



BFI set to tell the *Story of London* as seen on film

The BFI is delighted to be involved in the *Story of London* season – an exciting month of events that celebrates the history and identity of our wonderful capital city. Organised by Mayor Boris Johnson, this key initiative gives us a great opportunity to showcase London through film.

Throughout the month of June, the BFI will be showing London at its finest – through the fantastic archive film and TV about the city carefully preserved in the BFI National Archive, and through a month-long partnership celebrating the 50th anniversary of the legendary London jazz club **Ronnie Scott's**.

The BFI National Archive houses the world's largest collection of film about London, and we have found many ways to make these wonderful films available for everyone to enjoy.

Visitors will be able to come to the Mediatheque at BFI Southbank and watch, completely for free, hundreds of these archive films. Our **London Calling** collection has over 300 films featuring the city, with new titles being added all the time. Titles range from pioneer film-maker **R.W. Paul's** *Blackfriars Bridge* (1896) to *What Have You Done Today, Mervyn Day* (2006), co-produced by band **Saint Etienne** and featuring the Olympic site before the bulldozers moved in.

In June, we are augmenting this city-wide collection with 50 titles from across last century, presenting a fascinating window on life in Lambeth and Southwark. Highlights will include *Alexandra Day in Peckham* (1913) and *The Spirit of Lambeth* (1962).

People all over London will be able to enjoy our touring Mediatheque programme **The Big Smoke: Journeys through a Lost London, 1896-1945**. Highlights include *Old London Street Scenes* (1903), where the traffic chaos seems strangely familiar, while sci-fi short *The Fugitive Futurist* (1924) sees an oddball inventor startle Londoners with a glimpse of their great city's future. This programme will tour many of the capital's community centres, libraries and arts centres.

From 12 to 14 June the **BFI Jazz and Film Weekender in partnership with 'Ronnie Scott's at 50'** will be a celebration from morning till night, with the focus on London's links with jazz. There will be something for everyone and for all ages as audiences enjoy screenings and live music, jazz brunches, children's workshops, debates and dancing. Watch out for rare archive footage of major jazz musicians in performance – from American divas like **Ella Fitzgerald** and **Nina Simone** (filmed live at Ronnie's), to home-grown talent like **Stan Tracey**, **Courtney Pine**, **Humphrey Lyttleton** and **John Dankworth**.

Dankworth's talents as a composer can also be heard on the soundtracks of three classic movies that screen over the Weekender – *The Criminal*, *The Servant*, and

Accident – directed by **Joseph Losey**. A complete retrospective of Losey’s films will be playing at BFI Southbank throughout June and July. Three other Losey movies with a jazz theme or soundtrack and which play over the Weekender are *The Intimate Stranger*, *The Sleeping Tiger*, and *Blind Date* (with a score composed by Richard Rodney Bennett). Scenes set in the capital abound in these movies (with even the Oxford-set *Accident* boasting a memorable trip to the capital involving the BBC and a night of adultery), with locations ranging from Chelsea and Kensington, King’s Cross and Heathrow, to Merton Park Studios and Wandsworth Prison.

Eddie Berg, Artistic Director of BFI Southbank, said: “The BFI National Archive is brimming with wonderful moving images of the capital. We are very excited to have this opportunity to open it up so that the people of London can see their great city over the past century or more as seen through the eyes of filmmakers. Archive film is so important – by looking at footage of our ancestors and the landmarks of yesterday, we can learn so much about who we are today.”

ENDS

For further information contact:

Erica Roberts, Acting Communications Manager, Archive & Heritage, BFI
Tel: 020 7957 8940
Email: erica.roberts@bfi.org.uk

NOTES TO EDITORS

What is a Mediatheque?

A Mediatheque is a place to enjoy hundreds of British films and television collections from the BFI National Archive, totally free, at the click of a mouse. Most of the material is not available on DVD, and a Mediatheque is the only place you can enjoy it. The Mediatheque allows unprecedented access to our film and television heritage. You can watch as much or as little as you like: sit back and enjoy an entire feature film or take a look at fondly remembered television shows; use the database to search on a variety of subjects or browse to discover unexpected delights.

The Mediatheque @ BFI Southbank

The BFI Southbank Mediatheque is open daily Tuesday 13.00 - 20.00; Wednesday - Sunday 11.00 - 20.00. Book in advance for a viewing station which can seat between one to four people, or simply turn up. Book for as little as 15 minutes or as much as two hours. Tel: 020 7928 3535 or simply turn up.

Research what you’d like to view in advance at www.bfi.org.uk/mediatheque

About the BFI

There's more to discover about film and television through the BFI. Our world-renowned archive, cinemas, festivals, films, publications and learning resources are here to inspire you. www.bfi.org.uk