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## Terence Rattigan Season. At BFI Southbank in April 2011



To mark the centennial year of the birth of highly regarded dramatist and screenwriter **Terence Rattigan**, **BFI Southbank** mounts the only celebratory season focusing on Rattigan's output for film. Throughout **April 2011** audiences will have the opportunity of seeing a selection of his varied screen output including **Brighton Rock** (1945), **The Browning Version** (1951) and **The Prince and the Showgirl** (1957). Rattigan expert and biographer **Michael Darlow** will, on **April 13** also present an extended introduction to the screening of **Journey Together** (1945) and will investigate why film screenwriters are generally accorded less respect than theatrical dramatists.

From the 1940s until his death in 1977 Terence Rattigan was one of the most successful screenwriters in the world. He wrote more than 20 films and was twice nominated for an Oscar (for both *Separate Tables* (1958) and *Breaking the Sound Barrier* 1952). He wrote screen adaptations of his own stage plays, original screenplays and adaptations of work by others.

Throughout his career Rattigan's film work alternated between projects which he found creatively exciting and those he regarded as well-paid chores and a means of sustaining his extravagant lifestyle. Rattigan ended an article he penned in 1950 by protesting at the extravagant critical respect accorded to film directors by reminding fellow screenwriters that 'drama is inference, and inference drama'. He challenged them to 'remember that the screenplay is the child not only of its mother, the silent film, but also of its father, the Drama; that it has affinities not only with Griffith and de Mille, but also with Sophocles, Shakespeare and Ibsen'.

Through this season **BFI** hopes to show that in their use of inference and dramatic understatement, Rattigan's films remain every bit as true, moving and powerful as films made today. That, when so much that we see on our screens is over-obvious, overstated or simply empty, Rattigan's words remain as pertinent as when he wrote them over 60 years ago.

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**Quiet Wedding**

UK 1941. Dir Anthony Asquith. Scr Terence Rattigan & Anatole de Grunwald, based on a play by Esther McCracken. With Margaret Lockwood, Derek Farr, AE Matthews, Athene Seyler, Peggy Ashcroft, Roland Culver, Muriel Pavlow, Margaret Rutherford. 80min. **PG** Asquith brought in Rattigan to adapt Esther McCracken's 1938 stage hit and add some touches of his own deft humour – for example, in the opening cricket match scenes. As the harassed young couple who want a quiet, simple wedding but find their families have other ideas, Lockwood and Farr lead a cast of well-loved British actors in a romantic comedy which beguiled British cinemagoers during the darkest days of WWII.

**Fri 8 April 18:20 NFT2**

**Fri 15 April 18:20 NFT2**

**Sat 30 April 18:20 NFT2**

**Journey Together**

UK 1945. Dir John Boulting. Scr Terence Rattigan. With Richard Attenborough, Jack Watling, Edward G Robinson. 95min. **PG**

While serving in WWII as an RAF Air Gunner, Rattigan was seconded to work with another officer, John Boulting, on a film about RAF Training Command. The result, showing how in war people from different backgrounds mix and become dependent upon each other, remains one of the period's most satisfying blends of documentary and fiction. Sergeant Richard Attenborough and Aircraftsman Jack Watling were drafted in to play leading roles.

**\*With extended introduction by Michael Darlow**

**Wed 13 April 18:20 NFT2\***

**Wed 20 April 20:40 NFT2**

**The Way to the Stars**

UK 1945. Dir Anthony Asquith. Scr Terence Rattigan, based on a scenario by Rattigan and Richard Sherman. With Michael Redgrave, John Mills, Rosamund John, Douglass Montgomery, Basil Radford, Trevor Howard. 109min. **U**

Intended to promote harmonious relations between the British and Americans, and incorporating material from Rattigan's successful 1942 stage play *Flare Path*, the film centres on the lives, loves and tragedies of the succession of servicemen and their families who serve on a British wartime airfield. Not completed until just after the war ended, it was hailed as a patriotic masterpiece – a reputation that has endured.

**Sat 9 April 17:50 NFT2**

**Fri 29 April 16:00 NFT2**

**Brighton Rock**

UK 1945. Dir John Boulting. Scr Terence Rattigan & Graham Greene, from the novel by Greene. With Richard

Attenborough, Hermione Baddeley, William Hartnell. 92min. **PG**

This adaptation of Graham Greene's novel about Brighton gangs, with Richard Attenborough outstanding as the vicious young hoodlum Pinkie, was – and still is – widely regarded as the finest British thriller of the period. Working together on the script was not a happy experience for either Rattigan or Greene. Greene likened working with Rattigan to 'walking on very slippery parquet flooring'. However, the result of the two great writers' collaboration is classic British *film noir*.

