

WNCC



WOKING'S NEW CINEMA CLUB



Silver Award - 1986
Special Commendation - 1987
Film Society of the Year - 1988
Best Programme Notes - 1990
Special Commendation - 1992

Affiliated to the British Federation of
Film Societies and the British Film Institute

"See Barton Fink and experience
what audiences in 1941 felt when
they saw Citizen Kane"

ROD LOURIE
LOS ANGELES MAGAZINE

Between Heaven
and Hell
there's always
Hollywood

"Exhilarating, vivid and startling."

VINCENT CANBY
NEW YORK TIMES



a film by

JOEL & ETHAN COEN

JOHN TURTURRO JOHN GOODMAN



BARTON FINK

15

THE CREDITS

Directed by.....JOEL COEN
Produced by.....ETHAN COEN
Written by.....ETHAN COEN and JOEL COEN
Co-Producer.....GRAHAM PLACE
Executive Producers.....BEN BARENHOLTS
TED PEDAS
JIM PEDAS, BILL DURKIN
Director of Photography.....ROGER DEAKINS



THE CAST



Barton Fink.....JOHN TURTURRO
Charlie Meadows.....JOHN GOODMAN
Audrey Taylor.....JUDY DAVIS
Jack Lipnick.....MICHAEL LERNER
W.P. Mayhew.....JOHN MAHONEY
Ben Geisler.....TONY SHALHOUB
Lou Breeze.....JON POLITO
Chet.....STEVE BUSCEMI

And Featuring the Golden Throat of
WILLIAM PRESTON ROBERTSON



John Turturro in *Barton Fink*

BARTON FINK

In May 1991 I was amongst a group of people milling around in jeans, Dr Marten's boots and weird hair, revelling in the rare opportunity of seeing the directors of the film being screened tonight, when they made an appearance in Brighton. Two days earlier (20th May to be exact) BARTON FINK had won three major prizes at the Cannes Film Festival; best film, best direction and best actor.

That evening in Brighton the talented film-makers were appearing in the less than luxurious (frankly rather scruffy) surroundings of the Duke of York's independent cinema. I can remember still, seeing the Coen brothers; the tall Joel with his long dark pony-tail, and the less talkative Ethan, three years younger, shorter and with contrasting light brown curls. I recall also many of the comments made about BARTON FINK.

Joel and Ethan Coen write the screenplays, and direct their films together, though it is usually Joel who is credited as director. Their films are made within the American commercial mainstream, but come across more as 'art movies'. Their recognised output consists of four films; BLOOD SIMPLE (1984), RAISING ARIZONA (1987), MILLER'S CROSSING (1990) and BARTON FINK (1991).

Barton Fink was inspired by the Coen brothers' experience of writer's block during the writing of Miller's Crossing. "We'd reached an impasse in writing the plot of Miller's Crossing, and we decided to work on another story. One of the things rattling around for a long time was to set a movie in an old decrepit hotel."

Set in 1941, Barton Fink is a well-meaning, slightly leftist Broadway playwright, who achieves overnight success with a play, and is then enticed to Hollywood by an eccentric movie mogul, Jack Lipnick. There, feeling like a fish out of water, he is assigned to write a screenplay for a 'B' movie wrestling picture starring Wallace Beery. He develops writer's block and his inability to write his script is displaced and abstracted on the film's soundtrack, where every noise is amplified, echoed and distorted. The Coens have an ability to find aural and tactile devices to suggest a world gone awry.



However, to his rescue comes his next door neighbour, in the chubby form of insurance salesman Charlie Meadows, and helps Barton to overcome his blockage. But not in the way that he expects.



John Turturro, as Barton Fink (seated) and Jon Polito register apprehension in Lipnick's office.

"Barton grew out of thinking about a character trying to get some foothold on reality and his world becomes his room at night..... And then the world he has to deal with during the day, this surreal Hollywood, when he goes out to find some sort of anchor is even more disorientating than the hotel room." Indeed the hotel almost becomes another character, " a decaying organism", as Joel put it.

The film was written with John Turturro and John Goodman specifically in mind. "We'd admired both of them as actors and become friends with them. Thinking about them as the characters made writing the film easier, putting them together propelled the whole thing."

The character of Barton Fink (John Turturro) has much in common with the real-life playwright Clifford Odets, and the play that can be heard at the start of the film is said to be a pastiche of



JOEL AND ETHAN COEN



Odet's 'Awake and Sing'. John Goodman (in the role of Charlie Meadows, but best known for his co-starring part in the TV series 'Roseanne'), who had already worked with the brothers on Raising Arizona, had been pigeon-holed and was getting frustrated. He was therefore eager to do something a little different.

Another character W P Mayhew, appears to have been inspired by William Faulkner. John Mahoney who plays Mayhew, bears a striking resemblance to Faulkner, the character being that of a great Southern alcoholic novelist. Whilst, Jack Lipnick, the fast-talking, arm-waving studio chief is a very funny stereotype, who seems to illustrate how much Barton's view about art and its social functions differ from that of the demands of the Hollywood studio.

To have more than introduced the plot would certainly spoil this bizarre movie, which is like a hybrid," a monster growth from several genres." The directors are trying to make the audience identify with what Barton Fink sees, hears and feels. Definitely a bizarre and genuinely nightmarish film. Perhaps the story takes place in Barton's head, it could all be a dream.

JEREMY MITCHELL



COMING NEXT..... COMING NEXT.....
SPECIAL EVENT
FOR **WOKING'S**
ONE WORLD WEEK

El Norte (1983) 139m. D: Gregory Nava. Aide Silvia Gutierrez, David Villalpando, Ernesto Cruz, Alicia del Lago, Eracio Zepeda, Stella Quan, Lupe Ontiveros. Sweeping, emotional saga of a brother and sister who leave their violence-torn village in Guatemala to find a better life in The North—El Norte. Getting to America is half the story; making a life there is the other half. Writer-director Nava presents a heightened sense of reality that removes this from the realm of documentary; a compassionate, heart-rending, unforgettable film. Cowritten and produced by Anna Thomas, for *American Playhouse*.

Leonard Maltin

Tuesday 19th October at 8 pm

PERFORMANCE ENDS 10.50 p.m.

EL NORTE (15)

Goldwater
ON **Lodge** **BIGSCREEN**



FNCC photocopying is sponsored by



15 Poole Road, Woking, Surrey, GU21 1DY Woking (0483)

740483

- Dyeline Printing
- Full colour photocopying
- Photocopying
- Larger size plain paper copying
- Encapsulating
- Binding
- Photographic PMT
- Microfilming & Enlargement