

A FILM CRUISE

In July, I was fortunate to embark on a Mediterranean cruise with seventy other enthusiastic Australian film buffs. For most the attraction was the presence of David Stratton presenting twelve themed films along the way.

We boarded *Celebrity Equinox* in Barcelona and our first port of call was Cannes. We viewed the building where the Cannes Film Festival is held and visited the beautiful little village of St Paul de Vence in the hills above Cannes. That night our first film screening was *To Catch a Thief* (1954) which traced the road we had just travelled on that day and was welcome light relief for jet lag.

Next came various ports in Italy. David does not regard any film as dated, as he views them as a snapshot of subject matter, technique, etc. at the time of making. One of the things that keeps drawing me back to these film cruises is that the films are high quality and even when not big box office hits. A highlight for me was *Investigation of a Citizen above Suspicion* (1970), which still has relevance today. Other Italian films featured famous actors such as Marcello Mastroianni, Toto and Jean-Louis Trintignant.

Visiting Crete, Mykonos, Santorini and Rhodes inevitably led us to seeing *Zorba the Greek* (1964). I had not seen previously and was not disappointed. It was also great to revisit *Z* (1970) featuring Yves Montand and Irene Papas (also in *Zorba*). Next day I saw *Citizenfour* (2014), about Edward Snowden, as part of cruise's regular featured films and it was chilling to see that very little has changed in regard to political corruption in the intervening years.

Before the cruise I contacted David requesting he consider showing *A Matter of Life and Death* (1948) also known as *Stairway to Heaven*. I had heard about it from an interview Margaret Throsby had with a British film historian and was intrigued. One of the things I like about David's presentations is that the audience never knows what the film will be until he introduces it. After a wonderful day exploring the island of Rhodes, David said he was thrilled to show a film that was one of his all-time favourites. To my delight and surprise it was *A Matter of Life and Death*. The audience reaction was wonderful and I hope we can secure it for a Members' Only screening in 2016.

We visited the ancient site of Ephesus and then on to Istanbul. One of my favourite films from the cruise was a joint German/Turkish production called *The Edge of Heaven* (2007). After a tour of Istanbul including Topkapi Palace, we ended on a lighter note with *Topkapi* (1964) with Melina Mercouri, Peter Ustinov, and Robert Morley followed by a stand-up comedy routine which I performed... and that's another story.

As I am on the MFS film selection committee, I managed to pick David's brain about upcoming movies that he knew of and other interesting tidbits.

Next year David is traversing the Baltic. Cities include St. Petersburg, Copenhagen, Stockholm, Helsinki and the highlight for me (I have already booked) is visiting Gotland Island, where Ingmar Bergman lived and made a number of his films. After seeing Estonian film *Tangerines*, I am also looking forward to visiting Tallinn in Estonia. I'll see if I can twist his arm to come up for our Australian Film Festival weekend in 2017. In January 2016 he is sailing around NZ with Margaret Pomerantz.)

I can thoroughly recommend these tours although they are quite physically demanding as you are on the go the whole time and have little down time (and no I am not on commission!) If you would like to know more, come and say hi to me at the movies as I am there most film nights.

Deirdre