



A NEW DEAL FOR UK FILM AUDIENCES & INDUSTRY

Collected, curated and connected:

brand new video-on-demand service is unveiled

***7 channels including day and date releases for *The Selfish Giant*
and *The Epic of Everest* and biggest ever archive release***

EMBARGOED: until 12 noon on Wednesday 2nd October 2013

BFI (British Film Institute) Chair Greg Dyke today unveiled the BFI Player, a brand new video-on-demand platform for the millions that enjoy independent and specialised film and who will now get the full BFI experience, wherever they live. Available nationwide from 9th October, the BFI Player will support the UK's film industry by offering new distribution opportunities whilst making great film accessible to the widest possible audience across the UK. Launching to coincide with the BFI London Film Festival, the BFI Player is a pioneering new way of taking cultural assets into the digital age and will offer a mix of 7 new channels, or 'collections', including behind-the-scenes at the Festival, contemporary and archive films – including GOTHIC and Cult cinema – and, for the first time ever, the full 28 hours of rare Edwardian film footage from filmmakers Mitchell and Kenyon.

Offering a mix of free (approx. 60%) and pay-per-view (approx. 40%) content that includes over 1,000 items, including hundreds of feature films in the launch period, the BFI Player will go further than current VOD platforms by offering deep exploration and understanding of film content, chosen and contextualised by the experts at the BFI, all in HD quality. The BFI Player will evolve and grow as new partners and increasing content come on board over the coming months, with Phase 2 of the BFI Player set to launch in early 2014.

Special events will be a feature of the BFI Player. Today it is also announced that Clio Barnard's *The Selfish Giant* will launch on the BFI Player simultaneously with its UK theatrical release on 25th October, and the BFI restoration of *The Epic Of Everest* (1924) will launch on the BFI Player on the same day as its premiere at the BFI London Film Festival and UK cinema release on 18th October.

Greg Dyke, BFI Chair, said: *"The launch of the BFI Player is a defining moment in the BFI's 80 year history – it will unlock the past, present and future of British film and, most importantly, offers a new deal for UK audiences by ensuring that as many people as possible across the UK get access to great films. I'm really excited about the BFI Player's potential. The BFI is pivotal to identifying great films and nurturing and giving a voice to great filmmakers in the UK and now offers a platform to take these stories out to whole new audiences."*

Edward Humphrey, BFI Director of Digital, said: *"Audience behaviour has shifted to embrace digital platforms. Now the BFI Player gives us a foundation from which we can support a digital future for film lovers and bring the story of film to a truly national audience. The UK film industry leads the world in digital innovation and we hope the BFI Player will quickly become an essential element in the distribution models of tomorrow."*

The BFI Player will launch with seven different collections:

- **BFI London Film Festival Presents;** exclusive red carpet action, talent interviews and special behind-the-scenes access to the UK's most important film festival and a selection of films and highlights from previous festivals
- **Backed by the BFI;** a collection of contemporary British films, each supported by the BFI's Film Fund
- **GOTHIC: The Dark Heart of Film;** The BFI's blockbuster project featuring compelling themes *Monstrous, The Dark Arts, Haunted* and *Love is a Devil*
- **Edwardian Britain;** for the first time ever, all 28 hours of the extraordinary films of pioneering filmmakers Sagar Mitchell and James Kenyon made between 1900 and 1913
- **Sight & Sound Selects;** a growing selection of iconic film classics, hand picked by Sight & Sound magazine
- **Cult Cinema;** the Flipside of British cinema - weird and wonderful films that have slipped through the cracks of history
- **Inside Film;** documentaries and interviews about the art and industry of filmmaking

Enabling distributors, empowering filmmakers

The BFI Lottery Film Fund invests in distinctive new British filmmaking on every step of the journey – from development to production to distribution. The BFI Player brings our support full circle, bringing the best of Contemporary British Cinema directly to audiences.

