



Monitor

In 1958 the **BBC** launched *Monitor*, which grew to be one of the most groundbreaking television shows of the 50s and 60s. It was the channel's flagship arts documentary series and proved that challenging, intellectual ideas – previously the domain of the senior service, radio, - could find a home on television. This month **BFI Southbank** invites you to watch an expertly compiled selection of highlights from *Monitor*.



In 1955 BBC TV revived the radio format *Brains Trust*, in which a team of intellectuals would discuss various themes suggested by audience questions. The show was broadcast on radio a few days later and radio bosses were so pleased with the arrangement that they suggested replicating it with another radio format *The Critics*, in which a team of critics looked at the arts. However those in TV argued that if television was to get an Arts programme it should be visual, playing to the strengths of the newer medium. **Huw Weldon** was brought in to present (and run) such a show and the result was *Monitor*.

Weldon, who had been Welsh Director of the Arts Council and later in charge of all the Arts Council activities associated with the Festival of Britain, was a perfect choice. Soon he had surrounded himself with a talented team of directors - including **John Schlesinger** and **Ken Russell** - whose work was assembled by the brilliant film editor **Allan Tyrer**. Later, **Humphrey Burton** and **Melvyn Bragg** also became part of the *Monitor* team.

Monitor usually featured three or four unrelated films in each edition and happily many of these films have survived for posterity. In this small season we will screen some of the best surviving items in four themed batches; *Monitor Interviews the Artist*, *Monitor on Film*, *Monitor: Humorists, Novelists and Angry Young Men* and *Monitor Miscellany* that will

include films featuring appearances from, amongst others, **PG Woodhouse**, **Andy Warhol**, **Spike Milligan** and **John Betjeman**.

For further information please contact:

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www.bfi.org.uk/releases

Monitor Interviews the Artist

c90min

One of the most fascinating and valuable strands within the *Monitor* archive is the interviews with, and films about, living artists. Here we present a few of those highly original portraits including sculptors **Julius Epstein** (from 1958) and **Henry Moore** (from 1960), and artists **Max Ernst** (from 1961), **Marcel Duchamp** (from 1962), **Rene Magritte** (from 1965) and *enfant terrible* **Andy Warhol** (also from 1965).

Thu 9 April 18:20 NFT2

Monitor on Film

c90min

In this round-up of some of *Monitor*'s examinations of the world of film we feature a hand-picked selection of reports and interviews, including a look at the Cannes Film Festival (1958); interviews with directors **Orson Welles** (1960) and **Alfred Hitchcock** (1964) about their unique styles; actor **Rod Steiger** on 'The Method' (1960) and an interview with **Peter O'Toole** on the set of *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962).

Thu 23 April 18:20 NFT2

Monitor: Humorists, Novelists and Angry Young Men

c90min

A rare collection of idiosyncratic talents. Three years after their first film with him, *Portrait of a Goon*, (shown recently in our Ken Russell season) *Monitor* revisited **Spike Milligan** (1962); **David Wheeler** interviews **P G Wodehouse** at his New York home (1960); **Evelyn Waugh** reflects on life at 60 (1964), **Kenneth Tynan**, **Colin Wilson** and **John Wain** (among others) discuss *Angry Young Men – Cult or Myth* (1958) and from the very first *Monitor*, **Kingsley Amis** patiently explains that he is not Lucky Jim (1958)

Mon 20 April 18:15 NFT2

Monitor Miscellany

c90min

Monitor had many moods and styles and in this miscellany of its most diverse moments we feature an elegiac look at Brighton Pier (1958); the (then) current craze with guitar music (1959); **John Betjeman** reminiscing on the great exhibitions of the past (1960); **London Moods** a musical look at the capital's many forms of transport (1961); **The Lonely Shore** a fantasy in which archaeologists from the future try to build up a picture of modern day life (1962) and haunting music as **Lotte Lenya Sings Kurt Weill** (1961).

Wed 15 April 20:40 NFT 2

NB - Individual content reliant on availability of material and some slight changes may be made.

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NOTES TO EDITORS:

The BFI Southbank Monitor season runs from 9 to 23 April

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/southbank

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 *****

A selection of images for journalistic use in promoting BFI Southbank screenings can be found at www.image.net under BFI / BFI Southbank