



BFI PRESENTS SHAKESPEARE ON FILM WITH IAN MCKELLEN

**BIGGEST EVER PROGRAMME OF SHAKESPEARE ON FILM IN THE UK AND
ACROSS THE WORLD WITH THE BRITISH COUNCIL**

- *Ian McKellen live on stage to present re-mastered Richard III for UK wide simulcast and opens Shanghai Film Festival with Shakespeare on Film*
- *International tour of 18 British films to 110 countries with British Council*
- *Play On! Shakespeare in Silent Cinema premieres at BFI Southbank with new live score by the Musicians of Shakespeare's Globe*
- *New 4K restorations of Franco Zeffirelli's Romeo and Juliet and Akira Kurosawa's Ran*
- *Includes landmark films by Laurence Olivier, Orson Welles, Roman Polanski and Kenneth Branagh*

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Embargoed until 11:00 Monday 25 January 2016

As the world celebrates Shakespeare 400 years after his death, the BFI, the British Council and Ian McKellen today unveiled **BFI Presents Shakespeare on Film**. With no other writer impacting so greatly on cinema, this programme explores on an epic scale how filmmakers have adapted, been inspired by and interpreted Shakespeare's work for the big screen. It incorporates screenings and events at BFI Southbank (April-May) and UK-wide, newly digitised content on BFI Player, new DVD/Blu-ray releases and film education activity. As part of Shakespeare Lives, the British Council and the GREAT Britain campaign's major global programme for 2016, celebrating Shakespeare's works and his influence on culture, education and society, the BFI has also curated an international touring programme of 18 key British Shakespeare films that will go to 110 countries – from Cuba to Iraq, Russia to the USA – the most extensive film programme ever undertaken. The BFI is also part of the Shakespeare 400 consortium, led by King's College.

Ian McKellen said "400 years on, Shakespeare's plays continue to dominate stages worldwide, mostly of course in translation, challenging actors, directors, designers and audiences."

The BFI's "Shakespeare on Film" is more than just timely, it is a glimpse of the matchless collection of brilliant endeavour from world-beating Shakespeare experts like Laurence Olivier, Peter Brook and Kenneth Branagh whose films have popularised Shakespeare over the years. Their theatre-roots are evident. They have respect for the text and cut lines with regret.

*Other directors have successfully translated the stage plays for the screen, aiming, perhaps to make great cinema than great Shakespeare. Here, I relish Baz Luhrman's *Romeo and Juliet*; Julie Taymor's *Titus Andronicus*; Orson Welles' *Chimes at Midnight*, Kurosawa's *Throne of Blood* and *Ran*. And there are more.*

I will not be the only one to be grateful to the BFI for their initiative in this anniversary year."

The Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport, Rt Hon John Whittingdale MP said: *"Shakespeare has influenced and inspired audiences around the world for centuries. As the BFI undertakes the most extensive film programme ever to celebrate his work, I'm delighted that even more people will have the opportunity to enjoy the legacy of Shakespeare. From new adaptations, to events and a tour through 110 nations, this bold new project will help us remember one the greatest writers of all time."*

Ian McKellen and Richard III (1995)

Spearheading the project, award-winning actor and writer Ian McKellen will travel around the world to present and discuss Shakespeare on Film. Ian starred in and co-adapted **Richard III** (1995), directed and co-adapted by Richard Loncraine and co-starring Annette Bening, Maggie Smith, Jim Broadbent, Kristen Scott Thomas, Robert Downey Jr and Dominic West. The film will be simulcast, in partnership with Park Circus, across UK cinemas on 28 April with a special post-film on-stage discussion between Ian McKellen and Richard Loncraine live from BFI Southbank. The film is set in the 1930s and shot largely on location in London, taking in iconic locations from St Pancras station and Tate Modern to Battersea Power Station and Hackney's haunting gas holders. **Richard III** is also being screened at BFI Southbank, will be part of the international touring programme and re-released by the BFI in a DVD/Blu-ray Dual Format Edition on 23 May, with brand new additional material, including new audio commentary.

Ian will attend the Shanghai International Film Festival's Opening Night on 11 June and take part in a special on stage event at the festival on 12 June. Plans for Ian to travel to other countries as part of the tour will be announced soon.