The Selfish Giant, from content partner Curzon's Artificial Eye label, is the critically acclaimed debut fiction feature from Clio Barnard and will be available through the BFI Player on 25th October the day it premieres in UK cinemas. Co-developed and financed by the BFI Film Fund, *The Selfish Giant* won the Europa Cinemas Label as Best European Film in Director's Fortnight at Cannes 2013, and premieres in the UK in Official Competition at the BFI London Film Festival.

Breathing new life into the landscape for innovative release models, the BFI Player will provide a richer and wider relationship between distributors and fans of independent cinema across the UK.

Working with major partners

The BFI has a new partnership with ITV Studios to bring content from the latest BFI blockbuster project GOTHIC to the BFI Player.

Dan Gopal, SVP, Global Digital Media & Home Entertainment, ITV Studios Global Entertainment (ITVS GE), said: *"The BFI is dedicated to preserving and promoting British film culture and at ITVS GE we own the rights to the renowned Rank and ITC film libraries, so together we can make these collections accessible online to fans of classic British cinema across the UK."*

Making the archive accessible: a platform for incredible stories

The discovery of the films of Mitchell and Kenyon was one of the defining moments in recent British film history, transforming our understanding of early cinema in Britain and revealing what were once considered minor figures to have been peerless chroniclers of everyday life in their times. These amazing images - many as sharp and clear as if they were shot yesterday - bring to life the streets, workplaces, sport and holidays of our Edwardian ancestors. The complete collection of films, some 28 hours, will be available to the general public in its entirety for the first time.

The Epic of Everest is the 57th BFI London Film Festival's Archive Gala on the 18th October and, alongside its UK theatrical release that day, will be simultaneously available on the BFI Player. *Epic of Everest* is a largely unseen masterpiece and a record of the remarkable third expedition to Mount

Everest in 1924 that tragically cost the lives of Mallory and Irvine. The film is directed by Captain John Noel and is commonly considered to be one of the most extraordinary treasures in the BFI National Archive. *Epic of Everest* is debuting on the BFI Player 89 years after the climb and 60 years after Everest was officially conquered. The film poignantly captures the tragedy of the expedition and also offers some of the earliest and most beautiful film footage of life in Tibet.

The BFI Player is working with two lead technology partners. Online video playback in HD quality is provided by Ooyala and the web user interface has been designed and built by Capablue.

Ends

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NOTES TO EDITORS

One-to-one interviews with Greg Dyke, Edward Humphrey, BFI Director of Digital, Ben Roberts, Director of BFI Film Fund and Heather Stewart BFI Creative Director can be prior-arranged for after the briefing.

About the BFI

The BFI is the lead body for film in the UK with the ambition to create a flourishing film environment in which innovation, opportunity and creativity can thrive by:

- Connecting audiences to the widest choice of British and World cinema
- Preserving and restoring the most significant film collection in the world for today and future generations
- Championing emerging and world class film makers in the UK

- Investing in creative, distinctive and entertaining work
- Promoting British film and talent to the world
- Growing the next generation of film makers and audiences

The BFI is now a Government arm's-length body and distributor of Lottery funds for film. The BFI serves a public role which covers the cultural, creative and economic aspects of film in the UK. It delivers this role:

- As the UK-wide organisation for film, a charity core funded by Government
- By providing Lottery and Government funds for film across the UK
- By working with partners to advance the position of film in the UK.

Founded in 1933, the BFI is a registered charity governed by Royal Charter.

The BFI Board of Governors is chaired by Greg Dyke.



About Capable

Capable creates innovative TV solutions that harness the power of internet and TV. It designs and delivers TV Everywhere solutions, Connected TV interfaces and apps and compelling second screen solutions that interact, transact and engage with consumers wherever they are.

About Ooyala

Ooyala delivers personalised video experiences across all screens and is a leader in online video management, publishing, analytics and monetisation. Ooyala's integrated suite of technologies and services gives content owners the power to expand audiences through deep insights that drive increased viewer engagement and revenue from video.