**Thu 14 April 18:40 NFT1**

**Thu 21 April 18:20 NFT2**

### **The Browning Version**

UK 1951. Dir Anthony Asquith. Scr Terence Rattigan, from his own stage play. With Michael Redgrave, Jean Kent, Nigel Patrick. 90min. **U**

Michael Redgrave gives what many regard as his finest film performance in Rattigan's own adaptation of his greatest play. A masterpiece of concentrated emotional intensity about a failed public-school classics master, Crocker Harris, driven into premature retirement by heart disease and his openly unfaithful wife. In a plot of enormous personal resonance for both Rattigan and Redgrave, the film explores emotional repression, falsity, failure and the pain of love.

**Fri 8 April 20:20 NFT2**

**Fri 22 April 20:40 NFT2**

### **The Sound Barrier**

UK 1952. Dir David Lean. Scr Terence Rattigan. With Ralph Richardson, Ann Todd, Nigel Patrick, John Justin, Dinah Sheridan, Denholm Elliott. 119min. **U**

Asked by David Lean to write a script about the development of new high speed jet aircraft, Rattigan was reluctant. But a visit to the Farnborough Air Display and meeting test pilots fired his imagination. The result, about the troubled relationship between an aircraft manufacturer, his daughter and her test-pilot husband, raises still relevant issues about the cost, purpose and benefit of technological advance and reveals Rattigan's profound humanism.

**Sat 16 April 18:10 NFT2**

**Mon 25 April 20:40 NFT2**

### **The Prince and the Showgirl**

UK 1957. Dir Laurence Olivier. Scr Terence Rattigan, from his play **The Sleeping Prince**.

With Marilyn Monroe, Laurence Olivier, Sybil Thorndike, Richard Wattis. 117min. **PG**  
Rattigan said he 'detested' adapting his stage plays for film but this, his screen version of his 1953 comedy *The Sleeping Prince*, is a great advance on the stage original. Laurence Olivier reprises his stage performance as the boorish Carpathian prince uncharming, in London to attend the 1911 coronation of George V, and Marilyn Monroe is delicious as the determinedly romantic chorus girl he hires for his one free evening.

**Sun 17 April 18:10 NFT2**

**Fri 22 April 18:10 NFT2**

### **Separate Tables**

USA 1958. Dir Delbert Mann. Scr Terence Rattigan & John Gay, based on Rattigan's play.

With Rita Hayworth, Deborah Kerr, Burt Lancaster, David Niven, Wendy Hiller. 100min. **PG**  
This adaptation of Rattigan's powerful one-act double-bill was nominated for seven Oscars, including Best Screenplay, and won two (for David Niven and Wendy Hiller.) Set in a Bournemouth hotel, it explores loneliness, sexual desire and repression. Rattigan worked with two Hollywood screenwriters: John Gay, known mainly for TV series, and (uncredited) John Michael Hayes, whose movies included *Rear Window* and *To Catch a Thief*. Despite earning \$1,000-a-day, Rattigan hated Hollywood, its endless script conferences and general hysteria

**Sat 23 April 16:00 NFT2**

**Tue 26 April 20:45 NFT3**

**Thu 28 April 20:40 NFT2**

### **The VIPs**

UK 1963. Dir Anthony Asquith. Scr Terence Rattigan. With Elizabeth Taylor, Richard Burton, Louis Jourdan, Rod Taylor, Orson Welles, Elsa Martinelli, Maggie Smith, Margaret Rutherford. 117min. **PG**

Trapped in the VIP Lounge at Heathrow, his flight grounded by fog, Rattigan imagined the lives of fellow stranded passengers and the dramas behind them being there. When he arrived in America he sold his imaginings to MGM as the

scenario for this film. The central story is based on Vivien Leigh who, attempting to leave her husband, Laurence Olivier, for her lover Peter Finch, was thwarted by fog at Heathrow.

**Sat 23 April 18:10 NFT2**

**Fri 29 April 20:40 NFT2**

### **The Winslow Boy**

USA 1999. Dir David Mamet. Scr Mamet

based on the play by Terence Rattigan. With Nigel Hawthorne, Jeremy Northam, Rebecca Pidgeon, Gemma Jones. 105min. **U**

1911. A boy is expelled from naval college for stealing five shillings. His father decides to fight for his son's right to a fair hearing, at no matter what cost to himself or his family. David Mamet, who adapts and directs, believes Rattigan's play, on which the film is based, is a masterpiece, and that the issues raised remain as relevant today as 65 years ago, when Rattigan wrote it.

**\*Seniors' Matinee (with introduction)**

**Tue 19 April 14:00 NFT2\***

**Mon 25 April 15:50 NFT2**

**Fri 29 April 18:20 NFT2**

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

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### **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.

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

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