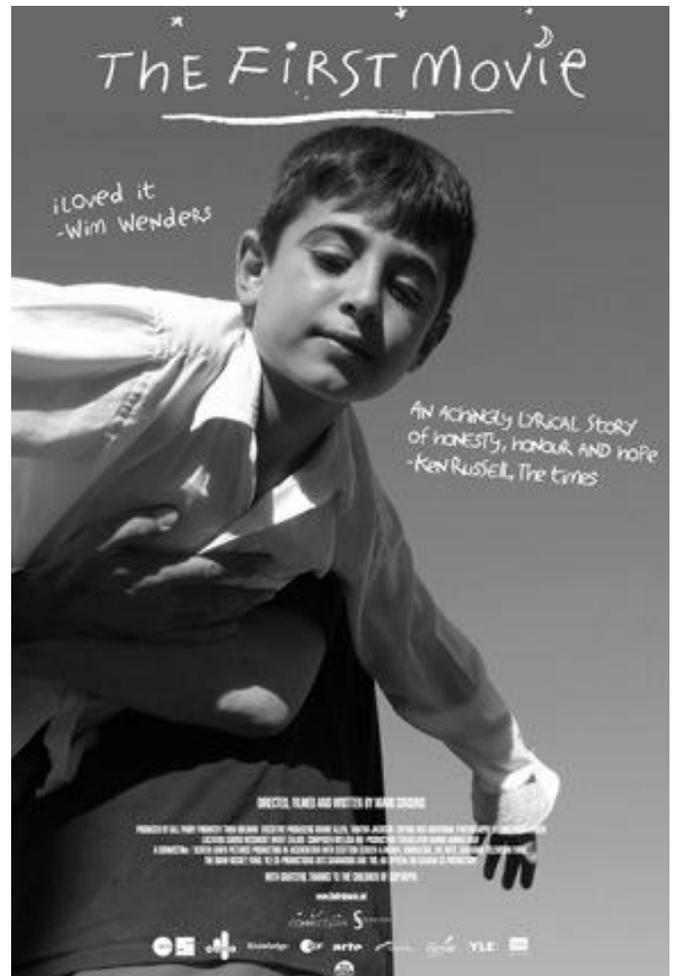
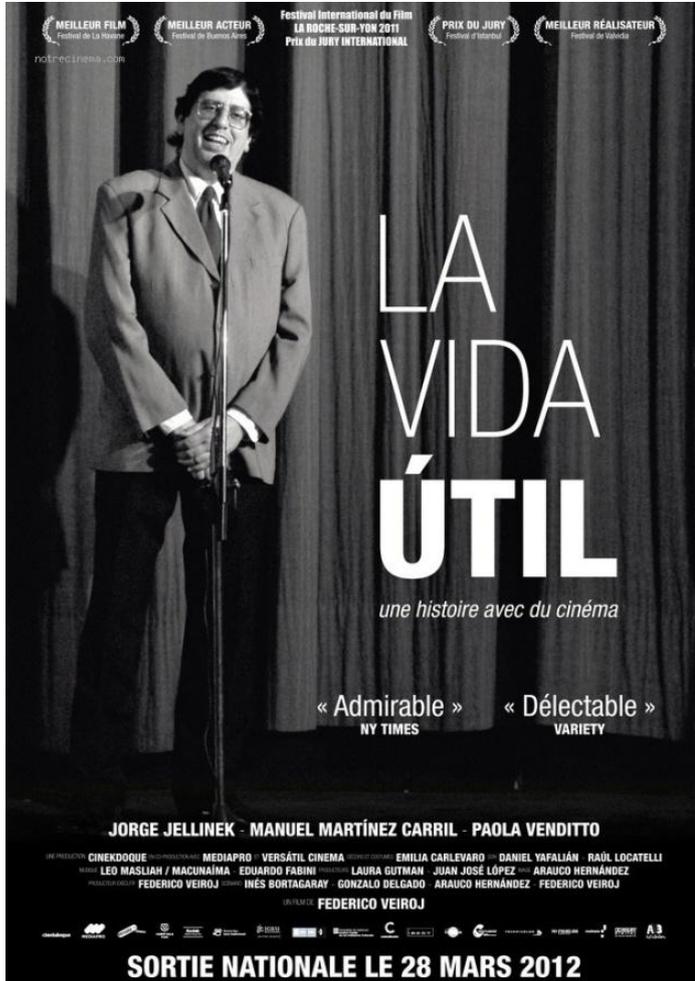


