CULTURE

The Daily Star

Cinema

Time to sit back and be thrilled with Hitchcockian suspense

The king of thriller Alfred Hitchcock's retrospective is now being held in city

departure for him, building sus-

pense by the use of a tracking

camera rather than by cutting.

Hitchcock's most satisfying films.

ZIAUL KARIM

ITH the pronouncement of the name Alfred Hitchcock the terrifying images of the film The Birds come into our mind. Hitchcock's concentration on the suspense thriller and his exploration and development of the genre is probably unique. His films are characteristically invested with his personal quality of sly humour, resourceful and imaginative use of technique, and sense of the visually dramatic.

Zahir Raihan Film Society, with its long list of successful and exceptional film festivals, has come up this time to pay a tribute to Alfred Hitchcock -- one of the greatest filmmakers of all time. Though termed by some critics as "King of suspense and thrill" or "Master of suspense." Hitchcock nevertheless remains cinema's most popular exponent

The Society is presenting Hitchcock films in collaboration with the High Commission of India at its auditorium at Road No. 2, Dhanmondi, since last September, The season will run till 29th November with a show everyday at 6 pm. Zahir Raihan Film Society is presenting at the retrospective more

than half his lifetime's oeuvres. Hitchcock made his first successful film The Lodger in 1927 after several apprentice works of little distinction. The Lodger is a tale of a family who suspect their lodger of being a latter-day Jack the Ripper. This is his first film to contain the basic characteristics of his developed style: the ordinary person caught up in extraordinary events; the suspense story that has provided the basis of nearly all his films; and exuberantly imaginative cinematic effects. Hitchcock himself appeared in The Lodger; subsequently a glimpse of his rotund form became an obligatory gag, occurring in almost all his films.

Blackmail (1929) was the first British feature film with synchronous sound; and already showed the characteristic interplay of soundtrack and editing that distinguishes his work throughout his career. It introduced his recurrent motif of the chase, which he has developed with



A scene from Psycho

great expertise by the dramatic use of rapidly changing settings and a blend of realism and intense stylization that achieves the vivid impact of a nightmare. His outstanding films of the

thirties were all thrillers: The Man Who Knew Too Much (1934), The Thirty-nine Steps (1935), Sabotage (1936) and The Lady Vanishes (1938). Apart from demonstrating his increasing skill in manipulating the conventions of suspense drama, these show him introducing humour as an off-setting device to increase tension. In the Lady Vanishes he also set himself the problem of limiting the action to a restricted setting, to which he was to return later. Shortly before the outbreak of

war, Hitchcock went to Hollywood under contract to David O.Selznick. Ironically, his first film there was a British subject, Rebecca (1940), an impeccable adaptation of Daphne du Maurier's romantic mystery story, with an all-British cast that included Joan Fontaine and Laurence Olivier. It introduced a more psychological approach into Hitchcock's work; stylistically, too, it was a new



The Birds, a film that established Hitchcock as the supreme king of suspense thrille

for conventional cutting Hitchcock substituted total camera mobility. The experiment was interesting.

Suspicion (1941) similarly used the Stage Fright (1950), in which he fear-inducing properties of unspodeliberately confused the plot with a ken doubts: it was weakened by the 'lying' flashback (conventionally considered a solecism), was one of producers' insistence on a happy ending, but marked the beginning of his less popular films. His success several successful collaborations was wholly re-established, howbetween Hitchcock and Cary Grant. ever, by Strangers On A Train Spellbound (1945), a murder (1951), a classic example of the story with a voguish flavour of "perfect crime" story. In I Confess psychoanalysis, used dream (1953) a priest, played with sombre sequences designed by Salvador intensity by Montgomary Clift, is Dali and images derived from accused of murder and cannot Freudian symbolism. Ingrid reveal the real criminal without Bergman, who had notable success violating the secrecy of the confesworking for Hitchcock, starred in sional. This (with The Wrong Man, Spellbound and again in notorious 1957; Frenzy, 1972) is the most (1946). Notorious has a visual overt expression of a theme central to many Hitchcock films, the 'exsophistication and clarity of construction which combine with the change of guilt' whereby one man is excellent casting to make it one of suspected or accused of another's crime. REAR Window (1954) pre-In 1948, with Rope, Hitchcock sented another self imposed physibecame his own producer. Apart cal problem; the viewpoint is that of from its being his first colour film. the a convalescent who, passing his interest of Rope lies in its experitime observing his neighbours, mental shooting technique. The chances to witness a murder. It action, which takes place entirely in starred James Stewart, like Carv one room, was filmed in one contin-Grant remarkably effective as the uous shot, interrupted only to reload puzzled hero caught up in bewildering events, a constantly recurring the camera at ten-minute intervals:

