

WORLD YOUTH ALLIANCE FILM LIST

The **WYA Film List** is a selection of films that explore the truths of the human person and the drama of the human condition. They are intended to help our members reflect more deeply on what it means to be human. The films, coming from all over the world, look at specific themes related to our common humanity – the search for meaning, justice, freedom and peace as well as the need for beauty inherent in human nature. These themes are relevant to the work of the World Youth Alliance and aim to contribute to our members' growth in understanding WYA's vision of the human person and to enhance the capacity for empathy and solidarity.

RECOMMENDED FILMS

Mad Hot Ballroom by Marilyn Agrelo (2005)

Rating: PG

Every year, the New York Public School system sponsors a dance competition for youngsters in fifth grade; in this contest, boys and girls ages 10 and 11 learn traditional ballroom dancing styles such as the fox trot, the rumba, and the tango, and then pit their skills against other students from around the Big Apple. Mad Hot Ballroom is a documentary which offers an inside look at this event, as well as the teachers and students who take part.

Children of Heaven by Bacheha-Ye aseman (1997)

Rating: PG

The Children of Heaven follows the relationship between an impoverished brother and sister, Ali and Zahra, who are thrust into a difficult circumstance. They choose to solve their problem themselves, without telling their parents, in their own unique way. What follows is a tender, moving tale of compassion, determination and deep family love.

Lumumba by Raoul Peck (2000)

Rating: Not rated.
****Viewer discretion advised
on account of violence.***

The true story of the rise to power and brutal assassination of the formerly vilified and later redeemed leader of the independent Congo, Patrice Lumumba. Using newly discovered historical evidence, Haitian-born and later Congo-raised writer and director Raoul Peck renders an emotional and tautly woven account of the mail clerk and beer salesman with a flair for oratory and an uncompromising belief in the capacity of his homeland to build a prosperous nation independent of its former Belgium overlords.

Buena Vista Social Club

Aging Cuban musicians whose talents had been virtually forgotten following Castro's takeover of Cuba, are brought out of retirement by Ry Cooder, who travelled to



by Wim Wenders (1999)

Havana in order to bring the musicians together, resulting in triumphant performances of extraordinary music, and resurrecting the musicians' careers.

Rating: G

Les Choristes
by Christophe Barratier
(2004)

Wildly successful orchestra conductor Pierre Morhange returns home when his mother dies. He recalls his childhood inspirations through the pages of a diary kept by his old music teacher Clément Mathieu. Back in the late '40s, little Pierre is the badly behaved son of single mother Violette. He attends a dreary boarding school presided over by strict headmaster Rachin. New teacher Mathieu brightens up the place and organizes a choir, leading to the discovery of Pierre's musical talents.

Rating: PG-13

The Shawshank
Redemption
by Frank Darabont (1994)

In 1946, a banker named Andy Dufresne is convicted of a double murder, even though he stubbornly proclaims his innocence. He's sentenced to a life term at the Shawshank State Prison in Maine, where another lifer, Ellis "Red" Redding, picks him as the new recruit most likely to crack under the pressure. The ugly realities of prison life are quickly introduced to Andy: a corrupt warden, sadistic guards led by Capt. Byron Hadley, and inmates who are little better than animals, willing to use rape or beatings to insure their dominance. But Andy does not crack: he has the hope of the truly innocent, which (together with his smarts) allow him to prevail behind bars. He uses his banking skills to win favor with the warden and the guards, in exchange, he is able to improve the prison library and bring some dignity and respect back to many of the inmates, including Red.

Rating: R

****Viewer discretion advised***
on account of violence



**Schindler's List
(1993, Stephen Spielberg)**

Rating: R
***Viewer discretion advised
on account of subject
matter**

Based on a true story, Oskar Schindler, a German businessman in Poland sees an opportunity to make money from the Nazis' rise to power. He starts a company to make cookware and utensils, using flattery and bribes to win military contracts, and brings in accountant and financier Itzhak Stern to help run the factory. By staffing his plant with Jews who've been herded into Krakow's ghetto by Nazi troops, Schindler has a dependable unpaid labor force. For Stern, a job in a war-related plant could mean survival for himself and the other Jews working for Schindler. However, in 1942, all of Krakow's Jews are assigned to the Plaszow Forced Labor Camp, overseen by Commandant Amon Goeth, an embittered alcoholic who occasionally shoots prisoners from his balcony. Schindler arranges to continue using Polish Jews in his plant, but, as he sees what is happening to his employees, he begins to develop a conscience. He realizes that his factory (now refitted to manufacture ammunition) is the only thing preventing his staff from being shipped to the death camps. Soon Schindler demands more workers and starts bribing Nazi leaders to keep Jews on his employee lists and out of the camps. By the time Germany falls to the allies, Schindler has lost his entire fortune -- and saved 1,100 people from likely death.

**Hero
(2004, Yimou Zhang)**

Rating: PG-13

In a distant war torn land, a ruthless emperor is rising to power with an iron fist and massive armies. To control everything, he will stop at nothing. A fearless warrior, Nameless, goes on a mission of revenge, against the emperor, for the massacre of his people.

**Life is Beautiful
Roberto Benigni**

Rating: PG-13

A joyful portrayal of the inner freedom possible when choosing to love regardless of the circumstances in which we find ourselves!

**Babette's Feast
(Gabriel Axel)**

Rating: G

Babette's Feast (1988), set in an isolated village in 19th century Denmark, presents the story of two adult sisters living with their father, a revered pastor of the village's small Protestant church. Although both sisters have the opportunity to leave their village for romance and worldly success, they each choose to remain in service of their father and church. Some years after their father's death, they accept a French refugee into their home. Known as Babette, she serves as their faithful cook and maid until learning that she has won a large sum in the French lottery. She asks for the opportunity to prepare a celebratory meal commemorating the 100th birthday of the sisters' late father. The lavish feast is a moment of awakening for all members of the community who attend the banquet dinner.



WORLD YOUTH ALLIANCE FILM DISCUSSION GROUPS

The World Youth Alliance offices organize film discussion groups where people come together and discuss the themes of the books and relate them to lessons on human dignity. WYA provides guide questions for the book discussion leader to help facilitate the discussion. Copies of the films are available at the WYA Regional Offices. Some copies may also be purchased on Amazon.com.

If you would like to learn more about setting up a film discussion or to request copies of the discussion guides, please contact your regional office. WYA has offices at the following locations:

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