cunning as well, perhaps, in its competition with institutions of New Media, such as the ICA.

But, what exactly do you get for you money at this place of film enthusiasts and tourists? Well, first of all, as with many other cultural institutions in London, this is not merely a cinema. Nor is it merely another Museum with its obligatory souvenir shop. The complex holds within its boundaries a broad sweep of important film-related experiences, contemporary and classic. And while not being directly linked, but affiliated - through festivals and seasons - to (inter)national institutions such as embassies, it still does a good, informative job in offering a range of film from around the globe - some of which only get rare film-festival screenings.

The Bfi (British Film Institute), through the Museum of the Moving Image, also offers regular ('Tuesday-') lectures on various topics involving film and its environment. You can also catch the occasional Talk or lecture (such as the London Film Festival

Guardian Lectures in the autumn) by internationally respected film-people such as Quentin Tarantino or The Dogme 95 Group.

The cinema itself is somewhat of a well-stocked library of 'must sees', accompanied by their respective video versions and books explaining everything you ever wanted to know about Kate Winslet but dared not ask. Seasons celebrate when not the film of the Japanese Kenji Mizoguchi, or Contemporary Russian film, then the likes of the German Rainer Werner Fassbinder as well as showing new releases from Hollywood, as do most other cinemas.

But it wouldn't be a complete success as a cinema-experience, whether sitting at the recently re-furbished Film Café or just strolling through - to the NT- if one was not also completely

immersed in film all the way through it. This is one of the reasons they have the MOMI. Not only for the kids, the display of cinema relics will re-awaken the fathers love of film as he strolls down the memory lane of Dr. Who or takes a trip through the history of film in much the same scope as the Theatre Museum does for theatre.

Yes, I am predisposed towards film. But let this not discourage people from exploring the uniqueness of different media. This is exactly where the interweaving of the arts benefits the audience, or as it were, the customer. Next time you think about going to the cinema, think about what kind of a film-experience you would like to have. If you grab the bull by the horns, you might just be surprised that you'll have re-awoken your love for film.

## Cub Turn Ons

A look at what's floating the boat of Cub writers this month.

### Music

Suede's new single, Electricity.

Beth Orton - Central Reservation

How long's a tear take to dry - The Beautiful South

### Cinema

Woody Allen's new film with Kenneth Branagh, **Celebrity**

**Beloved**, directed by Jonathan Demme

### Television

The new series of Red Dwarf

The brand spanking new ITV news schedules.

### Web

Channel 4's new effort starring Kelly Brook and Graham Norton. [www.channel4.com](http://www.channel4.com)

Feed turns Simon "brains" Booth on. [www.feedmag.com](http://www.feedmag.com)



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### FILM

#### Heart

Gary, played by Christopher Ecclestone of "Shallow Grave", gives himself a heart condition through sexual jealousy of his successful wife Tess, a high-flying TV producer. She quickly begins an affair after a stroke renders Gary wheelchair bound.

Cue an exhilarating soundtrack and sweeping helicopter shots as Gary enters hospital for a transplant. Also cue the obsessive, possibly incestuous mother of the 17 year old boxer whose heart restores Gary's life to normality. Her sudden entry into the life of Gary and his adulterous wife leads to a disturbing intimacy.

In fact Jimmy McGovern, also the writer of Cracker and a fair few episodes of Brookside, revels in a slightly surreal and grim script that leaves the bitter aftertaste of some very grotesque lines; "Have you ever in your life seen such a fucking disgusting aorta?" Indeed, the very swift visual simplicity of this film still created the impression of a great TV movie, rather than a cinematic feature.

Yet though the exaggerated plot twists and the immensely bloody ending were incredible all the major performances in Heart were ultimately touching through the mastery of the tension

SUDIP HAZRA

### ALBUM

#### Peasants, Pigs and Astronauts by Kula Shaker

Listening to this album is like going on a kaleidoscopic journey through magical and mysterious times and places. It shifts from London in the 1960's to India in the early ages. In some ways, Peasants, Pigs and Astronauts is much better than its predecessor K, in the sense that it is more of a mesh of East and West. Also, unlike K, where each track stood alone, the new album flows very well.

It's a total contradiction, with revolutionary undertones both lyrically and musically. The album starts with Great Hosannah, a beaty track with a quick tempo. It's loud and has velocity, but as soon as SOS reaches its climax, Radhe Radhe slams the brakes on and suddenly you are on top of an elephant travelling through the jungle. Whilst listening to the album, you feel yourself being teleported around different countries.

The music is so vivid that you can almost see and feel the imagery. Timeworm asks "when will we see when we're travelling in time?" and this exacerbates the mood of the whole album. The use of unusual instruments also adds to the overall effect, with bagpipes, sitar, flute and tablas. But this certainly isn't everybody's cup of tea - you'll either love it or hate it.

One of the best tracks is Golden Avatar, which has pace and character.



Kula Shaker : This is 1999, boys.

Crispian's voice has developed and is much stronger and varied. The vocals of Gouri Choudhury on Radhe Radhe and Namami Nanda-Nanadana are equally excellent.

Rather than happy or sad tunes, the album reflects the hopeful and the unknown. If you liked Govinda and Tattva, then you will really enjoy this album. Kula Shaker have shown an act of bravery in releasing such material, leaving it to the mercy of music press and fans alike. With Peasants, Pigs and Astronauts, they have metamorphosed into an amazing butterfly.

VERNA VYAS

### ALBUM

#### FanMail by TLC

The technological revolution is here, and it's come in the form of synthesised musical icons. In Japan they call them Idoru, these computer-ghosts, non-existent, industry created pop stars. And I'm not talking about Steps.

TLC, whose last long player, CrazySexyCool, was back in '95, have a new member. Kind of. She's entirely fictitious, two dimensional (literally) and has a voice like Stephen Hawking via The Bronx. Vic-E, they call her, and her synthesised tones introduce the album to us; "We have dedicated this album to every person who has ever sent us fan mail". Great. That's me, then.

Vic-E's not a fully paid up member of the TLC clan, but the computer influence can be heard right across this album. BLEEP! Hyper-swung numbers are dotted with strange noises and drum machine loops. It's the same kind of disjointed, mechanical vibe you get from Missy Elliot or Busta Rhymes, but it feels less authentic.

Sometimes it works - Lovesick is built up around a touch tone phone melody. Most of the time, however, it's just too calculating for its own good. There are good touches on FanMail, but if you're expecting the pop crossover of Creep or Waterfalls, you'll be disappointed.

BOOTHBY DUNNE

## My view



Julian Ball  
Static Media Editor

This last month has been a time of weirdness and chaos, from asking the surprisingly cordial Shaun Ryder for a chair at the Riverside studios, to listening to Kate Winslet rehearse her harrowing piece for the Vagina Monologues, to just missing my bookies being robbed by a couple of minutes.

As well as the grey dampness of the weather, and the grey dampness in my flat caused by the explosion of the washing machine, all in all life is setting out to get me.

It was in this frame of mind that I went to see 'The Thin Red line'. The nervous tension caused by this has brought on this pounding headache, which is preventing me from writing an important essay. The best time of my life?

This time of year always seems to inspire me to take off to a deserted cabin with all the books I want to read and all the videos I want to see, and emerge the fully stabilised individual ready to face the challenge of writing my editorial.