

Hollywood tale: The cast of *Seven Magnificent Egos*

Review: Seven Magnificent Egos

Ye Old Rose and Crown Theatre, Walthamstow

By Jessica Holt

As the title suggests this is a light-hearted exploration of what went on behind the scenes of the making of a great film, *The Magnificent Seven*. A Hollywood adaptation of the Japanese classic *The Seven Samurai*, it was made in 1960 and shows how the fate of seven cowboys plays out as they protect a Mexican village from bandits.

As the audience enters the theatre the actors mingle and crack jokes to ensure we understand this will be a good humoured, fun-loving play poking fun at the huge egos of the actors themselves.

Seven directors' chairs are placed in a line with the names of the star actors written on them: Yul Brunner, Steve McQueen, Charles Bronson to name just three. The scenes are short and sharply written giving an insight into the difficulties experienced by the demands and clashing egos of the actors but also the demands

of the Mexican government. I had the pleasure of meeting the musical director Nick Samuel, a Muswell Hill resident who explained the process of collaborating with the writer and director Lance S A Nielsen. He described him as "open-minded" and always eager to take on ideas. Nick is particularly pleased with the gun-fight scene which in the film has only sound effects, specifically gunshots. There is no music in the film for the gunfight, but Nick wrote some for the play and overlaid the original sound effects from

the film. Nick considers the play as a "classy and cheeky project"

I particularly enjoyed the performance by the only female actor Rose Kaur who plays several different roles with great dexterity and humour. A special mention for the show's programme, which is truly 'magnificent' and would work well in a West End theatre where I hope this play ends up.

What's on at the Phoenix in December

By Zalan Pall, general manager

An Everest documentary, a Palme d'Or winner, acclaimed dramas, a French classic, ballet, opera and Christmas releases, plus more await you at the Phoenix in December.

In the Palme d'Or winner *It Was Just an Accident*, from Friday 5 December, what begins as a minor accident sets in motion a series of escalating consequences.

Brisk, insightful, and gently crafted, *Prime Minister*, also from Friday 5 December, offers a persuasive and inspiring portrait of Jacinda Ardern.

The Epic of Everest, on Saturday 6 December, by John Noel is a matinee screening to accompany a talk by Mark Power about his newly published book *Vanishing: A Tibetan Sketchbook*.

Scarlett Johansson's directorial debut is a resonant story that bridges generational gaps. *Eleanor the Great*, on Sunday 14 December, is the kind of film that will make you laugh, cry, and hug everyone you love.

In *Marty Supreme*, coming in late December, Marty Mauser (played by Timothée Chalamet) is a young man with a dream no one respects, who goes to hell and back in pursuit of greatness.

Defly exploring the uneasy tension between artistic expression and personal connection, *Sentimental Value*, also in late December, is a bracingly mature work from writer-director



Joachim Trier that's marvelously acted across the board.

For the lovers of screen arts, we will have the Royal Ballet and Opera's *The Nutcracker* on Wednesday 10 December, Met Opera's *Andrea Chenier* on Saturday 13 December and the Berlin Philharmoniker's *New Year's Eve Concert* on Wednesday 31 December.

And we carry on with our French Classic Season this month with Jean Vigo's 1934 *L'Atalante*, acclaimed by some critics as one of the greatest films of all time, on Sunday 14 December. Finally, our Christmas season this year will include *It's a Wonderful Life*, *The Muppet Christmas Carol* and a *Polar Express Pyjama Party*. Find out full details and book at www.phoenixcinema.co.uk or pop into our foyer to talk to our box office staff.

Love in later life



Intriguing: *The Two Strangers* Q&A session at the Phoenix Cinema

By Diana Cormack

Screened at the Phoenix in early November, the title and theme of *Two Strangers Trying Not to Kill Each Other* intrigued me. This documentary featured an older married couple realising that, as they approach the end of life, changes and preparations needed to be made. Being both of a certain age my husband and I and, by the looks of things, many of the large audience, were also at that stage and perhaps hoping to pick up some hints?

The couple in question, who met in middle age, had entirely different backgrounds. Joel Meyerowitz is a world-famous photographer and author hailing

from the Bronx. Maggie Barrett is a British artist and writer, talented but less achieving.

Their lives change drastically when she badly breaks her leg in a fall and is diagnosed with osteoporosis, necessitating Joel taking care of her. Gradually and not without challenges, they take stock of their 30-year marriage, with the love they share helping them to move forward together.

In the following Q & A session, the young film makers Jacob Perlmutter and Manon Ouimet said they had spent a year living with Joel and Maggie observing love in later life. Both couples participated enthusiastically in the discussion and were very much in agreement that this had been a unique experience.

The evening was organised both for the general public and for their members by Circle Square, a networking group for the over-50s. Founded in 2018, the club provides members with a range of activities "to help you make the most of mid-life and beyond". Readers are invited to attend a taster event. To view these visit www.sharecirclesquare.com/events or email info@sharecirclesquare.com

Soccer Cinderella



Panto first: Talia Pick as Cinderella

East Finchley Women's Football Club player Talia Pick is taking time out from her soccer career to start in the title role of *Cinderella and the Matzo Ball*. Being slightly accident prone, she has put her football training on hold to prepare for the role and all her team mates are hoping to go along and support her pantoland debut.

The traditional Jewish pantomime is a seasonal mix of music, theatre, comedy and entertainment and runs at the JW3 Centre, Finchley Road, NW3, from Sunday 7 December to Sunday 4 January.

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