character in the Hitchcock canon. To Catch a Thief (1955), with Cary Grant as another Hitchcock hero, made exciting use of a glossy Riviera setting, particularly in the car

chase sequences. In 1956 Hitchcock remade The Man Who Knew Too Much in bigbudget Hollywood style. It was at first received as a pale shadow of the original British version, but with revaluation of his later films its merits have gained recognition. The Trouble With Harry, released in the same year, was a macabre story depicted in exquisite autumnal setting and handled with a whimsical humour that was received with extremes of delight and detestation. Hitchcock ended the decade with two major films which sum up the two main trends in his work: North By Northwest (1959) capping all his previous chase films in its extravagant fantasy, which had more than a touch of self-parody, and Psycho (1960), a horror story with all the trappings of melodrama and one of the most successful of his psychological thrillers

The Birds (1963) was an attempt to derive horror from an unexplained



An emotional moment from Vertigo.

natural source (a vicious attack on the human race by flocks of birds) rather than a human villain; Marnie (1964) dealt with the psychological explanation of criminal acts by a pretty young woman; and Topaz (1969) again used a spy story, but without the climactic action sequences that audiences have come to expect.

He has also produced, introduced, and intermittently directed two successful television series, using them to try out new ideas and apparently deriving much enjoyment from his role as 'host'.

Although he has very often worked from literary sources, the original is invariably fully assimilated into his cinematic approach. His lengthy and uneven career is reflected in the variety of critical response to his films; sometimes his British films are rated highest, at others his work of the forties or his big-budget productions of later years. Many French critics, particularly those of the early period of Cahiers Du Cinema, class him as a leading Auteur with his own distinctive film language and as such he had considerable influence on the Nouvelle Vague: the films of

CHABROL, in particular, contain many touches of homage to Hitchcock. His four films of the sixties, which were received with disappointment in Britain and America, were hailed in France as confirmation of the view that he continued to be in a class of his own. Hitchcock himself, in spite of all

that his admirers claim on his behalf, maintains a steady unpretentiousness, prosaically claiming a place as a skilled entertainer which he undoubtedly and superbly is content to work within the commercial system. Although the plots of his films frequently resolve themselves into schematic and implausible intridues where depth of characterization is sacrificed to dramatic development, the exuberance of his technical invention and his use of montage and visual stylization to manipulate audience emotion and to create and intensify pure sensation in the spectator is unrivalled.

The choice is wide at the retrospective with as many as 31 films by this master of suspense thriller, plus three short TV mystery films of the 1950s as bonus.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Art show

A group art exhibition by Zahid Shamim, Kakoli and Safin has opened at The High Commission of India cultural centre, 754, Satmasjid Road, Dhanmondi. The show runs everyday from 3:00 to 8:00 p.m. till November 29.

Exhibition

Goethe institute Dhaka has organised a show of Nishkandaa folk mythical deity who is worshipped to drive away evilat House # 10, Road # 9, Dhanmondi R/A

Crafts and

fashion works show

A Crafts and Fashion Works Exhibition is now being held at the Zainul Gallery. Institute of Fine Arts. Shahbagh, Dhaka. The show will run till November 30.

Alfred Hitchcock

Retrospective

Zahir Raihan Film Society, in collaboration with Indian High Commission in Dhaka, has organised a fortnight long Alfred Hitchcock Retrospective. Psycho, starring Anthony Perkins, Janet Leigh & Vera Miles, is to be screened today and The Birds, starring Tippi Hedren, Rod Taylor & Jessica Tandy both at will be screened today at Indian High Commission Auditorium at 6 in the evening

Anjan's collection

Anjan's Eid collection capturing the mood of the Eid festival is going on at Kamal Ataturk Avenue, Banani.

Fashion

A colourful apparel show by Altamira, a fashion gallery, is now being held at House # 1, Road # 2, Dhanmomndi. The show, open from 10 a.m to 10 p.m. everyday, runs till December 14.

