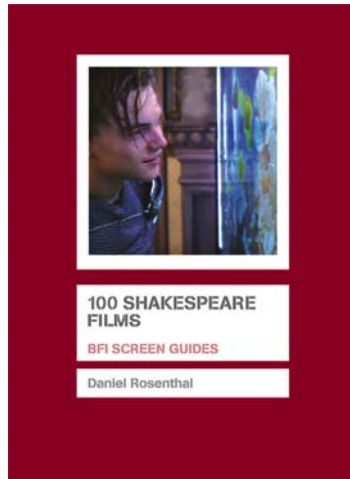


Books press release

BFI SCREEN GUIDES



100 Shakespeare Films

Daniel Rosenthal

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“In many ways, Shakespeare’s plays seem more suitable to cinematic interpretation than to the theatre.”
 – Julie Taymor, director of *Titus*, from her Foreword

100 Shakespeare Films, one of two new additions this month to the BFI’s popular Screen Guides series, is published alongside a major film season at BFI Southbank: *Inspired by Shakespeare*, running from March 14 to April 29.

Shakespeare has inspired British Oscar-winners and Spaghetti Westerns, Bollywood thrillers and Soviet epics. Directors as distinctive as Akira Kurosawa, Baz Luhrmann and Franco Zeffirelli have adapted Shakespeare’s plays with unforgettable results. Daniel Rosenthal’s up-to-the-minute selection of 100 Shakespeare films spans 20 plays and almost a century of cinema, from a silent *Tempest* (1908) to Kenneth Branagh’s *As You Like It* (2006).

Fifty of the films retain Shakespeare’s language, among them Laurence Olivier’s *Henry V* and *Hamlet* and Orson Welles’ *Chimes at Midnight* and *Othello*. Alongside these are 40 genre adaptations, with modernised dialogue and re-imagined characters: Macbeth as a gangster in *Joe Macbeth* and *Maqbool*; Othello as a jazz pianist in *All Night Long*. The book includes Shakespeare melodramas, musicals, teen comedies, thrillers, Westerns, a sci-fi adventure (*Forbidden Planet*) and a Chinese martial arts epic (*The Banquet*).

Rosenthal emphasises the global nature of Shakespearean cinema, assessing 25 foreign-language titles, including Kurosawa’s *Throne of Blood* and *Ran*, and adaptations set in Finland, France, Italy, Madagascar, Singapore and Venezuela – several never released in the UK. His Introduction explains his selection criteria, traces “The Seven Ages of Screen Shakespeare” and analyzes the pros and cons of adaptation. Presented alphabetically by Shakespeare play, each chapter begins with a synopsis. The film essays include credits and production history, and relate cinematography, design, dialogue, music and performance to the Shakespeare play.

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About the author

Daniel Rosenthal is a freelance author, editor, journalist and lecturer. His books include *Shakespeare on Screen* (2000) and a Student Edition of Patrick Marber's *Closer* (2007). Formerly Editor of the annual *International Film Guide*, he lectures on Shakespeare and film at Pembroke College, Cambridge. **Daniel Rosenthal is available for interview.**

Julie Taymor

Julie Taymor is the director of the films *Titus* (1999), *Frida* (2002) and *Across the Universe* (2007). Her next feature film will be Shakespeare's *The Tempest*. She won two Tony Awards for the musical *The Lion King*.

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Notes to editors:

About the BFI Southbank Season

For **Inspired by Shakespeare**, Daniel Rosenthal has brought together a dozen of the best Shakespeare genre adaptations from **100 Shakespeare Films**. The season spans the last 50 years of world cinema and highlights include the British premiere of Alexander Abela's dazzling *Makibefo*, a version of *Macbeth* set in a Madagascan fishing village, as well as rare screenings of *All Night Long*, which turns *Othello* into a melodrama set in swinging 60s London, and *Joe Macbeth*, the first of many gangster adaptations of the Scottish play.

The full line-up of films, listed by their Shakespeare source, is:

HAMLET

The Bad Sleep Well (Japan, 1960) Akira Kurosawa

Hamlet Goes Business (Finland, 1987) Aki Kaurismäki

KING LEAR

Ran (Japan, 1985) Akira Kurosawa

MACBETH

Joe Macbeth (UK, 1955) Ken Hughes

Throne of Blood (Japan, 1957) Akira Kurosawa

Makibefo (France, 1999) Alexander Abela

OTHELLO

All Night Long (UK, 1961) Basil Dearden, Michael Relph

O (US, 2000) Tim Blake-Nelson

Omikara (India, 2006) Vishal Bhardwaj

ROMEO AND JULIET

West Side Story (US, 1961) Robert Wise, Jerome Robbins

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW

10 Things I Hate About You (US, 1999) Gil Junger

THE TEMPEST

Forbidden Planet (US, 1956) Fred McCleod Wilcox

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