

International Film Series to play at Behrend

University-wide celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month included in series

BEHREND- Penn State Erie, The Behrend College, is hosting an International Film Series as a part of a University-wide celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month. Four films representing viewpoints from Spain, Cuba and Brazil will be presented on a series of Monday evenings at 7 p.m., beginning October 16.

The films, which are free and open to the public, will be shown in Reed Lecture Hall, Reed Union Building. The festival includes "Belle Epoque," Monday, Oct. 16; "Strawberry and Chocolate," Monday, Oct. 30; "Dona Flor and her Two Husbands," Monday, Nov. 6 and "The Holy Innocents," Monday, Nov. 13. The titles selected have all received critical acclaim: "Belle Epoque" won the 1992 Academy Award for Best Foreign Film, while "Strawberry and Chocolate" was honored at the Sundance Film Festival.

"Belle Epoque," directed by Fernando Trueba, is the story of a handsome young army deserter who finds himself in love with the beautiful daughters of an aged artist. It was released in Spain in

1992. It will be introduced by Dr. Thomas G. Deveny, professor of Spanish and chair of the department of foreign languages at Western Maryland College. An expert on Spanish cinema, Deveny's most recent work is entitled, "Cain on Screen: Contemporary Spanish Cinema."

Dr. Juan Fernandez, professor of Spanish, and Dr. Lidia Diaz, assistant professor of Spanish, both at Penn State-Behrend, deliberately chose titles for the series which go beyond light entertainment.

"Films being produced by Hispanic directors today face contemporary issues and actively confront the challenges of the 90s," Diaz says. "They are often a metaphor both for the oppression under which people live at a given time and place, and their struggle to liberate themselves from such oppression."

Government censors originally withheld director Thomas Gutierrez Alea's "Strawberry and Chocolate," concerned by its examination of the oppression



Belle Epoque: The Spanish film won the 1992 Academy Award for Best Foreign Film. The film was released in Spain in 1992.

experienced by gays under Castro. The film, conservative in its portrayal of homosexuality, eventually received widespread distribution and an official endorsement as Cuba's entry into the Oscars.

"Barreto can express lust with class and it's an exhilarating, civilized gift," wrote the

Washington Post, when "Dona Flor and Her Two Husbands" came to theaters in 1978. The classic erotic comedy, starring Sonia Braga, takes a look at the life of a Brazilian widow whose late, libidinous husband keeps returning to earth to disrupt her boring second marriage.

The series' final offering, "The

Holy Innocents," is a 1985 release directed by Mario Camus of Spain. The film deals with the dichotomy between the misery of poor peasants and the arrogance of their wealthy masters on a large Spanish estate during the 1600s.

Will the plunge be taken?

The question has been asked before by TV viewers. Take, for example, David and Maddie in "Moonlighting," or Sam and Diane in "Cheers."

This season, it's Rache and Ross on "Friends." And what viewers really want to know is whether the sensitive paleontologist Ross Geller and waitress-buddy Rachel Green will work out their star-crossed crush and get together.

David Schwimmer, who plays the slightly nebbish Ross, isn't telling.

However, the Emmy-nominated star is sharing at least one secret-- which is how did Gen X guy like him make the big time? His story is simple, he says.

"Once upon a time there was a guy who worked really, really hard to try to pursue his dream," says Schwimmer. "It's just a lot of hard work and perseverance."

Of course an uniformed outsider might assume the lanky actor took the plunge into stardom pretty abruptly. A year

ago before "Friends" sizzled onto NBC and exploded into the Top 10 ratings, the only people for whom Schwimmer was a household name were likely his real friends and family.

These days people stand in line to hear that earnest-sounding voice of his and look upon that pensive face. Backstage at the St. Dennis Theater in Montreal, where Schwimmer recently co-hosted a yearly Quebec Comedy festival, the line of reporters who waited to interview the 28-year-old actor included those representing USA today, TV Guide and Variety.

On stage the night before, Schwimmer told the Canadian audience, "When I told my friends I was going to be on a sitcom, they said why would they want to put you on a sitcom? You're not funny."

"Well, I am funny," he said, in a tone that was bravely assertive yet puppy-doggish. To this, the audience loudly, and one female fan screamed, "We love you, David."

His manager pops in with a late, styrofoam-boxed lunch. The dark-haired Schwimmer bites into his sandwich and says the problem with stardom is the vicious time crunch.

"There is as much energy directed to publicizing the work as to the work itself," he says.

A son of two attorneys and educated at Northwestern University, Schwimmer gives no impression of being a candidate for Hollywood's bimbo squad.

And for now, he says he's not taking any of his new-found fame for granted. There's a sore mad man with a spotlight in the sky who's random about where it falls, and just as quickly as it has fallen on you, it could move onto somebody else," says Schwimmer.

Though he admits to a healthy dose of cynicism, Schwimmer says he's not the sad sack shadow of his vulnerable TV character Ross. "I don't think I'm as petulant. I'm usually pretty happy-go-lucky."

But he looks so worried on

TV. "The character has a lot to worry about," he replies.

True. Ross's pregnant wife left him for another woman. Then he fell in love with Rachel, played by Jennifer Aniston, who saw him as nothing more than a friend until the slickly orchestrated last show of the season. She finds out about his feelings and rushes to the airport, gripping a bouquet, to greet him upon his return from a week long business trip to China. Unfortunately, he's about to deboard with a new girlfriend he met while away. As Madonna's farewell-flavored "Take a Bow" plays in the background, an eager-eyed Rache awaits unbeknownst heartache; and the story fades until next fall.

In the season opener, Rachel struggles with her feelings for Ross while he tells her just how great things are going with his new sweetheart. Suddenly, it's Rachel who has a bad case of an unrequited crush.

David Crane and Mara Kauffman, "Friends" executive

producers fingered him as perfect for the role of Ross. Now there's talk of Schwimmer becoming the show's breakout star.

"I can't go anywhere without being recognized," he says. "I'm careful about what I say. You feel the impact of something like this touch every part of your life."

I'm responsible for projecting a positive role model." He says that means "treating people decently." So he makes sure he's nice to off-camera types such as the make-up and wardrobe folks.

Actually his only publicized riff is with Marcel, the long-tailed actor who played his monkey companion on the show. Reportedly, Schwimmer didn't like working with an actor who couldn't speak English, or rather just couldn't speak, so the monkey is looking for a new job now.

by Janet Singleton
Copyright 1995, Distributed
by Tribune Media Services



BRADLEY