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TV GUIDE									
BTV noon 12:00 Live telecast of the parliamentary sessions from the 8th National Parliament 3:10 pm News Headlines 4:50 Mahe Ramadan 5:00 News Headlines 5:25 Desh O'bigyan 5:45 Pushtitathya 6:00 Khabar 6:10 Geet Bitan 6:35 Programme from Chittagong station 7:00 News Headlines (Eng- lish) 7:05 Unmesh 8:00 News in Bengali 8:30 Drama Serial: Bhalobashar Onek Rong 9:00 News Headlines 9:30 Drama Serial: Kanta 10:00 News at Ten 10:25 Shei Gaan Guli 11:15 Khabar / The News	ATN BANGLA4:30Mobarak Ho Mahey Ramadan5:30Islamic Prog7:00Musical Prog: ATN Music7:35Dance prog: Dance Dance8:00ATN Bangla News8:25Drama serial : Uttaran9:00Film Magazine: Cin Music9:35Drama: Keyo Katha Rakhene10:50Drama serial : Bondon11:15Bengali film : Abar Bonobashe Rupban12:00ATN Bangla News4:30Mobarak Ho Mahey Ramadan6:07Health care prog: Sustha Thakun6:45Film Songs prog: Surchobi7:00ATN Bangla Evening News	(Razzak/Bobita) HBO 6:30 The Freshman 8:30 Body Double 10:45 Melanie Darrow 12:30 Bingo 2:15 Last Rites 4:00 Look Who's Talking 6:00 Beethoven 7:45 My Best Friend's Wedding 10:00 Gold Diggers the Secret of Bear Mountain 12:00 No Way Back 2:00 Body Double 4:15 My Best Friend's Wedding STAR GOLD 10:30 Amul Bollywood News 11:00 Geet Bahar 11:30 Mr Sampat (Motilal, Padmini) 3:00 Amul Bollywood News 3:30 Do Aankhen Barah	EKUSH aks As Shirin oi tells him ness soEKUSH aks As Shirin oi tells him ness soEKUSH trace a C Zahir. H seems I back fro that ZahEKUSH trace a C Zahir. H seems I back fro that ZahEKUSH trace a C Zahir. H seems I back fro that ZahEKUSH trace a C Zahir. H seems I back fro that As that he i Thanksg Mimi's C	Function of the product of the prod		PICK OF THE DAYImage: Stress of the second se	1:00[V] FDFS1:30[V] Hit Machine4:30[V] Hotline5:30Very [V]7:30[V] Hit Machine8:00[V] Colossal ChaosCountdown9:009:00[V] Hit Machine9:30[V] Jungli Jukebox10:00[V] FDFS10:30[V] Hit Machine11:00Late Night [V]12:00[V] Hit Machine12:30Club [V]1:00[V] Hit Machine2EETV6:00Yaadon Ke Pal6:30Aalaap7:00Yoga For Life7:30Jagran7:50Zee Gym & EatHealthy8:208:30Ardhangini8:45Yaadein Radio CeyionKi9:009:00Nickelodeon on Zee	8:00Deewane To DeewaneHai8:30Ek Tukda Chand Ka9:00Mehndi Tere Naam Ki9:30Choti Maa Ek AnokhaBhandhan10:00Koi Apna Sa10:30Aap Jo Bole Haan toHaan Ap Jo Bole Na11:30Sarhadein12:00Gharana12:30Justujoo1:00Rishtey The LoveStories2:002:00India's Most Wanted2:30Manzilein Apni Apni3:00Feature Film5:30Chehren6:00Feature Film9:00Kuch Lamhe KuchNagme9:159:15Ikke Pe Ikka9:45Movie Fare10:00Feature Film1:00Chatpati Chat	4:30Phoren Maal5:30Sizzlers ALPHA TV BANGLA6:00Sheshprashna6:30Aatpake Bandhe7:00Grohon7:30News8:00Surer Ei DharanaDharay8:308:30Zee Jalsa9:00News9:05Bharat Bhraman9:30Purobi10:00Googly10:30Prapto Baeskoderjanyo11:3011:30Grohon12:30Chena Mukher Shari1:00Ingit1:30Ek Akasher Niche2:00Nayantara2:30Chaka- Laxmi PujaSpecial5:005:00Surer Ei Jharna
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