Ian's illustrious career spans six decades and he has been performing Shakespeare on stage and screen for the majority of it: from breakthrough performances as *Henry V* and *Edward II* at the Edinburgh Festival (1969) to the title role in Trevor Nunn's acclaimed production of *Macbeth* with Judi Dench in 1976 and the opening ceremony of the London Paralympics (2012) when he portrayed Prospero from *The Tempest*.

BFI Head Curator, Robin Baker said *"No writer has had greater impact on cinema – or inspired more films. At the latest count, IMDb lists Shakespeare as the 'writer' of 1120 titles. For me the best*

adaptations of Shakespeare are those that have taken his themes, situations, characters or language and presented them in ways that are purely cinematic: from the immediacy of the epic, bloody battles of Branagh's Henry V or Kurosawa's Ran (King Lear) to the intimacy of the close-ups used in the love scenes of Zeffirelli's Romeo and Juliet. Film and TV makes Shakespeare's work more accessible than any other medium and the BFI National Archive looks after the world's largest collection of film adaptations of his work so I'm delighted that so many of them are going to be shared with audiences across the world in cinemas, online and on DVD."

Play On! Shakespeare in Silent Cinema

It is believed that around 500 Shakespeare films were made in the silent era and this new film is a playful compilation of scenes from the best surviving adaptations held by the BFI National Archive, including the first ever Shakespeare film **King John** (1899) and a rare discovery of a 20-year old John Gielgud's earliest appearance on film in **Romeo** (1922). Other films from the 26 titles sampled include **The Tempest** (1908), **The Merchant of Venice** (1916) – shot on location in Venice, **Julius Caesar** (1909), **Macbeth** (1909) and **Richard III** (1911). The BFI has commissioned the musicians and composers of Shakespeare's Globe to write a score for the film which will take an innovative approach, marrying a different composer for each of the film's five acts (see Notes to Editors for credits). The film will premiere at BFI Southbank, play UK-wide in cinemas and on the international tour, and will be available in the summer on BFI DVD and BFI Player.

International Touring Programme: BFI Presents Shakespeare on Film around the world

The BFI is working in partnership with the British Council, as part of the global Shakespeare Lives in 2016 programme, to present 18 key British Shakespeare films in 110 countries, with activity ranging from single films shown in embassies, schools and English language teaching centres, to film programmes in partner cinemas, film festivals and in grand scale outdoor events. Many of the international events will be offered free of charge, so will be widely accessible to a variety of audiences from Azerbaijan to Zimbabwe. The programme will feature key titles including Loncraine's **Richard III** (1995), Zeffirelli's **Romeo and Juliet** (1968) and the BFI's **Play On! Shakespeare in Silent Cinema** compilation. Also featuring as part of the Shakespeare Lives programme will be an exciting package of brand new Shakespeare-inspired commissions produced by Film London.

Highlights of the year to come so far include:

- **Slovenia** will launch the first official international screenings on 27 January with **Henry V** (1944), Polanski's **Macbeth** (1979) Jarman's **The Tempest** (1979) and Hickox's **Theatre of Blood** (1973)
- **Brazil** is creating 'Shakespeare House' at the Paraty International Literary Festival (FLIP) in late June which will showcase the BFI curated films
- Large scale series of event screenings being developed in **Cuba**
- In the **USA, The Museum of Modern Art, New York**, will be featuring highlights of the programme this autumn
- Cinemas and outdoor locations in **Iraq**, including a refugee camp in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq (KRI), will use the universal themes of Shakespeare to highlight the humanitarian situation

- In **East Asia** international film festivals including **Shanghai, Beijing and Hong Kong** will present the programme from April to June
- **Poland** will present **Play On! Shakespeare in Silent Cinema** with local live music accompaniment at an open-air screening as part of Wrocław European Capital of Culture, and the BFI curated films will screen throughout the year
- On Midsummer Night (21 June) **Russia** will present a large scale summer festival dedicated to Shakespeare in one of Moscow's central parks
- **Italy** will be exploring the rich connection between Shakespeare's plays and Italian locations by screening films in 20 cities and a series of high profile events
- **Greece** will present 'Shakespeare in the City' in partnership with the Athens International Film Festival, including open air screenings in archaeological sites, squares and parks
- Plans are being developed in many other countries including **India** and **sub-Saharan Africa**

