



**Nigel Kneale's  
The Year of the Sex Olympics**  
Directed by Michael Elliott  
Starring Leonard Rossiter, Suzanne Neve  
and Brian Cox

**DVD release on 20 April 2020**

First broadcast by the BBC on 29 July 1968, *The Year of the Sex Olympics* is one of the most original pieces of television drama ever written, foreshadowing both the likes of *Big Brother* and *Love Island* and the sexualisation of digital space. Unavailable on DVD for many years, on 20 April 2020 it will be re-released by the BFI in a new edition with a host of accompanying extras including a feature-length audio commentary by actor Brian Cox and Nigel Kneale in conversation. Also on the disc is *Le Pétomane* (1973), a short comedy biopic of Joseph Pujol, starring

Leonard Rossiter and written by Ray Galton and Alan Simpson (*Hancock's Half Hour* and *Steptoe and Son*).

Nigel Kneale's eerily prescient drama is set in a future when society is split into two strata. The low-drives are the passive majority, mentally anaesthetised by an incessant diet of TV consisting largely of pornography. Television, and by extension the populace, is controlled by the high-drives, an educated class engaged in a perpetual quest for better ratings and audience subjugation. But when the low-drives become increasingly uninterested in the programming on offer, production executive Ugo Priest (**Leonard Rossiter**, *Rising Damp*, *The Rise and Fall of Reginald Perrin*) and his team happen upon a new concept: reality TV.

*The Year of the Sex Olympics* was originally broadcast in colour. At some point after that single broadcast, the original colour tapes were erased and all that remains is a black-and-white 16mm telerecording which has been remastered by the BBC for this release.

### Special features

- Feature-length audio commentary by actor Brian Cox: recorded for the BFI's 2003 release
- Nigel Kneale in conversation (2000, 71 mins, audio only): the writer looks back over his career with Professor Julian Petley
- Kim Newman introduction (2003, 5 mins): the writer, critic and broadcaster guides us into the world created by Nigel Kneale and Michael Elliott
- *Joyce Hammond's Costume Designs* (2020, 8 mins): a gallery of designs and drawings including the original colour swatches
- *Le Pétomane* (1973, 31 mins): a short comedy biopic of Joseph Pujol, penned by Ray Galton and Alan Simpson and starring Leonard Rossiter
- *Fifty Years of Broadcasting* (1972, 5 mins): an episode of the COI's cinemagazine *This Week in Britain*, looking at the work of the BBC on its anniversary
- Illustrated booklet (\*\*first pressing only\*\*) with new essays by Rob Young, Mark Pilkington and William Dudman (who was a trainee assistant cameraman at

the BBC); a biography of Michael Elliott by Philip Kemp, notes on the special features and full credits

**Product details**

**RRP: £19.99/ Cat. no. BFIV2128 / Cert 15**

UK / 1968 / black and white / 103 mins / English language, with optional hard-of-hearing subtitles / original aspect ratio 1.33:1 // DVD9: PAL, 25fps, Dolby Digital 2.0 mono audio (192kbps)

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BFI DVD/Blu-ray releases can be ordered from home entertainment online retailers or from the BFI Shop (online only) at <https://shop.bfi.org.uk/>. However, shipping will be delayed until the Shop re-opens (date unknown at present).

**About the BFI**

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- Curates and presents the greatest international public programme of World Cinema for audiences; in cinemas, at festivals and online
- Cares for the BFI National Archive – the most significant film and television archive in the world
- Actively seeks out and supports the next generation of filmmakers
- Works with Government and industry to make the UK the most creatively exciting and prosperous place to make film internationally

Founded in 1933, the BFI is a registered charity governed by Royal Charter. The BFI Board of Governors is chaired by Josh Berger CBE.

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