



PRESS RELEASE

12/08

DICKENS ON SCREEN AT BFI SOUTHBANK IN FEBRUARY AND MARCH 2012

DICKENS ON SCREEN, BFI Southbank's unprecedented retrospective of film and TV adaptations, moves into February and March and continues to explore how the work of one of Britain's best loved storytellers has been adapted and interpreted for the big and small screens – offering the largest retrospective of Dickens on film and television ever staged.

February 7 marks the 200th anniversary of Charles Dickens' birth and **BFI Southbank** will host a celebratory evening in partnership with **Film London** and **The British Council** featuring the world premiere of Chris Newby's **Dickens in London**, the innovative and highly distinctive adaptation of five radio plays by **Michael Eaton** that incorporates animation, puppetry and contemporary footage, and a Neil Brand score. The day will also feature three newly commissioned short films inspired by the man himself. Further highlights in February include a special presentation of Christine Edzard's epic film version of **Little Dorrit** (1988) that will reunite some of the cast and crew members including **Derek Jacobi**, a complete screening of the rarely seen 1960 BBC production of **Barnaby Rudge**, as well as day long screenings of the definitive productions of **Hard Times** (1977) and **Martin Chuzzlewit** (1994). In addition, there will be the unique opportunity to experience all eight hours of the **RSC's** extraordinary 1982 production of **Nicholas Nickleby**, including a panel discussion with directors **Trevor Nunn** and **John Caird**, actor **David Threlfall** and its adaptor, **David Edgar**.

Saving some of the best for last, the season concludes in March with a beautiful new restoration of the very rare Nordisk version of **Our Mutual Friend** (1921) and a two-part programme of vintage, American TV

adaptations of Dickens - most of which have never been screened in this country before and feature legendary Hollywood stars. **Carol Reed's** classic musical **Oliver!** (1966) will receive a special screening in a new digital print, complete with special archival titbits and accompanying guests. For contrast and completeness, there will also be an opportunity to see some of the most recent film adaptations, including **Roman Polanski's** 2005 version of **Oliver Twist**.

Last but not least, the UK television contribution to Dickens on Screen in March sees a complete screening of one of the finest ever Dickens adaptations made for television, **Bleak House** (BBC 1985), starring luminaries such as **Diana Rigg**, **Denholm Elliott** and **Peter Vaughan**. There will also be a panel session devoted to examining 'Dickens the Man' with biographers and interpreters in attendance.

- Ends -

Press Contacts:

Brian Robinson, Communication Manager Archive and Heritage

brian.robinson@bfi.org.uk 020 7957 8940

Tim Mosley, Press Officer BFI Southbank tim.mosley@bfi.org.uk 020 7957 8918

Part of

DICKENS 2012



PROGRAMME

Dickens 200th Birthday Event + World Premiere: Dickens in London

UK 2012. Dir Chris Newby. With Hugo Docking, Samuel Barnett, Alex Jennings, Antony Sher. 70min

To mark the occasion of Dickens' actual 200th birthday, a host of special guests will come together in a celebration of one of the world's most loved authors, whose life and writing continues to inspire artists and filmmakers today. Working with partners of Dickens 2012, including the British Council, this event will tie into the Dickens birthday events around the world. *Dickens in London* is an innovative collaboration between BBC Radio 4, BBC Radio Drama and Film London Artists' Moving Image Network (FLAMIN), supported by the National Lottery through Arts Council England. Five of Dickens' journalistic essays were adapted by Michael Eaton for five radio plays depicting Dickens' impressions of London and forming a biographical portrait. Film artist Chris Newby responded to the plays and, working in counterpoint to the audio, created this arresting, powerful and highly distinctive work that incorporates animation, puppetry and contemporary footage, and a Neil

Brand score. Also screening are premieres of three new Film London-commissioned short films, inspired by the great man (c15min):

80,000 Christmas Lights, Fire, and Fits and Starts of Restlessness. Tickets £10, concs £6.75 (Members pay £1.50 less)

Tue 7 Feb 18.20 NFT1

Oliver Twist

USA 1922. Dir Frank Lloyd. With Jackie Coogan, Lon Chaney. c74min. Video. With live piano accompaniment

After Jackie Coogan's heart-rending debut in Chaplin's *The Kid*, his father formed a company to exploit the talented seven-year-old. The boy who asked for more was an obvious choice. Helmed by Dickens aficionado Frank Lloyd (director of *A Tale of Two Cities* in 1917) and with Chaney adopting one of his thousand faces, the result was a charming, spirited production. Believed lost for decades, the film was rediscovered in Yugoslavia in the early 70s.

