

**BFI celebrates  
A CENTURY OF CHINESE CINEMA  
in partnership with TIFF  
June to early October 2014**



**London, Monday 31 March 2014**

This summer the BFI is presenting the largest and most comprehensive exploration of Chinese cinema ever to be undertaken in the UK. **A Century of Chinese Cinema** programmed in partnership with **TIFF**, with the generous support of our season sponsors **Lycamobile** and **Shangri-La** and with special thanks to **Cathay Pacific Airways**, forms a key part of **Electric Shadows**, the Chinese term for movies or 电影“diànyǐng” and the name of the BFI’s extensive year-long programme of business, trade, creative and cultural collaborations with China. 2014 will see the BFI opening up previously hard-to-see Chinese cinema to UK audiences and making UK film accessible in China, to what will soon become the world’s biggest box office nation.

The BFI is making a wealth of Chinese cinema available across the UK. In addition to an extended major four-month retrospective, **A Century of Chinese Cinema** at BFI Southbank from June to early October 2014, this wide-ranging celebration also features the nationwide release (20 June) of **Spring in a Small Town** (1948) plus screenings of other Chinese classic films in key cities throughout the UK, DVD releases, a lavishly illustrated new BFI Compendium publication on the history of Chinese cinema, written by many of the world’s foremost authorities on Chinese film, and digital content on the BFI Player of incredibly rare non-fiction films of China from 1901 to 1949 from the BFI National Archive including early actuality footage, travelogues, newsreels and home movies.

The BFI’s timely landmark project highlights China’s huge contribution to cinema and its outstanding artistic output. It is an unprecedented exploration of Chinese film tracing the shared cultural and historical connections between the cinemas of Mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan. The programme is the result of new collaborations with three major Chinese film archives – the **China Film Archive** (Beijing), the **Hong Kong Film Archive** and

the **Chinese Taipei Film Archive** which are providing access to many titles that have never been seen in UK cinemas before now.

The season will showcase more than 80 films including classic martial arts movies, musicals, pioneering social dramas, lavish costume epics and cutting-edge modern masterpieces. There are some very special events and guests still to be announced.

Highlights of the 80-plus film programme at BFI Southbank include a variety of offerings under five distinct strands:

#### **The Golden Age – June 2014**

The first golden age of Chinese cinema was defined by the classics of Shanghai cinema from the 1930s and 1940s which depicted the seedy yet sophisticated East-meets-West reputation of the cosmopolitan city. Some of the best known films of this era include the silent classic **The Goddess** (China 1934, Wu Yonggang) starring the ‘Greta Garbo of China’ **Ruan Lingyu** whose tragic early death at the age of 24 led her to become an icon of Chinese cinema, and the musical **Street Angel** (China 1937, Yuan Muzhi) portraying the daily struggles of Shanghai’s underclasses featuring popular Chinese singer and actress of the time, **Zhou Xuan**. Regarded as the finest work from the first great era of Chinese filmmaking, **Spring in a Small Town** (China 1948, Fei Mu) was produced in 1948 prior to the Communist takeover in China and subsequently long suppressed by the regime. It is now seen as a masterpiece and one of the greatest Chinese films ever made. It will be released by the BFI in a new digital restoration at selected cinemas nationwide from 20 June.

#### **A New China – June 2014**

Following the establishment of the People’s Republic of China in 1949 the cinematic output of the new nation saw filmmakers contend with the volatile years leading up to the Cultural Revolution in 1966. Major films of this era include the gritty war film **Shangrao Concentration Camp** (Mainland 1951, Meng Sha & Zhang Ke) set in the hellish confines of a Guomindang (Nationalist) prison; the Shaw Brothers’ legendary musical **The Love Eterne** (Hong Kong 1963, Li Han-hsiang) based on the Chinese classic story *The Butterfly Lovers* which made a star of its lead **Ivy Ling Po**, sparked fanaticism amongst audiences and broke box-office records throughout Asia on its release; and **Two Stage Sisters** (Mainland 1964, Xie Jin) chronicling the different financial and political fortunes of two actresses in pre-revolutionary China.

