

CHELMSFORD FILM CLUB

An Independent film society based in Chelmsford

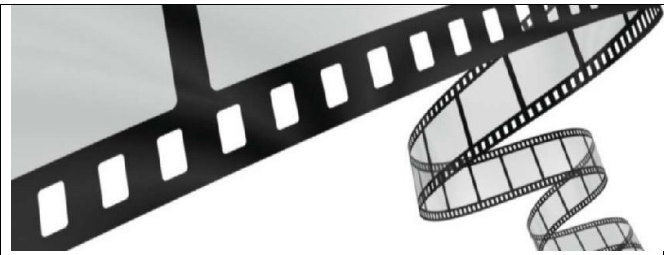
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I AM NOT YOUR NEGRO

Dir: Raoul Peck USA 2016 95 mins

Narrated by Samuel L. Jackson and with unprecedented access to author and public intellectual James Baldwin's (*Go Tell It On The Mountain*, *The Fire Next Time*) original work, award-winning filmmaker Peck's (*Murder in Pacot*, *Moloch Tropical*, *Lumumba*) transfixing, revelatory documentary is the cinematic version of the book Baldwin never wrote.

In 1979, when a literary agent asked Baldwin to write about the lives and assassinations of his friends Martin Luther King Jr., Malcolm X and Medgar Evers, he responded with a 30-page letter explaining why he couldn't. This manuscript, entitled *Notes Toward Remember This House*, was entrusted to Peck by the writer's estate and serves as the backbone of the film. Alongside an exploration of these key Civil Rights figures, Peck gives us a fascinating picture of Baldwin himself, while uncovering the deeper narrative of America's troubled relationship with race.

In a form as radical as the man that inspired it, Baldwin's words are juxtaposed with interviews, music, archive footage and images of present-day America to create an overwhelmingly powerful, essayistic mosaic that lays bare the persistent violent and systemic inequality suffered by America's black population.

The film shows Baldwin refusing to be drawn into the violence/non-violence difference of opinion between King and Malcolm X that mainstream commentators leaped on, and steadily maintaining his own critique. But, as critic Peter Bradshaw noted, maybe Peck's juxtaposition of Doris Day's mooning and crooning with a lynch victim is a flourish that approximates Baldwin's anger but not his elegance. Note the compelling section on Baldwin's discussion of dramatist Lorraine Hansberry, author of *A Raisin in the Sun*.

Jordan Hoffman in *The Guardian* wrote of the film: 'A cinematic seance... one of the best movies about the Civil Rights era ever made'.

We screen *I AM NOT YOUR NEGRO* as, due to circumstances beyond CFC's control, the advertised film *Starless Dreams* is no longer available for hire. We apologise for this but give thanks to our Secretary, Daden Hunt, for securing *I AM NOT YOUR NEGRO* at very short notice.

A warm welcome is extended to filmmaker Adam King who has brought two of his very short films for us to watch before the main screening. Adam will be able to answer questions and discuss his work after watching his films.

OUR NEXT SCREENING: *PATERSON* on Wednesday 13 December, the final film of 2017. A Merry Christmas and peaceful New Year to all our members and their guests.

