

## Paul Newman Season at BFI Southbank



**Paul Newman's** film career spans more than half a century and secured him the status of a true screen icon. This April, BFI Southbank will celebrate his illustrious career with a season of his films.

Born in 1925, the son of a successful Ohio entrepreneur, he served in the navy during WWII, studied drama at Yale on the GI Bill, and found a foothold in New York in the early 1950s, putting in time at the Actors Studio, appearing on Broadway and in live television dramas. His big breakthrough came with his second film, ***Somebody Up There Likes Me*** (1956) where he played the role of middleweight champ Rocky Graziano. Rocky is a social menace, a petty criminal with a violent anti-authoritarian streak. But he shows us the strength too, the pride and the fury, the longing for respect.

After playing Billy the Kid in ***The Left-Handed Gun*** (1958), Newman's next big success was with **Richard Brooks'** adaptation of **Tennessee Williams'** ***Cat on a Hot Tin Roof*** (1958), as **Elizabeth Taylor's** alcoholic husband. As the heat rises, so does the sexual tension, as Newman portrays the troubled former sports hero, for which he earned his first of nine **Oscar** nominations.

***The Hustler*** (1961) proved Newman's acting capabilities as he took on the role of Fast Eddie Falcon, the cocky pool player, a role that he reprised in ***The Color of Money*** (1986) as a mentor to the young **Tom Cruise**, a role for which he finally won the **Academy Award for Best Actor**.

Despite his good looks, Newman often played the outsider; a drifter who uses a woman to advance his situation in ***Sweet Bird of youth*** (1961), the immoral womaniser in ***Hud*** (1963) or the western outlaw in ***The Life and Times of Judge Roy Bean*** (1972). But it was as the rebellious prisoner in ***Cool Hand Luke*** (1967), and as one half of the outlaw duo with **Robert Redford** in ***Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*** (1969), that cemented his reputation as one of the greats.

As he aged, the rebels took up causes, his heroes lost some of their antagonism – he might even give us a wink now and then. That was Newman the superstar. Charisma on wheels. But many would argue he saved the best for last: in ***The Verdict*** (1982), ***The Hudsucker Proxy*** (1994) and ***Twilight*** (1998) we see the man in full, the stubborn charm and braggadocio seasoned with doubt and regret.

## **PRESS CONTACTS**

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### ***Somebody Up There Likes Me***

Newman inherited the role of boxer Rocky Graziano on the death of James Dean. Filmed on the streets of New York, the film is striking for its tough, unsentimental depiction of Rocky's childhood (his abusive father hits him in the face in the first frame), his delinquency and anger. Newman gives an honest account of the man's limitations and resources. The roots of *Raging Bull* are here.

USA 1956 Dir Robert Wise. With Pier Angeli, Everett Sloane, Eileen Heckart, Sal Mineo 113min PG

**Thu 1 Apr 18:20 NFT1, Sun 4 Apr 20:30 NFT3**

### ***The Left-Handed Gun***

Newman helped bring Gore Vidal's play to the screen and stage director Arthur Penn to make his first movie. He plays William Bonney, 'Billy the Kid', whose quest to avenge his murdered boss puts him on the wrong side of the law. In this ostentatiously psychological reading of an angry young gunfighter Penn puts the cowboy on the analyst's couch, metaphorically speaking.

USA 1958 Dir Arthur Penn With Lita Milan, John Dehner, Hurd Hatfield, James Congdon 102min PG

**Thu 1 Apr 20:30 NFT3, Wed 7 Apr 18:20 NFT2** with introduction by Clyde Jeavons

### ***Cat on a Hot Tin Roof***

Tennessee Williams' play about a Southern family riddled with sexual frustration and social anxiety may have been hobbled by the constraints of the Hollywood Production Code, but nobody told the actors. They play it to the hilt. Passionate and poetic and a little bit camp, the movie is like a soap opera written by a genius. Newman earned his first Oscar nomination as Maggie the Cat's alcoholic husband, Brick.

