

Shirley MacLaine at BFI Southbank in June 2012



Throughout **June 2012**, **BFI Southbank** dedicates a season to **Shirley MacLaine**, the award-winning actress, author and sister of **Warren Beatty** (who also enjoys a companion season of his film work throughout the month). The season is set to encompass a career that has spanned over 60 years and which, with a highly anticipated role in the upcoming series of **Downton Abbey** (ITV) around the corner, shows little sign of slowing down. Highlights are set to include screenings of Minnelli's **Some Came Running** (1958) which gave her first Oscar nomination as well as a recurring relationship with the Bratpack, **Sweet Charity** (1969) that features MacLaine's

signature song 'If My Friends Could See Me Now', **Terms of Endearment** (1983) that produced her first Oscar win and an extended run of the evergreen satire **The Apartment** (1960).

Having danced from the age of three, MacLaine started out on Broadway as a chorus girl and stand-in. Plucked from the stage by a talent-spotting producer and promptly signed to Paramount, she embarked upon her film career. As a Hollywood ingénue, her first film role came with **Alfred Hitchcock**, in **The Trouble With Harry** (1955) earning her the first of many Golden Globe Awards before working with equally prestigious filmmakers like **Billy Wilder** and **William Wyler**.

Learning the tricks of the trade from her fellow actors, she credited **Marlene Dietrich** for teaching her lighting and beauty tips for the screen during the filming of **Around the World in Eighty Days** (1956). Starring with Rat Pack members **Frank Sinatra**, **Dean Martin** and **Sammy Davis Jr** in several films (including a fabulously fun cameo in **Ocean's 11** 1960), MacLaine became one of the few women to have a long-term relationship with the clan, becoming affectionately known as 'The Mascot'. Often cast as the tart with a heart, she famously said: 'I've made so many movies playing a hooker that they don't pay me in the regular way anymore. They leave it on the dresser.' Indeed, her first Academy Award nomination came for one of her lady-of-easy-virtue roles as Ginny Moorhead in **Some Came Running** (1958). Stand-out roles as the waifish Fran in **The Apartment** (1960), alongside **Jack Lemmon** – with whom she would later star in **Irma La Douce** (1963) – and as a lesbian headmistress alongside **Audrey Hepburn** in **The Children's Hour** (1961) marked MacLaine out as a vastly adept and unique actress.

As the years progress, MacLaine played tough, witty and worldly wise roles that are filled with cantankerous fun. She deservedly won a Best Actress Oscar for the poignant and funny matriarch Aurora in **Terms of Endearment** (Dir James L Brooks 1983), and gave a fabulous turn as the alcoholic, camp icon and showbiz grande dame Doris Mann, loosely based on Carrie Fisher's experiences of drug use and living with her mother – Hollywood royalty Debbie Reynolds in **Postcards from the Edge** (Dir Mike Nichols 1990).

NOTES TO EDITORS

Extended Run: The Apartment (NEW PRINT)

USA 1960. Dir Billy Wilder. With Shirley MacLaine, Jack Lemmon, Fred MacMurray, Ray Walston. 125min. Digital. Courtesy of Park Circus

Fresh from **Some Like It Hot**, Billy Wilder and his regular writing partner IAL Diamond hit gold again with this evergreen satire, the five Oscars it won including those for best film, director and original screenplay. But it's the treasurable cast that sticks in the memory. Lemmon is at his nervy best as Baxter, the Big Apple insurance clerk so eager to get ahead he lets his bosses use his apartment for illicit trysts. The arrangements are complicated enough, but then he begins to suspect that Fran (an adorably sympathetic MacLaine), the elevator girl of his dreams, is being taken there by the serpentine Sheldrake (Fred MacMurray at his shiftiest)... At once an acerbic tale of exploitation in the workplace and a touchingly understated love story, imbued with a tender compassion for the lonely, vulnerable and self-destructive, the film is packed with nuanced moments of psychological precision that render the comedy all the more poignant. Undoubtedly a highpoint in the careers of all concerned.

Fri 15 – Thu 28 June

Some Came Running

USA 1958. Dir Vincente Minnelli. With Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin. 136min. **PG**

Ginny has followed GI Dave (Sinatra) from Chicago on a drunken promise of love. Setting her aside with \$50 for her trouble, he inserts himself back into hometown life, riling up his brother, wooing a teacher and joining a poker school. When Ginny meets up with Dave again in a bar, she determinedly sticks to him, offering all of her love and herself despite his apparent lack of interest. A sweet and poignant early role for MacLaine, who maintained her friendship with Ratpack stars Martin and Sinatra.

