

Alice in Wonderland



With a hint of spring in the March air the **BFI** presents a selection of films and activities to take audiences down rabbit holes and through looking glasses, when we dip into Lewis Carroll's enduring tale of **Alice in Wonderland**.

As we anticipate the release of **Tim Burton's Alice in Wonderland – An IMAX 3D Experience** on 5th March at **BFI IMAX**, the BFI celebrates the many versions of **Alice...** through the last century of film.

An amazing example of film restoration from the **BFI National Archive** can be seen in the first *Alice in Wonderland* (1903), free-to-view in **BFI Mediatheques**. Other interpretations of **Alice...** will be screened in a programme of films from 1933 through to 1988, at **BFI Southbank**, where the **Mad Hatter's Film School** will entertain kids during the Easter holidays.

In 1933 Paramount produced a star-studded adaptation of *Alice in Wonderland*, starring **Gary Cooper** as the White Knight, **Cary Grant** as the Mock Turtle and **W.C. Fields** as Humpty-Dumpty. Drawing on both *Alice* books for inspiration, the script was written by **Joseph Mankiewicz** and **William Cameron Menzies**. A more faithful version is the Anglo-French collaboration made in 1949, with **Carol Marsh** in the title role accompanied by **Lou Bunin's** beautifully crafted puppets. Two BBC commissions feature in our **BFI Southbank** season. **Alice** (1965) was a controversial template for **Denis Potter's Dreamchild** (1985), and Potter wrote the screenplays for both, each mixing biographical material with fiction to explore the relationship between the Alice Liddell and Reverend Charles Dodgson. **Jonathan Miller's** version from 1966 stars **Sir John Gielgud**, **Alan Bennett** and **Peter Cook** as the Mad Hatter. And of course we had to include **Jan Švankmajer's** surreal take on this tale - a wonderfully creepy and chilling offering, where Wonderland is filled with menacing stop-motion characters.

During the Easter holidays we'll be running the **Mad Hatter's Film School**, a chance for 9 - 13 year olds to encounter the surreal world of **Alice...** From Tuesday 6th April to Friday 9th April there will be a choice of workshops and screenings good enough to entice anyone to leap into the rabbit hole! The workshops will consist of different activities including: composing soundtracks to the 1903 silent version, designing, making and animating puppets à la Jan Švankmajer and, most exciting of

all, recreating the dizzying changes in scale that feature in the novel and all the films - with a custom built mini set and green screen technology. Each afternoon we'll screen a classic Alice film: Švankmajer's dark animated tale, the 1950s Disney take, Jonathan Miller's BBC version, and of course the new retelling by Tim Burton.

Following the phenomenal recent success of the IMAX 3D version of *Avatar*, the **BFI IMAX** opens ***Alice in Wonderland – An IMAX 3D Experience*** (2010) on **5th March**. Visionary filmmaker **Tim Burton** puts his distinctive touch to this combination live-action and performance capture version of Lewis Carroll's classic tale. The all-star cast includes **Johnny Depp, Anne Hathaway, Helena Bonham Carter, Crispin Glover, Alan Rickman** and **Mia Wasikowska** as Alice. *Alice in Wonderland*, which opens nationwide in Disney Digital 3D and 2D, has also been digitally re-mastered into the unparalleled image and sound quality of IMAX 3D. See it on Britain's biggest screen for the ultimate cinema experience. Advance booking is open now.

Alice in Wonderland (1903), the first-ever film version of Lewis Carroll's tale, has recently been restored by the **BFI National Archive**. Made only 37 years after Lewis Carroll wrote his story, the film is based on **Sir John Tenniel's** original illustrations. This version, at 12 minutes, was the longest film produced in England at that time. A major investment for the pioneering Hepworth Studios that produced it, it was the *Avatar* of its day. The only surviving print, held in the BFI National Archive, is severely damaged – and only 8 minutes of footage have survived. The Archive has preserved the film and restored its original colour tints. This short film will be available to view on the BFI website www.bfi.org.uk and in the BFI Mediatheques, free of charge, from early March. The film will also premiere on 24 February, accompanied by live piano, at a special event at the British Library that celebrates the history of Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*. The British Library holds the original hand-written and illustrated manuscript of *Alice's Adventures under Ground*.

The BFI Southbank Alice in Wonderland season is presented in association with:



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For season information go to:

http://www.bfi.org.uk/whatson/bfi_southbank/film_programme/march_seasons/

Programme:

Alice in Wonderland

As Tim Burton's new 3D version of Carroll's classic opens at **BFI IMAX**, and the **BFI National Archive's** restoration of the 1903 Hepworth version is brought to light, it's time for a brief rabbit-hole retro...

Alice in Wonderland

This star-studded Paramount version, scripted by Joseph Mankiewicz and William Cameron Menzies, features Grant as the Mock Turtle, Cooper as the White Knight and WC Fields as Humpty-Dumpty. Borrowing from both Alice tales, it takes a liberal approach to the source material but concludes with an ending of suitably surrealist proportions.

USA 1933 Dir Norman Z McLeod With Charlotte Henry, Gary Cooper, Cary Grant 79min U

+ **Alice in Wonderland** UK 1903 Dir Percy Stow. With May Clark c8min

Fri 12 Mar 18:30 NFT2, Sun 14 Mar 18:10 NFT3

Alice in Wonderland

Perhaps the most faithful in terms of narrative and tone to the original story, this dreamlike Anglo-French adaptation blends together actors and marionettes. After a live action prologue Alice descends into an absurdist Wonderland populated by Lou Bunin's beautifully designed and crafted puppets, an eccentric cast of grotesques vividly brought to life via stop-motion animation.