Fri 3 Feb 18:00 NFT2

Wed 8 Feb 20.45 NFT2

The Only Way

UK 1925. Dir Herbert Wilcox. With John Martin Harvey, Madge Stuart. c120min. With live piano accompaniment

The last silent Dickens was an adaptation of a play based upon *A Tale of Two Cities*. The great actor-manager John Martin Harvey first took the role of Sydney Carton in 1899, but found no difficulty in reprising his performance for the screen when he was a still-sprightly 62-year-old! Massive liberties were taken with the book to introduce the character of Mimi, Carton's French maid, originally to provide a role for his wife.

Sat 11 Feb 15:50 NFT2

Mon 27 Feb 20:40 NFT3

Oliver Twist

UK 1948. Dir David Lean. With Robert Newton, Kay Walsh, John Howard Davies, Francis L Sullivan, Anthony Newley. 118min. **U**

Lean's second magnificent adaptation of a classic Dickens novel, made hard on the heels of *Great Expectations*. Shot through with black humour, sombre in tone, suspenseful and sometimes shocking, this again raised the cinematic standard for translating Dickens on to celluloid. It also features a bravura and controversial performance from Alec Guinness as Fagin (reluctantly cast by an initially disbelieving Lean), basing his appearance on the original novel's illustrations by George Cruikshank. Plus an extract (c10min) from a 1955 interview with Lean.

Wed 1 Feb 20:30 NFT3

Sat 4 Feb 17:30 NFT2

Fri 10 Feb 17:50 NFT

Scrooge

UK 1951. Dir Brian Desmond Hurst. With Kathleen Harrison, Mervyn Johns, Hermione Baddeley, Michael Hordern, George Cole. 86min. **U**

Arguably the best loved and best remembered film adaption of Dickens' cautionary festive tale, *A Christmas Carol*. Fizzing with seasonal spirit, this is a beautifully rendered, well directed film of the haunting of the miser Scrooge that perfectly captures the story's mixture of fear, regret, fun and redemption. It also features a career-defining comic performance from the scintillatingly brilliant actor Alastair Sim, whose nasty, but eventually nice, Scrooge has never been bettered.

Sun 26 Feb 16:20 NFT2

Tue 28 Feb 20:40 NFT2

Great Expectations

USA 1998. Dir Alfonso Cuarón. With Ethan Hawke, Gwyneth Paltrow, Robert De Niro. 111min. **15**

A convincing update, relocating Dickens' timeless masterpiece to Florida and New York. Finn/Pip (Hawke) becomes a successful artist, unaware that his patronage comes not from crazed Miss Dinsmoor/Havisham (Anne Bancroft) but from escaped convict Lustig/Magwitch (De Niro). This imaginative modernisation focuses on class division, with upwardly-mobile Finn pursuing an impossible love for the snobby Estella (Paltrow) while turning his back on faithful working-man Joe (Chris Cooper). A significant contribution to the Dickens film canon.

Mon 20 Feb 20:40 NFT3

Tue 28 Feb 18:20 NFT2

Little Dorrit

UK 1988. Dir Christine Edzard. With Derek Jacobi, Alec Guinness, Joan Greenwood, Sarah Pickering, Miriam Margolyes. **U. Part One:** 176min; **Part Two:** 181min + Panel Discussion.

Epic, intelligent, marvellously cast and beautifully detailed film version of Dickens' mammoth masterpiece about a young girl who has grown up in a debtors' prison with her father, with secrecy surrounding her family history. Deploying the length of a television serial and wedding it to the scale and imagery of a cinema screen, Christine Edzard, backed by the weight of the dynamic cottage industry production and costume company Sands Film, made one of the most significant Dickens adaptations of the late 20th century. Following the screening of the concluding part of *Little Dorrit*, we are delighted to present a special on-stage discussion with writer director Christine Edzard, producer Olivier Stockman and cast members, hosted by season co-curator Adrian Wootton.

