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Sex Pistols documentary highlights Ross schedule

By Samuel McKewon

Senior editor

The usual mix of foreign and arthouse films on the Mary Riempa Ross Film Theater's summer film schedule is about to get a dose of anarchy, UK style.

"The Filth and the Fury," the highly acclaimed documentary about the seminal band of the punk-rock movement, The Sex Pistols, is the highlight of the Ross' docket of six feature and four short films. It's also the last film of the summer schedule; it won't hit the screen until Aug. 10-20.

Call it saving the best - and most filthy - for last.

"It's the definitive Sex Pistols documentary," said Dan Ladely, director of the Ross. "I can't say I'm much of a fan of the Sex Pistols, but I can say I enjoyed it."

It's the second Pistols documentary from Julien Temple, whose first effort, "The Great Rock 'N' Roll Swindle," focused less on the band than its promotion. "Filth and Fury," which Ladely saw at its premiere at the Sundance Film Festival, is more intimate with the band, chronicles the downfall of Sid Vicious and features the band's best live footage ever captured.

Made with the cooperation of the surviving members, then-and-now interviews spice up the 105-minute run time. Even Johnny Rotten can't resist the urge to tear up.

The result is one of the more critically lauded rockumentaries made in recent years. It's a genre not often shown at the Ross, Ladely said, because of its relative obscurity in the 1990s. The fall 1999 schedule included Wim Wenders' "Buena Vista Social Club," but music documentaries are still a rarity.

"You look back, and I don't know how many there's been," Ladely said. "I know we showed the first Sex Pistols documentary. It was well received."

"Filth and Fury" will be shown along with one of the four short films this summer, "Paulo e Ana Luiza em Porto Alegre," a 15-minute tale of the strange couple next door.

Other Ross offerings this summer are mostly foreign efforts, with avant garde filmmaker Jim Jarmusch's latest and applauded film "Ghost Dog: The Way of the Samurai" showing up in mid-July.

As always, Ross movies show Thursdays through Sundays with two showings on weekdays, four on weekends.

The complete slate of films:

"Holy Smoke!" June 1-11

Rated R

114 minutes

Director Jane Campion is a leader of feminist filmmakers, and "Holy Smoke," a romantic comedy about cult worshippers and their deprogrammers, fits her typical fare.

One of finest visual artists in the film medium, Campion, along with her sister Anna, wrote a screenplay that they hoped would be all things, but the film only accomplishes some of them. Kate Winslet is Ruth, the blind follower in a spiritual cult, while deprogrammer Harvey Keitel is hired to draw her out. It goes without saying they eventually will draw each other out.

A risky, beautiful film, "Holy Smoke!" takes too many chances to be perfect. But it is daring, and Ruth's Australian family is the American equivalent of lovable white trash. Feminist hooey? Maybe a little. It largely works nonetheless.

"East is East," June 15-25

Rated R

96 minutes

A immigrant comedy from England chronicles the life of a boorish Pakistani man (Om Puri) with a strange mixed-race family and his struggle to keep his sons and daughter under his watchful eye, which includes arranged marriages.

"Milkman," a 15-minute short film about a stroke victim and his milk-loving visitor, will accompany "East is East."

"Beau Travail," June 29-July 9

Not rated

90 minutes

Claire Denis' military ballet drama is a loose representation of Herman Melville's "Billy Budd" and a story about a French legionnaire outpost in Africa. The outpost leader (Denis Lavant) and his ritualistic regiment of men is threatened by new recruit Gregoire Colin.

"Amplifier," a 22-minute futuristic nightmare about technology and television, also will be shown.

"Ghost Dog: The Way of the Samurai," July 13-23

Rated R

115 minutes

More like filming poet than moviemaker, Jim Jarmusch tackles life and death with the story of a hit man (Forest Whitaker) who lives by the honor code of the ancient Japanese Samurai and therefore must pledge allegiance to the mob boss who once saved his life. A carrier pigeon and small girl are his only real connection to the pop-culture universe.

Jarmusch paints with broad strokes rather than specific ones; his movies are meditations on

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