

Review: A film tribute to Winnipeg

ALISON CLACK AND
BETH GIESBRECHT
THE BRUNSWICKAN

On Monday Oct. 20, the movie *My Winnipeg* was shown at the Monday Night Film series.

The film by Guy Maddin was an homage to his hometown of Winnipeg.

It is the kind of movie that can be interpreted differently by everyone who watches it. For us, it was especially interesting to look see the different perspectives of a native of Winnipeg and an East Coaster who has never visited the city in question.

While some people get bored of their community and want to leave, most native Winnipeggers seem to find it hard to break the connection with their hometown.

In the film Maddin is trying – once again – to leave his hometown and is using the creation of the film to leave the memories and nostalgia behind in hopes of leaving the city once and for all.

The film explores Maddin's history in the city and his childhood. The city's history and some of its eccentricities (that even a native Winnipegger didn't know) were also shown.

The atmosphere of the film is incredibly confusing. As it was an art piece, the plot lacked a linear feeling and jumped back and forth between his memories, his making of the film, the history of Winnipeg, and his trying to leave the city.

Maddin hired actors to pose as his family in the movie, although his mother played herself. However, rather than re-enacting the events the movie showed him filming the memories of his family.

At times the strange atmosphere of the movie made the viewer unsure of what was reality and what was fiction.

One scene in the movie recounts a winter where Winnipeggers enjoyed skating down the Red River alongside the heads of frozen horses.

The little-known incident happened when the Winnipeg fairgrounds burned down. The horses, spooked by the fire, ran into the half-frozen river until the ice eventually closed up around them – trapping them until the spring.

The odd event is one of the many ways Maddin unveils Winnipeg's uniqueness. For a native of Winnipeg it is just another one of the little things that brings back feelings of nostalgia.

Maddin also describes Winnipeg as a sleepy city. He says that the people seem to walk through the streets as though they are sleepwalkers. The sleepiness, however, should not be taken as indication that Winnipeggers do not care about their town.

From the perspective of someone who has lived there their entire life and left this sleepiness is what makes people want to leave. The sleepiness is also ironically what makes the city's natives not want to leave. The sleepiness of the town represents all the nostalgia and memories of its inhabitants.

From the perspective of someone from the east coast, I think that the film's idea transcends Winnipeg. After seeing the mass exodus of Maritimers to the prairies – namely Alberta – I can not help but feel some annoyance with the declining population of the Maritimes.

New Brunswick has always been one of the more forgotten places in Canada (with the exception of the territories) and for this reason there seems to be a pull that wants to drive natives out. However, I find that everytime I leave the province – even for a couple of weeks – I always feel a swell of pride when I come home. Manitoba, from a prairie native perspective, has the same hidden tug of pride.

Maddin's homage to his hometown is a wonderful reminder for everyone not to forget about where they come from. It reminds viewers of their own town's eccentricities and creates nostalgia.

Monday Night Film Series shows movies every Monday night in Tilley 102 at 8 p.m.

SARAH RATCHFORD
THE BRUNSWICKAN

As I walked into the Memorial Hall theatre to review this play, my eyes met with four guys dressed in ragtag clothing, and my ears with endless F-bombs. I knew I was in for a somewhat unconventional theatre experience.

From Wednesday Oct. 29 to Saturday Nov. 1, Canadian playwright Lee MacDougall's Dora award-winning comedy 'High Life' will be performed at Memorial Hall by Theatre UNB.

The play, directed by UNB drama student Jordan Dashner,

is based on MacDougall's own experience of living in apartment with heroin addicts – so it's on the money as far as authenticity.

The plot surrounds three ex-cons: Donnie, the loony old hypochondriac; Bug, the blood-thirsty killer; and the mastermind who seemingly has it together, Dick. The three join up with oily, good looking crook Billy in the attempt to carry out Dick's "genius" plan to hook them all up with fast and plentiful cash, which would then enable them to purchase a lifetime supply of morphine – the driving force behind each of them.

Love of morphine is also the only common interest shared between the four, so watching them try to cooperate is quite

hilarious.

The plan entails robbing a series of banks.

The actors, Ryan Griffith (Dick), Brad Young (Bug), John Ball (Donnie), and Greg Shanks (Billy), do a remarkable job of capturing the colloquial voice of these lovable criminals. I couldn't help but wonder if Dashner had typecast the entire performance.