USA 1958 Dir Richard Brooks With Elizabeth Taylor, Burl Ives, Jack Carson, Judith Anderson 108min 12A

**Thu 1 Apr 18:10 NFT3, Fri 2 Apr 15:50 NFT3, Mon 5 Apr 18:10 NFT1, Wed 7 Apr 14:30 NFT2**

### ***The Hustler***

This is the essential Paul Newman performance: Fast Eddie Felson, a hungry young pool player whose cocky grin flashes up bullish self-belief but zero class. He's matched (and more?) by Jackie Gleason's gliding, decorous Minnesota Fats – both look like real shooters – and by Scott's watchful presence as the man with the bankroll in his pocket – the only pocket that really counts. Great film.

USA 1961 Dir Robert Rossen With Jackie Gleason, George C Scott, Piper Laurie, Murray Hamilton 135min 15

**Fri 2 Apr 18:00 NFT1, Sun 4 Apr 17:50 NFT2, Mon 5 Apr 20:20 NFT3**

### ***Sweet Bird of Youth***

Newman never shied from the venality of his characters; his outsiders are always sniffing for the inside track. Case in point: Chance Wayne, a cavalier narcissist who sinks his hooks into fading movie siren Alexandra Del Lago (Page) in a bid to break into Hollywood and reclaim the girl who got away. Both stars originated the roles on Broadway and Brooks' movie is an invaluable record of these definitive performances.

USA 1961 Dir Richard Brooks With Geraldine Page, Shirley Knight, Ed Begley, Rip Torn 120min 15

**Fri 2 Apr 20:30 NFT3, Mon 5 Apr 15:40 NFT1**

### ***Hud***

Another callous womaniser and low-down heel, Hud Bannon is the definitive Newman anti-hero; the last time he would play a character beyond redemption. Yet we still feel Hud's lure. Based on Larry McMurtry's first novel, the film is a modern western interrogating the mercenary values of the age. Superb b&w photography by James Wong Howe.

USA 1963 Dir Martin Ritt With Brandon de Wilde, Patricia Neal, Melvyn Douglas 111min 12A

**Sat 3 Apr 16:10 NFT1, Fri 9 Apr 20:45 NFT1, Wed 14 Apr 18:10 NFT1**

### ***Harper* aka *The Moving Target***

After a series of flops, Newman got back on track with this breezy, starchy, modish update on the classic private eye thriller: *The Big Sleep* a-go-go. William Goldman adapted Ross Macdonald's novel, undercutting the California trippiness with playful distaste, and concocting a pleasingly head-scratching fade out. Shelley Winters has a memorable bit as a blowsy movie actress gone to seed.

USA 1966 Dir Jack Smight With Lauren Bacall, Julie Harris, Janet Leigh, Robert Wagner, Arthur Hill 121min 12A

**Sat 3 Apr 18:00 NFT3, Tue 13 Apr 18:10 NFT2**

### **Hombre**

The team behind *Hud* reassembled for this gripping western based on Elmore Leonard's first novel. A variation on *Stagecoach*, the film has Newman in the John Wayne role, as the unrespectable outsider (a white man raised by the Apache) who represents his fellow passengers' best chance of survival after bandits attack. Newman's laconic reserve and intelligence mark him as an ideal Leonard hero; it's one of the best adaptations of his work.

USA 1967 Dir Martin Ritt With Fredric March, Richard Boone, Diane Cilento, Cameron Mitchell 111min PG

**Sun 4 Apr 15:40 NFT1, Tue 13 Apr 20:30 NFT3**

### **Torn Curtain**

American scientist Newman defects to the East – in fact he's working as a double agent, but he can't tell his fiancée (Andrews) this, which makes her decision to follow him to East Germany somewhat problematic. The late, great Robin Wood found *Torn Curtain* rich, but unsatisfying. Fair enough, but it's a far more enjoyable movie than its ugly-duckling status would suggest, with at least one truly unforgettable sequence.

