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ENTERTAINMENT****Screens Come to Life**

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behind in conflicts like the Palestine-Israeli conflict. The film, oddly, gives us almost no sense of the women in this community, but it is a true ministry of presence to the men. (Plays Feb. 14 and 16)

I hope no U.S. filmmaker decides to make a biopic about Lech Walesa, the leader of Poland's Solidarity movement, because it is way more satisfying to watch "**Walesa: Man of Hope**" (7). The film tracks the 19-year period in which the young Walesa rose from a simple shipyard electrician into the leader of a movement that toppled the Communist system in Poland.

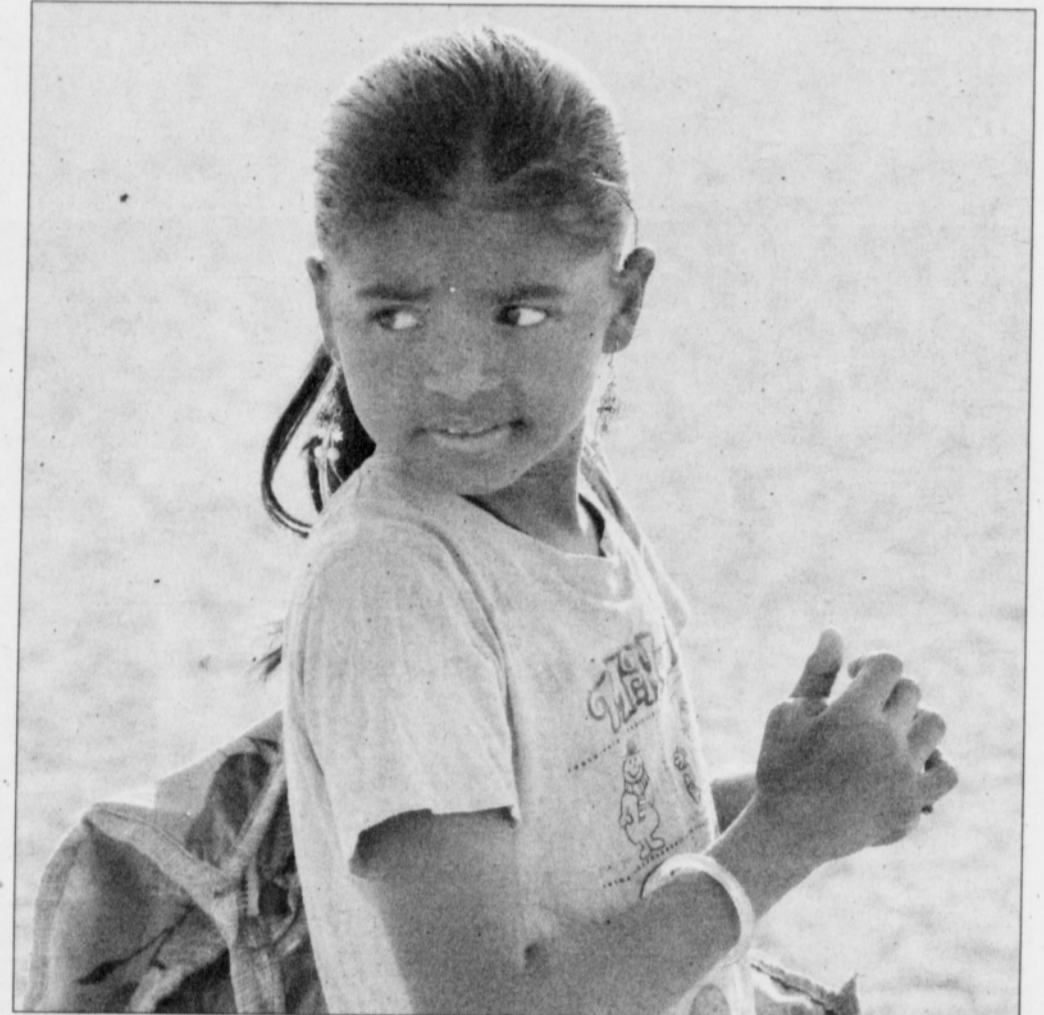
I suspect that the politics here may be a bit too complex to really do them justice, but the filmmaker wisely focuses on Walesa's ballsy personality and his relationship with his long-suffering wife Danuta. The actor who plays Walesa bears an uncanny resemblance to the real hero and the film feels very grounded in Polish culture and experience. Now if this fascinating film can just find an audience here in the U.S. (Plays Feb. 17 and 20)

