

A not-so-terrible time

The tenth annual Terrible Film Fest wasn't half-bad



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Walking into the Creative City Centre, I felt like I was stepping into an old noir film. At the top of the narrow staircase, I expected to see Humphrey Bogart blowing cigarette smoke and trying to romance Mary Astor.

Instead, I found a group of people huddled around a 16mm film projector that was facing a screen at the far end of the room. I quickly grabbed a table right beside the projector. I got the feeling that I was in for a real treat.

The biggest problem with the 10th annual Terrible Film Festival was that the films showcased by Gerald Saul's Film 412 class weren't inherently bad. From beginning to end, the audience was thoroughly engaged in the experience.

This, says Saul, is the key to the festival's success.

"The event is about how good a time the audience has," Saul explained after the festival. "Experimental films have a reputa-

tion for being too intelligent for the average viewer, and festivals like this challenge that."

Certainly, the films on display didn't require much critical viewing. Instead, they were showcases of the technical mastery of the film students. Every aesthetic imperfection on the screen – and they were abundant – was intentional. All of the films were edited and developed by the students in the campus darkrooms.

"It was a lot of fun to see different takes on making and watching film," said third-year film student Jim Woodcock.

The size of the venue made for an intimate setting for the audience of about 40. There was no such thing as a bad seat in the room. I was especially appreciative of my seating choice, having the constant whirl of the projector right beside me while watching these films only added to the already great atmosphere. Some of the films were completely silent – save for the projector – and yet others had live musical accompaniment. A particularly memorable moment saw the entire audience singing along to Neil

Diamond's rendition of "Sweet Caroline," the lone soundtrack of one student's film.

Marian Donnelly, CEO of the Creative City Centre, couldn't have been happier with the event.

"I thought it was a great turnout," Donnelly said. "I think events like these are critical for a fine arts student's professional development. It's great for them to get out of the ivory tower and into the real world."

The show let out in just under an hour, and walking to my car, I felt a serious want for more. If you haven't attended the Terrible Film Festival before, make it a priority for next year. The film festival is a great way for aspiring filmmakers to flex their creative muscles and capture the imaginations of an appreciative audience.

At one on point during the show, one audience member asked me what I thought "good" is.

Terrible is good, my friend. Terrible is good.

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