

Chance to view independent movies never looked so good

By Anita Modak-Truran
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The opportunity for independent film alternatives to mainstream cinema expands each year as dedicated organizations, such as the Crossroads Film Society, the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life, Millsaps College with its prestigious Southern Circuit Film Series and movie distributors, such as Regal Entertainment, scout out critically successful movies uncompromised by a jumbo-sized budget.

Word spreads

Without the big bucks, however, the alternative films lack advertising and marketing dollars. These pictures, such as *My Big Fat Greek Wedding*, *Napoleon Dynamite*, *The Blair Witch Project*, *March of the Penguins* and *Mad Hot Ballroom*, rely upon word of mouth and build an audience through grassroots campaigns. (Crossroads sponsored a screening last week of *Mad Hot Ballroom*, a crowd-pleasing documentary about elementary kids from the inner schools of New York competing in a city-wide ballroom dance competition.)

Tonight at 7:30 at Parkway Place Regal Cinema in Flowood, Crossroads sponsors *Rize*, a documentary which I hadn't heard about until Nina Parikh, one of the founders of Crossroads, mentioned she heard good buzz about this movie at a film conference in Scotland and at the Independent Feature Film Market in New York.

Rize, directed by Vanity Fair photographer David LaChapelle, is about Los Angeles street krumpers, such as "Tommy the Clown," who "krump" on the streets to a different beat than the gangs who terrorize the area. "Krumping" is a syncopated dance form that melds hip-hop and vaudeville into an eye-catching extravaganza.

"*Rize* looks like a contender for one of the year's best documentaries," Parikh says. "Whenever the Academy Awards comes up, most people haven't heard of any of the films in the documentary categories. Crossroads is working to bring those movies here." An evening of Oscar-worthy krumping is something I wouldn't want to miss.

Jewish Film Festival

The week is topped off by the fifth annual Jackson Jewish Film Festival, which is part of Jewish Cinema South, a project of the Goldring/Woldenberg Institute of Southern Jewish Life. With the exception of a special student screening of *Marion's Triumph: Surviving History's Nightmare* on Friday at St. Andrew's North Campus, all festival screenings will be held at Millsaps College's Recital Hall in Jackson.

The Jewish Film Festival opens Saturday with *Monsieur Batignole*, a poignant film set in Paris during the German occupation. It tells the story of a hen-pecked butcher who discovers a frightened Jewish child at his door.

Sunday at 2 p.m., *All I've Got*, a feature film from Israeli filmmaker Margalit Keren, makes its Jackson premiere. A 72-year old woman, torn between the life she has and the life she could have had, is given the opportunity to choose a new reality.

Go for Zucker screens at 7 p.m. Nov. 7. The festival closes on Nov. 8 with *Hitmakers: The Teens Who Stole Pop Music*, an entertaining documentary about the pop music fad narrated by John Turturro.

'Constant' Crossroads

Finally, mark your calendars for Nov. 14. Crossroads is bringing back *The Constant Gardener*, which is based on the best-selling John le Carre novel and helmed by Fernando Meirelles (Academy Award-nominated director of *City of God*), for one special evening, beginning at 7:30 p.m. at the Parkway Place Regal Cinema.

Alternative movies hit solid gold this month.

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