



Photos courtesy of Mary Riepma Ross Film Theater

CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: Sean Penn and director Woody Allen on the set of "Sweet and Lowdown," Emilie Dequenne in "Rosetta," Jackie, Lynn and Sue at age 14 in the documentary film "42 Up," Miriam Frost, Mark Borchardt, Robert Richard Jorge, Sherri Beupre and Tom Schimmels in "American Movie," and Nandita Das and Aamir Khan in "Earth."



Cultural Cinema

Foreign films dominate season at Ross Theater

By Josh Krauter

Staff writer

Question: What do a pregnant nun, a German rock band, an inept horror film director, a self-obsessed jazz musician, Gilbert and Sullivan, a Japanese forest god and a killer carp have in common?

Answer: They are all characters in films showing at the Mary Riepma Ross Film Theater this semester.

Dan Ladely, director of the Ross Theater, said the spring lineup is an especially good one.

"This particular season is one of the strongest we've had in a while," he said. "I know I probably say that every time, but I can back it up."

The season kicks off tonight with the latest film from Spanish director Pedro Almodóvar, "All About My Mother." Almodóvar ("Women on the Verge of a Nervous Breakdown") is one of many established directors in the lineup. Others include:

■ **Woody Allen.** Allen's "Sweet and Lowdown," the story of a self-centered yet insecure jazz musician (Sean Penn) whose only moments of grace occur when he's playing his music, opens Feb. 17.

■ **Mike Leigh.** "Topsy-Turvy" is the story of a strained period in the working relationship of musical playwrights Gilbert and Sullivan. Sullivan wants to write serious work, while Gilbert is content to churn out the same old stuff. The pair finds a happy medium in "The Mikado." The film, a slight departure for Leigh ("Secrets and Lies"), opens on March 16.

■ **Michael Apted.** "42 Up" is the latest installment in a series of documentaries involving the same people. British director Apted documents his subjects in seven-year increments and then turns those seven years into one film. "42 Up" opens March 30.

New and lesser-known directors also have a place on the roster. Chris Smith's debut film,

"American Movie," opens Feb. 3. The film is a documentary about a local Wisconsin filmmaker who makes up in ambition what he lacks in talent.

Gavin O'Connor's "Tumbleweeds" is the story of a woman (Janet McTeer) who moves from one Southern location to the next, taking her daughter (Kimberly J. Brown) with her.

The latest film from the controversial and outspoken Harmony Korine, "Julien donkey-boy," opens April 6. Korine, who wrote "Kids" and directed "Gummo," returns with the story of a schizophrenic (Ewen Bremner), his strict and stern father (legendary German director Werner Herzog) and his pregnant sister (Chloe Sevigny).

"Julien donkey-boy" is the first American film to be endorsed by the Danish Dogma group, a coalition of filmmakers whose philosophies include using absolutely no special effects, making no films longer than about 90 minutes and using no music unless the characters are actually playing it or listening to it.

Besides directors old and new, the Ross lineup also features several unusual events this spring. Japanese anime, live music, a local feature film night and an Iranian film festival are all making Ross Theater debuts.

"Princess Mononoke," the animated Japanese film directed by anime vet Hayao Miyazaki, will open April 27. This version is dubbed, and it features the voices of Minnie Driver, Claire Danes, Billy Bob Thornton and Jada Pinkett Smith.

Musician Leslie Nuchow will be performing a free concert Feb. 8. Nuchow was offered a record contract by a company owned by Phillip Morris, and she turned it down. The concert is part of her activism efforts against tobacco companies.

Another free event takes place Feb. 10-11. Two local films, "Carpula" and "The Dean's Boys," will be screened, with an additional three or four local short films on the schedule as well. The directors of "Carpula" and "The Dean's Boys," Ross Brockley and Daniel B. Iské respectively, will be in the audi-

ence to answer questions about the films.

"We're really happy to be able to do this," Ladely said. "We want to promote and encourage local filmmakers as much as possible."

Ladely said he is especially excited about the Iranian film festival.

"For me, what's really going to be the highlight is the retrospective of Iranian cinema," he said. "Iranians have made a huge impact on cinema in the last few years."

Ladely said it was amazing Iranian films existed at all.

"Just to make a film in Iran, you have to jump through hoops," he said.

Ladely said the Iranian government enforces strict censorship and reviews all scripts.

The films being shown still manage to criticize the Iranian government in subtle ways, he said. A number of films made by women also will be included. The festival begins April 13.

Other foreign films will be screened throughout the season, sponsored by the University Program Council. The UPC International Film Series Committee picks the lineup for the foreign film schedule with a little help from Ladely, said UPC member Tom St. Germain.

He said the committee has three members and a chairman and picks the films based on reviews, articles and schedules sent by film companies.

St. Germain said the committee tries to include a variety of countries, but sometimes it isn't possible.

"We try and pick the ones with good reviews, but we can't spread it too thin," he said.

Foreign films on the schedule include: Katja von Garnier's "Bandits," the story of a rock band; Jean-Luc and Pierre Dardenne's "Rosetta;" Wu Tianming's "The King of Masks;" "Same Old Song," from French director Alain Resnais; "Eternity and a Day," a Greek film; and "Earth," a political film from India.

MARY RIEPMA ROSS FILM THEATER	
WINTER/SPRING 2000 SCHEDULE	
Admission: \$6.50 general, \$4.50 students	
"All About My Mother" with short feature "Life History of a Star"	Jan. 20 - Jan. 23, Jan. 27 - Jan. 29
"Bandits" (UPC International Film Series)	Jan. 30
"American Movie"	Feb. 3 - Feb. 6
"Leslie Nuchow in Concert" (free admission)	Feb. 8
"Carpula" and "The Dean's Boys" (free admission)	Feb. 10 and Feb. 11
"Rosetta" (UPC International Film Series)	Feb. 13
"Sweet and Lowdown" with short feature "Greg"	Feb. 17 - 20, Feb. 24 - 26
"The King of Masks" (UPC International Film Series)	Feb. 27
"Tumbleweeds" plus short feature "From Morning on I Waited Yesterday"	March 2 - 4, March 9 - 12
"Same Old Song" (UPC International Film Series)	March 5
"Topsy-Turvy"	March 16 - 19, March 23 - 25
"Eternity and a Day" (UPC International Film Series)	March 26
"42 Up"	March 30 - April 2
"Julien donkey-boy"	April 6 - 8
"Earth" (UPC International Film Series)	April 9
"The Iranian Cinema: A Dream With No Awakening"	April 13 - 16, April 20 - 23
"Princess Mononoke"	April 27 - 30, May 4 - 7

For information on screening times call the Ross at (402) 472-5353