Joint ticket available £13.75, concs £10.25 (Members pay £1.50 less)

Part One: Nobody's Fault

Thu 2 Feb 19:00 NFT1

Part Two: Little Dorrit's Story + Panel Discussion with Derek Jacobi

Sun 5 Feb 16:00 NFT1

Hard Times

Granada TV 1977. Dir John Irvin. With Patrick Allen, Timothy West, Ursula Howells, Jacqueline Tong. 99min. **PG**

Originally aired in four parts in 1977, this re-edited version was then broadcast in 1979. A fine adaptation by master of the art Arthur Hopcraft, this lavish production made full use of Granada Television's skills and resources at the time to allow director John Irvin to create a 'Dickensian' environment that highlights the hypocrisy and sterile nature of Gradgrind's appalling views. Superb performances from Allen and West combine with incredible production values to make this a seminal entry in the Dickens TV canon.

Fri 17 Feb 18:20 NFT2

Barnaby Rudge

BBC 1960. Dir Morris Barry. With John Wood, Joan Hickson, Isabel Dean, Barbara Hicks. 13 x 30min + intervals

Adapted by Michael Voysey, Dickens' first 'historical' novel is set around 1775, and inevitably draws parallels with the better known *A Tale of Two Cities*. Poor naive Barnaby is caught up in the religious bigotry sweeping the nation as a wave of anti-Papist sentiment (the Gordon Riots) is exploited by cynical politicians for their own ends. One of Dickens' most political works, it is a hymn to the importance of tolerance and society's duty to protect the vulnerable. With limited resources, director Morris Barry captures the epic nature of the work, ably abetted by a fine cast.

Tickets £13.75, concs £10.25 (Members pay £1.50 less)

Sun 12 Feb 14:30 NFT3

Martin Chuzzlewit

BBC-WGBH 1994. Dir *Pedr James*. With *Paul Scofield, Tom Wilkinson, Maggie Steed, Pete Postlethwaite*. 1 x 90min + 5 x 60min + intervals

Dickens is said to have proclaimed *Martin Chuzzlewit* his best work. When early public sales of its first monthly instalments proved disappointing, Dickens changed the plot to send Martin to America, drawing on his visit there in 1842. Given its rich array of typically 'Dickensian' characters, it is surprising that it took British TV until 1994 to turn to this tale. Wilkinson is magnificent as the self-aggrandising villain Pecksniff, and there is the opportunity to see the incomparable Scofield in a rare TV role.

Tickets £13.75, concs £10.25 (Members pay £1.50 less)

Sun 19 Feb 14:30 NFT2

All Day Event: Dickens and the Theatre: Nickleby & the RSC The Life & Adventures of Nicholas Nickleby

Channel 4-RSC-Primetime 1982. Dir *Jim Goddard*. (Play Dir *Trevor Nunn & John Caird*). With *Roger Rees, David Threlfall, Bob Peck, Suzanne Bertish*.

The theatrical event of the 1980s – all eight hours of the RSC's now-legendary production were filmed on stage for Channel 4's first week on air. Producer Colin Callender took over the Old Vic for three months to re-stage the entire production in loving detail. Conquering Broadway as well as the West End, the production made a star of Roger Rees (in the title role), and who can forget David Threlfall's heartbreaking performance as Smike?

With thanks to Primetime and the RSC

Sat 25 Feb 11:30 NFT3

Nicholas Nickleby

UK-USA 2002. Dir *Douglas McGrath*. With *Charlie Hunnan, Tom Courtenay, Romola Garai, Jamie Bell, Jim Broadbent, Anne Hathaway*. 132min. **PG**

A cracking cast, mixing established British actors and a group of attractive young performers (including a stand-out, scene-stealing turn from Jamie Bell as the tragic Smike), is just one of the notable things about this fine British cinema adaptation of Dickens' rollicking comic odyssey. American writer-director Douglas McGrath does a very good job of elegantly compressing the picaresque tale, retaining its warmth and humour, while making the most of its beautifully shot summer locations.

