



SCHEDULE

- **WITNESS FOR THE PROSECUTION:** **Wednesday 16 May 2018, at 3pm, Lexlcon, Free Entry** --Rating: G
Witness for the Prosecution (Dir. Billy Wilder, 1957). Courtroom drama. 116 min. =Adaptation of a play by Agatha Christie.
Cast: Charles Laughton, Tyrone Power, Marlene Dietrich, Elsa Lanchester
Summary: A fiery but ailing barrister takes on a murder case where nothing is what it seems. His blood pressure is about to shoot up, and justice is about to shut down.

- **ADAM'S RIB** **Wednesday 23 May 2018, at 3pm, Lexlcon, Free Entry** --Rating: G
Adam's Rib (Dir. George Cukor, 1949). Romantic Comedy. 101 min. =American Film Institute's 'Top Ten Rom-Coms of All Time'
Cast: Katherine Hepburn, Spencer Tracy, Judy Holliday, Tom Ewell
Summary: A pair of barristers live in harmony as husband and wife, but when he backs up a misogynist case, she declares war at home and in court.

- **THE LADYKILLERS** **Wednesday 30 May 2018, at 3pm, Lexlcon, Free Entry** --Rating: G
The Ladykillers (Dir. Alexander McKendrick, 1955). Black comedy. 97 min. =BAFTA award for Best Screenplay
Cast: Katie Johnson, Alec Guinness, Cecil Parker
Summary: A criminal gang with a perfect plan sets up camp in an elderly lady's home, but they get more trouble than they bargained for.

- **BAGDAD CAFÉ:** **Wednesday 6 June 2018, at 3pm, Lexlcon, Free Entry** --Rating: 12
--"Presented in co-operation with the Goethe-Institut Irland"--
Bagdad Café (Dir. Percy Adlon, 1987). Comedy drama. 108 min. =César award for Best Foreign Film
Cast: Marianne Sägebrecth, CCH Pounder, Jack Palance
Summary: In a café in the middle of the Arizona desert, an array of wonderfully odd characters enjoy life and each other's company.

SILVER SCREEN

"Lawless!" -- four classic films about law-makers and rule-breakers

To celebrate Bealtaine, we bring you a special selection of films: three certifiable masterpieces and a modern classic.

What is a 'film classic'? A work that will endure through the centuries? But cinema is a very young art form, a mere 120 years old! Perhaps then, a classic is a film that endures through our lifetimes –that can change and adapt to us as we grow older, so that we always find something new in each new viewing. With time, some films get sillier, or harder to crack, more cynical, or playful, more tender, or uncompromising, or darker, or wiser. For this special season celebrating Bealtaine, we have selected three masterpieces from the 1940s and 1950s, as well as a modern classic. If you have seen them, you know they can be watched again and again and again. But if you haven't seen them yet... how lucky you are! This is a treasure chest. From the amazing transformation of a character, to the turning of the tables in a story, from an unexpected life-saving friendship, to a solid alliance turned toxic, these four films have enough twists, shocks, tricks, and punchlines, enough "ooh" moments, "auch" moments, and "gasp!" moments to hook you from start to finish.

Put yourself in the hands of brilliant directors like George Cukor and Billy Wilder. Let yourself be entranced by the flesh-and-blood characters created by great actors like Katharine Hepburn, Charles Laughton, Marlene Dietrich, or Jack Palance. Lose yourself in some of the best story-telling in the history of cinema, from the thousand twists of the Agatha Christie-based *Witness for the Prosecution*, to the meandering tale of a woman who finds herself at the edge of the world in *Bagdad Café*. Let your deep-seated beliefs be tested, by laughing at the crime-and-punishment tale of *The Ladykillers*, or by being swept away by the peculiar mix of brains and feminist comedy in *Adam's Rib*. The four films of our Silver Screen mini-season have one thing in common, they are all about law-makers and rule-breakers. Join us and explore with us what are the limits of justice, and why the unwritten rules are the hardest ones to break.