Briony Hanson, Director of Film, British Council comments *"We are thrilled to present a selection of work from a tour of classic British feature films to a programme of newly commissioned shorts by female creative teams that all demonstrate Shakespeare's enduring relevance as source material. The Shakespeare on Film tour will be the most ambitious touring film programme that the British Council has ever offered and our aim is to ensure that Shakespeare Lives in each of the 110 countries in our network."*

Shakespeare Lives 2016 is led by the British Council and the GREAT Britain campaign and includes a major partnership with UK-based charity Voluntary Services Overseas (VSO) to provide education overseas. The British Council's work with film is designed to showcase UK film internationally and find opportunities for cultural exchange between film communities here and those everywhere else. For more information, please see www.shakespearelives.org.

BFI Southbank – programme and events

The programme launches on 31 March with the premiere of **Play On! Shakespeare in Silent Cinema** with the score performed live by the Shakespeare's Globe musicians. April will focus on the **Classics**, including Laurence Olivier's **Hamlet** (1948), Kenneth Branagh's **Henry V** (1989), Roman Polanski's **Macbeth** (1971) and Franco Zeffirelli's **Romeo and Juliet** (1968) brought to life with a new 4K restoration and presented in a special event and extended run at BFI Southbank and a UK-wide release by Park Circus.

In May, **Shakespeare Re-imagined** will explore how filmmakers have taken inspiration from Shakespeare's texts and re-interpreted them. Screenings include a newly re-mastered **All Night Long** (Basil Dearden, 1961) set in the London jazz world and inspired by *Othello*; a new restoration in 3D of George Sidney's musical **Kiss Me Kate** (1953) and Gil Younger's **10 Things I Hate About You** (1999) starring Heath Ledger – both based on *The Taming of the Shrew*; Derek Jarman's **The Angelic Conversation** (1985) featuring Shakespeare's *Sonnets* read by Judi Dench, and Gus Van Sant's **My Own Private Idaho** (1991) based on *Henry IV parts 1 and 2* and *Henry V*. Fred M Wilcox's **Forbidden Planet** (1956) puts a sci-fi spin on *The Tempest*, **Theatre of Blood** (Hickox, 1972), inspired by

Shakespeare's death scenes, will appeal to horror fans while **The Lion King** (Roger Allers/Rob Minkoff, 1994) gives younger audiences a route into *Hamlet*.

International adaptations include a new 4K restoration of **Ran** (1985), directed by Japanese master Kurosawa and based on *King Lear*, which will have an extended run at BFI Southbank and is being released by STUDIOCANAL and Independent Cinema Office UK-wide from 1 April and on DVD/Blu-ray on 2 May. A focus on Indian Shakespeare from 29-30 April will feature three films from Indian director Vishal Bhardwaj; **Maqbool** (2003), **Omkara** (2006) and **Haider** (2014), based on *Macbeth*, *Othello* and *Hamlet* respectively with Bhardwaj himself discussing the films on stage with the scriptwriters.

TV previews

BFI Southbank will also be previewing, with on-stage cast and crew interviews, **The Hollow Crown: The Wars of the Roses, Henry VI part 1 & 2** starring Tom Sturridge, Hugh Bonneville, Sophie Okonedo, Sally Hawkins, Michael Gambon and Benedict Cumberbatch, on 29 March – due to be broadcast on BBC Two in April. A new BBC Arena Documentary '**All the World's a Screen: Shakespeare on Film**' previews on 14 April which will look at the complex history, artistic contradictions and cultural achievements of Shakespeare, as translated into moving image. The film will be co-produced by Arena series editor Anthony Wall and Film London Chief Executive Adrian Wootton. The BFI is also partnering with the BBC on their Shakespeare Day Live, on BBC Arts and online on 23 April, providing archive film footage.

BFI Player / BFI Mediatheques / BFI National Archive

The BFI National Archive holds the world's greatest collection of moving image material relating to Shakespeare, the world's greatest playwright. Now, thanks to National Lottery funding through the Unlocking Film Heritage project, many rare and exciting Shakespearean film and television titles – some unseen for decades – have been digitised and are being made available to audiences nationwide for viewing online, often for the very first time, on BFI Player. These include: animations including **Oh'Phelia A Cartoon Burlesque** (1919), vintage travelogues, musical novelties, newsreels, adverts and rarely seen fiction shorts and features inspired by the Bard's works, ranging from period drama **The Immortal Gentleman** (1935) to contemporary comedy **Romeo of the Spirits** (1976).

