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Bollywood duo top new BFI poll revealing favourite film and TV couples

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STRICTLY EMBARGOED UNTIL 00.01hrs Friday 18th DECEMBER 2015. LONDON.

- Raj and Simran from Bollywood classic *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* voted favourite romantic couple in the UK and internationally
- *Outlander's* Claire and Jamie top international TV poll, *Poldark's* Ross and Demelza win British hearts
- 3 gay couples appear across the two polls in *Brokeback Mountain*, *Torchwood*, and *Glee*
- British audiences love 'will they, won't they' couples

The BFI today reveals the favourite couples from the world of film and TV, as voted for by the British public, as well as thousands of people from around the globe. Top film couple, both in the UK and internationally, is Raj and Simran from the film that defined the word Bollywood *Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge* (1995), or *DDLJ* as it is better known, which celebrated its 20th anniversary this year. The result comes on the day of the worldwide release of *Dilwale* (2015), the latest in a number of films to reunite actors Shah Rukh Khan and Kajol on screen. The accolade of top TV couple overall (and also in the Scottish vote) goes to newcomers Claire (Caitriona Balfe) and Jamie (Sam Heughan) from fantasy adventure *Outlander* (2014), from Amazon Prime's VOD service, with Ross (Aidan Turner) and Demelza (Eleanor Tomlinson) from BBC1's *Poldark* (2015) topping the British vote. The poll was conducted as part of the BFI's major UK-wide season dedicated to romance on the big and small screen - **BFI LOVE** in partnership with Plusnet.

The TV poll shows the British audiences are loyal to their region with the pioneering Newcastle-set sitcom *Boy Meets Girl* (2015) starring transgender actor Rebecca Root as Judy, a transgender woman in her forties who falls in love with Leo (Henry Hepple), ten years her junior, topping the poll in the North East of England; the Highland adventure *Outlander* topping the vote in Scotland; and Cornish-set *Poldark* topping the poll in the South West. (The full regional results are available below.) The TV poll in particular reflects audiences' love of the anticipation of romance and 'will they, won't they' couples, with Mulder (David Duchovny) and Scully (Gillian Anderson) from *The X Files* (1993-2002), The Doctor (David Tennant) and Rose (Billie Piper) from *Doctor Who* (2005-present), Chuck (Ed Westwick) and Blair (Leighton Meester) from *Gossip Girl* (2007-12) and Tim (Martin Freeman) and Dawn (Lucy Davis) from *The Office* (2001-03) all featuring in the top ten.

While the TV poll is dominated by contemporary couples, the film poll results demonstrate that classic couples still resonate with audiences, with top ten appearances from *Gone With the Wind's* (1939) Rhett (Clark Gable) and Scarlett (Vivien Leigh), *Casablanca's* (1942) Rick (Humphrey Bogart) and Ilsa (Ingrid Bergman) and the eponymous heroes of *When Harry Met Sally...* (1989), played by Billy Crystal and Meg Ryan, which is currently back in cinemas across the UK as part of **BFI LOVE**. Also performing very strongly are Jesse (Ethan Hawke) and Celine (Julie Delpy) from Richard Linklater's *Before Trilogy* (1995, 2004, 2013) which comes at number 2 in the film poll. With *Star Wars The Force Awakens* primed to become the biggest selling film of all time, Sci-Fi fan favourites Han Solo (Harrison Ford) and Princess Leia (Carrie Fisher) sneak into the top ten at number 10 - fans await the fate of the couple with baited breath over thirty years since they last graced our screens in *Return of the Jedi* (1983).

Both polls also feature iconic gay couples, with *Glee's* Kurt (Chris Colfer) and Blaine (Darren Criss) being just pipped to the top spot in the TV poll, and *Torchwood's* (2006-11) Jack (John Barrowman) and Ianto (Gareth David-Lloyd) coming in at number 5; meanwhile the heart-breaking romance between Jack (Jake Gyllenhaal) and Ennis (Heath Ledger) in Ang Lee's Oscar-winning *Brokeback Mountain* (2005) struck a chord with audiences, being voted into the film top ten at number 7.

DDLJ, starring Bollywood legends Shah Rukh Khan and Kajol, may not be very familiar to some UK audiences, but there is no denying that the film is quite simply a worldwide phenomenon. It turned its stars into Bollywood megastars, and holds the world record for the longest continuous plays in a cinema, having been screened daily in the Maratha Mandir Cinema in Mumbai every day since its release over 20 years ago. As part of the BFI's LOVE season the BFI Southbank worked with Yash Raj Films to celebrate the film with a special 20th anniversary complete with Bollywood dancers and a nationwide competition to find the UK's 'real Raj and Simran'.

The result of the TV poll is perhaps surprising, with Amazon Prime's *Outlander* taking the top spot - the fact that a couple from a TV series only available on-demand demonstrates how significant VOD has become as audiences' viewing habits change. *Outlander* follows Claire, a married WWII nurse in 1945, who is thrust back in time 200 years, when she encounters the dashing highland warrior Jamie and becomes embroiled in the Jacobite risings. Based on the historical time-travel novels by Diana Gabaldon and shot on location in Scotland the show has built a dedicated and vocal online fandom, who have helped propel it to the top of the BFI's Greatest TV couples poll.

A BFI spokesperson will be available for interview.

The full top ten for film and television, both overall and in the UK only, can be found below, with regional data following that.

