

SOCIAL INTERCOURSE

Global Visions 25th Annual Film Festival

2-6 November
Empire Theatres City Centre
\$10 per film at Earth's General Store, Alternative Video Spot, Tix on the Square and Mountain Equipment Co-op

The theme of this year's festival is "Shades of Reality," focusing on globalization, justice and social issues. The organization that puts on the festival has had some financial problems and struggled to get the festival going this year, so help them out by supporting this annual cultural staple and seeing some great cinema in the process.

Souls In Rhythm

Friday, 3 November at 9pm
Sidetrack Café
\$8 at the door

Singer-songwriter/keyboardist Scott Henderson and the rest of Souls In Rhythm are bringing the soul train to Edmonton. Promoting their new album *Can't Fake the Funk*, the group is taking their soulful jazz and R&B act from Calgary across the country. The band has also reached the upper echelons of Canadian music, scoring two Juno nominations, which were unfortunately both lost to Bryan Adams.

The Subhumans

With Guests
Friday, 3 November at 8pm
Victory Lounge, 18+
\$10 at door

Just in time for the Halloween season, the legendary punk outfit The Subhumans, formed by barely-human members of Vancouver's blossoming underground sewer community, has resurfaced 25 years after releasing their Canadian punk classic *Incorrect Thoughts*. The band released their sophomore album *New Dark Age Parade* in September and is hitting the Victory Lounge to promote their political ideals and their love for fresh human brains.

Support the Arts Event

Art exhibit by Lili Vanderlaan
Featuring Plaid Tongued Devils, Vibe Tribe-Music By Paul Bromley, Zaghareet! Tribal Belly Dance, Rag A Belly Dance and Mile Zero Dance
Friday, 3 November at 7:30pm
Starlite Room, 18+
\$10 advance at Blackbyrd Music, Listen, Acoustic Music Shop and online @ nancy.vibetribes@gmail.com. \$15 at door

The only thing that goes together better than belly dancing and art is dirty dancing and Patrick Swayze. But since Johnny Castle is tough to book, why not enjoy a night of belly dancing, live music and art at the Starlite Room instead? Local artist Lili Vanderlaan presents her exhibit while the Plaid Tongue Devils and belly dancers entertain the crowd. It'll be even more fun than dancing with the Swayz' himself.

Moses Mayes

With David Hein and AA Soundsystem
Saturday, 4 November at 8pm
Victory Lounge
\$10 Advance at Megatunes, Blackbyrd, and Listen

According to the King James Brown version of the Bible, the ancient prophet Moses was appointed by the Godfather of Soul to lead the Hebrew people to get up off of that thing in Egypt. Reading from a cliff, Moses said to his people, "Thou shalt get on the scene and covet thy neighbour's funk." This Saturday, that scene will be the Victory Lounge and that funk will be eight-piece Winnipeg jazz-funk ensemble Moses Mayes. Along with acoustic rocker David Hein and Edmonton folk rockers AA Soundsystem, it's a concert that will be worth parting the Red Sea for.

JONN KMECH
Not allowed to play Chingy in the car

Borat makes for 'sexy time'

From wielding sex toys while naked to interviewing the American populous, Borat makes us 'like'

Borat: Cultural Learnings of America for Make Benefit Glorious Nation of Kazakhstan

Directed by Larry Charles
Starring Sasha Baron Cohen
Opens Friday, 3 November
Empire Theatres

MATTHEW BARRETT
Arts & Entertainment Writer

Borat is everything a good comedy should be—witty, fast-paced and satisfying. Never mind that it's been internationally reviled for its vulgarity and brutish offensiveness, or condemned so horribly by Kazakhstan's government that their president intends to personally complain to George W Bush on his next visit to the United States. When it boils down, *Borat* is just a movie, and one that appeals to a wide range of comedic tastes. Whether you're looking for low-brow laughs, scatological humour or more subversive political satire, *Borat* delivers like a C-section to a uterus.

Borat is based on *Da Ali G Show*, the brainchild of British comedian and provocateur-extraordinaire Sasha Baron Cohen. In the show, Cohen plays three different characters: a wannabe hipster aptly named Ali G, a gay fashion expert named Bruno and the self-proclaimed "seventh most popular person in Kazakhstan," Borat. There's already been several movie adaptations of the show, like *Spiz* or *Ali G in Da House*, but none that could proudly scroll Borat's name across the proverbial marquee.

Out of the three characters on *Da Ali G Show*, Borat is the most blatantly offensive and the most politically incorrect. He's a racist, a sexist, a bigot and a skewed diplomat of Kazakhstani culture and society. He's, for all intents and purposes, a living, breathing, walking asshole with no comprehension or understanding of conventional taboo or politeness. He's a bungling incompetent, insensitive and naïve towards the people and world around him. And he's absolutely freaking hilarious.

The premise of the movie could be followed by a toaster oven. Borat, in his home country of Kazakhstan, is heading to the "US and A" to film a documentary in the hopes of modernizing the Kazakhstani people. But, after watching a single episode of *Baywatch* in his New York hotel room, Borat decides to travel across the United States to the West Coast

in an attempt to marry and "make sexy time" with the vivacious Pamela Anderson.

Along the way, Borat interacts with hapless American streeters, professionals and high-profilers. He interviews a veritable piss-load of

people, from a feminist support group to a senator, a driving instructor to a used car salesman, and a specialist in dinner etiquette (who later sends him to a formal dinner) to Pamela Anderson herself. At one point, he buys a bear and keeps it in the back of an ice cream truck, only to have it scare off little children when they hear the truck's hypnotic jingle.

The sketches are glued together by scenes between Borat and his producer, and usually involve them talking about who they're going to interview next or where they're going. These scenes are mostly here to give the film some structure and the faintest tickle of a plot, perhaps irking some viewers who are expecting more in that particular department. But the minimal story arc works to preserve the comedic style of the original show, and despite the manufactured nature of the scenes, they eventually come into their own and prove to be some of the most hilarious moments of the film.

One particularly heinous—and might I add, pornographic—scene involves a naked Borat wielding a rubber sex toy, fighting his also-naked producer *Star Trek*-style before chasing him through a hotel and finally wrestling him to the ground in the middle of a packed presentation hall. The whole thing is uncensored, except for bits of Borat, and is visceral enough to leave you stunned for at least the rest of the movie, if not an entire week.

Now, as I'm sure you've gathered by this point, *Borat* isn't for everyone. Everything you read about this movie is going to describe it as offensive, either horrifically or delightfully so. It's offensive to women. It's offensive to Jews. It's offensive to Kazakstanis. It's offensive to good taste.

Viewers familiar with *Da Ali G Show* will understand it's a ruse; a special kind of humour based on provocation and reaction, not unlike Michael Moore's documentaries and Rick Mercer's "Talking to Americans" segments on *This Hour has 22 Minutes*. But instead of the well-groomed Mercer poking fun at our southern neighbours, we have Borat: an unkempt, sexist and racist protagonist who's more of an interloper than Mercer or Moore ever were in their interviews.

Not to mention that Mercer never had a movie.

But if the idea of a more vulgar, more curmudgeonly Rick Mercer—or a funny Michael Moore—traipsing about the US making Americans feel awkward about themselves is appealing, then join up with fans of *Da Ali G Show*, because you're going to love *Borat*. But if you're not a fan of Mercer, or are of the easily-wounded variety, then stay far, far away, because you'll most likely be put off entirely.

And if you do find yourself in the opening scenes of *Borat*, and are about as impressed as finding cockroaches in your bed, take solace: you'll only have to excuse your proper manners and sense of disgust for 90 minutes.

