

## **THE PHILADELPHIA STORY**

**Directed by George Cukor**

USA, 1940, 112 mins, Cert U

Starring

**Katharine Hepburn, Cary Grant, James Stewart, Ruth Hussey**



Opening on 13 February 2015  
at BFI Southbank, IFI Dublin, Cornerhouse Manchester  
and selected cinemas UK-wide

George Cukor's dazzling, sophisticated tale of a society wedding threatened by scandal is one of the greatest and best-loved of Hollywood romantic comedies. Re-released in cinemas UK-wide on 13 February, just in time for Valentine's Day, *The Philadelphia Story* will also be the centrepiece of a major Katharine Hepburn season at BFI Southbank (1 February – 19 March 2015).

Katharine Hepburn plays Tracy Lord, a breezy socialite whose imminent wedding to a dull, self-made millionaire brings her charmingly impudent ex-husband C.K. Dexter Haven (Cary Grant) back into her life. He arrives at the family mansion accompanied by Macaulay Connor (James Stewart) and Elizabeth 'Liz' Imbrie (Ruth Hussey), journalists at the scandal-sheet 'Spy Magazine'. Posing as friends of Tracy's absent brother, they hope to nab a scoop on the private lives of this notoriously publicity-shy family. Playful yet insightful, *The Philadelphia Story's* witty banter delivers cutting truths about romance, marriage and forgiveness while allowing its brilliant cast to tease comedy out of class conflict and shattered illusions, and drama out of an innocent, drunken midnight swim.

The film is based on a stage play by Philip Barry, the leading role of which was specially written for Katharine Hepburn who starred in the Broadway production.

It was during her Broadway stint that Hepburn wisely acquired the movie rights which she sold to MGM in a deal that guaranteed her the role of Tracy Lord and the choice of director and co-stars. Although she originally wanted Clark Gable and Spencer Tracy, neither was available owing to scheduling clashes, so Cary Grant (her on-screen partner on three previous occasions) and James Stewart were cast instead. Having previously been declared 'box office poison' on account of her bossy, unfeminine image, Hepburn scored a huge success in this role which set her back on course to become one of the most popular female stars in Hollywood history.

Having received six Academy Award nominations, *The Philadelphia Story* picked up two Oscars: Best Actor for James Stewart and Best Screenplay for Donald Ogden Stewart. It was remade as the film musical *High Society* in 1956, with songs by Cole Porter and Bing Crosby, and Grace Kelly and Frank Sinatra in the leading roles.

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Images are available at [www.image.net](http://www.image.net) >BFI>Theatrical releases

More details on venues at [www.bfi.org.uk/releases](http://www.bfi.org.uk/releases)

**Notes to editors**

- A major Katharine Hepburn retrospective will take place at BFI Southbank from 1 February – 19 March 2015, programmed by Hannah McGill, freelance writer and critic, and former artistic director of the Edinburgh Film Festival. Amongst the 26 films in the season are those in which Hepburn won Oscars for her performance; *Morning Glory*, *Guess Who's Coming to Dinner*, *The Lion in Winter* and *On Golden Pond*.

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