

FILMS THAT TOUCH YOUR HEART

OLLI SPRING, 2020

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1/30—**Music of the Heart**, 124". Directed by Wes Craven. This film is based on a true story and tells how Roberta Guspari's musical gifts work wonders. She gets a part-time job in an inner city school and proceeds to teach violin to disadvantaged students. She faces terrible challenges not only from some of her students but also from some of the administration. She carries on and she prevails. Stars Meryl Streep and Angela Bassett.

Short film: *The Happiness Tour*, 10" A short quirky doc about a hilarious, motley crew of seniors who in their 80's and 90's decide to form a band to spread happiness.

2/6—**He Named Me Malala**, 88". Directed by Davis Guggenheim who is also the director of *Waiting for Superman* and Academy Award Winner *An Inconvenient Truth*. This is a highly inspiring and deeply moving documentary about courage, survival, and empowerment. It tells the remarkable true story of teenager Malala Yousafzai, who was attacked by Taliban gunmen in Pakistan for advocating girls' education. Rather than be silenced, Malala emerged as a global voice for education rights of all children and in 2014 she became the youngest ever Nobel Peace Prize recipient.

Short film: *Grounded*, 19". Stephanie is a ticket agent who follows the rules, until the sight of a powerless young mother confronted by bureaucracy reminds Stephanie what means the most to her: her humanity and her will to fight.

2/13—**Lives Well Lived**, 72". Directed by Sky Bergman. Celebrating the incredible wit and wisdom of adults 75 to 100 years old who are living their lives to the fullest, this documentary holds over 3000 years of experience, as forty people share their secrets and insights to living a meaningful life.

Short films: *A Bicycle Lesson*, 12" Dir. by Renuka Jeyapalan, When a young woman teaches her mother how to ride a bicycle she discovers a secret that has the potential to mend their fractured relationship. ***40th***, 8" Before Anne's mother died she wrote her a card for every birthday up to her 40th. Today is Anne's 40th birthday and she's about to open the last card her mother left for her.

2/20—**Mr. Holland's Opus**, 143", Directed by Stephen Herek. Starring Richard Dreyfus and Glenna Headly. Glenn Holland (Dreyfus) is a passionate musician who dreams of composing one truly memorable piece of music. But reality intrudes when he reluctantly accepts a "day job" as a high school music teacher to support his family. In time, however, Mr. Holland realizes that his real passion is teaching and his legacy is the generations of young people he inspires.

Short Film: *For You*, 13", Elliot is feeling lost after a recent breakup until he meets a mysterious songwriter named Jess at The Hotel Cafe. Through music he reconnects with a part of himself that was missing.

2/27—**The Finishers**, 86", Directed by Nils Travenier. (French with English subtitles.) Julien is 17, has a great sense of humor, bags of charm, and is wheelchair-bound due to cerebral palsy. Despite their love for him, his family is gradually falling apart under the strain of dealing with his disability. He challenges his father to compete with him in the "Ironman" triathlon in Nice and in so doing brings his family together.

Short Film: *In the Blink of an Eye*, 17" 25 years after a tragic helicopter crash, extreme athlete Don Schwartz suffers from PTSD. Don's psychological issues reveal themselves unexpectedly, leading to an incredible journey of recovery. Documentary.

3/5—**Heart of the Country**, 87". Directed by John Ward. With her husband arrested for Wall Street fraud, Faith leaves her life of luxury to return to rural North Carolina and the father and sister she'd left behind. This film shows the many textures of a loving family in deep and touching ways. This film features a strong country music sound track.

Short film: *Scrap Dolls*. 13" Dir. by Aude Cuenod. On the east side of Detroit an 11-year-old boy, grieving over the loss of his best friend, encounters an artist who makes art out of abandoned objects.

3/12—**Philadelphia**, 125” Directed by Jonathan Demme. Anniversary Edition. This emotional powerhouse stars Tom Hanks and Denzel Washington as competing lawyers who sue a prestigious law firm for AIDS discrimination. 1993 Academy Award Winner for Best Actor (Hanks) & Best Music.

Short film: *You’re It*, 4”. Dir. by Steve Bastoni. A businessman waits for his daily bus to work when he notices that something is wrong in the nearby playground: it seems to be populated with zombie-like kids all consumed with devices.

3/19—**Cas & Dylan**, 90”. Directed by Jason Priestly. A dying doctor, who plans to check out on his own terms, takes a reluctant detour when he winds up on the lam with an “anything-but- normal” 22-year old girl. Stars Tatiana Maslany & Richard Dreyfus.

Short Film: *Man from Mars*, 15”. A cynical podcast host hellbent on making fools out of small town celebrities, has just met his match: A charming woman who has her entire community convinced she’s the second coming of Jesus Christ.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES FOR THIS COURSE

Any of the following books will be helpful.

SCREENING THE SACRED—Religion, Myth, and Ideology in Popular Film ed. by Joel W. Martin and Conrad E. Ostwalt, Jr. Westview Press, 1995.

FINDING MEANING AT THE MOVIES by Sara Anson Vaux, Abingdon Press, 1998.

THE FORCE IS WITH YOU—Mystical Movie Messages that Inspire Our Lives by Stephen Simon, Hampton Roads Publishing House, 2002.

Any collection of Roger Ebert’s film reviews

DVD Collection from The Great Courses

HOW TO VIEW AND APPRECIATE GREAT MOVIES

Unpack the Components that Make Movies “Great” with Professional Filmmaker and professor Eric R. Williams. This is a full course of 24 lectures. He has many great insights although I don’t agree with all his theories. He does a great job of illustrating his ideas with specific films.