Note: the films will be preceded by an Introduction, and followed by an open discussion with the audience.

--film selection and notes by Anne Legarreta



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WITNESS FOR THE PROSECUTION
Wednesday 16 May 2018, at 3pm, Lexlcon



Witness for the Prosecution (Dir. Billy Wilder, 1957). Courtroom drama. 116 min. =Adaptation of a play by Agatha Christie.
 Cast: Charles Laughton, Marlene Dietrich, Tyrone Power, Elsa Lanchester

Our “Lawless!” mini-season of classics starts with one of the greatest courtroom dramas in the history of film. *Witness for the Prosecution*, despite its rather dry, functional title, is an absolutely gripping story, conceived by that empress of puzzles, the brilliant Agatha Christie. Surprisingly, the film features a lot of comedy, which offsets but also deepens its seriousness. Like every courtroom drama worth its salt, *Witness for the Prosecution* deals with the limits of the justice system, showing that for every rule of law there’s a trick to break it. At the centre of the film, we find two ‘couples’: an innocent murder-suspect and his spiteful wife, vs. a cantankerous lawyer and his devoted nurse. Like a mirror, these parallel relationships are versions of broken ‘contracts’ between people who have promised to care for and respect one another. In the midst of it all, what glorious actors, in what rewarding roles! The great Charles Laughton, whose talent as a director and whose homosexuality were never allowed full expression. The magnetic Marlene Dietrich, who in this film proved her intelligence and range as an actor. The unforgettable Elsa Lanchester, best known for her career-clinching performance in the camp fairytale *Bride of Frankenstein*. And the accomplished Tyrone Power, vulnerable or commanding at will, an actor often cursed by his handsomeness to play stereotypical roles. These four underused and misused actors, so often out of tune, soar together here like a flawless string quartet.

Witness for the Prosecution, originally a play, also draws attention to the theatricality of our justice court system. Suspects are actors, jury members reviewers, and the public are the audience, in an event where a good performance (of innocence, or of contrition) can mean freedom, and a bad performance jail. As a bonus, the film takes a look at life with a chronic illness. The star barrister Sir Wilfrid has a serious heart condition, and has been told to avoid excitement at any cost. Little does he know that his final case will be so full of twists and shocks that his heart may not survive it! But perhaps the most delicious twist of all is that this pillar of the law, the insubornable and clock-like reliable Sir Wilfrid, has a secret of his own, having decided that in order to be happy, he must bend the rules a little...

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ADAM'S RIB
Lexlcon, weds 23 May 2018, at 3pm



Adam's Rib (Dir. George Cukor, 1949). Romantic Comedy. 101 min. =AFI's 'Top Ten Rom-Coms of All Time'
Cast: Katherine Hepburn, Spencer Tracy, Judy Holliday, Tom Ewell

Our "Lawless!" mini-season of classics continues with one of the greatest films of the Hepburn-Tracy artistic partnership. *Adam's Rib* looks at the double standards of law-makers who make judgements to match their own prejudices. In the dock – women. In the prosecution – men. In the defense – a woman determined to show that Eve, far from a weakling seduced by a snake, was the courageous one who dared to pluck the apple. This is serious stuff, but *Adam's Rib* is a riot. How can a political film be so entertaining, so hilarious? It is light-weight, but punches like a boxer. This battle-of-the-sexes story features no black eyes or bloody noses, however, only razor-sharp brains and quick-fire words, because the co-protagonists are a pair of highly civilised, self-respecting, neat and proper barristers, who happen to be married to each other. And they also happen to be on opposite sides of the 'sex war'. Surely, the husband believes, this talk of Equality is being taken too far, and men have a right and an obligation to remain 'gentlemen'. Sadly, the wife declares, manliness requires the subservience of half the population in order to exist. We are in the year 1949; if it's ok for a woman to drive a car (as Amanda drives Adam in a great scene), why are women never allowed the driver's seat in the world?