These films have completed their festival run, but are worth watch watching for on Netflix or a DVD release:

"**The Good Road**" (7.5) is a depiction of a part of Indian culture that rarely makes it to American audiences. It is set in the rural desert roads of Kutch, a remote region of Gujarat, and features three intertwined stories of journeys gone awry.

The first story involves a middle-class city couple who, en route to their vacation destination, inadvertently leave their seven-year-old son behind at a roadside restaurant. Their ordeal intersects with that of a taciturn truck driver and his assistant, who are embroiled in an illegal scheme. The two end up traveling with the missing boy, and part of the film's charm is watching the boy worm his way into their companionship.

The final story involves a young orphan girl who is trying to get to the city where her grandmother lives, and encounters a strange and lovely community of young girls. The film's handling of the menace underlying this community is interestingly understated. The filmmaker has a delightfully subtle approach to developing these characters and the ominous dangers that beset them,



"The Good Road," a film from India and one of last weekend's entries at the Portland International Film Festival, is about two children lost in the Kutch desert of Gujarat and features three intertwined stories of journeys gone awry. PIFF continues through Feb. 22. For an updated schedule, visit [nwfilm.org](http://nwfilm.org).

along with the color and the sense of a sort of code that governs the communities in this sparse area of India.

"The Good Road" also features a wonderful soundtrack with acoustic Gujarati folk music.

According to Jon Savage's book, *Teenage: The Creation of Youth 1875-1945*, the concept of youth culture that now pervades Western thought is a relatively new concept that evolved during those years. The U.S. documentary "**Teenage**" (7) gives us a visual depiction of that evolution, making use of an effective combination of impressionistic archival footage and first-person narratives chronicling the experiences of teens in the U.S., Britain, and Germany during those years. It charts the impact of the emergence of child labor laws in creating more of a divide between childhood and adulthood and documents such movements as the Boy Scouts, the Nazi Youth, and various party trends, dance crazes, and youth movements that resulted in our now very-pervasive sense of adolescents as cultural drivers.

Finally, U.S. filmmakers rarely make historical epics with the moral complexity of "**Age of Uprising: The Legend of Michael Kohlhaas**" (6.5). Danish heartthrob Mads Mikkelsen stars in this French film

set in the 16th century. Kohlhaas is a successful horse trader who gets into a conflict with a wicked baron which escalates into an all-out war when the corrupt legal system of the time utterly fails to accord Kohlhaas's claim its fair due. A man of conscience who inspires loyalty in his farmhands and community, Kohlhaas refuses to drop his grievances as expected of a man of his class and becomes a formidable foe to the ruling class.

The film is less interested in the battles (a la *Braveheart*) and more interested in the twisted logic of the church and royalty of the time, which imposes on a man like Kohlhaas a moral obligation to avoid responding to wrong with violence. By that twisted logic, Kohlhaas's efforts finally move the ruling class to give him his due, but also to extract the ultimate price.

Given the cancellations last weekend, it will be especially important to check the Northwest Film Center's website ([nwfilm.org](http://nwfilm.org)) for updates to the entire Portland International Film Festival schedule. More to come!

Darleen Ortega is a judge on the Oregon Court of Appeals and the first woman of color to serve in that capacity. Her movie review column *Opinionated Judge* appears regularly in *The Portland Observer*. You can find her movie blog at [opinionatedjudge.blogspot.com](http://opinionatedjudge.blogspot.com).

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