



Life Moves Pretty Fast

Teen Rebellion in Film
CUFA Film Club Week 1

The Teen-Age Dream

Today teenagers are a powerful demographic, impacting popular culture at all levels. But it wasn't always like this - indeed, the concept of the teenage years existing between child and adulthood only emerged in the 1950s

The term "teenager" first appeared in 1944 for the commercial purposes of creating a new consumer demographic. However, the concept of adolescence as a period of rebellion and self-discovery soon captured the imagination; one 1958 article observes that "it is difficult, if not impossible, to say to what extent the press, the movies, and other mass media have reflected the teenager and to what extent they have molded him."

Depictions of teen rebellion often grapple with the struggle to maintain identity and independence in the face of the stringent rules of adulthood. What exactly characters are resisting speaks to the social and cultural dynamics of the time: *A Hard Day's Night* ridicules class dynamics and elitism, *Daisies* defies the conforming expectations of women. While teen rebellion films can be liberating and full of life, they always include this touch of anxiety, anger, and disillusionment.

Read more about the concept of the teenager here:
<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/1958/11/29/inventing-the-american-teenager>

Now on to the featured movies!



A Hard Day's Night

Year Released: 1964

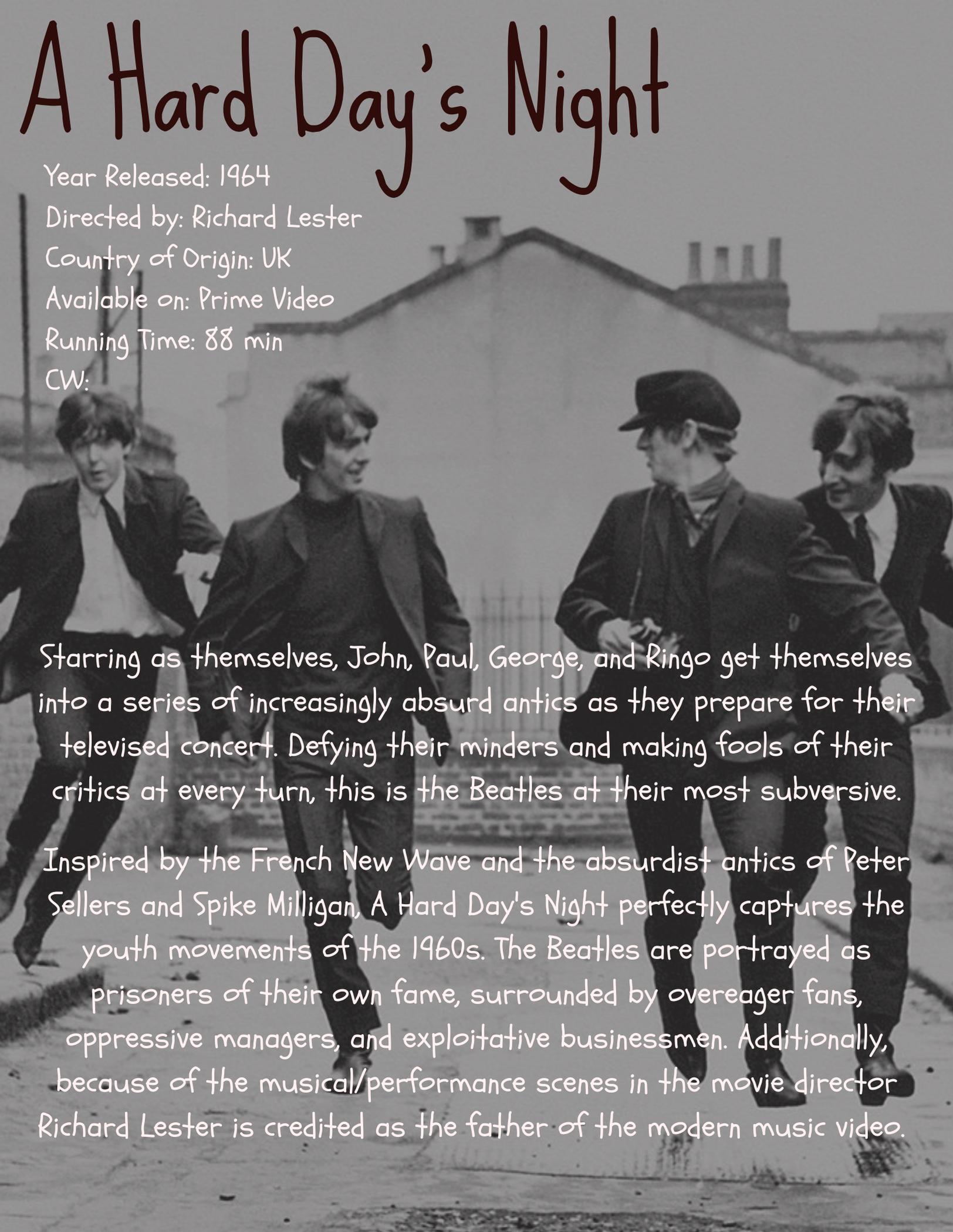
Directed by: Richard Lester

Country of Origin: UK

Available on: Prime Video

Running Time: 88 min

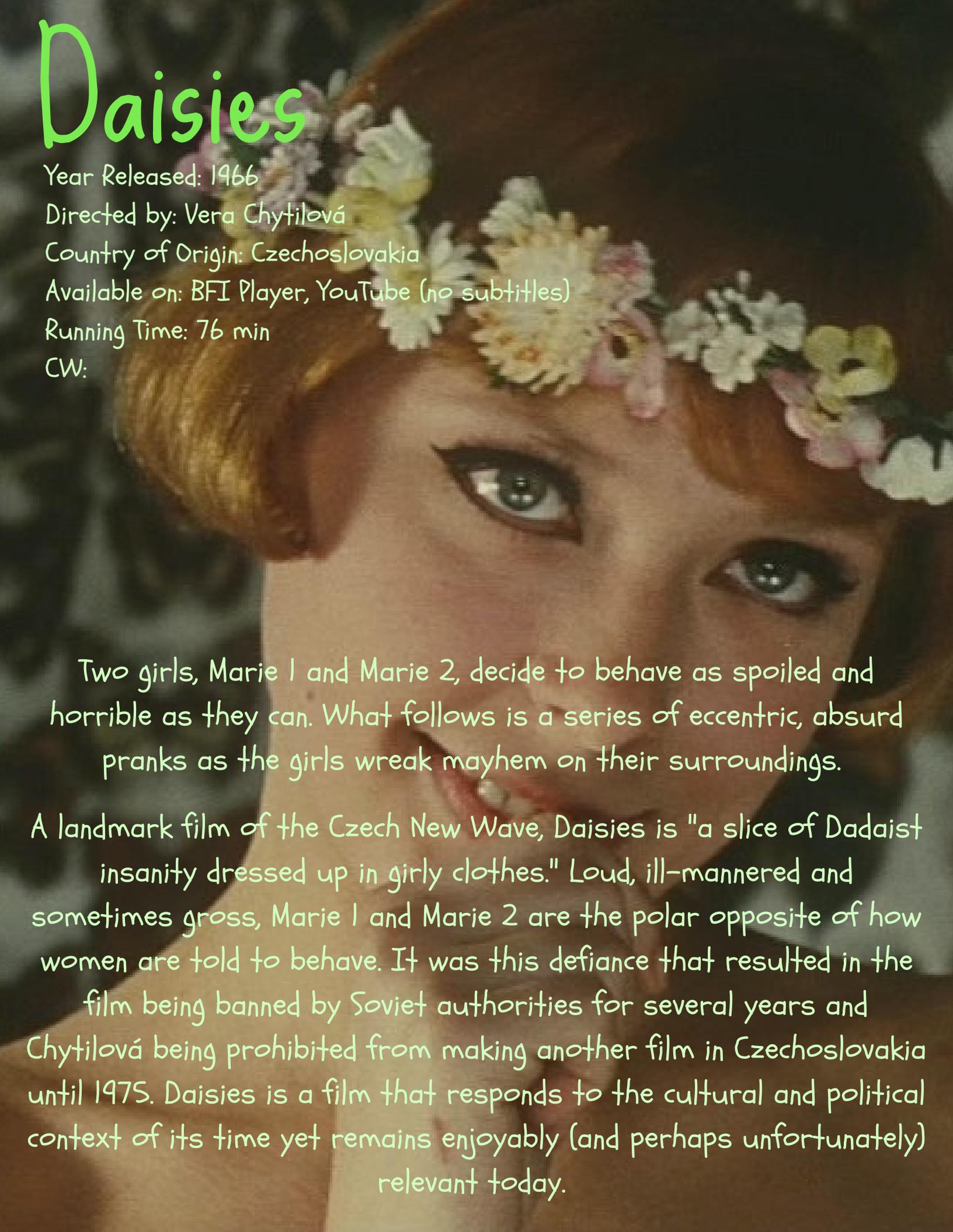
CW:



