



BUNNY AND THE BULL

UK | 2009 | 101m | 15

Director: Paul King

Screenplay: Paul King

Cinematography: John Sorapure

Editing: Mark Everson

Original music: Ralfe Band

Leading Players: Edward Hogg, Simon Farnaby, Verónica Echegui, Noel Fielding, Julian Barratt

filmnote

Nominated for the Sutherland Trophy for most original and imaginative first feature at BFI 53rd London Film Festival, this is the first feature film from the director Paul King.

It has been described as “a wildly creative piece of work” by Todd Brown of the Toronto Film Festival, and has been compared to the work of director Michel Gondry by *Total Film* magazine. The film's producers have referred to it as “Withnail & I for the mentally ill”.

Although this may be Paul King's first venture onto the big screen, he certainly has plenty of experience in directing the surreal. King was the associate director on the dark TV comedy series, *Garth Marenghi's Darkplace* (2004), and went on to direct the better known *The Mighty Boosh* (2003-2007), for which he was nominated for the BAFTA TV Award for Best New Director (Fiction) in 2005.

King is not the only member of the *Boosh* family to use this film as a transition from TV to the silver screen; he brought with him both Noel Fielding and Julian Barrett for whom this is also their first feature film. Although neither of these cult figures play the leading roles in the film, some argue that their presence alone “inspires certain, largely false expectations as to what the film as a whole is” (Todd Brown, *TIFF Review Online*, 2009).

The story revolves around Stephen; a man who has not left his flat in over a year. Prompted by a rodent infestation, he looks back at the European road trip which caused his reclusive life, in particular his relationship with a man called Bunny. Stephen is played by Edward Hogg and is described by Hogg as being “based on every man who's never done very well with women, who's a little bit shy, introverted or OCD”, is rumoured to have some similarity to the writer/director. Although to what extent is unclear, this “road movie set inside a man's head” (King, 2009) has certainly been influenced greatly by different aspects of King's life, in particular his own rail trip across Europe.



what did you think of the film? please mark or tear your vote ▶

excellent A

please add further comments about the film or the festival here

B

fair C

D

poor E

to be included in our e-mailing list (you'll receive occasional bulletins about film festival activities, special email-only offers and news) **please give your email address** on the other side of your voting slip ▶

Bunny, played by Simon Farnaby, is described by King as “someone you remember more fondly than perhaps he deserves”. Stephen's admiration of Bunny is seen as similar to the infatuation that the other characters feel for Percival in Virginia Woolf's *The Waves*, a novel which King adapted for the stage several years ago.

This is only the fifth film from production company Warp X, sister company of Warp Films which produced *Donkey Punch* (2008) and *This Is England* (2006). The company is an initiative of UK Film Council, Film4, Screen Yorkshire and Optimum Releasing. *Bunny and the Bull* breaks away from the British low-budget independent film expectations, and instead presents us with a film that was imaginatively shot in a studio, with home-made props, still managing to create an original voice, which stems from a TV tradition.

“Recommended, if you're prepared to take a flight of fancy and see something original” a Sunday Review from film blog *the line* wrote of *The Mighty Boosh*, and the same seems to be true of *Bunny and the Bull*.

BFF Film Note by Elspeth Hinde

short / experimental film email film newsletter matinee screenings late-night screenings workshops volunteering
sponsoring an event something else...

would you be interested in joining a 'Friends of Bath Film Festival' scheme, which would confer benefits in return for a small joining fee?
yes **no** please detach this slip from your flmnote and hand in following the screening, or return to:
BFF, c/o On The Video Front, 7 Terrace Walk, Bath BA1 1LN telephone / fax: **01225 401149** email: **info@bathfilmfestival.org.uk**