



PICKPOCKET



CHIMES AT MIDNIGHT



SCARFACE



LOLA MONTES



TWENTIETH CENTURY



A WALK IN THE SUN



ANGEL FACE



STRANGE CARGO



FIRE OVER ENGLAND



MEET ME IN ST LOUIS

# METROPOLIS

Thursday 27 February 7.30pm and 9.00pm

**PICKPOCKET** 1959 Robert Bresson 75 minutes  
A young man takes up picking pockets on a whim, is caught but finds himself compelled to return again and again to the rituals of theft. ‘A film of dazzling originality. On its first viewing, it risks burning your eyes. So go back to see it every day...’ This was how Louis Malle described his response to *Pickpocket*. Bresson’s films are like no-one else’s, austere, earnest, emotionally overwhelming and this intense meditation on morality and redemption may well be his masterpiece.

**PICKUP ON SOUTH STREET** 1953 Samuel Fuller 80 minutes  
A petty thief (Richard Widmark) inadvertently finds himself entangled in a plot involving Communist spies when he steals some microfilm from a woman’s bag. A tough, violent crime thriller, it has all the hallmarks of classic Fuller with its swaggering visual style, sharp characterisation and emotional hyperbole. Features a number of great performances, particularly from Widmark and the wonderful Thelma Ritter.

Thursday 27 March 7.30pm and 9.30pm

**MIDNIGHT** 1939 Mitchell Leisen 94 minutes  
A gold-digging American (Claudette Colbert) finds herself stranded in Paris. A glorious modern fairy tale, from an hilarious script by Billy Wilder and Charles Brackett. Leisen handles the complicated goings-on involving gigolos, taxi-drivers and high-society impostors with effortless style and panache. The cast, including Don Ameche, John Barrymore, Mary Astor and Monty Woolley, is without peer.

**CHIMES AT MIDNIGHT** 1967 Orson Welles 115 minutes  
A dark yet comic portrait of Falstaff as an innocent, unlikely hero at a crucial moment in English history. Drawn from five Shakespeare plays, it is arguably Welles’ most fully realised film after *Citizen Kane* and boasts an extraordinary cast (Welles, Jeanne Moreau, John Gielgud with narration by Ralph Richardson). A moving, nostalgic yet strangely real and unsentimental evocation of Merrie England.

Thursday 24 April 7.30pm and 9.15pm

**SCARFACE** 1932 Howard Hawks 93 minutes  
The rise and fall of a Capone-like figure in Prohibition Chicago. Hawks’ astonishing gangster film, the touchstone of the genre, proved to be so compellingly attractive in its combination of humour and violence, that it helped usher in a new era of self-censorship in Hollywood. The addition of the subtitle *Shame of a Nation*, and a couple of clumsily-added scenes showing that crime doesn’t pay, do little to reduce its thrilling power.

**PARTY GIRL** 1958 Nicholas Ray 98 minutes  
In prohibition Chicago a mob lawyer (Robert Taylor) and a jaded ‘party girl’ (Cyd Charisse) gradually rediscover their idealism. Although often regarded as a minor work, Ray’s transformation of a relatively weak script into a highly stylised and strikingly visual exploration of the limitations and possibilities of genre (in this case both the musical and the gangster film) has proved to be one of the most enduring examples of his unique talent.

Thursday 29 May 7.30pm and 9.30pm

**LOLA MONTES** 1956 Max Ophuls 110 minutes  
The story of an ageing courtesan, told mostly in flashbacks by the ringmaster of a New Orleans circus where she now ‘performs’. Ophuls’ last film and the most perfect expression of his fluid, romantic style. A feast of breathtakingly choreographed camerawork and lavish sets, shot in cinemascope and colour.

**SAWDUST AND TINSEL** 1955 Ingmar Bergman 83 minutes  
The ageing owner of a tatty circus and his young mistress try in vain to escape from each other and the bleak routine of their lives. This dark and deeply pessimistic tale of cruelty and sexual humiliation, universally reviled upon its release, now emerges as one of the great director’s masterpieces. Bergman gives full rein to his powerful visual style, with co-cinematographer and longtime Bergman collaborator Sven Nykvist’s stunning expressionist compositions a perfect counterpoint to the symbolic richness of the circus setting.

Thursday 26 June 7.30pm and 9.30pm

**DAYBREAK EXPRESS** 1958 D A Pennebaker 6 minutes

**NIGHT MAIL** 1936 Harry Watt, Basil Wright 24 minutes  
Pioneering documentary with a verse narrative scripted by W.H. Auden and a musical score by Benjamin Britten.

**THE NARROW MARGIN** 1952 Richard Fleischer 71 minutes  
When a mobster’s wife agrees to testify at a grand jury hearing, two detectives must ensure that she reaches it alive. Set aboard the Chicago-Los Angeles express train, Fleischer’s classic film moves at a breathless pace. Cunningly scripted, directed with tremendous energy and inventiveness, it is the quintessential B movie.

**TWENTIETH CENTURY** 1934 Howard Hawks 91 minutes  
John Barrymore, in a wickedly self-parodic role, is the monstrously egotistical Broadway producer whose career is on the slide until he bumps into Lily Garland (played by a luminous Carole Lombard), a former protege now destined for Hollywood. Set aboard the train from which it takes its title, Hawks’ legendary screwball comedy features wonderful performances by both stars and a brilliant supporting cast.