Adam's Rib has so much to savour when you watch it again. For example, these days we are all alert to how a director may approach the physical movement of actors, but a long time ago Cukor was already masterminding body-work, and both Tracy and Hepburn were turning their physicality into a trademark, with Tracy's assured parsimony anchoring Hepburn's wired unpredictability – a match as distinctive as that of Laurel and Hardy. Beautifully shot, carefully designed, craftily paced, director George Cukor's legendary attention to detail says as much as the oh-so-clever dialogue. Look at that scene in the car, and how the double-window screen breaks up the world in two. Or look at that four-poster bed, where the final restoration of manliness and femininity is enacted – it is not by accident that it looks just like a puppet theatre... It is time to take a fresh look at *Adam's Rib* and reclaim this classic film on gender equality.

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THE LADYKILLERS
Lexlcon, weds 30 May 2018, at 3pm



The Ladykillers (Dir. Alexander McKendrick, 1955). Black comedy. 97 min. =BAFTA award for Best Screenplay
Cast: Katie Johnson, Alec Guinness, Cecil Parker

Our Silver Screen mini-season of films about law makers and rule breakers, continues with the satirical masterpiece *The Ladykillers*. The main characters in this film are criminals, the ladykillers of the title, and they are planning to get rid of little Mrs Wilberforce, a frail elderly lady who stands between them and a bank loot. But soon she comes up with a plan of her own: to sort them out by taking them to Sunday mass. Will these hardened gangsters crush her like a fly, or will she turn out to be a stinging gadfly who, like Socrates, will make the unjust itch and burn, til they repent and make amends?

The Ladykillers was produced by the much loved Ealing Studios in London, famous for their comedies, and for creating choral stories about ordinary but resourceful folk zig-zagging their way out of trouble. In our film, Mrs Wilberforce is an ordinary citizen dealing with crime on her own doorstep. We may be tempted to see her as the incarnation of Lady Justice, confident, indiscriminating, and determined to restore order. But as the film progresses, and as the baddies get their comeuppance, it is hard not to feel some sympathy for these "ordinary decent petty criminals", now confronted by the merciless colossus of fate. But what is the moral in this strange story? Is the film proposing a kind of Christian Karma? There is a bizarre, absurdist side to the string of unexpected twists, which push the plot further and further into the darkest shades of black humour. Perhaps there is no moral. Perhaps this is just a film about criminals who finally find themselves at the mercy of the Law.... of Murphy's Law.

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BAGDAD CAFÉ

"Presented in co-operation with the Goethe-Institut Irland"
Lexlcon, weds 6 June 2018, at 3pm



Bagdad Café (Dir. Percy Adlon, 1987). Comedy drama. 108 min. =César award for Best Foreign Film
 Cast: Marianne Sägebrecht, CCH Pounder, Jack Palance.

Our Silver Screen mini-season concludes with the modern classic *Bagdad Café*. While our other films have looked at how law is made in the courtroom, unmade by criminals, and mishandled by all-too-human lawmakers, *Bagdad Café* looks at the wider concept from which our justice systems derive: the need to have rules. We must put rules in place if we are to live together, if we are to survive and thrive together: in a household, a workplace, a country, or a planet. Our lives are governed by agreements, to be civil to one another, to pay the bills on time, to walk the dog in the evening, to stop on a red light... The trouble comes when our private rules are imposed on others, when we judge others according to our own standards. And that's what happens to Jasmin Münchgstettner in the film. She thinks she knows best, and when she is faced with a shipful of former hippies, young rebels, wayward artists, easy-going drifters, there is an inevitable and epic clash. But when she lets go.. it's (literally) magic.

The co-protagonists, the owner of the café and her rather peculiar new costumer, are strong-willed and not instantly-likeable women. The film shows us how getting to know someone, or somewhere, slowly smooths out any sharp edges, so that we get to tolerate, and sometimes even love, other people's oddities – while they may get to tolerate or love our own. The Arizona dessert is an extra character in the film, with its patient and ancient wisdom. It has the oppennes of a golden sea, gently rocking the pirate ship that's Brenda's Café. The dessert knows how to wait, how to call you, and how to keep you.

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