



Peterborough Arts Cinema

Films that make you think

Thursday 5th Feb
7:30 pm

Still Pushing Pineapples

UK, 12A, 93 mins, 2025

Director; Kim Hopkins

Stars; Dene Michael, Anne Betteridge, Tom Collins

Still Pushing Pineapples is a 2025 documentary by Kim Hopkins that follows former Black Lace singer Dene Michael, famous for the novelty hit "Agadoo," as he tours the UK's working men's clubs and Spain, still chasing musical relevance with his devoted 89-year-old mother and new girlfriend, Hayley, exploring themes of aging, working-class resilience, fleeting fame, and finding love and purpose under the shadow of an infamous earworm.



How Wales helped Black Lace singer step out of shadow of 'Agadoo' Bethan Tanner Nation Cymru

To say that Wales has a connection to music would be an understatement. Music is woven into the history and culture of the Land of Song, from the tradition of choral singing, to the Eisteddfod; to arguably our most famous export, Tom Jones. This influence made its impact on me from the earliest age: we didn't recite the Lord's prayer at primary school, we sang it.

When I moved to Sheffield for university, I was struck by the feeling that South Wales and Yorkshire were kindred spirits: both full of towns and cities reimagining themselves in the shadow of 20th-century industrialisation; both regions shaped by a working-class resilience, intertwined with creative energy. With a 2022 study finding that there are now half as many professional creatives from working-class backgrounds in the UK than there were during the 60s and 70s however, it is clear significant inequalities still exist in terms of turning that artistic energy into sustainable careers.

Director Kim Hopkins touches upon some of these themes in her new documentary, Still Pushing Pineapples, a film that will resonate with anyone who has spent time in a Welsh working man's club or a rundown Blackpool ballroom. The film opens on a dark stage; at its centre, a man dressed as a pineapple. It's an absurd, oddly melancholic image which acts as the perfect precursor to the sweet, funny, poignant film that follows. The distant voice of a Top of the Pops presenter echoes through the film, "... have you ever wondered who's in that fruit?"

Dene finds himself at a perpetual fork in the road: to keep the money coming in from nostalgic club nights where audiences pay to hear him sing the song he's reported to have sung 45,000 times; or to follow his heart and break free of his legacy, creating a new audience for his own music.

Nostalgia is a word synonymous with rosy-hued warmth. For Dene however, it's a double-edged sword, offering him his livelihood but making re-invention almost impossible. What does it do to a person when you are forced to continually play your greatest hits, with nothing from the last thirty years of your life included? What does it mean to grow older and feel as though you still have so much to give but not the opportunities to give it? When Dene's manager asks him to shave his beard off before a gig, Dene complies without question, frustrating Hayley who continually encourages him to be himself; to live in the present. A fresh-faced Dene Michael – the one they saw on TV in the '80s – is what the audience want however. At times it feels as though he has no choice.

