

CinéGuernsey go 'Around The World in Animation'

When our local Arts Committee decided to put on Weekend of World Cinema for the second year in a row, CineGuernsey was asked for its help. Specifically, the plan was to show children's films in another room at the same location that the main films were being shown – the intention being that the children could watch one film whilst parents could watch one less suitable for family viewing. Due to problems with the original location, this proved impossible and so the decision was taken to show the family films in our usual location, a short drive from the main festival. Also, the films would have to now appeal to a broader family audience, rather than purely children. So, what to do? What films, outside the standard Hollywood fare, would appeal to a broad range of families? And, just as importantly, what was available to us for hire in the first place?

The, perhaps obvious, solution was to show animation. But not any old animation – we would go Around the World in Animation (the eventual title of the our portion of the Weekend of World Cinema), choosing films (features and shorts) from different continents – films which local audiences may not have had the chance to see or even been aware of. After much discussion, searching on the internet, and long phone calls in French (really!) our programme was ready...

We started in Japan with probably the best known film of the day, the charming *My Neighbour Totoro* from Studio Ghibli. This was the most popular feature of the day and proved popular with all ages. Hayao Miyazaki's films have proved popular here over the past couple of years – the Oscar winning *Spirited Away* was shown at last year's Weekend of World Cinema and we showed *Kiki's Delivery Service* to a similarly enthusiastic audience earlier this year.

Moving from Asia to Africa, our second film was *Kirikou and the Sorceress*, a product of the Senegalese musician Youssou N'Dour and the French animator Michel Ocelot. This richly coloured folk tale made a wonderful contrast to the earlier *Totoro*, the great music and surreal humour again proved popular with young and old – and produced no complaints about the considerable amount of nudity in the film.

Probably our most popular showing of the day was our next, four short films from Canada – a country with a strong tradition of animation. Displaying traditional cell drawing, computer art and stylised water-colours there was a good range of techniques shown in just a few films. Particularly popular were *Cuckoo Mr Edgar*, about a cuckoo from a clock raising three young chicks, and *Noel Noel*, a lengthy animated verse telling a Christmas fable.

From the Americas to Europe, and the Czech/French *Fantastic Planet* (aka *La Planete Sauvage*) was our next show. This was the only film we showed subtitled – we had expected a slightly older audience and the US dub was comparatively weak. Our smallest audience of the day found this 1970's science fiction from cult animator Rene Laloux undeniably strange, but equally fascinating – many of us are eagerly awaiting new DVD releases of his other films.

And finally to Australia and our second package of short films – eleven in total, offering a wide variety of styles. Particularly popular were *Carnivore Reflux*, a nightmarish comedy meat eating, the elegiac and nostalgic *Cry From the Past*, and the self-referentially amusing *The Lecture* – all about the difficulty of producing animation. The biggest laugh of the day came from the ingenious *Fraught*, using several variations of the rotoscoping technique that animates live action. The punchline, as a man tries to remember who this terrible woman is that is chatting away to him, was worth the price of a ticket on its own.

All in all, it was an enjoyable, mind-expanding day of animation which has, hopefully, spread the good news of world cinema to a few more people, whatever their age. Now the only problem is – what do we do next year?