

Sunday, April 19
5:00 pm

Sometimes Always Never

In Carl Hunter's debut feature, Bill Nighy shines as Alan, an eccentric, retired tailor with a uniquely keen talent for Scrabble — and for hustling strangers in games. However, the pleasure he takes in Scrabble is tainted by the memory of his long-lost son, who stormed out while playing one night and was never seen again.

Shielding himself from the cruelties of the world with a cloak of quirky peculiarities and a gruff demeanor, Alan has made it his life's work to locate his missing son. His efforts haven't yielded much, except to effectively estrange him from his other son, Peter (Sam Riley), whose feelings of being second-best aren't much assuaged by his father's obsessive quest. Father and son seem to share only one common quality: an inability to understand each other.

When Alan moves in with Peter and his family to improve their relationship, he manages to make gentle inroads with Peter's introverted adolescent son, Jack — a demonstration of paternal connection that Peter resents in more ways than one. While living with Peter, Alan comes across an online Scrabble player who plays in a fashion eerily similar to that of his missing son. As the mystery of the online player's identity deepens, Alan and Peter's strained relationship teeters on the brink of calamity.

Featuring quietly powerful performances from both Nighy and Riley, *Sometimes Always Never* employs an English eccentricity, visual inventiveness, and a whimsically offbeat style that makes for a lovely tale of how difficult it can sometimes be for even the most loquacious of us to simply spell it out.

Country: UK

Running Time: 91 minutes

TICKETS:

Series Pass: \$55.00

Single Film: \$15.00

Passes and Tickets are available in advance at the Alberni Valley Museum.

Subject to availability, single tickets may be sold at the door.

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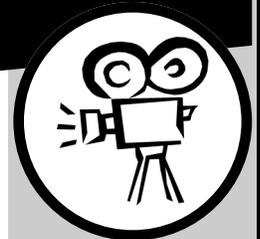
Film Fest

is a fundraising initiative of the Alberni Valley Museum. The Films are distributed through **The Film Circuit** a Division of the Toronto International Film Festival. It is our intent to provide our community with quality films that would not otherwise be available to the local theatre. Each series of films will feature a Canadian and a Foreign production. Funds raised support museum school and outreach programs. Thank-you for supporting our efforts.



WINTER 2020 FILM SERIES

FILM FEST PORT ALBERNI



Presented by the:

Alberni Valley Museum



Sunday, January 19

5:00 pm

The Farewell

Lulu Wang's *The Farewell* is an inter-generational family drama that is at once celebratory, heart-wrenching, and life-affirming. The film, which is based on true events, follows a young Chinese American woman named Billi (Awkwafina) as she travels back to China to visit her dying grandmother.

Billi's family has decided to spare their beloved matriarch the news of her terminal diagnosis so as not to darken what time she has left. In order for everyone to have a chance to say goodbye without tipping her off that the end is near, they orchestrate an elaborate excuse to reunite in the form of a fake wedding. Though cultures clash and family conflict ensues, the story is told with universally relatable warmth and charm.

Awkwafina is dazzling as the quick-witted and empathetic Billi; she is supported by a remarkable cast that includes the charming Tzi as her father and Diana as her mother. Little by little, we realize that this story is not only about Billi saying goodbye to her grandmother, but also about her reconnecting with a country and extended family that she left behind at a young age. *The Farewell* is truly remarkable. It will make you laugh out loud, cry both sad and happy tears, and contemplate the meaning of home.

Country: USA

Running Time: 98 minutes

Sunday, February 23

5:00 pm

The Song Of Names

With *The Song of Names*, acclaimed filmmaker François Girard returns to the classical music milieu of *The Red Violin*. And like that film, *The Song of Names* sets personal, professional, and family tragedies against sweeping historical events.

Constructed like a detective mystery on a grand scale, the film opens the night of the much-anticipated first public performance by Dovidl Rapoport, a Polish musical prodigy. When he doesn't show up, his best friend Martin is left to tell the packed theatre that the performance will not go on. Decades later, an adult Martin (Tim Roth), serving as a judge in a musical competition, watches a young student prepare to play in Dovidl's unique style. This moment sends Martin, over the objections of his wife Helen, on a transcontinental search. As the mystery of the disappearance unravels, Martin finds himself consumed by memories of the deep bond between the two boys — and also uncovering elements of Dovidl's tormented life that Martin simply couldn't have fathomed at the time. An emotionally devastating tale of family, obligation, ambition, and friendship, Girard's film is, unsurprisingly, driven by exquisite music. It is also extraordinarily timely, focusing on the tragic circumstances of the migrant — whose departure is often (if not usually) motivated by forces far beyond their control.

Featuring touching performances by Roth, Clive Owen, Catherine McCormack, Saul Rubinek, and an extremely talented young cast as the junior versions of Martin and Dovidl, *The Song of Names* is a powerful call to remember.

Country: Canada, UK, Germany, Hungary

Running Time: 113 minutes

Sunday, March 29

5:00 pm

Hope Gap

Featuring brilliant performances from Bill Nighy and four-time Oscar nominee Annette Bening this exquisite drama from writer-director William Nicholson will resonate with anyone who has ever navigated the choppy waters of long-term love.

Grace (Bening) and Edward (Nighy) have been together for 33 years. To celebrate the occasion, they've invited their London-based son Jamie (Josh O'Connor) to visit them at their home on the Sussex coast, where the picturesque cliffs of Hope Gap look out onto the open sea. Communication between the couple is at a nadir, however, with Grace nagging Edward about his lack of enthusiasm and Edward, who has long felt inadequate in his marriage, responding by turning inward — and harbouring secrets. Edward is leaving Grace for another woman, a decision that will result in ongoing turmoil for everyone involved.

A veteran of literature, film, and television, Nicholson received Oscar screenwriting nominations for *Shadowlands* and *Gladiator* — but nothing in his august body of work quite prepares you for the wit and wisdom woven into each scene of *Hope Gap*: no one is entirely innocent and nothing, after three decades of coupledness, is simple.

The film's poignancy, of course, is dependent on its actors, and you couldn't ask for a more perfect pairing than Bening and Nighy, the former exhibiting an astonishing range of emotion and tactics, the latter tempering his trademark deadpan charisma in favour of a gravitas he's too rarely had the chance to exude.

Country: UK

Running Time: 100 minutes

ALL FILMS SHOWING AT THE THEATRE



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