Of the characters, Dashner says "you start to feel for them and think, 'I'm pretty sure I've seen these guys out in the street!'"

The play will be Dashner's first endeavor in direction of full-length plays. Stage manager Alex Larsen says jokingly, "I chose Jordan as my director."

"Part of the reason we're doing

this is there's so much academic and intellectual theatre out there, which is great, but we wanted to have fun," says Dashner. "People are calling it a bastard love child of *Reservoir Dogs* and *Trainspotting*."

Although this is sure to be a phenomenal show, it must be noted that it is certainly not a family production, nor is it for those who may be offended by excessive F-bombs and other profanities.

"We hope people are going to come out and have a lot of fun," says Dashner. "It's good to support campus theatre."

The show starts at 8 p.m. Tickets are \$6 for students and \$10 for adults, and they're available at the door.

Teach your phone the robot



FROM THE
TUBES

Doug
Estey

The very first Android-powered phone hit the market last week, much to the delight of gadget-lovers abroad.

Developed alongside a coalition of 34 companies (including Google, HTC, Intel and Motorola) that call themselves the Open Handset Alliance, Android represents the first fully open source mobile platform. It's built from the ground up on the Linux kernel, and it kicks major ass.

When most people see the words "open source" they acknowledge that the source code isn't behind closed doors, but don't read into it much more than that. What they may not realize is that you can actually run Android right on your cell phone.

Before you get any wise ideas, remember that Android is designed for devices equipped with touch sensors, read: it won't fare well on your LG Chocolate.

Only users like me, crawling around on their Windows Mobile phones, need apply.

So yes, I did install Linux on my phone.

That being said, you don't have to be a nerd to use Android. In fact, it's a lot more intuitive than most cell phones of today. If you've ever held an Apple iPhone in your hand, then you already know what I'm talking about: a smooth, thumb-friendly interface adorned with plenty of 3D bling and tight integration

social networks, email, and personal information management. Without

any sort of instruction manual, I managed to familiarize myself with the carefully-designed environment in a matter of minutes.

Feature-wise, a pull-down notifications tray and a customizable desktop with widgets and icons are two of my instant favourites. Threaded text messaging works beautifully well. Contacts can be sync'd from a Gmail account, and mobile versions of Google Search and Maps are tightly integrated into the fray.

Even the web browser kicks ass on the mobile front, easily besting pocket versions of Internet Explorer and Opera and introducing strong competition to Apple's mobile Safari.

Google has also implemented a new software management application

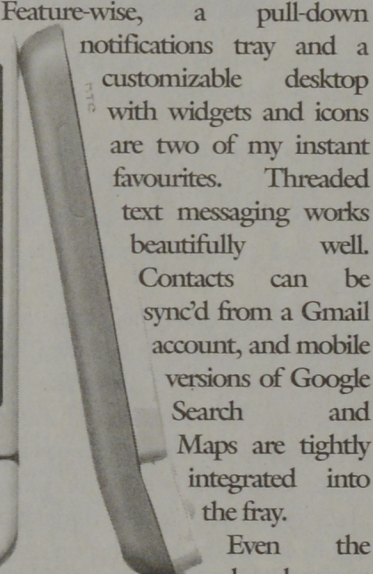
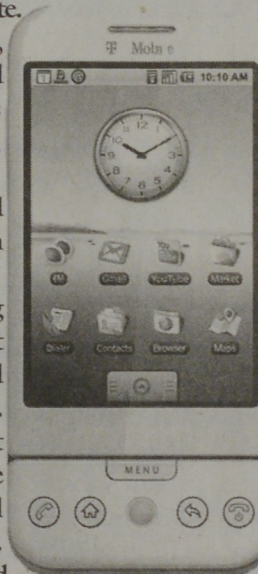
called Marketplace, which will serve as a distribution system between developers and end users. Not only can developers freely create anything they want for the phone, they can also distribute it accordingly.

It's been argued that the iPhone possesses a similar feature set and that Android isn't creating anything revolutionary. This, however, is the point. Now anyone can access the kind of 'perks' that iPhone users have subscribed to. Obviously the biggest contrast between Android and the iPhone operating system is that the former is designed to support a wide variety of phones, while the iPhone OS only really works with, well... you get the point.

The Open Handset Alliance has firmly stated that the purpose of Android is to compete with, not replace the mobile operating environments already in place today.

You can check out www.android.com to take a closer look at the mobile OS.

Doug Estey is Arts Editor at *The Brunswickan*.



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