

Clever and sweet but in danger of losing the plot

video/dvd



Lost in Translation
Director: Sofia Coppola
Available on video/DVD

Lost in Translation is a strange piece of whimsy that will delight some and simply confuse others. It all but lost me.

Now out on DVD, the latest outing by writer/director Sofia Coppola (daughter of the *Godfather* creator himself) is a quiet, reflective film that oddly gets pegged as a comedy.

The question is why. There are few real laugh-out-loud moments in the film. Even the "comic" bits are more likely to raise eyebrows than belly laughs, as when a shrieking Japanese fan, legs waving in the air, tries to get Bill Murray's world-weary actor Bob Harris to "lip" her stockings.

This sort of "Ingrish" is typi-

cal of the film's humour, which labours the fish out of water theme. There's a nice shot near the beginning where Harris sticks out like Gulliver in Lilliput among the Japanese locals in the lift.

Trapped in a land of incomprehensible foreigners, making a whisky commercial he finds an embarrassment, Harris meets a kindred soul in fellow American Charlotte (Scarlett Johansson), a beautiful young woman whose husband (Giovanni Ribisi) has all but abandoned her for his photography.

A chaste relationship springs up as the two insomniacs try to combat loneliness in this city of millions.

It's a savvy move, cutting out the sex — less is more, and all that. It's different, at the very least. If this film is trying to be anything, it's Art.

Wherever the story may — or may not — go, the visuals are beautifully done. The other-worldliness of the film's Tokyo is introduced from the word go, with its blinking neon lights dazzling Harris's jetlagged eyes as he wakes in a taxi. It's wonderfully Alice in Wonderland.

The plot is inconsequential. For an Oscar-winning script, the story relies on a minimum of dialogue, creating the most emotion when hardly a word is spoken. It's an admirable display of restraint, even down to the light-

ly used soundtrack.

Without spoiling the ending, however, it leaves the viewer hungry, much like the inedible meal the pair order in a Tokyo restaurant.

The unfortunate side-effect of all the "aren't the Japanese crazy?" stuff is that the Japanese appear like their own cute little cartoons. It's trying hard to be deep, but many things about the film ring horribly shallow.

It's by turns amusing, sweet, and in many ways clever, but you can't help but feel as if in its eager search for meaning, *Lost in Translation* doesn't watch where it's going.

— **Andrea Jutson**

The rise, fall and rise again of a Hollywood exec

dvd



The Kid Stays in the Picture
Director: Brett Morgen,
Nanette Burstein
Available on DVD

Glamour, sex, drugs and murder — this movie has all the ingredients of a Hollywood blockbuster.

It's the story of an actor turned film producer who ruled Hollywood, lost it all, and fought his way back.

But the incredible story of Robert Evans' life isn't fiction.

It's fact — or at least his version of it.

The highlight of Evans' acting career was the 1958 movie *The Sun Also Rises*.

When other actors in the film wanted him fired, producer Darryl Zanuck announced via bull-horn: "The kid stays in the picture".

Evans knew from that moment what he wanted to be.

The next Darryl Zanuck.

In 1966, aged only 34, Evans

became the first actor ever to run a major film studio. He turned an ailing Paramount into the most successful studio in Hollywood.

Classic films such as *The Godfather*, *Rosemary's Baby* and *Chinatown* set a new standard of movie-making.

Then it all went wrong.

The documentary *The Kid Stays in the Picture* traces Evans' meteoric rise, his 1980s nose-dive of drug addiction, failure, and rumours surrounding a murder, and finally his triumphant return to the movie business.

The idea for the film came from an audio recording Evans made of his autobiography.

The challenge was how to turn Evans' enthralling dialogue into a movie when he would not

appear, nor would he let an actor play him.

New computer software was invented to "animate" photographs.

Three-dimensional depth and movement such as cigarette smoke wafting gently upwards, or the world speeding by from a car window, bring his story to life. These were blended with old film footage and new shots of important locations.

His beautiful Hollywood home, the centre of his whirlwind life, is used as a metaphor for his changing fortunes.

The opening shot drifts through warmly-lit rooms, browsing over photographs of his life, hinting at interesting stories to come.

When all is lost, leaves blow around the pool and the house is

dark and cold.

The final frame returns the house to the warmth of the opening shot, and Evans to his place in cinematic history.

A varied musical score, from orchestra to pop music, sets the atmosphere and anchors images in relevant time periods.

It rarely lets up but is never overbearing.

Evans' powerful, gripping and taut dialogue perfectly overlays this blend of visual and audio techniques creating an enthralling piece of story-telling.

This movie is perfect DVD viewing if only for one reason — you need to watch it twice.

The fast-paced story and its revolutionary film techniques demand and deserve multiple viewing.