A selection of classic televised Shakespeare plays and bold re-interpretations spanning five decades will be available free in the nine BFI Mediatheques around the UK from April, offering a crash course in the Bard on the box. These include:

- The first televised Shakespeare to feature a black actor as **Othello** – Gordon Heath in Tony Richardson's 1955 BBC production
- **Macbeth on the Estate** (1997) Penny Woolcock's ambitious re-staging of the Scottish Play on Birmingham's Ladywood estate, with a cast of drug dealers and street gangs
- Three sinister child 'witches' in **Romeo and Juliet** (1992) a tragic edition of *Shakespeare: The Animated Tales*, S4C's award-winning series of abridged plays

Hamlet (1948) Exhibition

From 1 April until 12 June an exhibition in the Mezzanine Gallery at BFI Southbank will showcase items from multi-award-winning *Hamlet* (1948) directed by and starring Laurence Olivier. These include:

- The original Hamlet costume worn by Olivier and designed by Roger Furse. Furse was the first costume designer to win an Oscar in this category which had not previously been recognised by the Academy.
- A souvenir brochure, produced as a tie-in between the Rank Organisation and Pollock's Toy Theatres and sold to the public to enable people to stage their own miniature version of *Hamlet* at home. It contains a cut-out theatre with characters, scenery as well as suggested dialogue.
- An original press campaign book, which also contains fashion items including a Hamlet dress fabric and scarf as well as 'Ophelia' sandals and handbags by Dolcis.

A number of *Hamlet* production designs held in the BFI National Archive in 2015 were donated by Tracy Granger, the daughter of actor Stewart Granger and Jean Simmons, who played Ophelia in the production. The designs, both by Roger Furse include:

- A watercolour and ink production design of the scene where Hamlet receives the King and Queen
- One of a number of drawings of Ophelia, played by Jean Simmons

BFI Education

The BFI is collaborating with various partners and organisations to provide a way into teaching Shakespeare through film. Alongside a new Adult Education course: Shakespeare on Film, a Study Day on Global Shakespeare and Family Workshops on Silent Shakespeare, these include:

- A focus on diverse audiences will include actors Hugh Quarshie and Bert Caesar leading a discussion around black Shakespeare; a screening and event around O (*Othello* with Josh Hartnett as Iago); screening and talk around Makibefo (South African *Macbeth*) and a Study Day on Music in Shakespeare films with University of 3rd Age
- Through the BFI supported, UK-wide education programme from Into Film, young people will be able to watch and discuss over 30 Shakespeare-inspired films, including *The Tempest* (2010); *Caesar Must Die*; *The Lion King* and Zeffirelli's *Romeo And Juliet*, supported by resources ranging from film guides to interview videos and curricular resources
- A resource to support the BFI **Play On!** *Tempest* film, has been developed by Into Film to enable teachers to explore this adaptation of the text, relate it to Shakespeare's original text and immerse themselves in the world of silent film
- A selection of Shakespeare-related film titles and special collections material from the BFI National Archive for the new TES super collection *Teaching Shakespeare*, including Play On! titles from the BFI National Archive, and Stratford-upon-Avon travelogues, along with contextualisation and teaching ideas. <http://www.tes.com/teaching-shakespeare>

- Historian Judith Buchanan will be leading an education event on Silent Shakespeare in May exploring the idea that silent Shakespeare has the most potential for cinematic adaption of all

BFI Film Fund – Bill

BFI Film Fund Lottery funding supported the development, production and distribution of a new take on Shakespeare's story. **Bill** (dir. Richard Bracewell) tells the story of what really happened during Shakespeare's 'Lost Years' – how hopeless lute player Bill Shakespeare leaves his family and home to follow his dream. It's a tale of murderous kings, spies, lost loves, and a plot to blow up Queen Elizabeth! The film, which was shot in Yorkshire, stars an award-winning cast including the team behind the BBC's *Horrible Histories* – Mathew Baynton, Simon Farnaby, Martha Howe-Douglas, Jim Howick, Laurence Rickard, Ben Willbond – with Helen McCrory and Damian Lewis. Released in the UK in 2015, **BILL** can be seen on BFI Player from 12 February.