The Main Feature



Season 34 - Issue 14 (screening 10.4.14)



Uruguay 67mins Cert U
UK release 13 January 2012

UK 76mins Cert 12A
UK release 14 December 2009

Director Federico Veiroj

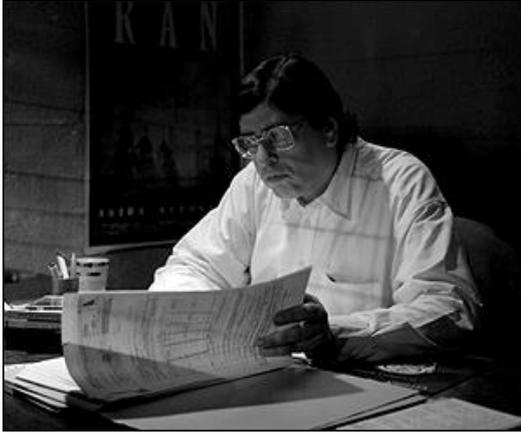
Director, writer and cinematographer:
Mark Cousins

Cast
Jorge Jellinek (Jorge)
Manuel Martinez Carril (Martínez)
Paola Venditto (Paola).

Uruguay's official selection for the 2010 Academy Awards, LA VIDA UTIL (A Useful Life) is an exploration of cinema and a tribute to the silver screen. A small film with a big heart, Federicio Veiroj's tale of a beleaguered cinematheque and its life-shy film programmer, is a charming ode to the big screen.

A cinematheque is a film archive with small cinemas that screens particularly classic and art-house films

After 25 years as the co-manager of the Uruguayan Cinemateca, Jorge (played by real-life film critic Jorge Jellinek) is forced out of his crumbling silver screen paradise when its philanthropic funders pull their support, and an eviction notice is enforced. After a quarter century spent viewing the world from other people's filmed perspectives, Jorge is forced to walk a new path on the streets of Montevideo.



Although the story is fiction, Cinemateca Uruguaya, which celebrated 50 years in 2012, is besieged by financial problems, and its director Manuel Martínez Carril agreed to play himself in the film. In 1998 it held 11,500 films.

A Useful Life exists for filmgoers to feel good about being filmgoers; to provide validation for all those romantic notions movie lovers entertain as they sit in the dark for huge chunks of their (our) lives. Veiroj honours the belief in the lies that cinema tells, reassuring us it is not a waste of time. As Jorge pleads, 'Let's rid the world of the truth that is rotting it.' • For Jorge, and for the patron who will seek out a film such as this one, a life spent believing in the spirit of cinema is indeed a useful one.



The premise for “The First Movie” is simple and the result oddly profound. Cousins and his crew arrive at a Kurdish village of Goptapa, Iraq in Iraq and set up an outdoor cinema where they show a series of children’s film classics – *The Red Balloon*, *The Singing Ringing Tree*, *Palle Alone In The World*, *The Boots* and *E.T.: The Extra-Terrestrial* - for the youngsters of the community.

After a brief education in cinema, he hands them small, handheld video cameras and gets them to make their own films, shooting their everyday lives and thoughts.

Some interview their parents and grandparents about the terrible day of Saddam's attempted genocide; others unselfconsciously create myths and stories which have nothing to do with it.



Cousins does a terrific job in filming the village landscape and weaves into the film some harrowing real-life stories about the impact of Saddam’s cruelties, but at its heart this charming film is about cinema and children rather than death and war