#### **Swordsmen, Gangsters and Ghosts – The Evolution of Chinese Genre Cinema – July 2014**

This programme highlights the genre films that first brought Chinese cinema to international attention including the *wuxia* (swordplay) films that date back to China’s earliest filmmaking days, gangster movies which became a trademark of Hong Kong cinema and kung fu films such as **Fist of Fury (The Chinese Connection)** (Hong Kong 1972, Lo Wei) starring the legendary **Bruce Lee**. Other key titles include **A Chinese Odyssey Part I: Pandora’s Box/Part II Cinderella** (Hong Kong 1995, Jeffrey Lau) the fantasy martial arts comedy featuring comedian **Stephen Chow**, **Police Story** (Hong Kong 1985, Jackie Chan) showcasing international superstar **Jackie Chan** at his physical, comedic and creative peak, and **Ang Lee’s** exhilarating martial arts epic **Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon** (Taiwan/Hong Kong/USA/Mainland 2000) which brought global acclaim for Chinese cinema in the new millennium.

#### **New Waves – August 2014**

During the 1980s and 1990s, Chinese film dominated the international art-film scene with work from the Mainland’s Fifth Generation directors such as **Chen Kaige**, **Tian Zhuangzhuang** and **Zhang Yimou**. Highlights include Chen’s **Yellow Earth** (Mainland 1984), a true milestone which helped propel China to the top ranks of global cinema, Tian’s **The Horse Thief** (Mainland 1986) one of the greatest achievements of Fifth Generation cinema famously praised by Martin Scorsese as the best film he saw in the 1990s, and Zhang’s neorealist-influenced **The Story of Qiu Ju (Mainland 1992)** which won the Golden

Lion at the Venice Film Festival and starred Zhang's muse **Gong Li** which established her reputation as one of the world's most talented film actresses.

#### **New Directions – September/October 2014**

Leading up to and during the early years of the new century, a series of sexy, provocative and daring new films directed by acclaimed filmmakers such as **Wong Kar-Wai**, **Jia Zhang-Ke** and **Wang Xiaoshuai** built on the innovations of the New Wave era and ignited a renewed global interest in Chinese cinema. Signature films of **New Directions** include **Wong Kar-Wai's** dazzling, offbeat romantic-comedy **Chungking Express** (Hong Kong 1994) and his sublime masterpiece of romantic longing **In the Mood for Love** (Hong Kong 2000) starring **Maggie Cheung** and **Tony Leung** which is a love letter to much of Chinese cinema history.

– Ends –

[www.bfi.org.uk/china](http://www.bfi.org.uk/china)

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#### **NOTES TO EDITORS:**

##### **About A Century of Chinese Cinema**

Curated by Noah Cowan for TIFF (TIFF Bell Lightbox), in collaboration with China Film Archive (Beijing), Hong Kong Film Archive and Chinese Taipei Film Archive.

##### **About Lycamobile**

Lycamobile is a prepaid mobile SIM card provider that provides low-cost, high-quality international and national calls and has acquired over 30 million customers across 17 countries (UK, Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland, Denmark, Norway, Sweden, Austria, Spain, Australia, France, Germany, Poland, Ireland, Portugal, Italy and the USA). Lycamobile is available through an extensive network of more than one million retail outlets. The brand was initially introduced in 2006 and is already Europe's largest pre-pay MVNO. Lycamobile continues to grow rapidly with further market launches planned throughout 2014.



##### **About Shangri-La**

Hong Kong-based Shangri-La Hotels and Resorts, one of the world's premier hotel companies, currently owns and/or manages more than 80 hotels under the Shangri-La brand with a room inventory of over 34,000. Over four decades the group has established its brand hallmark of 'hospitality from the heart.' The group has a substantial development pipeline with upcoming projects in mainland China, India, Mongolia, Myanmar, Philippines, Qatar, Sri Lanka and the United Kingdom. For more information and reservations, please contact a travel professional or access the website at [www.shangri-la.com](http://www.shangri-la.com).