USA 1966 Dir Alfred Hitchcock With Julie Andrews, Lila Kedrova, Hansjorg Felmy 128min 15

**Sat 3 Apr 20:30 NFT2, Sun 11 Apr 15:30 NFT2**

### **Cool Hand Luke**

War veteran Luke gets drunk one night, decapitates several parking meters and winds up on a southern chain gang, where his rebellious ways inspire the other inmates, but infuriate the guards. The anti-authoritarianism (and Christ symbolism) is laid on pretty thick, but Newman's still-youthful magnetism, his insolence and humour (and Conrad Hall's sharp Panavision compositions) made this one of his iconic parts. Timely in 1967, it still plays.

USA 1967 Dir Stuart Rosenberg With George Kennedy, Strother Martin, JD Cannon, Robert Drivas 127min 15

**Tue 6 Apr 14:30 NFT2; 18:00 NFT3, Mon 19 Apr 18:00 NFT1**

### **Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid**

After a decade at the top, Newman cemented his box-office status with this jocular western, a flip, light-hearted testament to the outlaw sensibility that broke box-office records in its day. Newman and Redford's antics inaugurated a line of buddy movies that lasted into the 1980s. Written by William Goldman, the movie proved just how funny Newman could be. At 44, he seems utterly relaxed and on top of his game.

USA 1969 Dir George Roy Hill With Robert Redford, Katharine Ross, Strother Martin, Henry Jones 110min PG

**Wed 7 Apr 20:45 NFT1, Sun 18 Apr 16:10 NFT1**

### **WUSA**

Much maligned at the time, this curio is the most overtly political of Newman's films, and also, he said, his 'most important'. Another example of the star's literary taste (he produced it), it is based on Robert Stone's *A Hall of Mirrors*, adapted by the novelist himself. Newman is Reinhart, a broken cynic who works as a 'communicator' at a right-wing radio station. Perkins is memorable as the ineffectual voice of liberalism.

USA 1971 Dir Stuart Rosenberg With Joanne Woodward, Anthony Perkins, Laurence Harvey 117min 15

**Sun 18 Apr 20:40 NFT2, Tue 20 Apr 18:20 NFT2**

### **Sometimes a Great Notion** aka *Never Give an Inch*

Ken Kesey's novel about the Stamper clan, an Oregon logging family who keep right on cutting through a timber strike, makes for challenging film material, but a surprisingly authoritative and reflective movie. Newman (who had directed Joanne Woodward in *Rachel, Rachel* in 1968) took over as director after firing Richard Colla a few weeks into production.

USA 1971 Dir Paul Newman With Henry Fonda, Lee Remick, Michael Sarrazin, Richard Jaeckel 114min 12A

**Sat 17 Apr 20:40 NFT2, Tue 20 Apr 14:00 NFT3** Seniors' Matinee, with introduction and discussion

### **The Life and Times of Judge Roy Bean**

Wild and woolly celebration of Roy Bean, the western outlaw who declared himself the law west of the Pecos, and became an infamous hanging judge ('I am the law, and the law is the handmaiden of Justice. Get a rope.') Raucous and anarchic comedy mashed up with much macho mayhem and a sentimental streak, plus lots of cameos, including Huston himself as Grizzly Adams... And all of them upstaged by Bruno the bear.

USA 1972 Dir John Huston With Victoria Principal, Ava Gardner, Tab Hunter, Anthony Perkins 124min 15

**Sat 17 Apr 15:40 NFT2, Fri 23 Apr 20:20 NFT3**

### **The Sting**

Lightning struck twice for Hill, Newman and Redford. The *Butch and Sundance* team enjoyed another smash hit (and watched as the film won multiple Oscars) with this snappy con-man comedy, set during the Great Depression but jauntily scored to Scott Joplin's ragtime. Newman graciously played mentor to Redford's fledgling grifter, both intent on putting one over on mob boss Shaw.