A BFI Film Audience Network (FAN) UK-wide film programme, led by Film Hub London, will be announced in March.

Join in the conversation on Twitter and Facebook via @BFI and facebook.com/BritishFilmInstitute using #ShakespeareLives.

NOTES TO EDITORS

A selection of images for journalistic use can be found at www.image.net under BFI UK Publicity > Shakespeare on Film

Clips for broadcast from Richard III, Ran, Romeo and Juliet and a selection of silent Shakespeare films are available to download at Panther

<http://panther4.dmsukltd.com/> e: guest.pol@dmsukltd.com p: Letmein1

Press contacts:

Ian McKellen / General

Judy Wells, Head of Press and PR , BFI

Email: judy.wells@bfi.org.uk

Tel +44 (0) 207 957 8919

Mobile: 07984 180501

BFI Southbank Programme and Events

Liz Parkinson, Press Officer

Email: liz.parkinson@bfi.org.uk

Tel +44 (0) 207 957 8918

Mobile: 07891 602864

Silent Shakespeare

Brian Robinson, Communications Manager, Archive & Heritage, BFI,

Email: brian.robinson@bfi.org.uk

Tel +44 (0) 207 957 8940

Mobile: 07740 171968

DVD / Theatrical releases

Jill Reading, Press Officer

Email: jill.reading@bfi.org.uk

Tel +44 (0) 207 957 4759

Mobile: 07876 033966

Shakespeare Lives, British Council

Mary Doherty, Senior Press Officer, British Council

Email: Mary.doherty@britishcouncil.org

Tel +44 (0) 207 389 3144

About the BFI

The BFI is the lead organisation 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 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 the British Council

The British Council is the UK's international organisation for cultural relations and educational opportunities. We create international opportunities for the people of the UK and other countries and build trust between them worldwide.

We work in more than 100 countries and our 8,000 staff – including 2,000 teachers – work with thousands of professionals and policy makers and millions of young people every year by teaching English, sharing the arts and delivering education and society programmes.

The British Council Film department links UK films and filmmakers to new international audiences, profiling the innovation, diversity and excellence of British films around the world and finding opportunities for creative exchange.

For more information, please see www.britishcouncil.org/film

ABOUT SHAKESPEARE LIVES

Shakespeare Lives is a major global programme for 2016 celebrating Shakespeare's works and his influence on culture, education and society on the 400th anniversary of his death and is possible due to the unprecedented number of partnerships and collaborations between the British Council, the GREAT Britain campaign partners and organisations including the BBC, the BFI (British Film Institute), the National Theatre, the Royal Shakespeare Company, the Shakespeare 400 consortium, the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust and Shakespeare's Globe.

For more information, please see www.shakespearelives.org.

About Shakespeare's Globe

Founded by the pioneering American actor and director Sam Wanamaker, Shakespeare's Globe is dedicated to the exploration of Shakespeare's work and the theatre for which he wrote. Since it opened in 1997, Shakespeare's Globe has become one of the most popular visitor destinations in the UK, at the heart of the regeneration of London's Bankside. Shakespeare's Globe is a UK registered charity and operates without annual government funding. Together, Globe Theatre, Globe Exhibition & Tour and Globe Education seek to further the experience and international understanding of Shakespeare in performance. Under the leadership of Artistic Director Dominic Dromgoole, the Globe Theatre has gained an international reputation for world-class Shakespeare, welcoming 600,000 visitors annually. From 2016, Shakespeare's Globe welcomes Emma Rice as its new Artistic Director.

Confirmed composers for Play On! Shakespeare in Silent Film include Stephen Warbeck (Oscar® winner for Best Original Score for **Shakespeare in Love** and BAFTA for **The Hollow Crown**), Jules Maxwell (*Merchant of Venice*, *Antony & Cleopatra*, and *Dr. Faustus* at the Globe), Olly Fox (*Macbeth*, *As You Like It*, *Dido Queen of Carthage*, and *The Mysteries* at the Globe), and Alex Baranowski (*Hamlet* at the National Theatre, *Cymbeline* and the *Henry VI* trilogy at the Globe).