Starring as themselves, John, Paul, George, and Ringo get themselves into a series of increasingly absurd antics as they prepare for their televised concert. Defying their minders and making fools of their critics at every turn, this is the Beatles at their most subversive.

Inspired by the French New Wave and the absurdist antics of Peter Sellers and Spike Milligan, *A Hard Day's Night* perfectly captures the youth movements of the 1960s. The Beatles are portrayed as prisoners of their own fame, surrounded by overeager fans, oppressive managers, and exploitative businessmen. Additionally, because of the musical/performance scenes in the movie director Richard Lester is credited as the father of the modern music video.

Daisies



Year Released: 1966

Directed by: Vera Chytilová

Country of Origin: Czechoslovakia

Available on: BFI Player, YouTube (no subtitles)

Running Time: 76 min

CW:

Two girls, Marie 1 and Marie 2, decide to behave as spoiled and horrible as they can. What follows is a series of eccentric, absurd pranks as the girls wreak mayhem on their surroundings.

A landmark film of the Czech New Wave, *Daisies* is "a slice of Dadaist insanity dressed up in girly clothes." Loud, ill-mannered and sometimes gross, Marie 1 and Marie 2 are the polar opposite of how women are told to behave. It was this defiance that resulted in the film being banned by Soviet authorities for several years and Chytilová being prohibited from making another film in Czechoslovakia until 1975. *Daisies* is a film that responds to the cultural and political context of its time yet remains enjoyably (and perhaps unfortunately) relevant today.

Ferris Bueller's Day Off

Year Released: 1986

Directed by: John Hughes

Country of Origin: USA

Available on: Netflix

Running Time: 103 min

CW:

Faking illness to skip school, high school senior Ferris Bueller decides to make the most of his day. With best friend Cameron and girlfriend Sloane, Ferris goes on an adventure around Chicago, all while avoiding Principal Rooney, who's determined to prove Ferris is playing hooky.

Perhaps the most iconic teen film of all time, Ferris Bueller's Day Off is another gem from John Hughes, the writer/director behind The Breakfast Club, Home Alone, and more. It captures the flaunting of societal expectation intrinsic to teen rebellion movies, yet is also poignant as the characters grapple with the looming onset of adult life. Though Ferris is the most iconic of the cast, it is the supporting characters who with their many conflicts and struggles imbue this film with its heart and soul.

More Stuff!

Other films to check out:

If... (UK, 1968)

Cry-Baby (USA, 1990)

Dazed and Confused (USA, 1993)

Ghost World (USA, 2001)

Fish Tank (UK, 2009)

American Honey (USA, 2016)

Other Articles to Read:

A Timeline Of Teen Rebels On Film:

<https://www.curzonblog.com/all-posts/2017/9/13/a-timeline-of-teen-rebels-on-film>

A Hard Day's Night: The Whole World Is Watching:

<https://www.criterion.com/current/posts/3205-a-hard-day-s-night-the-whole-world-is-watching>

In praise of Daisies:

<https://lwlies.com/articles/daisies-vera-chytilova-mubi-ica-light-show/>

Save Jeanie: On 'Ferris Bueller's Day Off's' 30th Anniversary, A Tribute To The Misunderstood, Mistreated Jeanie Bueller:

<https://uproxx.com/movies/save-jeanie-on-ferris-buellers-day-offs-30th-anniversary-a-tribute-to-the-misunderstood-mistreated-jeanie-bueller/>