

Jar City (Myrin)

Iceland 2006

Director

Baltasar Kormákur

Writing Credits

Baltasar Kormákur

Based on novel *Myrin* by

Arnaldur Indridason

Director of Photography

Bergsteinn Björgúlfsson

Music

Mugison

Cast*Inspector Erlendur*

Ingvar E. Sigurdsson

Eva Lind

Ágústa Eva Erlendsdóttir

Sigurður Óli

Bjorn Hlynur Haraldsson

Elinborg

Ólafía Hrönn Jónsdóttir

Orn

Atli Rafn Sigurdarson

94 minutes Subtitles

*Our next screening...***Goodbye Solo (USA)**

Tues 16 March 2010

Dir: Ramin Bahrani

Two men forge an unlikely friendship that will change their lives.

Marking a change in direction from our previous couple of screenings, this week's offering is a gripping, multi-layered crime thriller based on a best selling novel. We have shown one Icelandic film previously – *Noi Albinoi* – to some acclaim, so let's hope for another hit!

Jar City is one of the biggest films in Iceland's history. Although boasting a relatively complex plot, the true strength of the film lies in its setting. Iceland is presented as a desolate, cold place, populated by square buildings of grey stone and deserted open roads. The small population lends itself to other unusual aspects; every character is referred to almost exclusively by their first name only, and a (real life) project to catalogue the DNA of the entire country. The colours are heavily desaturated and often tinted blue to add to the sense of cold. Even Ingvar E. Sigurdsson as chief investigator Erlendur has a world-weariness that he carries through every scene. The sombre visuals complement perfectly a tale of past evils creating a chain of death and sadness. *Jar City* is a low-key, solid crime drama with an undercurrent of social commentary, elevated beyond average by superb cinematography and an elegance in style. *DVD Holocaust*

Baltasar Kormákur directs this cracking police-procedural thriller from Iceland, inspired by a real-life controversy when that country put the genetic records of its entire 300,000 population on a single database, as an ideal test sample for research into inherited diseases. How do the storylines match up? It's an intriguing puzzle that held me gripped until the very end. Surely more Inspector Erlendur stories must be on the way.

Peter Bradshaw, The Guardian

Don't expect Baltasar Kormákur to turn up on the Christmas card list of the Icelandic tourist board any time soon. Previously best known for *101 Reykjavik*, his portrait of the booze-fuelled slacker culture in the capital city, Kormákur returns with *Jar City* based on one of a popular series of crime novels. *Jar City* is a uniquely Icelandic work – as dark and brooding as the long winter nights, it is also infused with a sardonic northern humour as sour as fermented shark and so understated that you almost miss it. Seemingly disparate story lines gradually weave together with a slow, deliberate precision. It's a terrific piece of direction from Kormákur. Everything, from the look of the film to the brilliantly unsettling use of food as a recurring motif is judged perfectly.

Wendy Ide, The Times