USA 1973 Dir George Roy Hill With Robert Redford, Robert Shaw, Charles Durning, Ray Walston 129min PG

**Fri 16 Apr 18:00 NFT3, Fri 23 Apr 18:00 NFT1**

**Buffalo Bill and the Indians**

'It's harder bein' a star than an injun,' bemoans Newman's Bill Cody, Wild West showman extraordinaire, in Altman's characteristically trenchant satire. As much as *Nashville*, this was his contribution to America's bi-centennial celebrations, a frankly disgusted memorial to the subjugation of Native America, and the lies told about it. Newman seizes on the opportunity to debunk his own celebrity in this seriously underrated romp. USA 1976 Dir Robert Altman With Joel Grey, Kevin McCarthy, Harvey Keitel, Burt Lancaster 123min PG

**Wed 21 Apr 18:10 NFT2, Sun 25 Apr 15:50 NFT2**

**The Verdict**

Newman took on the role of alcoholic ambulance chaser Frank Galvin after Robert Redford backed out – but it's impossible to imagine anyone else in the part. Newman gives us a broken man who sees a chance to redeem himself, inviting further disaster into his life. It's a brave, beautifully modulated performance – look how he shrugs off his big summation speech – from a choice, adult script by David Mamet.

USA 1982 Dir Sidney Lumet With James Mason, Charlotte Rampling, Jack Warden, Milo O'Shea 128min 15

**Sat 24 Apr 17:50 NFT2, Sun 25 Apr 20:30 NFT2**

**The Color of Money**

Newman finally won the Best Actor Oscar (at the seventh attempt) in this sequel to 1961's *The Hustler*. It may not have the grit of the earlier picture, but it's a tremendously dynamic and engrossing slice of lowlife entertainment. This time Cruise is the cocky raw talent, Newman the polished elder statesman who takes him on the road to show him some new tricks, but finds he's missed a few himself.

USA 1986 Dir Martin Scorsese With Tom Cruise, Mary Elizabeth Mastrantonio, John Turturro 119min 15

**Sun 25 Apr 18:10 NFT3**

**The Hudsucker Proxy**

Madcap business shenanigans at the Hudsucker Corporation, where mail clerk Norville Barnes (Robbins) is swiftly elevated to CEO in a scheme orchestrated by cunning VP Sidney J Mussburger (Newman). The Coens' 30s-style screwball comedy is breathlessly inventive farce, and Newman brings his own distinctive hardboiled class to the party. Much ado about nothing? Don't you believe it!

USA 1994 Dir Joel Coen With Tim Robbins, Jennifer Jason Leigh, Charles Durning, John Mahoney 111min PG

**Tue 27 Apr 20:45 NFT2, Thu 29 Apr 20:45 NFT2**

**Twilight**

Following up their deliciously autumnal *Nobody's Fool* (sadly unavailable for this season) with this likewise wry study of ageing, honour and friendship, Benton and Newman here ring rich changes on the private-eye picture, with the star's Harry Ross caught up in deadly corruption after he does a favour for a former movie-star pal (Gene Hackman). The pleasingly labyrinthine plot may not be the most original, but the interplay between the cast does the witty, insightful script full justice.

USA 1998 Dir Robert Benton With Susan Sarandon, James Garner, Reese Witherspoon 95min 15

**Thu 29 Apr 18:30 NFT2, Fri 30 Apr 20:40 NFT2**

**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 £9.00, concs £6.65 Members pay £1.40 less on any ticket. Website [www.bfi.org.uk/southbank](http://www.bfi.org.uk/southbank)

**Tickets for ALL FREE screenings and events but must be booked in advance by calling the Box Office to avoid disappointment**

**NOTES TO EDITORS:**

**BFI Filmstore**

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**\*\*\* PICTURE DESK \*\*\***

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