



Cult classics top art-house fare at new film festival

Golden Horse Fantastic features an odd mix of highbrow and lowbrow cinema

BY **HO YI**
STAFF REPORTER

The Taipei Golden Horse Film Festival (台北金馬影展) is celebrating the wacky, bloody and sexy aspects of cinema with a new festival that focuses mostly on B movies, cult films and genre flicks.

The lineup for the Taipei Golden Horse Fantastic Film Festival (台北金馬奇幻影展) includes zombie films like *Dead Snow*, a hilarious Norwegian take on the genre that reportedly went through 475 liters of fake blood during production, and *The Children*, a classic horror flick about a group of possessed kids who murder their parents.

Paired somewhat incongruously with such fare are a mini retrospective on Roman Polanski's early works that includes his 1958 short *Two Men and a Wardrobe* and a program of classics selected by Taiwanese director Hou Hsiao-hsien (侯孝賢).

Organizers aren't sure whether the fledgling festival will land a permanent spot in Golden Horse's stable of events, as it lacks government funding and is relying mostly on ticket sales to cover costs. But festival director Wen Tien-hsiang (聞天祥) says he is optimistic because a third of the screenings have already sold out and revenue from advance ticket sales has exceeded NT\$2.4 million, more than double the projected amount of NT\$1 million.

Even more surprising for Wen is that tickets for B movies and cult films such as *Little Shop of Horrors* and *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* have been among the first to go.

"I think we can learn a few things from the audience," Wen said. "We used to think Golden Horse audience members were pretty square. But in fact they're not as conservative as you might think."

FESTIVAL NOTES

WHAT: Taipei Golden Horse Fantastic Film Festival (台北金馬奇幻影展)

WHERE: Taipei Shin Kong Cineplex (台北新光影城), 4F, 36, Xining S Rd., Taipei City (台北市西寧南路36號4樓)

WHEN: Through April 22

ADMISSION: Tickets are NT\$160, available at the door or through ibon kiosks at 7-Eleven stores

ON THE NET: www.ghfff.org.tw

◀ *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* is one of the star attractions at the Taipei Golden Horse Fantastic Film Festival.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF TAIPEI GOLDEN HORSE FILM FESTIVAL

Amarcord

Federico Fellini's *Amarcord* is part of the Hou Hsiao Hsien's (侯孝賢) Favorite Fantasy Films program. This unflinching look at provincial life in 1930s Italy is loosely based on Fellini's own adolescence and is seen as one of his more accessible endeavors. Roger Ebert called it a movie "made entirely out of nostalgia and joy, by a filmmaker at the heedless height of his powers." The title translates as "I Remember."



The Eclipse

Ninety-five percent of *The Eclipse* is an elegant, healing story about a widower trying to adjust to his new life with his two young kids. The remaining five percent, however, will "scare the crap out of you," says festival director Wen Tien-hsiang (聞天祥). Hint: Pay attention each time the father is alone.



Symbol

An example of the popular Japanese genre that mixes fantasy and comedy with a dose of manga madness, *Symbol* begins with a young man waking up in a white room without doors or windows in his polka-dot pajamas. He soon works out that to escape he needs to use objects that fall from the ceiling whenever he presses on the little penises of baby statues that mysteriously emerge from the walls. Fun-loving audiences should wear pajamas to the film's Wednesday screening. Other movies with a dress code are *Little Shop of Horrors* (flowers), gay comedy *Antique* (aprons) and Japanese anime-turned live action *Yatterman* (glasses, the more outrageous, the better).



Eating Out 3

The gay section in film festivals is often a repository for art-house movies about problems the gay community faces. At Golden Horse Fantastic it's all about fantasy. Hence the exuberantly campy *Eating Out 3: All You Can Eat*, in which gay life is one big "male sale" and children are "just abortions that eat." The title says it all, and if you still don't get it you probably don't want to see this movie. Also showing are *Eating Out* and *Eating Out 2: Sloppy Seconds*.



The Rocky Horror Picture Show

A newly engaged couple become stranded in a remote area at night and seek help at the mansion of Dr Frank N. Furter — just as the mad scientist is conducting another of his zany experiments. Tickets for this cult classic which has been in some form of theatrical release for a record 34 consecutive years sold out within days, so an additional screening has been scheduled for Friday at 11:30pm. Fans are encouraged to "dress up as their favorite characters" and "bring props."