USA-France-UK 1949 Dir Dallas Bower & Lou Bunin With Carol Marsh 96min U

Fri 5 Mar 18:10 NFT3, Sun 7 Mar 15:50 NFT3, Tue 9 Mar 11:00 NFT2 (Parent & Toddler screening)

Alice

The controversial template for what later became *Dreamchild*, this Dennis Potter-scripted television drama mixes biographical detail with fiction as it seeks to explore the relationship between ten-year-old Alice Liddell (Watling) and the Reverend Charles Dodgson (Baker), and the psychological underpinnings behind his celebrated work. Director Davies recreates scenes John Tenniel's illustrations as his guide.

The Wednesday Play BBC 1965 Dir Gareth Davies With George Baker, Rosalie Crutchley, Deborah Watling 95min PG

Thu 11 Mar 18:15 NFT3, Mon 15 Mar 21:00 NFT2

Alice in Wonderland

Miller's BBC adaptation uses Carroll's nimble wordplay as a means of dissecting the Victorian upper classes. The dreamlike atmosphere is haunting and unsettling, the cast stellar, and Dick Bush's deep-focus cinematography, inspired by the photography of the era, impressive.

BBC 1966 Dir Jonathan Miller With Ann-Marie Mallik, Wilfred Brambell, Alan Bennett, Michael Gough 72min PG

Tue 9 Mar 20:40 NFT2, Sat 13 Mar 18:20 NFT2

Dreamchild

In 1932, Alice Liddell Hargreaves (Browne) travels to New York, aged 80, to attend a celebration of the centenary of Charles Dodgson's birth. Haunted by childhood events, Alice recalls the questionable attentions of the shy, stuttering Dodgson (Holm). Written by Dennis Potter, this is a dark, complex, quite remarkable film, with nightmarish creatures by Jim Henson's Creature Shop.

UK 1985 Dir Gavin Millar With Coral Browne, Ian Holm 95min PG

Tue 9 Mar 18:10 NFT3, Tue 16 Mar 18:20 NFT2

Alice (*Neco z Alenky*)

Czech surrealist Švankmajer's *Alice* adaptation is as creepy and disturbing as you'd expect. With a live-action Alice entering a Wonderland filled with threatening stop-motion characters, and eventually becoming a doll herself, Švankmajer's deliberately crude style of and menacing design lend the film a pervading sense of unease and dread.

Switzerland-UK-Germany 1988 Dir Jan Švankmajer With Kristina Kohoutova 85min PG

Sat 13 Mar 16:00 NFT2, Wed 17 Mar 20:40 NFT2

In association with:



Future Film presents: Creating Wonderland

Future Film is the BFI's monthly strand of screenings, workshops, competitions and special offers for 11-25 year olds.

This month we're exploring *Alice in Wonderland* as if through the eyes of the artist and filmmaker Sergei Paradjanov. Throughout the day we'll work with artists and designers Tata Naka and filmmaker Pia Borg to make a short film about Alice in a day using puppets and poetry. bfi.org.uk/futurefilm

For 11-18 year olds: Wonderland Workshops **Sat 13 Mar 11:00-18:00 Learning Spaces FREE**

For 18-25 year olds: Check out Jan Švankmajer's version of *Alice* for just £5 **Sat 13 Mar 16:00 NFT2**

NOTES TO EDITORS:

The **BFI IMAX**, South Bank, SE1, features the largest cinema screen in the UK – more than 20 metres high and stretching more than 26 metres wide. This, together with the 12,000-watt digital surround-sound system and the most sophisticated motion-picture projector in the world, immerses audiences in larger-than-life images and ultra-realistic sound, whether the film is in 2D, 3D or IMAX DMR. BFI IMAX also holds special events including live opera in HD from the New York Met, regular All-Nighters and the BFI Film Quiz.

Tickets for **Alice in Wonderland** – An IMAX 3D Experience (Cert PG TBC) are on sale now and can be bought in advance from the ticket desk in person, by telephone on **020 7199 6000** or online at www.bfi.org.uk/imax. Ticket prices: Standard seats - Adults £14.00, Concessions £10.25, Students £9.75, Children (4-14) £9.25. Premium seats including double 'love' seats - Adults £16.00, Concessions/Students/Children £12.00. We now also offer money-saving Family Tickets for our standard seats. A Family Ticket for two adults and two children is £42.00, saving £4.50, and for one adult and two children is £28.50, saving £4.00. Double seats can be booked by telephone only.

The **BFI Filmstore** is stocked and staffed by BFI experts with over 1,200 book titles and 1,000 DVDs to choose from, including hundreds of acclaimed books and DVDs produced by the BFI.

The British Library is the national library of the United Kingdom and one of the world's greatest research libraries. It provides world class information services to the academic, business, research and scientific communities and offers unparalleled access to the world's largest and most comprehensive research collection. The Library's collection has developed over 250 years and exceeds 150 million separate items

representing every age of written civilisation. It includes: books, journals, manuscripts, maps, stamps, music, patents, photographs, newspapers and sound recordings in all written and spoken languages. www.bl.uk

The benugo bar & kitchen

Eat, drink and be merry in panoramic daylight. benugo's décor is contemporary, brightly lit and playful with a lounge space, bar and dining area. The place to network, hang out, unpack a film, savour the best of Modern British or sip on a cocktail.

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 / March 2010

Images from Alice in Wonderland 3D are available at www.image.net under Walt Disney