

ely
film
society

jan
2018

the
notes

coming up @ kings lynn

JANUARY

CLOSE-UPS EVENT
Thursday 18th 7.00-9.00pm
The Sound of Silents
FESTIVAL FILM Friday 26th 3.30pm
MY COUSIN RACHEL
FILM Sunday 28th 3.30pm
HOBSON'S CHOICE
SOCIAL EVENT Sunday 28th 6pm
Post Film meal at The Rathskeller

FEBRUARY

FILM Thursday 8th 7.30pm
MAUDIE
CLOSE-UPS EVENT
Thursday 15th 7.30-9.30pm
Hong Kong and Taiwanese Cinema
details: www.klccc.uk

Central Station

Walter Salles,
Brazil 1998

Script by Marcos Bernstein, João Emanuel Carneiro and Walter Salles

Fernanda Montenegro Isadora
Marília Pêra Irene
Vinícius de Oliveira Josué
Soia Lira Ana
Othon Bastos Cezar
Otávio Augusto Pedrão
Stela Freitas Yolanda
Matheus Nachtergaele Isaías
Caio Junqueira Moisés
Socorro Nobre, Manoel Gomes,
Roberto Andrade, Sheyla Kenia,
Malcon Soares, Maria Fernandes,
Maria Marlene, Christano Camargo,
Jorseba-Sebastiano Oliveira

... Dora's Clients



The true heart of Rio de Janeiro is not Copacabana beach or the outstretched arms of the statue of the Redeemer - but Central do Brasil station. Four hundred thousand people pass through Rio's Central Station every day. At the intersection of all main rail networks and Rio's metro system, a moving wall of travellers and commuters passes hundreds of stalls

where young boys shine thousands of shoes, and professional letter-writers sit waiting for their illiterate customers.

It is here that *Central Station* opens its cinematic odyssey, centred on the story of a cynical middle-aged letter-writer called Dora and an orphaned boy, Josue, as they traverse the vast landscapes of Brazil in search of Josue's long-lost father. The film won the

Golden Bear (best film) at this year's Berlin Film Festival, startled critics at Sundance, and moved audiences to tears and ovations at last month's Galway Film Fleadh, where the film was picked up by major mover Buena Vista for European distribution. That's impressive; what's amazing is that it was made by a Brazilian documentarist, most of the cast and

crew had never worked in film before, and one of the leads is a nine-year-old shoe-shine boy who had never been to a cinema.

Even more miraculous is that this intimate epic of rediscovery appears after a decade when Brazilian film almost ceased to exist. Walter Salles - who previously made a series of highly respected documentaries - beat overwhelming odds to make his elegiac debut drama, initially funded by an award from the Sundance Institute and fuelled by a visceral desire to address the future of his country.



'When you come out of period like that, it's like experiencing a language you have been prohibited from using,' says Salles. 'And it's necessary to work with people who have never done films before. But that blended very well with the idea of *Central Station*. It meant we rehearsed very thoroughly, then let the film open up as we made it.' On the verge of the 21st century and in a world of instant communication, Salles reminds us that there are over a billion illiterate people in the world. Letter-writers are a common fact of life in Brazil, a society steeped in poverty where education and literacy are for the privileged few. Salles's idea for *Central Station* came directly from his experience filming his last documentary, *Socorro Nobre (Life Somewhere Else)*, about the correspondence between a semi-literate female life prisoner and the sculptor Frans Krajcberg.

'We got accustomed to urban violence in Brazil,' says Salles. 'There are a lot of unofficial police still operating. But that was part of a larger

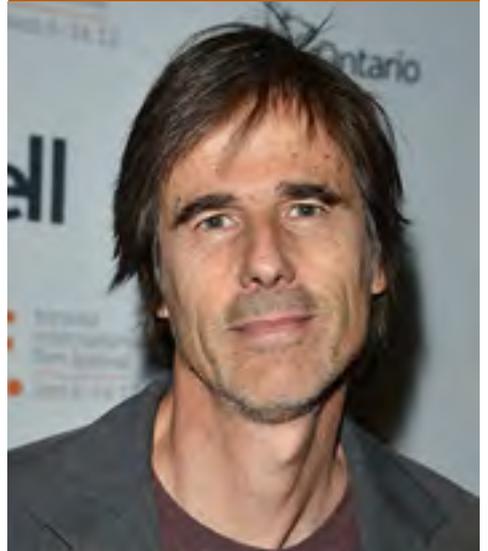
malady. In the eighties and nineties, like in many other countries, the only criterion was efficiency. In the name of that, we had unemployment and social violence. Individually, it causes you to ignore others, and there is a loss of identity. Dora in the film is typical of that.' His ace card was casting Fernanda Montenegro, Brazil's greatest theatre actress, as Dora, the hard-faced retired teacher, a childless survivor amongst millions of others, who pens letters for a constant traffic of people for a dollar a time, but rarely sends the outpourings of love, grief and greetings, callously betraying the trust put in her by the gallery of hopeful faces.

'I wanted to do a film with her for 10 years,' says Salles, 'but the plays she does are so successful that they can last for three to four years, so scheduling is a problem. But I also wanted to use non-actors, mainly because they can reach into themselves without pretension and let their experiences show on screen.' Having found his lead actress and a crew of enthusiastic novices - including first-time screenwriters Joao Carneiro and Marcos Bernstein - the director struggled to find a boy who could play the orphaned Josue. Three weeks before the start of filming, and with more than 1,500 auditions already conducted, he was in Rio airport when he was approached by Vinicius de Oliveira, a nine-year-old shoe-shine boy desperate for business. 'I realised he was exactly the kid I was looking for,' says Salles. 'He was streetwise but also innocent, and I asked him to do a screen test. He told me that he couldn't do that because he had never been to the cinema before. Then he asked if he could bring the other shoe-shine boys along to give them a chance. Ultimately the film is about solidarity and discovering compassion, and he had those qualities ingrained in him.' The next day, the shoe-shine boys of Rio airport laid siege to Salles's production offices. Salles tested every one, but Vinicius was a natural and the boy who had never seen a film became the co-star of Brazil's finest actress.

Walter Salles

born Walther Moreira Salles Jr.

April 12, 1956, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil



2017 **Where Has the Time Gone?**

(segment "*When the earth trembles*")

2012 **On the Road**

2008 **Stories on Human Rights**

2008 **Linha de Passe**

2007 **To Each His Own Cinema**

(segment "*A 8 944 km de Cannes*")

2006 **Paris, je t'aime**

(segment "*Loin du 16e*")

2005 **Dark Water**

2004 **The Motorcycle Diaries**

2001 **Behind the Sun**

1998 **Midnight**

1998 **Central Station**

1995 **Foreign Land**

1991 **The Knife**

(as *Walter Salles Jr.*)

NEXT MONTH'S FILM IS

A CANTERBURY TALE

(Powell & Pressburger,
UK 1944)

Monday 19 February

www.elyfilmsociety.com

[www.meetup.com/
ely-film/](http://www.meetup.com/ely-film/)

meetup