### **About Cathay Pacific Airways**

Carmen Tse, Marketing Communications & E-commerce Manager at Cathay Pacific Airways, commented: *“Flying five times a day from London to Hong Kong, and onwards to 21 destinations within mainland China, we are committed to bringing China and the Far East closer to the UK to share cultural experiences. We are delighted to be supporting Electric Shadows, the BFI’s film season in 2014 which will showcase some of China’s most iconic films ever created. Serving business and leisure travellers, Cathay Pacific has connecting flights from Hong Kong International Airport to more than 170 destinations worldwide.”*

### **About BFI Film Audience Network**

The BFI Film Audience Network (FAN) is a ground-breaking initiative that goes to the heart of the BFI’s vision and new audience development strategy to help put film at the centre of UK cultural life, as set out in the BFI’s *Film Forever* five-year plan.

Film-watching is one of the UK’s most loved and important cultural activities, but many audiences across the UK do not get the opportunity to see a diverse range of films in a cinema setting. For filmmakers, getting films onto cinema screens is a highly competitive business, particularly for specialised films which includes archive, documentary, independent and foreign language films. The BFI FAN aims to change this.

- In a first for the UK, the BFI is investing up to £8.7 million of Lottery funding over four years (2013-2017) through partnerships with nine lead organisations (Film Hubs) to work full-time with cinema exhibitors, film festivals, educators, film societies, community venues, film archives and other organisations in their regions or nations to boost audiences for film across the UK.
- The Film Hubs, which drive audience engagement locally, will work together with the BFI at a UK-wide level to grow audiences for British independent and specialised film. They currently comprise: Broadway, Nottingham and Cambridge Film Trust; Chapter, Cardiff; Cornerhouse, Manchester; Film London; Queen’s Film Theatre, Belfast; Regional Screen Scotland; the University of Brighton; Showroom Sheffield and National Media Museum, Bradford; and Watershed, Bristol. These organisations and their partners form the BFI FAN.
- The BFI FAN is also investing in targeted training and programming activity, in support for the non theatrical sector as well as improving access to cinema for people with hearing or sight loss, through strategic partners including the Independent Cinema Office, the British Federation of Film Societies and Your Local Cinema.com

More partners will join the network in the coming months as it grows and expands across the UK.

In ten years’ time, we want to look back on the setting up of the BFI FAN as a turning point for film culture in the UK, embracing film not just as a form of entertainment, but also as a way of engaging audiences in ideas, dialogue and debate about culture and society.



### **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 Southbank is open to all. BFI members are entitled to a discount on all tickets. BFI Southbank Box Office tel: 020 7928 3232. Unless otherwise stated tickets are £11.00, concs £8.50 Members pay £1.50 less on any ticket. Website [www.bfi.org.uk/southbank](http://www.bfi.org.uk/southbank)

**Tickets for FREE screenings and events must be booked in advance by calling the Box Office to avoid disappointment**

### **BFI Shop**

The BFI Shop is stocked and staffed by BFI experts with over 1,200 book titles and 1,000 DVDs to choose from, including hundreds of acclaimed books and DVDs produced by the BFI.

### **The benugo bar & kitchen**

Eat, drink and be merry in panoramic daylight. benugo's décor is contemporary, brightly lit and playful with a lounge space, bar and dining area. The place to network, hang out, unpack a film, savour the best of Modern British or sip on a cocktail.

There's more to discover about film and television through the BFI. Our world-renowned archival collections, cinemas, festivals, films, publications and learning resources are here to inspire you.

**\*\*\* PICTURE DESK \*\*\***

**A selection of images for journalistic use in promoting BFI Southbank screenings can be found at [www.image.net](http://www.image.net) under  
BFI / BFI Southbank / Southbank 2014 / BFI A Century of Chinese Cinema**