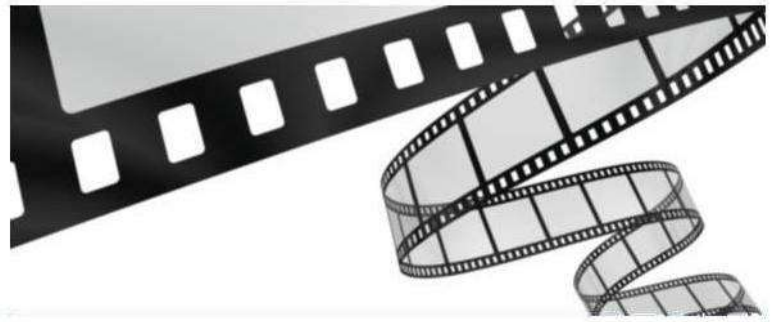


CHELMSFORD FILM CLUB

An Independent film society based in Chelmsford

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Lilting 2014

UK 86 mins

Director: Hong Khaou

Writer: Hong Khaou

Cast: Ben Wishaw, Cheng Pei-pei, Peter Bowles, Andrew Leung, Morven Christie, Naomi Christie.

This film was made under the auspices of the Microwave scheme which sponsors young London film makers. With a budget of £120,000 the film was mentored by Michael Winterbottom as writer/director and by Ken Marshall (London to Brighton, Filth and Song for Marion) as producer. It was the first bi-lingual film made under the scheme. Premiered at Sundance it won the Cinematography Award for the World Cinema Dramatic class.

Hong Khaou's inspiration for **Lilting** was **In the Mood for Love** by Hong Kong director Wong Kar-wai. That film tells the story of a relationship between 2 people who over a number of years fail to meet or make the connections they could have done to fulfil each other's hopes and dreams.

Lilting too is about people who are unable to connect because of barriers of language and emotional knowledge of the pre-existing relationships. Set in contemporary London and shot mainly in Hackney, the film shows how a Cambodian Chinese mother mourns the untimely death of her son (Andrew Leung). Her world is further disrupted by the arrival into it of a stranger (Ben Wishaw). We observe their difficulties in trying to connect with one another without a common language, and how through a translator they begin to piece together memories of a man they both loved. The film can be viewed as a study in grief and cross cultural misunderstanding or even prejudice. The two protagonists are on conflicting sides of a desperate love triangle where each is seeking recognition and understanding.

The use of language itself is self-conscious to emphasise the misunderstandings and also to comic effect, particularly in the relationship between Peter Bowles as the pursuing beau and the elderly mother. Throughout we are reminded that our feelings that we are sure we have understood someone else can be very misplaced. The Chinese and English dialogue is interwoven and at times sub-titles are withheld for those moments when we need to be as much out of the loop as Richard is.

The film is understated and uses the different time frames of the action in an oblique and unfussy way. The camera stays still and waits for the people to do the talking. There is a very specific palate of colours and music is used sparingly to match the narrative rather than as background emotional muscle.

Reviews were on the whole favourable although Dan Callahan of Roger Ebert.com felt it “lacked plausibility in its central situation and elsewhere.” Tom Robey in the Telegraph felt that it was “awfully methodical, almost mathematical, in working through the various emotional steps each character must take in reaching an end point” and found the humour “limp and unspontaneous.” Against that at the ICO screenings last year it came second in the film ratings and Dominic Mill (We got his covered) wrote, “The subject matter is powerful and the performances are wonderful – in a world of big and showy dramatism, *Lilting* gets its point across without feeling the need to shout about it.”

Club notices: Half season membership is now available at £25.

Our previous presentation:

Please visit the current season page at <http://www.chelmsford-filmclub.co.uk> to read all the feedback comments.

You can still provide feedback on this, or any other film, by visiting the Discussions page (<http://www.chelmsford-filmclub.co.uk/discussion/>).

Our next presentation:

Ida will be shown on 2nd March 2015 starting at 8:00pm.