— **Owen Hembry**

SHOWS, ART, THEATRE, MUSIC, FILM, SHOWS, ART, THEATRE, MUSIC, FILM, SHOWS, ART, THEATRE, MUSIC

SHOWS & FESTIVALS

Circus-X, Extravaganza starring X-games athletes performing amazing stunts, including trapeze and high-wire feats on motorbikes. All choreographed to a 12-piece band, with laser show and dancers. At the North Shore Events Centre, Glenfield. 15 - 17 Sept, 7pm. Tickets from Ticketek.

Evita, the musical about the tragic Argentinian first lady Eva Peron. Extended season until 12 Sept, at St James Theatre, Queen St. Tickets from Ticketek.

Chinese Mooncake Festival. This festival honours the importance of family in Chinese culture, with dance, song and acrobatics. Free entry, at Aotea Centre, on 12 Sept, 7pm.

The Home Show, hugely popular trade show for DIY-ers and home enthusiasts, with the latest in furnishings, appliances and decor, as well as DIY tips and discounts. At the Auckland Showgrounds, Greenlane Rd, Epsom.

ACG Art Festival/Auction, Worth the trip to Karaka if you are interested in collecting art. You'll find artworks from up-and-coming art students and professional artists at a snip of the usual

price. At ACG Strathallan, Hayfield Way, Karaka. Viewing from 9am on 10 Sept, 3pm on 11 Sept, and auction at 8pm on 11 Sept.

The Date Palm Film Festival, Formerly the Middle Eastern Film Festival, focuses entirely on the Middle East and North Africa. Includes six feature and three documentary films from Tunisia, Morocco, Egypt, Palestine, Israel and Iran. The films cover a wide range of themes, from comedy and romance to gay and political issues. 16 - 20 Sept, at The Capitol theatre.

RADIO

STATIC 88.1FM

AUT's year three BCS radio students present STATIC — AUT's own radio station. The students are aiming for sophisticated sounds, playing mostly down-beat house music. Each show has a similar sound, but some dj's have their own genres.

Shows are Monday, Wednesday, Friday 8am to 5pm, Tuesday and Thursday from 8am to 6pm.

PLANET 104.6 FM

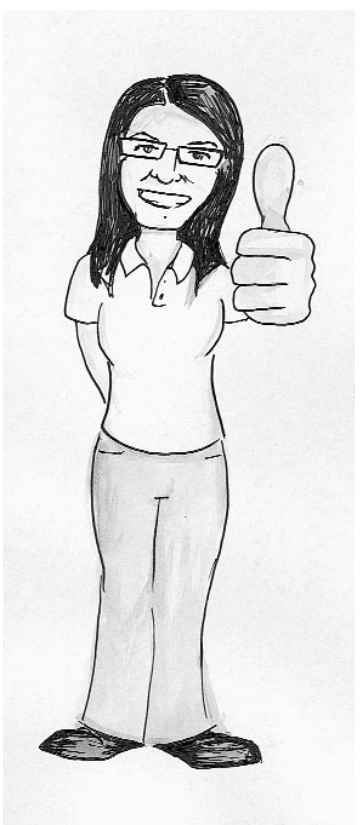
Planet FM is the only multilingual station in Auckland, providing 143 different programmes.

Here are some programmes to look out for:

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| Mon — | Niuean, 5.25pm
Hip Hop, 10.20pm
Arabic, 4.20pm
Education, 8am |
| Tues — | Dalmatian, 8.10pm
Tamil, 8.45pm
Mental Health, 12.30pm
Korean Youth, 10.30pm |
| Wed — | Sri Lankan, 8.15pm
Portuguese, 8.50pm
Senior Citizens, 3.50pm
Hindi, 8am |
| Thur — | Gay/Lesbian, 7am
Cook Islands, 6.30pm
Hard Rock, 11.35pm
Samoan, 7.40pm |
| Fri — | Dutch, 7.05pm
Rwanda, 8.10am
Fijian, 4.55pm
Indian Youth, 9.15pm |
| Sat — | Tongan, 6am
Spanish, 10am
Business, 9.05am
Albanian, 9.25am |
| Sun — | Irish, 11.35am
Croatian, 7.45pm
Vietnamese, 1.50pm
Disabilities, 12.40pm |

Contact us: If you think that something is missing from our list, email us at: wahanui@aut.ac.nz

TIANA'S PICKS



Music

De Ja Voodoo, Slavetrader & Foamy Ed, De Ja Voodoo's debut album *Brown Sabbath* is crazy-good energetic rock, the kind you need to pump up good and loud, and I'm sure their live gig won't disappoint. *The Kings Arms, 16 Sept.*

Film

Supersize Me, Doco directed by Morgan Spurlock about American obesity. Spurlock himself embarks on a McDonalds-only diet in a gross sacrifice of his health for art. You won't finish your Tangy Fruits during this movie! *Bridgeway cinema*

To Be and to Have (Etre et Avoir)

An intimate and charming documentary that follows M. Georges Lopez, the teacher at a rural French school over the course of a year. A gentle and sensitive portrait of a man, and I found myself longing for a fine mentor like this guy. Recommended. *Lido Theatre*

Tiana Miocevic