Iain McGlashan

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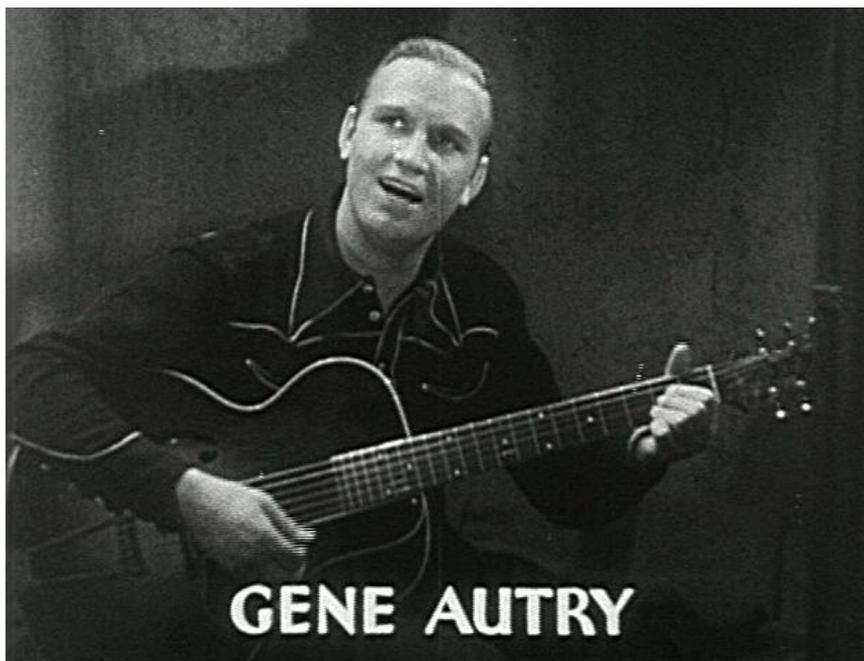
We take cinema, and its ability to transport us, to make us laugh and to summon tears from our eyes, almost entirely for granted - films have always been part of our lives and it's entirely impossible to imagine life another way. Even the most jaded of movie-goers must remember a time when the moving image was enough to inspire transcendental glee; for many of us, sat in front of the big screen and following the adventures of our heroes is enough to inspire an unparalleled nostalgia and warmth in our hearts. To the more fanatical of movie fans these same instances can be eulogised as some of the best moments in their lives, unmatched moments of joy and empathy.

One member of WNCC recently submitted a note recalling his early cinematic experiences, and I thought they would be appropriate tonight:

"Not so long ago the then modest price of a cinema ticket gave you two films, a cartoon and a newsreel. In the 1930s the Granada East Ham threw in on top of that lot a stage show and an organist who emerged from the depths seated at the Mighty Wurlitzer. You needed stamina when you went to the cinema in those days.

The second film in the programme - the B Feature - was often pretty dire, although there were a few gems. One American cinema owner tried to corner the honesty market by advertising his programme as containing "one pipperoo ad one stinkeroo". But in the 1940s we boys knew that there was no surer indication of something numbingly boring in prospect than the naming of Gene Autry as the "star" of the Western B film we were about to watch. He was one of the first to promote cowboy songs to a wider public and his singing was perfectly pleasant.

The trouble, so far as we were concerned, was that he could not hold to back. At the first, rare sign of impending excitement in one of his films he would halt the action by launching into a mellifluous account of what was happening to the local tumbleweeds or something of the sort. And when his tonsils tired, his back-up group, the sons of the Pioneers, would croon harmoniously while draped around an obviously fake camp fire. They too seemed to have a tumbleweed fixation.



Gene always played the same upright Gene in his films, figuring, presumably, that they would not be improved by any pretence of acting. Round about 1950 he was smart enough to see the way things were going and switched to making television programmes which so far as I know never crossed the Atlantic. It is easy to mock his screen career, but apparently, as well as being a thoroughly decent man who served his country as a flyer in WW2, he was an astute

businessman who invested his earnings in Californian real estate and became one of the richest men in the State. So who had the last laugh?"

Reactions to **The Hunt** – 27.3.14

Score **0** **1** **2** **3** **4** **5** **6** **7** **8** **9** **10**
 ~ ~ ~ 1 ~ 2 5 8 13 2 ~

Total received – 31

Average Score – 7.13

Your Comments

A superb film – so many twists and turns

What an unpleasant village – well acted

A very good choice – sensitive subject

8 but I could not watch it again

Excellent and thought provoking film

A topic that is disturbing but so true – very well done

Thought provoking, well acted film, tackling a very difficult subject very well

Herd reaction – enthralling portrayal of injustice

Men at their best and worst! Gripping film beautifully executed

Salem witches live on but what did the end mean?

Very good and believable. They really stitched him up

Very difficult viewing and very tense

A strong and sobering film

Superb acting – chilling

8 but not “a highly enjoyable film”

Position	Film	Average Score
1 st	Intouchable	8.29
2 nd	Argo	8.07
3 rd	All About Eve	7.79
4 th	Even the Rain	7.38
5 th	The Hunt	7.13
6 th	Delicacy	6.83
7 th	Never Let Me Go	6.53
8 th	Amour	6.46
9 th	No	6.44
10 th	Le gamin au vélo (The Kid with a Bike)	6.42
11 th	Rare Exports	5.71
12 th	Ivan's Childhood	5.22
13 th	Sightseers	4.56

**Our next
film:**

*An all time
classic!*

**8pm on
Thursday
24th April
2014**