TOP FIVE MANDARIN ALBUMS

APRIL 2 TO APRIL 8



1 S.H.E and *SHERO* with **37.79** percent of sales

2 Show Luo (羅志祥) and *Rashomon* (羅生門) with **19.21%**

3 The Drifters (浪花兄弟) and self-titled album with **2.32%**

4 Kan Kan (康康) and *Bei Piao* (北漂) with **2.19%**

5 A-Lin and *Before, After* (以前・以後) with **1.83%**

ALBUM CHART COMPILED FROM G-MUSIC (WWW.G-MUSIC.COM.TW), BASED ON RETAIL SALES

PLANET POP

He might have been just another young Hollywood actor on the rise, but **Jonathan Rhys Meyers** chose to become a king — on TV. And doing so, the actor said, changed his life.

Four years ago, Rhys Meyers was coming off an Emmy nomination and a Golden Globe win for playing Elvis Presley, and he had wowed audiences in **Woody Allen's** *Match Point* and worked opposite **Tom Cruise** in *Mission: Impossible III*.

He was among the hottest young actors in Hollywood, but the Irish-born Rhys Meyers traded his Tinseltown calling card to move to play King Henry VIII in Showtime drama *The Tudors*. Initially, Rhys Meyers thought the role might last only a year. He was wrong.

The show debuted its fourth and final season yesterday, as King Henry, by now in his late 40s, battles illness, takes his country to battle and, of course, marries and remarries.

The role has earned Rhys Meyers two Golden Globe nominations, and while he says it is now time to move on, he also feels the part made him a wiser and better actor.

"I've changed. My concepts have changed. Everything I've done up until now has been an apprenticeship," he said. "Now, I think, at 32 years old, I've

garnered enough experience to know what I don't want. Now, I know what I do want."

What Rhys Meyers wants, he said, is to work with directors who will challenge him, confront him when he's not getting a role right, and always push him to be a better actor.

He said directors with whom he has worked in the past, such as Allen, **Ang Lee** (李安) and **Robert Altman**, have done just that, and the role of King Henry has only strengthened his abilities because of the many facets of the character.

Henry VIII reigned from 1509, when he was a teenager, until his death in 1547, at age 55. He was the second ruler from the House of Tudor, and his time on the throne was marked by the separation of the Church of England from the Roman Catholic Church

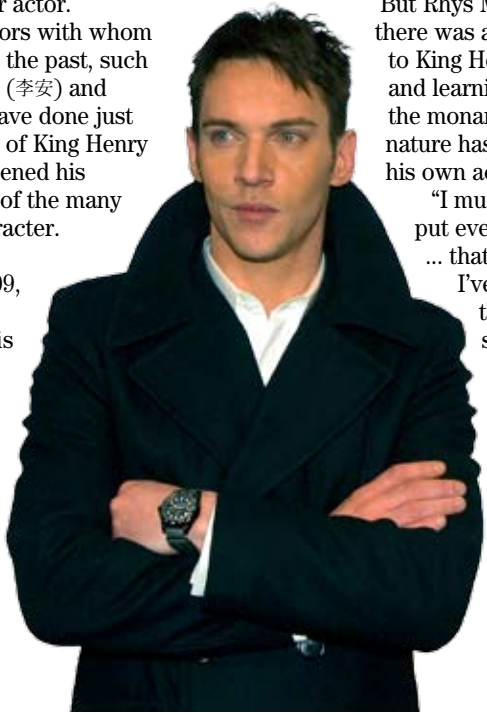
and by his six marriages.

The fourth season of *The Tudors* picks up with King Henry's marriage to a young Katherine Howard and sees him through his final years as he becomes obese, ill and an increasingly cruel ruler.

But Rhys Meyers reckons there was always a method to King Henry's madness, and learning how to tap into the monarch's manipulative nature has helped improve his own acting skills.

"I must psychologically put everybody on edge ... that is an art, and I've had to learn that over time," he said. "And as he gets older, you see more of the internal struggle inside him."

Queen of US television **Oprah Winfrey** will try to recreate her daytime success in the evening



Jonathan Rhys Meyers is entering the final year of his reign on popular television series *The Tudors*.

PHOTO: REUTERS

of his personal treasures.

His 1,098m² mansion in the upscale Los Angeles neighborhood of Bel-Air failed to get any bids at its US\$10.4 million asking price this week, and ownership reverted to a foreclosing lender.

The *Los Angeles Times* reported that Cage originally tried to sell the property for US\$35 million.

The newspaper quoted a real estate agent who called the interior design "frat house bordello," with framed comic books on walls.

The mansion also had model train sets on raised tracks in some rooms, in addition to a central tower, a home theater and an Olympic-sized pool.

A spokeswoman for Cage was not available for comment on the report.

Cage, the star of the *National Treasure* action franchise, filed a US\$20 million lawsuit in October against his former business manager, accusing him of harming his personal finances.

The manager, Samuel Levin, later filed a countersuit against Cage that accused him of overspending.

Cage a year ago sold his castle in Germany and told a magazine in that country that tough economic times forced him to make the sale.

— AGENCIES