

Experimental Senior High School of Patras
ENGLISH COURSE 2015-2016

OUR FAVOURITE 5 MOVIES

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5. “Steve Jobs”

An inspired, risky and unconventional biopic, "Steve Jobs" finds the unlikely team of author **Aaron Sorkin** and director **Danny Boyle** convene on a story of the late Apple impresario, and channeling the best of their abilities in symphonic unison to create dynamic electricity in a three act neo-Shakespearean drama.

Through an 1984 ascension, a 1988 falter and a 1998-set reclamation, Boyle and Sorkin chart the imperiousness, arrogance and genius of this tech trailblazer. Arguably the true auteur of the movie, Sorkin's witty, rapid-fire dialogue crackles and is made human by the herculean acting of **Michael Fassbender** —one gets the sense he had to wrestle the script into a chokehold and consume it.

The terrific supporting cast of **Kate Winslet**, **Seth Rogen**, **Jeff Daniels**, **Michael Stuhlbarg** and **Katherine Waterston**, all working at the top of their game, make the movie radiate that much more.

But perhaps the movie's secret weapon is Boyle, who has spent a lifetime impelling visual propulsion, but instead here expertly channels the kineticism already on the page—an insightful and counter-intuitive move if there ever was one.

An exhilarating and orchestrally-pitched drama about the cost of brilliance and an emotionally trenchant look at legacy and parenthood, “Steve Jobs” is an engrossing portrait of a relentlessly determined and dysfunctionally complicated tech titan.



4. “Spotlight”

Tom McCarthy has been producing relatively solid dramedies for a handful of years. But this year, we got a peek at a couple of new sides of the director. The first was the godawful **Adam Sandler** fiasco “**The Cobbler**” (which occupies a spot on our [Worst Of The Year](#) list). But the second was this incredibly sure-footed and rigorous take on the *Boston Globe* team that broke the news of the sexual abuse scandal and cover up in the early aughts. McCarthy snagged an impressive cast for the gig (**Michael Keaton, Mark Ruffalo, Rachel McAdams, Liev Schreiber**), all of whom are in top form and none of whom dominate the film, which is just how it should be. “Spotlight” is the definition of an ensemble film —it’s a story of teamwork and trust and one of the finest depictions of journalism since “**All The President’s Men**” (a connection that has been made repeatedly, but happens to be true). Despite being as exacting as it is, “Spotlight” manages keep the plot moving and maintains some of the sharpest tension of the year. It’s a film of moral quandaries and ethical obligations, where the city of Boston stands as one of the most compelling characters. It’s easy to imagine “Spotlight” in the hands of a different director, prone to overstuffing the film with melodrama and exploitation of this tragedy. Fortunately, we got McCarthy’s: it’s a deeply affecting, satisfying film and an impressive technical achievement.



3. “Room”

Nothing about director **Lenny Abrahamson**'s previous work could have prepared us for the emotionally visceral gut punch of “Room.”

Based on a best-selling novel by **Emma Donoghue**, who also adapted her book for the screen, this picture is about Jack (**Jacob Tremblay**), a loving, energetic, and imaginative 5-year-old boy who spent his entire life imprisoned in a ten-foot-by-ten-foot room with his mother (**Brie Larson**). In order to raise Jack in this horrific environment with any semblance of normalcy, Ma makes him believe that the room is the only place that exists in the world and that all the people and places he sees on TV are in a different galaxy.

All of the information we get about Ma and Jack's predicament builds up to one of the most pulse-pounding, nail-biting, any other review buzzword cliché-generating sequences we've seen in a long time.

Even though the thriller elements are laid to rest about halfway through "Room," there's still a tremendously engaging emotional journey ahead, where Abrahamson smartly avoids every trap for conventional melodramatics that the basic story elements would seem to lay out for him.

The performances from everyone involved are extraordinary, especially for a story that's ripe for hysterical dramatics.

Tremblay carries the entire emotional weight of the picture with an exceptional display of natural empathy and energy, and Larson's more than his match.

The premise suggested a film that could have been almost impossibly bleak if Abrahamson put a foot wrong: instead, it's deeply human.



2. "Carol"

Given the commensurate lack of buzz, it's possible you missed the boat on the exquisite-ness of **Todd Haynes'** superb **HBO** mini-series "**Mildred Pierce.**" But let's not be nags: everyone's on board the Haynes train this year, and that's just gravy for all of us. Haynes' delicate, nearly-note-perfect "Carol" is a swooning, romantic picture that makes you feel the grace notes of trembling desire in between words and between the eventually requited kisses and passionate moments.

It is a movie about the unspoken moments of desire, the subtle gestures, the furtive glances, and the batted-eyelashes we have to decode when falling in love, but are too deep in a place of vulnerability to play our hand.

Immaculately crafted, tremendously acted and rendered with consummate care and control, “Carol” is about the inexpressible, and the aching yearns of early, unformed loves and all the fragility it entails.

It’s a directing masterclass, its two leads **Cate Blanchett** and **Rooney Mara** deliver tour-de-force performances of restraint, and its score and cinematography (by **Carter Burwell** and **Ed Lachman** respectively) gorgeously underscore all the pangs of implicit heartache with musical dolor and frosty visual reflection.

With this impeccably made movie, Haynes, perhaps belatedly, is crystallized as one of America’s greatest living directors.



1. “Mad Max: Fury Road”

The Playlist's 2015 pick for the best film of 2015 didn't dominate to the extent that “**Under The Skin**” did last year, but from very early on in the voting process, it was clear what was going to come top. And what else could it be? Uniting everyone from highbrow cinephiles to explosion-happy genre fans (the film featured on all but two of the seventeen lists submitted), **George Miller**'s fourth movie in his post-apocalyptic franchise was an absolute wonder, literally the best action movie in decades, and a classic even before the title character (**Tom Hardy**) has had his mask removed.

Stripping down to the absolute basics —it's a chase movie in the same way that **Buster Keaton**'s “**The General**” is a chase movie— barely ever stopping to catch a breath while building a fascinating world through side-details and establishing complex characters through action, the director gifted us all with an adrenaline shot of pure, unfiltered cinema. One that returned grace and beauty to the summer blockbuster. One that wasn't afraid to get weird, like the blue-tinged section in the mudlands that feels almost like a **Tarkovsky** movie. One that stealthily put a woman at the heart of a testosterone-filled, gas-guzzling actioner. One crafted at a level that suggested that 95% of movies simply aren't trying hard enough. Miller's already started talking about potential further ‘Max’ movies, but there's part of us that wants him to let it alone, because returning with something as utterly perfect as “Fury Road” is a big, big task.



THANK



YOU!