Sat 16 June 17:15 NFT1

Tue 26 June 20:20 NFT3

The Children's Hour aka The Loudest Whisper

USA 1961. Dir William Wyler. With Audrey Hepburn, James Garner. 107min. **12A**

A schoolgirl's lie escalates into a life-altering accusation, ruining the livelihood and social standing of headmistresses Martha and Karen, who run an exclusive school for girls. Hepburn glows as kind-hearted Karen, who longs for a baby with her fiancé Joe. Fresh-faced MacLaine's heart-rending turn as the strong-willed Martha is not to be missed. A powerful tale of unrequited love and the tragedy of a community turning against its own.

Tue 19 June 18:15 NFT1

Thu 21 June 18:10 NFT2

Sweet Charity

USA 1969. Dir Bob Fosse. With John McMartin, Chita Rivera, Sammy Davis Jr. 149min. **PG**

A musical hit (adapted from Fellini's *Nights of Cabiria*) with star tunes like 'Big Spender' and MacLaine's signature song 'If My Friends Could See Me Now' Charity

Hope Valentine is a friendly gal-about-town who, according to her dancehall hostess pals, runs her heart like a hotel. Will she find happiness among her undeserving beaux? With bold Edith Head costumes and the stylistic flair that would later be seen in Fosse's *Cabaret*, *Sweet Charity* is a celebration of New York, love and bright colours.

Wed 20 June 20:10 NFT1

Sat 30 June 15:40 NFT1

Two Mules for Sister Sara

USA-Mexico 1970. Dir Don Siegel. With Clint Eastwood. 116min. **15**

Travelling mercenary Hogan (Eastwood) rescues half-naked Sister Sara from attack in the Mexican plains. He lets her tag along with him for safety, and she in turn will assist him in bringing down a French garrison in the name of helping her town's Mexican community. The sexual chemistry between them peaks when Hogan discovers Sister Sara's real identity. MacLaine is gorgeous in this Ennio Morricone-scored classic, a fun take on the role of women in Westerns.

Mon 18 June 20:40 NFT3

Sun 24 June 15:40 NFT3

The Turning Point

USA 1977. Dir Herbert Ross. With Anne Bancroft, Mikael Baryshnikov, Leslie Browne. 119min. **PG**

Lifelong friends Deedee (MacLaine) – a ballet teacher – and prima ballerina Emma are brought together again as the former's daughter Emilia shows promise in Emma's ballet company. When she moves to New York to be part of this new chapter in her daughter's life, Deedee's jealousy, rivalry and regrets come to the fore, and the two friends must finally confront the moment in their lives when things changed. Peppered with beautiful dance sequences and introducing to film Mikael Baryshnikov, then a relative newcomer.

Sun 24 June 20:20 NFT2

Wed 27 June 18:10 NFT2

Being There

USA 1979. Dir Hal Ashby. With Peter Sellers, Melvyn Douglas. 129min. **12A**

After spending his life inside one Washington townhouse, having learned about social interactions only from TV, Chance the gardener is sent into the world, and is promptly run over by Eve Rand's chauffeured car. She takes him home to husband Ben's estate to be cared for, and Chance, now named Chauncy Gardiner by Eve, becomes Ben's confidante; his simple gardening conversation being mistaken for sage political metaphor. Supportive and sparkly, MacLaine is the perfect foil to Sellers in one of his last roles.

Sun 17 June 15:30 NFT2

Tue 26 June 18:10 NFT2

Terms of Endearment

USA 1983. Dir James L Brooks. With Debra Winger, Jack Nicholson, Jeff Daniels, John Lithgow. 131min. **15**

Reluctant grandmother Aurora (MacLaine) surrounds herself with admirers, while distancing herself from any close relationship, either with a man or her daughter Emma (Winger). When Emma moves away with husband Flap, whom Aurora disapproves of, Aurora begins a cautious flirtation with neighbouring retired astronaut Garrett (Nicholson). MacLaine lends the role her own blend of strength, comic sass and vulnerability in this poignant story of motherhood and love, and won a well-deserved Oscar alongside Nicholson and Brooks.

Wed 27 June 20:30 NFT2

Sat 30 June 18:00 NFT2

Postcards from the Edge

USA 1990. Dir Mike Nichols. With Meryl Streep, Dennis Quaid, Gene Hackman, Richard Dreyfuss, Annette Bening. 101min. 15

Loosely based on writer Carrie Fisher's experience of drug use and living with her mother – Hollywood royalty Debbie Reynolds. MacLaine's turn as Streep's alcoholic mother, camp icon and showbiz *grande dame* Doris Mann, visiting rehab in full make-up and fur and memorably upstaging her daughter with a rendition of 'I'm Still Here' (now Reynolds' signature tune), is nothing short of fabulous.

Fri 22 June 18:15 NFT2

Sat 30 June 16:00 NFT2

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