

IRRATIONAL MAN – Film at CONCA VERDE on 25.01.16 – Talk by Danny Ford

The film

Irrational Man is a 2015 American mystery drama film written and directed by Woody Allen, starring Joaquin Phoenix, Emma Stone, Parker Posey and Jamie Blackley. The film was released on July 17, 2015 by Sony Pictures Classics. Irrational Man marks the sixty-second film of the remarkable Allen, whose unquenchable thirst for writing continues to produce chapter after chapter in an ever expanding filmography that has almost become its own sub-genre of cinema. Allen's career as an actor, comedian, playwright and filmmaker now spans more than fifty years and includes four Academy Awards: three for Best Original Screenplay and one for Best Director. He has won nine British Academy of Film and Television Arts Awards and his screenplay for Annie Hall was named the funniest screenplay by the Writers Guild of America.

The Director

Heywood "Woody" Allen (born Allan Stewart Konigsberg) worked as a comedy writer in the 1950s, writing jokes and scripts for television and publishing several books of short humor pieces. In the early 1960s, Allen began performing as a stand-up comedian, emphasizing monologues rather than traditional jokes. As a comedian, he developed the persona of an insecure, intellectual, fretful nebbish, which he maintains is quite different from his real-life personality. In 2004, Comedy Central ranked Allen in fourth place on a list of the 100 greatest stand-up comedians, while a UK survey ranked Allen as the third greatest comedian. By the mid-1960s Allen was writing and directing films, first specializing in slapstick comedies before moving into dramatic material influenced by European art cinema. During the 1970s Allen produced some of most highly regarded work with releases such as Annie Hall and Manhattan. Critic Roger Ebert described Allen as "a treasure of the cinema." And he is often identified as part of the new wave of filmmakers in Hollywood from the mid-1960s to late 1970s. Allen frequently stars in his films, typically in the persona he developed as a standup. He spent over 37 years undergoing psychoanalysis, and some of his films, such as Annie Hall, jokingly include references to psychoanalysis. Moment Magazine says, "It drove his self-absorbed work." Allen's biographer John Baxter, wrote, "Allen obviously found analysis stimulating, even exciting." Allen says his psychoanalysis ended around the time he began his relationship with Soon-Yi Previn, although he is still claustrophobic and agoraphobic. Allen performs regularly as a jazz clarinetist at small venues in Manhattan. In 2011, PBS televised the film biography, Woody Allen: A Documentary, on the American Masters TV series. In which Allen described himself as being a "militant Freudian atheist".

The Producer

Irrational Man was Jack Rollins' final production before his death in June 2015, having produced Allen's films since the 1970s. Jack Rollins was an American film and television producer and talent manager of comedians and television personalities. His first major success came in the 1950s before going on to help shepherd the careers of several prominent comedians with his partner Charles H. Joffe, including Woody Allen, Billy Crystal, David Letterman, and Robin Williams. Rollins' work as a film and television producer was closely tied to the artists that he managed. He was credited as an executive producer on many of the films directed by Woody Allen from 1969 to 2015. From 1982 to 1992 he was an executive producer of Late Night With David Letterman and he was nominated for a Primetime Emmy Award ten times. Rollins was also a close friend of jazz pianist Bill Evans, with whom he owned a racehorse named 'Annie Hall'. On May 2, 2014, it was announced that Woody Allen would write and direct his upcoming film, in which Joaquin Phoenix had joined the cast. Later on May 6, Emma Stone joined the cast, marking her second film collaboration with Allen as she previously co-starred in Allen's romantic comedy Magic in the Moonlight in 2014. On January 29, 2015, Sony Pictures Classics acquired the distribution

rights to the film and revealed the title to be Irrational Man. It marks Allen's eighth film distributed by the label.

The plot

The plot takes place on the fictional New England college campus of Braylin. Philosophy professor Abe Lucas (Joaquin Phoenix) finds himself in an existential crisis, but he eventually discovers a new purpose in life when he enters into a relationship with Jill Pollard (Emma Stone), one of his students. Principal photography began on July 7, 2014 in Newport, Rhode Island and it lasted until the end of August. On January 29, 2015, it was announced Sony Pictures Classics had acquired all distribution rights to the film, which premiered on May 16, 2015, at the 2015 Cannes Film Festival. The film was given a limited release on July initially and with a wider release arriving in August.

The reception

Irrational Man has received mixed reviews from critics. On the review aggregator website Rotten Tomatoes, the film has a rating of 42% approval rating, based on 147 reviews, with a rating average of 5.4/10. The site's consensus reads, "Irrational Man may prove rewarding for the most ardent Joaquin Phoenix fans or Woody Allen apologists, but all others most likely need not apply."

The Sponsors

This 5th Film Show is sponsored by AEGEE Bergamo – the association of Erasmus students, Anderson House – the Cambridge Centre for Bergamo and CRTDrills Lingue Bergamo – the Resource Centre for Language Teachers in the province of Bergamo coordinated by Noemi Ciceroni which operates within the Ufficio Scolastico Territoriale – the local education authority.

The Film Show

This is the 5th year we sponsor the film festival and this is the second film in English in 2016. There will be 12 films altogether – 9 in English, 1 in French, 1 in German and 1 in Spanish.

Enjoy the film!