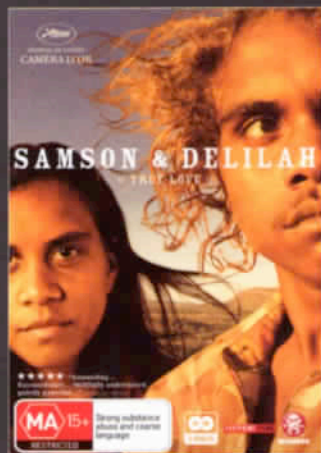




REEL BRAZIL

FILM FESTIVAL

ON DVD



SAMSON AND DELILAH

Perhaps the lack of films from an Aboriginal point of view has left politically-correct/leftist critics feeling bereft and desperate to applaud anything. This might explain the accolades heaped upon *Samson and Delilah* after its theatrical release—including basically every single award given out by the Australian Film Institute. It's not that the film is really all that bad, it's just that its love story is too awkward to be quaint or clichéd. Two unknowns, Rowan McNamara and Marissa Gibson, play the titular characters. They live in a barren, impoverished Aboriginal settlement just outside Alice Springs. There's nothing to do but sniff glue, throw the occasional violent tantrum, and notice each other—which they eventually do. Despite the fact that Samson says only one word in the entire film, the two somehow fall in love. They endure much suffering and hardship. Although the blank expressions on their faces hardly change—this may be from all the glue—it's safe to assume we should empathise with their plight. Well, you'll be going through some kind of suffering—just not of the vicarious variety. It's probably because you'll be muttering at the screen, "Oh for God's sake, just because you're an underprivileged Aboriginal doesn't mean you have to be completely speechless!"

Australian TV cinematographer Warwick Thornton wrote, directed and shot the film. He claims to have made the central characters mute because he's sick of the unrealistic "Hannah Montana monologues" that adolescents spout about love in films these days. It's great that Thornton wanted to bring some

Reel Brazil Festival

By HUGH LILLY & MARY ROMANOV

THE REEL BRAZIL FILM FESTIVAL runs for a week from Thursday (August 26) in Rialto Newmarket, and features films seen and celebrated at festivals all over the world—such as the music documentary *Beyond Ipanema: Brazilian Waves in Global Music*, and *Jean Charles*, which tells the story of the man mistakenly killed by British police in the wake of the 2005 terrorist attacks in London. The festival opens with *Now Boarding*, a comedy about an airport employee who longs for a more exciting life in the Big Apple. *Elvis and Madonna* chronicles the burgeoning relationship between a twenty-something lesbian and Madonna, "a ravishing blonde transvestite." *The Xavante Strategy* documents the titular people's struggle to keep their native culture alive in the face of encroaching modern civilization.

Most of the screenings are the films' Australasian premières. Student tickets are \$13 for Mon–Thu sessions, \$14 Fri–Sun. More details on all the films, plus the full schedule—and info on the festival's Brazilian-themed party at the Windsor Castle/Juice Bar in Parnell on Saturday night—are at reelbrazil.co.nz

MY NAME AIN'T JOHNNY (MEU NOME NÃO É JOHNNY)

2008 | DIR. MAURO LIMA | 120 MINS.

A sort of Brazilian coke fairytale, this film chronicles the rise and fall of a middle-class slacker turned serious drug dealer and trafficker, João (Johnny) is a privileged, aimless teenager until luck sees him pulled into becoming a small-time dealer to his friends in the desire to avoid getting a job. Years later, he is getting increasingly deeper into the (slightly) seedy Rio party scene with his messy girlfriend Sofia. Things continue to escalate until he has a serious problem, and worse still, is busted. However, fortunately for João he may yet turn things

around with a new, messiah-like attitude and the support of his family. Lengthy yet fast-paced, this film is very watchable in its portrayal of the underground drug trade in Rio, which seems remarkably sparkly in contrast to much grittier versions often seen in Brazilian cinema. (MR)

CITIZEN BOILESEN (CIDADÃO BOILESEN)

2008 | DIR. CHAIM LITEWSKI | 92 MINS.

This Documentary chronicles the life of Henning Albert Boilesen, a Danish national who became a naturalised Brazilian and rose to the top of the country's largest petrochemical company. He was deeply involved in politics and the military dictatorship—and in his spare time, he helped hunt and kill commies. The film is mostly composed of talking-head footage which makes it feel quite lengthy, but the almost unbelievable nature of some of the facts gives it a certain energy. (HL)

BOLLYWOOD DREAM (O SONHO BOLLYWOODIANO)

2010 | DIR. BEATRIZ SEIGNER | 83 MINS.

Three Brazilian actresses go on a spiritual quest to India, seeking success in the Bollywood film industry along the way. The perfect antidote to hyper-colourful explorations of the sub-continent like *The Darjeeling Limited*, this is a passage to the real India—full of Eastern spirituality, mythology and customs. The best part of the documentary comes when the trio tries to explicate what they each think are the differences between the East they've come to love and the West with which they've grown up. (HL)

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