Overall Film Top 10:

1. DDLJ – Raj and Simran
2. Before Trilogy – Jesse and Celine
3. Gone With the Wind – Scarlett and Rhett
4. Casablanca – Rick and Ilsa
5. True Romance – Clarence and Alabama
6. The Princess Bride – Buttercup and Westley
7. Brokeback Mountain – Jack and Ennis
8. Twilight – Bella and Edward
9. When Harry Met Sally... - Harry and Sally
10. Star Wars – Han and Leia

Overall TV Top 10:

1. Outlander – Claire and Jamie
2. Glee – Kurt and Blaine
3. Poldark – Ross and Demelza
4. Gossip Girl – Chuck and Blair
5. Torchwood – Jack and Ianto
6. The X Files – Mulder and Scully
7. Doctor Who – The Doctor and Rose
8. Pride and Prejudice – Darcy and Elizabeth
9. Parks and Recreation – Leslie and Ben
10. The Office – Tim and Dawn

UK Only Film Top 10:

1. DDLJ – Raj and Simran
2. Before Trilogy – Jesse and Celine
3. Casablanca – Rick and Ilsa
4. True Romance – Clarence and Alabama
5. Gone with the Wind – Scarlett and Rhett
6. The Princess Bride – Buttercup and Westley
7. Brief Encounter – Laura and Alec
8. When Harry Met Sally... - Harry and Sally
9. Brokeback Mountain – Jack and Ennis
10. Star Wars – Han and Leia

East Midlands

Film Top 5:

1. The Princess Bride
2. DDLJ
3. True Romance
4. Brief Encounter
5. Gone with the Wind

East of England

Film Top 5:

1. DDLJ
2. True Romance
3. Gone with the Wind
4. The Princess Bride
5. Star Wars

London

Film Top 5:

1. DDLJ
2. Before Trilogy
3. True Romance
4. Gone with the Wind
5. Casablanca

North East

Film Top 5:

1. Casablanca
2. The Princess Bride
3. Harry Potter
4. When Harry Met Sally...
5. Star Wars

North West

Film Top 5:

1. Casablanca
2. Before Trilogy
3. True Romance
4. Brokeback Mountain
5. Twilight

UK Only TV Top 10:

1. Poldark – Ross and Demelza
2. Glee – Kurt and Blaine
3. Gossip Girl – Chuck and Blair
4. Outlander – Claire and Jamie
5. Torchwood – Jack and Ianto
6. The X Files – Mulder and Scully
7. Pride and Prejudice – Darcy and Elizabeth
8. Doctor Who – The Doctor and Rose
9. Parks and Recreation – Leslie and Ben
10. The Office – Tim and Dawn

TV Top 5:

1. Poldark
2. Glee
3. Torchwood
4. Outlander
5. Pride and Prejudice

TV Top 5:

1. Glee
2. Poldark
3. Outlander
4. The X Files
5. Gossip Girl

TV Top 5:

1. Glee
2. Gossip Girl
3. Pride and Prejudice
4. Outlander
5. Torchwood

TV Top 5:

1. Boy Meets Girl
2. Poldark
3. Doctor Who
4. Torchwood
5. Glee

TV Top 5:

1. Glee
2. Outlander
3. Gossip Girl
4. Friends
5. Parks and Recreation

Northern Ireland

Film Top 5:

1. DDLJ
2. Gone with the Wind
3. True Romance
4. The Princess Bride
5. Casablanca

Scotland

Film Top 5:

1. DDLJ
2. Before Trilogy
3. True Romance
4. Casablanca
5. Brokeback Mountain

South East

Film Top 5:

1. Before Trilogy
2. Gone with the Wind
3. DDLJ
4. Casablanca
5. Brief Encounter

South West

Film Top 5:

1. Before Trilogy
2. Casablanca
3. True Romance
4. Brief Encounter
5. Brokeback Mountain

Wales

Film Top 5:

1. DDLJ
2. Before Trilogy
3. Casablanca
4. Brokeback Mountain
5. The Princess Bride

West Midlands

Film Top 5:

1. Before Trilogy
2. Casablanca
3. True Romance
4. DDLJ
5. The Princess Bride

TV Top 5:

1. Glee
2. Poldark
3. The Simpsons
4. Parks and Recreation
5. Doctor Who

TV Top 5:

1. Outlander
2. Glee
3. Gossip Girl
4. Torchwood
5. Poldark

TV Top 5:

1. Poldark
2. Gossip Girl
3. Glee
4. The X Files
5. Torchwood

TV Top 5:

1. Poldark
2. Torchwood
3. Glee
4. Outlander
5. Gossip Girl

TV Top 5:

1. Glee
2. Torchwood
3. Poldark
4. Gossip Girl
5. Doctor Who

TV Top 5:

1. Glee
2. Outlander
3. Poldark
4. Gossip Girl
5. Torchwood

Yorkshire

Film Top 5:

1. DDLJ
2. Casablanca
3. Before Trilogy
4. Twilight
5. When Harry Met Sally...

TV Top 5:

1. Poldark
2. Gossip Girl
3. Torchwood
4. Glee
5. Outlander

Outside the UK

Film Top 5:

1. DDLJ
2. Gone with the Wind
3. Before Trilogy
4. Casablanca
5. Twilight

TV Top 5:

1. Outlander
2. Glee
3. Gossip Girl
4. Poldark
5. Torchwood

– ENDS –

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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

About BFI LOVE

The power of love is cinema's most seductive illusion, making our hearts beat faster and shaping our dreams and longings. BFI LOVE, in partnership with Plusnet, is a major new project that will re-kindle audiences passions for film and television's most enduring love stories. Truly an affair to remember, the UK-wide season includes over 1,000 screenings at 100s of cinemas, special one-off events, new and rare releases on DVD and BFI Player, education events and innovative interactive content across online and social media.

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