Thursday 28 August 7.30pm and 9.00pm

**THE NEGRO SOLDIER** 1944 Stuart Heisler, Frank Capra 40 minutes  
Follow up to the *Why We Fight* series from an original script by black writer Carleton Moss. Made as a response to deteriorating race relations in the still segregated armed forces and ground-breaking in its day.

**THE SILENT VILLAGE** 1943 Humphrey Jennings 35 minutes  
Powerful retelling of the Nazi massacres in Lidice in Czechoslovakia after the assassination of Heydrich, transposed to a Welsh village.

**A WALK IN THE SUN** 1945 Lewis Milestone 116 minutes  
During the invasion of Italy a GI platoon lands at Salerno and slowly makes its way inland in the face of sporadic enemy resistance. This landmark independent production is certainly one of the great American films to emerge from WWII. Milestone’s subtly understated direction lets the events and characters speak for themselves while Robert Rossen’s naturalistic but poetic script captures perfectly the natural cadences of the soldiers’ talk.

Metropolis Film society screens at the Erwin Rado Theatre, 211 Johnson Street, Fitzroy. Admission is by annual membership (\$45 and \$40 concession) or by mini pass (\$14 and \$12 for entry to two consecutive screenings).

Thursday 25 September 7.30pm and 9.15pm

**ANGEL FACE** 1952 Otto Preminger 92 minutes  
Robert Mitchum is Frank Jessup, so besotted with ‘angel face’ Jean Simmons that he cannot see the evil that dwells beneath her sweet surface until it is too late. Preminger’s typically detached and downbeat approach to the potentially hysterical material allows the perverse psychology to bubble slowly to the surface. Robert Mitchum has never been better, his Frank a combination of bewilderment and calm restraint.

**THUNDER ROAD** 1958 Arthur Ripley 92 minutes  
Robert Mitchum produced, wrote the story for and starred in this unique film about a Korean War veteran and moonshiner who, with his brother (played by Mitchum’s son Jim) takes on the Feds, the mob and rival moonshiners to maintain his family’s production of illegal whiskey in Harlan County. A subversive anti-authoritarian streak runs through the low-budget production while the Appalachian community is depicted with a sympathy and authenticity notably absent from other Hollywood features, even to this day. The title tune, written and performed by Mitchum, became a hit single.

Thursday 30 October 7.30pm and 9.15pm

**LE TROU** 1960 Jacques Becker 83 minutes  
Four prison inmates dig a tunnel to escape. They are joined by a fifth cell-mate who may end up betraying them. Jacques Becker’s final film is a revelation – a spare, uncompromising work that concentrates on the exhausting physical detail of the agonisingly meticulous preparations for escape and the developing relationships between the prisoners.

**STRANGE CARGO** 1940 Frank Borzage 113 minutes  
A group of convicts escape from Devil’s Island. The intense physicality of their trek to freedom is matched by the frank carnality of the relationship between Clark Gable’s convict and Joan Crawford’s dancer which gradually deepens into a profound and transcendent love. A bizarre and, in its day, scandalous tale of l’amour fou, (with a Christ-like character eventually showing the true nature of freedom through Christian love and redemption), enhanced by Borzage’s unique pictorial sense.

Annual membership includes entry of one free guest to one screening. New members can join prior to any screening. Visit [www.metropoliscinema.com](http://www.metropoliscinema.com) or telephone Jeremy on 8300 0749 or Emily on 9489 5464 for further information.

Thursday 27 November 7.30pm and 9.15pm

**FIRE OVER ENGLAND** 1936 William K Howard 87 minutes  
Set during Elizabeth I’s reign, Fire Over England was a highly prestigious Alexander Korda production whose dubious historicity included barely veiled references to the rise of Nazi Germany. It features elegant sets, stunning photography (by the great James Wong Howe) and a glittering array of talent including Laurence Olivier, Vivien Leigh, Flora Robson and a young James Mason.

**WINSTANLEY** 1975 Kevin Brownlow, Andrew Mollo 95 minutes  
Film Historian Kevin Brownlow reunited with *It Happened Here* colleague Andrew Mollo to produce this meticulous historical reconstruction of the events leading up to the Diggers’ Revolt in 1649 under the leadership of revolutionary idealist Gerrard Winstanley. The shoe-string budget is belied by the authentic detail and the luminous monochrome photography.

Thursday 11 December 7.30pm and 9.30pm

**MEET ME IN ST LOUIS** 1944 Vincente Minnelli 111 minutes  
Following the trials and tribulations of a St Louis family in 1903, this glorious Minnelli musical boasts a stellar cast (Judy Garland, Mary Astor, Lucille Bremer and Margaret O’Brien) and a sumptuous use of sets, costumes and colour in its nostalgic and joyful recreation of a bygone era. Garland’s matchless rendition of *Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas* captures perfectly the impending disappearance of a simpler, perhaps more contented, way of life.

**QUAI DES ORFÈVRES** 1947 Henri-Georges Clouzot 105 minutes  
It’s Christmas night and Inspector Antoine’s (Louis Jouvet) investigation into the murder of a sleazy producer leads him to a couple whose marriage is on the brink of collapse. While ostensibly (and effectively) a standard detective thriller, Clouzot’s striking evocation of an unique milieu (down-at-heel music halls, dank apartments, gloomy police stations), is elevated by his characteristically sour approach to human relations, tempered at times with a surprising warmth and wit.