

Film fest guide: If you liked 'Lost,' see 'Timecrimes'

Rob Thomas — 4/04/2008 5:53 am

Haven't gotten your tickets yet for this weekend's Wisconsin Film Festival? Don't worry, there's still a seat waiting for you.

Actually, a whole bunch of seats are there, especially at large venues like the 1,500-seat Orpheum Theatre and the 1,100-seat Wisconsin Union Theater, which both have movies running all weekend. Many screenings have sold out at smaller venues like the UW-Cinematheque and the Bartell Theatre, but even they should have some tickets available at the door, in case you really, really want to see "The Republic of Tea." (Don't laugh, it sold out in about two days.) For all other screenings, tickets are available at the theater on the day of the show, so you can just walk up and buy one. If you need some 11th-hour suggestions about what to go see, here are some ideas:

- . If you liked "Lethal Weapon," go see "Bon Cop, Bad Cop" (9:15 tonight, Orpheum Main). If there's one thing the Wisconsin Film Festival has been light on in recent years, it's buddy cop movies. That all changes with this hilarious-sounding Canadian import, in which a by-the-book Toronto cop and a slovenly Montreal shamus join forces to catch a serial killer. The fact that the killer is targeting hockey greats may give you a sense of the tongue-in-cheek flavor of this action comedy.
- . If you liked "Lost," go see "Timecrimes" (11:30 tonight, Orpheum Main). If you're loving all the time-bending paradoxes of the current season of "Lost," you might dig this Spanish thriller. A middle-aged man sees a naked woman in the woods outside his house, goes to find her and gets stabbed in the shoulder by a mysterious assailant. Then things get really weird.
- . If you liked "Crash," go see "This Beautiful City" (9:45 tonight, Madison Museum of Contemporary Art). Canadian director Ed Gass-Donnelly brings us another indie film that explores the intersecting lives of several big-city residents. This time, the city is Toronto, particularly a gentrified neighborhood where upwardly mobile condo dwellers cross paths with street hustlers. Donnelly will attend this screening.
- . If you liked "Ratatouille," go see "The Pixar Story" (11 a.m. Saturday, Wisconsin Union Theater). The animation studio that churns out one classic after another gets an affectionate look in this documentary, which talks to all the major players at Pixar. In addition to looking at early storyboards of their films, maybe we'll get a glimpse into their reportedly cool and quirky offices.
- . If you liked "The Wind That Shakes the Barley," go see "It's a Free World" (1:15 p.m. Saturday, Orpheum). The new film by the revered Ken Loach (whose last film, "Barley," was a Cannes favorite) goes to one of his favorite themes, that of people struggling at the margins of a capitalist society. In this drama, a British woman sets up her own business setting up day jobs for immigrant workers and finds out the hard way about the rough and violent connection between illegal immigration and big business.
- . If you liked "Brothers," go see "White Night" (7:15 p.m. Saturday, Wisconsin Union Theater). Screenwriter Anders Thomas Jensen is a favorite of the festival -- ever since he brought his film "The Green Butchers" here in 2003, the festival has brought his other films ("Brothers," "Adam's Apples," "Red Road") with much success. His latest, "White Night," revisits one of his favorite themes, that of one man taking over another's family, as a hot-shot real estate agent begins caring for a working-class family after the father is killed.
- . If you liked "The Conqueror," go see "Mongol" (8 p.m. Saturday, Orpheum Main). OK, John Wayne's turn as Genghis Khan in "The Conqueror" was pretty bad. Much better is Sergei Bodrov's Oscar-nominated take on the life of the young Khan, which features stunning big-screen cinematography and a surprisingly subtle performance by Japanese actor Asano Tadanobu as one of history's most notorious figures.
- . If you liked "Re-Animator," go see "Stuck" (11 p.m. Saturday, Orpheum Main). Aside from one grotesque scene involving a ballpoint pen, "Stuck" is really nothing like the cult horror classic "Re-Animator." Except that former UW-Madison student Stuart Gordon directed both of them, and he'll be in town this weekend to present "Stuck," a gritty but bleakly funny thriller based on the real-life incident in which a nurse hit a homeless man with her car. Instead of calling 911, she parked the car in her garage with the wounded man still embedded in the windshield and went on with her life. Now that's horrifying.
- . If you liked "The Red Balloon," go see "Flight of the Red Balloon" (3:30 p.m. Sunday, Orpheum Main). The Orpheum presented the enchanting original French short film a couple of months back, so it's fitting that the theater is hosting this remake of sorts by the great Hsio Hsiao Hsien, as a young Parisian boy and his nanny see his family (including his mother, played by the wonderful Juliette Binoche) deal with the hectic pace of modern life.
- . If you liked "Basic Instinct," go see "Children of Glory" (6 p.m. Sunday, Orpheum Main). Screenwriter Joe Eszterhas' name was synonymous with soft-core schlock like "Basic Instinct" and "Showgirls" in the 1990s. Somehow, the same Joe Eszterhas has co-written this inspiring drama set in his native Hungary, based on the true story of an Olympic water polo match in 1956 between Hungary and the U.S.S.R., which occurred at about the same time as a student-led resistance in Budapest to the Soviet occupation.

Actually, the more you hated "Basic Instinct," the more you might like this.

- . **Wisconsin Film Festival**
- . **When:** Today-Sunday. **Where:** 10 venues in and around downtown. **Tickets:** \$7, available only at the film's venue on the day of the show. More information:



A photo from the movie "Timecrimes."

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