



PRESS RELEASE

07/13

## Terence Davies: Verging on visionary

In April **BFI Southbank** pays tribute to **Terence Davies**, one of Britain's most original and audacious film-makers. The season is a complete retrospective of films by this uncompromising poet of cinema, and includes a restored Special Release of the award-winning **Distant Voices, Still Lives** (1988). We are also delighted to welcome to the stage the exuberant Davies to discuss his career.

Davies drew inspiration from his own experiences and those of his family for his early work, and this season presents a very rare opportunity to see his first three autobiographical shorts, previously released as **The Terence Davies Trilogy**. After quietly revolutionising British cinema with films such as *Distant Voices...* and **The Long Day Closes** (1992), Davies went on to make two Anglo/American co-productions: **The Neon Bible**, starring **Gena Rowlands** (1995), and **The House of Mirth** (2000), based on **Edith Wharton's** novel. Featuring powerful performances from **Gillian Anderson** and **Eric Stoltz**, the film explores the destruction, by rumour and snobbery, of a young socialite in early 20<sup>th</sup> century New York. Davies' intensely emotional cinema and unique style confirms his status as a world-class film-maker.

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

### Event Listings:

#### Terence Davies in Conversation

For the opening night of our special release of the digitally restored **Distant Voices, Still Lives**, Geoff Andrew welcomes to BFI Southbank Terence Davies. A funny and insightful raconteur, Davies will discuss his films, his career, and anything else that happens to come into his head.

**Fri 20 April 20.20**

### Screening Listings:

#### The Terence Davies Trilogy

##### Children

The first episode of Davies' semiautobiographical triptych – newly restored by the BFI National Archive – is an exemplary foray into observational realism, creating dramatic tension from a wealth of details carefully selected from the daily life of a young boy growing up in Liverpool. Here, the mysteries and miseries of pubescence are painfully authentic.

UK 1976. With Philip Mawdsley, Nick Stringer, 46 mins, 15

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### **Madonna and Child**

Set in the same time period as *Children* but with the protagonist now approaching middle-age, this explores the torment of a gay clerk brought up as a Catholic and still living with his elderly mother. The juxtapositions of sound and image are sometimes shocking, always inspired.

UK 1980. With Terry O'Sullivan, Sheila Raynor, 30 mins, 15

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### **Death and Transfiguration**

With his protagonist now struck speechless on his death-bed in hospital and looking back over a lifetime, Davies creates a dazzling series of scenes interwoven according to the logic of memory and emotional resonance. Wilfrid Brambell gives an astonishingly brave performance as the dying octogenarian.

UK 1983. 26 mins, 15

**Mon 16 Apr 20:15, Sun 22 Apr 18:00, Wed 25 Apr 20:30**

### **Distant Voices, Still Lives**

Using an impressionistic series of social gatherings drawn from family memories, Davies paints a vivid picture of working-class life in the 40s and 50s. Centred on a Liverpoolian family in thrall to a stern, violent father, the vignettes are counterpointed by popular songs of the period, sung — communally in pubs or at parties or privately during work — not only as entertainment but as a sign of vitality and courage in the face of hardship. With digital restoration, the stunning images look especially superb. This ambitious, intelligent and profoundly moving work was created by a poet with film-making in his very blood.

UK 1988. With Freda Dowie, Pete Postlethwaite, Angela Walsh, Dean Williams, Lorraine Ashbourne, Debi Jones. 84 mins, 15. **A BFI release**

**Friday 20 April – Sat 12 May (screening daily)**

### **The Long Day Closes**

Through an impressionistic series of beautifully nuanced vignettes, Davies' autobiographical film evokes a period in the mid 50s. At 11 years old, he felt unparalleled happiness and security, warm amid family and friends, unruffled by the complications of sexual desire. A boldly imaginative cinematic hymn to the quiet joys of just being alive.

UK 1992. With Marjorie Yates, Leigh McCormick, Anthony Watson. 85 mins, 12A

**Tue 17 Apr 18:20, Thu 26 Apr 18:30**

### **The Neon Bible**

Shot in the USA, this elegant, stylistically audacious film is an adaptation of John Kennedy Toole's novel about a farmer's son growing up in 40s Georgia. Troubled by his mother's fragility and by local religious zealots, the boy finds consolation in his devil-may-care aunt (**Gena Rowlands**). A superbly staged death scene is particularly affecting.

UK-USA 1995. With **Jacob Tierney**, Diana Scarwid, Denis Leary. 92 mins, 15

**Wed 18 Apr 18:20, Sat 28 Apr 20:40, Sun 29 Apr 16:10**

### **The House of Mirth**

An incisive and moving adaptation of Edith Wharton's novel about a beautiful young socialite in fin de siècle New York, whose life is ruined by rumour, snobbery and hypocrisy. A darkly brilliant study of unthinking cruelty and ungratified love, this film boasts wonderfully nuanced performances, most notably from **Gillian Anderson** as the tragic protagonist.

UK-USA 2000. With **Eric Stoltz**, **Dan Aykroyd**, Eleanor Bron. 140 mins, PG.

**Thu 19 Apr 20:20, Sat 28 Apr 15:30, Sun 29 Apr 17:50**

- Ends -

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### **Booking information**

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 £8.60, concs. £6.25. Members pay £1 less on any ticket. Website [www.bfi.org.uk/nft](http://www.bfi.org.uk/nft)

### **NOTES FOR EDITORS**

**Please note that as of 14<sup>th</sup> March 2007 the NFT will be known as BFI Southbank. Please direct all listings information to the new venue's name.**

- **Distant Voices, Still Lives** is released by the BFI on 20<sup>th</sup> April
- Complementing the release of **Distant Voices, Still Lives**, the BFI will also make available **The Terence Davies Trilogy** (UK 1976-1983, total 102 mins), newly restored by the BFI National Archive.
- "Distant Voices, Still Lives" by Paul Farley is published by BFI Modern Classics. ISBN 1-84457-139-4
- Throughout April, an exhibition in The Mezzanine Gallery at BFI Southbank is devoted to Terence Davies' work and the films that have inspired him

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 ALERT \*\*\***

**A selection of images for journalistic use in promoting National Film Theatre screenings can be found at [www.image.net](http://www.image.net) under British Film Institute / BFI Southbank / March - April 2007**  
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