

<p>Volume 27 Number 4  APRIL 2024</p>		<p>Website <a href="https://www.williamstown-film-society.org">https://www.williamstown-film-society.org</a> Email michaeljslee58@gmail.com Phone 0478 624 528</p>
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Council Chamber of the Town Hall, 104 Ferguson St, Williamstown, 7.30pm, Wednesday 24th April, 2024.

## Darkest Hour

There are certain combinations of actor and role that, before even a second of footage has been shot, start screaming ‘AWARD SEASON CONTENDER’. Daniel Day Lewis and Abraham Lincoln. Helen Mirren and Queen Elizabeth II. Meryl Streep and Margaret Thatcher (or Meryl Streep and anyone else). Gary Oldman and Winston Churchill is just such a bellowing combination. One of the greatest British actors playing perhaps the most famous British man of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It may be a bit facile to begin with talking about award contention, but *Darkest Hour* really is that kind of film. It’s built around a performance. It’s a solid film, beautifully shot, depicting the life of a man whose story has been told many, many times (Brian Cox, Michael Gambon, Brendon Gleeson and John Lithgow are just a few of the other actors who’ve played Churchill in the past decade). The untold tale of Churchill is not what it’s selling. It’s selling the opportunity to see Oldman play him, and nobody can say he doesn’t give everyone their money’s worth.

*Darkest Hour* begins just before Churchill, a man not beloved by the political establishment, is made Prime Minister. Britain is losing World War II. In fact, it now looks unwinnable and when he’s shunted into power many around Churchill are trying to force him to make a peace deal with Hitler. Churchill absolutely refuses to retreat quietly, insisting Britain fights on.

Oldman doesn’t do anything quietly. This is Performance with a capital P. Actually, it’s all caps. Oldman’s under excellent prosthetics to make him appropriately old and fat, but this is not a role he disappears into. He shakes, shouts and sweats through it, a hurricane blowing through dusty corridors. It is a powerful acting performance, but it’s always acting, always Gary Oldman giving his Winston Churchill. That is not necessarily a criticism, because the part asks for a thundering performance and Oldman couldn’t possibly rumble louder. It does all, though, feel rather old-fashioned. It’s a film that delivers you everything you’d expect from it, handsomely produced, confidently crafted and risk-free. When people call a film Oscar bait, this is exactly what they mean.



*By Olly Richards January 8, 2018 nme.com/reviews*

## Starbox Results

	5	4	3	2	1	<b>Average</b>
<b>Mahana</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4.6</b>

To watch a trailer (& read more) head to the 2024 program on our website

[https://: www.williamstown-film-society.org](https://www.williamstown-film-society.org)