

## MVAH ZOOM Movie Club

September 14, 2021 3pm

Next movie club: October 12th at 3PM

### Attendees:

Host: Barbara Brennan

Cher Terry
Betsy Stephens
Louise and Bob McClean
Carol and Joe Mattaino
Kathi Hanrahan

### **Movie 1. The Lost City -1958 Amazon Video Director/writer Andy Garcia**

**MVAH Movie Club Average rating: 3.6 out of 5.**

The movie follows the heartbreaking tale of one family, three brothers and a beautiful woman against the backdrop of the overthrow of Cuban dictator Batista in 1958 and 1959, and the establishment of Fidel Castro's brutal, oppressive Communist dictatorship. In 1958, the city of Havana is the Paris of the Caribbean.

Andy Garcia ("Modigliani") stars and makes his directorial debut in a passionate and historical tribute to his native Cuba. Havana in 1958 is a place of pleasure for many, but others are not happy under the rule of dictator Fulgencio Batista. As the revolutionary forces of Fidel Castro and Ernesto "Che" Guevara prepare to move on the city, Fico Fellove (Garcia)—owner of the city's classiest music nightclub, El Tropic—struggles to hold together his family and the love of a woman (Inés Sastre), not knowing that his club will become more than just a stage for popular entertainment. Observing all is The Writer (Bill Murray) an ex-patriot American who sees Fico being drawn into events as the revolution changes everything. Though Fico watches a culture vanish and a people transformed, it is his love of Cuban music that keeps his memories alive.

### **Movie 2. J. Edgar- 2011. Amazon Video Director Clint Eastwood**

**MVAH Movie Club Average rating: 3.6 out of 5.**

That's a lot of 20th century to pack into anyone's biodrama, and the movie's slack pacing and choppy leaps back and forth in time will only confuse moviegoers too young to know their

history. If there's an Oscar waiting in the wings for J. Edgar, it will go to the heroic folks in makeup.

It's easy to see what attracted Eastwood, a lifelong libertarian, to the story of a government bureaucrat who dedicated his life to invading Americans' privacy and violating their civil rights. But Eastwood's portrait of Hoover's many contradictions rarely goes beyond conventional biography. J. Edgar follows the consensus view of its subject: that Hoover was married to his job, that he was a techno-bureaucrat whose obsession with fingerprinting and forensics expanded the reach of American surveillance well beyond his own passion for smoking out radicals, crime bosses and oversexed politicians with more charisma in their little fingers than this prissy suit of a man would ever achieve.

Domestic Asset: Armie Hammer's Clyde Tolson (left, with DiCaprio and Judi Dench as Hoover's mother, Annie) is an unexpectedly sympathetic presence in an otherwise unconvincing film. Keith Bernstein/Warner Bros. Pictures

Like so many fanatics, Hoover was as blind to his own failings as he was intolerant of those of others. Covering the well-documented vagaries of his personality, Eastwood is at pains to show us what an unreliable narrator and hypocrite Hoover was.

Yet one question J. Edgar never asks is why a man of so little vision or imagination exercises such a powerful hold on the public imagination to this day. And surely film is the medium in which to ask the question: Down the years Hoover has been portrayed by literally dozens of big-league actors, from Ernest Borgnine through Bob Hoskins and Kelsey Grammer and now to DiCaprio, whose serviceable performance in this serviceable movie will surely go down as one of the least definitive.

## OCTOBER MOVIES

### **MINARI – 2021. -Director and writer: Lee Isaac Chung - Amazon Video**

A tender and sweeping story about what roots us, Minari follows a Korean-American family that moves to a tiny Arkansas farm in search of their own American Dream. The family home changes completely with the arrival of their sly, foul-mouthed, but incredibly loving grandmother. Amidst the instability and challenges of this new life in the rugged Ozarks, Minari shows the undeniable resilience of family and what really makes a home.

### **The 12th Man. 2018 - Director Harold Zwart- Netflix**

One does not necessarily expect Harald Zwart to direct a near-epic World War II drama based on the heroic exploits of a real-life Norwegian who, deployed from Scotland to his own country on an abortive mission, finds himself struggling against the harshest elements as he tries to escape encroaching Nazis.

In the movie's first hour, the stoic Baalsrud, resigned to head for Sweden, which is at least a neutral country, tries to stay ahead of an avalanche on skis. It doesn't work out, which makes for a suspenseful scene full of spectacular visuals. When Baalsrud, played with resilience by Thomas Gullestad, isn't dodging Germans, his fights against the elements bring to mind films such as "The Revenant" and even "Man in the Wilderness" or "Jeremiah Johnson." Zwart handles these scenes with conscientious competence that makes the character's suffering credible if not palpable. And suffer Baalsrud does, the cold affecting his body to the extent that he's forced to go to grisly extremes to stay alive