

CHELMSFORD FILM CLUB

An Independent film society based in Chelmsford

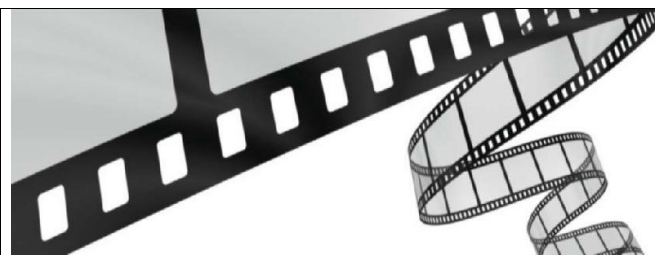
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Monday 4 November: DRIVING MUM 2022 Iceland/Estonia 113 mins

Director: Hilmar Oddsson

Cast:

Hera Hilmar (Bergdis); Tómas Lemarquis (Hitchhiker); Prostur Leó Gunnarsson (Jon); Kristbjörg Kjeld (Mamma).

“Don’t be put off by the title, which is bland and unintentionally deceitful. Pay no attention, either, to over-simplified summaries: road-movie, black comedy, that sort of thing. DRIVING MUM is a clever, imaginative film that flickers in the light of various genres but develops its own distinctive character. The leading man, hirsute, taciturn and unworldly, is heroic. His dog, Brezhnev (Bresneff), easily justifies third place on the credits after Mum, the stiffness of whose performance makes her a candidate for Best Supporting Actress.”

So says one reviewer on IMDb who clearly enjoyed the film. We hope our members will agree.

We have always had quirky, unusual, even ‘odd’, films from Iceland: some of this film, though, was shot in Estonia we are told. Who can forget OF HORSES AND MEN which we screened a few seasons ago? There the stallion definitely qualified for at least third place on the credits. Another important ingredient is, of course, the Icelandic scenery. We will remember that from last season’s GODLAND, a Danish film but very much ‘Icelandic’.

Jon and his mother live in a remote part of Iceland, remoteness even more emphasised by the black and white film stock on which the film is shot, and that their farm is most easily accessed by boat. And of course, no internet or TV, given the story is set some time in the 1970s or 80s. The outside world imposes itself through cassette recordings of old news bulletins that the boatman delivers when he comes to collect the finished sweaters, knitted by Jon and his mum with the local, hearty and bulky-weight ‘lopi’ wool.

A final word from Leslie Felperin in *The Guardian* from February this year: “The comic style [of DRIVING MUM] is reminiscent of Finnish auteur Aki Kaurismäki [*The Other Side of Hope* - 2017/*Fallen Leaves* - 2023], especially the deadpan way the film uses music. At the same time, this is very much an Icelandic film, one that celebrates the breathtaking emptiness of the landscape. Given how often the country is used to stand in for all manner other places - imaginary (see GAME OF THRONES) and real (it substituted for Alaska on the recent season of TRUE DETECTIVE) - it’s nice to see Iceland play itself for a change.”

Our next film: THE HOLDOVERS on Wednesday 11 December, starting 8pm.