

**ely
film
society** = **the
notes**

**july
2015**

latest news

A reminder of our reciprocal membership arrangement with Kings Lynn Community Cinema Club. They usually meet on the second Thursday of each month in The Guildhall of St George, King's Lynn Arts Centre, King Street at 7.30pm.

As well as films they host education events. All details of their activities at www.klccc.uk/

Au Revoir Les Enfants

Louis Malle, France 1987

Gaspard Manesse Julien Quentin
 Raphael Fejtö ...
 Jean Bonnet / Jean Kippelstein
 Francine Racette Mme Quentin
 Stanislas Carré de Malberg ...
 François Quentin
 Philippe Morier-Genoud ... Père Jean
 François Berléand Père Michel
 François Négret Joseph
 Peter Fitz Muller
 Pascal Rivet Boulanger
 Benoît Henriet Ciron
 Richard Leboeuf Sagard
 Xavier Legrand Babinot
 Arnaud Henriet Negus
 Jean-Sébastien Chauvin Laviron
 Luc Etienne Moreau
 Daniel Edinger Tinchaut
 Marcel Bellot Guibourg
 Ami Flammer Florent
 Irène Jacob Mlle Davenne
 Jean-Paul Dubarry ... Père Hippolyte
 Jacqueline Staup Infirmière
 Jacqueline Paris Mme Perrin
 René Bouloc Le restaurateur



Louis Malle's quasi-autobiographical masterpiece *Au Revoir Les Enfants* from 1987 remains breathtakingly good. There is a miraculous, unforced ease and naturalness in the acting and

direction; it is classic movie storytelling in the service of important themes, including the farewell that we must bid to our childhood, and to our innocence – a farewell repeated all our lives

in the act of memory. The scene is Nazi-occupied France in 1944 and the wealthy, urbane parents of 12-year-old Julien (Gaspard Manesse) have sent him away to a Catholic boarding school in the country. Here he makes the acquaintance of a shy, clever new boy called Jean Bonnet (Raphaël Fejtö), about whose wellbeing the headmaster seems very solicitous. The boys' friendship may not be enough to protect Jean when a momentous secret is discovered.

Malle shows how the French are conflicted about their collaborationist attitude. The German soldiers seem sympathetic: many are Catholic people from southern Germany and come to the schools' priests, politely asking for confession. When the boorish local civilian militia try to eject an elderly Jewish man from a restaurant, some German officers, lunching at the same establishment, gallantly if drunkenly intervene on the man's side. And among the French there is a genuine disgust with fascism and antisemitism,

but fatally combined with shame, class division and a dark tendency towards denunciation and spite. As an evocation of childhood it is superb, comparable to Jean Vigo's *Zéro de Conduite* and François Truffaut's *The 400 Blows* – perhaps better. Every line, every scene, every shot, is composed with mastery. It has to be seen.



Which of us cannot remember a moment when we did or said precisely the wrong thing, irretrievably, irreparably? The instant the action was completed or the words were spoken we burned with shame and regret, but what we had done never could be repaired. Such moments are rare, and they occur most often in childhood, before we have been trained to think before we act. "Au revoir les enfants" ("Goodbye, Children") is a film about such a moment, about a quick, unthinking glance that may have cost four people their lives.

"Malle's film is not filled with a lot of

dramatic incidents.

"Unlike such roughly comparable Hollywood films as "The Lords of Discipline," it feels no need for strong plotting and lots of dramatic incidents leading up to the big finale. Instead, we enter the daily lives of these boys. We see the classroom routine, the air-raid drills, the way each teacher has his own way of dealing with problems of discipline.

"More than anything else, we get a feeling for the rhythm of the school. Malle has said that when, years later, he visited the site of the boarding school he attended, he found the building had disappeared and the school forgotten. But to a student enrolled in such a school, the rules and rituals seem timeless, handed down by innumerable generations and destined to survive forever.

A schoolboy cannot be expected to understand how swiftly violence and evil can strike out and change everything." (Roger Ebert)



LOUIS MALLE

1932 - 1995

Lift to the Scaffold (1958)
The Lovers (1958)
Zazie dans le metro (1960)
A Very Private Affair (1962)
The Fire Within (1963)
Viva Maria! (1965)
The Thief of Paris (1967)
Murmur of the Heart (1971)
Lacombe, Lucien (1974)
Black Moon (1975)
Pretty Baby (1978)
Atlantic City (1981)
My Dinner with Andre (1981)
Crackers (1984)



Alamo Bay (1985)
Au revoir, les enfants (1987)
Milou en Mai (1989)
Damage (1992)
Vanya on 42nd Street (1994)

NEXT MONTH'S FILM IS
WADJDA (Haifaa al-Mansour, Saudi Arabia 2012)
Monday 17 August

www.elyfilmsociety.com

www.meetup.com/ely-film/