Oliver!

UK 1968. Dir *Carol Reed*. With *Jack Wild, Oliver Reed, Ron Moody, Mark Lester, Shani Wallis*. 146min. Digital **U**

Magnificently staged, performed and directed, this exuberant film version of Lionel Bart's brilliant musical theatre re-imagining of *Oliver Twist* is stuffed with classic songs ('Consider Yourself', 'He Needs Me', 'I'm Reviewing The Situation', to name but three) and outstanding pieces. Massively popular, deservedly Oscar-winning, *Oliver!* has, for some reason, not been properly recognised for what it is – the last great achievement of Carol Reed's outstanding canon of films, to rank alongside *Odd Man Out* and *The Third Man*.

+ Q&A and Archive Footage

We hope to welcome some very special cast and crew guests from *Oliver!* and some very rare material, including screen tests of key cast.

Sat 3 March 14:30 NFT1

+ Musical Clips

As an additional little treat, to put *Oliver!* into context, we are also showing today some extracts from other musical versions of Dickens's work.

Sun 11 March 15:20 NFT1 Feature Only

Fri 16 March 17:45 NFT1

Our Mutual Friend Vor Faelles Ven

Denmark 1921. Dir AW Sandberg. With Peter Fjelstrup, Karen Caspersen, Svend Kornbeck. c107min. Digital. With live piano accompaniment

Nordisk made four Dickens films under the direction of AW Sandberg, now considered the most faithful adaptations of the silent era. Though *Great Expectations*, *David Copperfield* and *Little Dorrit* are relatively well known, *Our Mutual Friend* has long been in the process of restoration. Now, for the first time in 90 years, there is the chance to assess this Danish version of Dickens' last completed book, one of his most complex, romantic and socially satirical works.

Tue 6 March 18:20 NFT3

Fri 9 March 20:45 NFT3

Pre-1914 Short Films (Programme Two)

Leaves from the Books of Charles Dickens (UK 1912. Dir Frank Powell. With Thomas Bentley. c8min)

+ **The Pickwick Papers:** (i) *The Honourable Event* / (ii) *The Westgate Seminary* (UK-USA 1913. Dir Laurence Trimble. With John Bunny, Arthur Ricketts, HP Hunt. 2 x 10min)

+ **Scrooge** (UK 1913. Dir Leedham Bantock. With Seymour Hicks. c25min)

+ **A Christmas Carol**

(UK 1914. Dir Harold M Shaw. With Charles Rock. c15min). With live piano accompaniment
A follow-up to our January selection of early silent Dickens-derived material. A rare screening shows Thomas Bentley in his role as 'Dickens Character Actor' before becoming a director of Dickens adaptations. The portly American comic John Bunny crossed the Atlantic to play in three films extracted from *The Pickwick Papers*, of which these are the two that remain. Seymour Hicks – well known for his depiction of Scrooge on stage – portrays the miser for the first time on screen, before memorably reprising the role in 1935 in the first talkie of *A Christmas Carol*.

***Introduction by Michael Eaton**

Fri 9 March 18:30 NFT3*

Fri 23 March 18:20 NFT2

Oliver Twist

UK-France-Italy-Czech Republic 2005. Dir Roman Polanski. With Ben Kingsley, Mark Strong, Barney Clark. 130min. **PG**

A version by someone whose childhood was as terribly threatened as that of Dickens' young hero. A persuasive evocation of a squalid, rotten world as seen through the eyes of a vulnerable innocent, the film boasts fine performances that underline the persistent presence of corruption and deadly danger, none more so than Kingsley, whose superb contribution to the iconography of Fagin serves to create a truly affecting climax in the jailhouse reunion with Oliver. And at last Toby Crackit is given his due by Mark Strong.

Sun 11 March 20:20 NFT3

Mon 19 March 20:30 NFT2

Tue 20 March 18:00 NFT2

Bleak House

UK 1920. Dir Maurice Elvey. With Constance Collier, Bertha Gellardi. c85min.

With live piano accompaniment

After his 1917 *Dombey and Son* – which scenarist Eliot Stannard controversially relocated to contemporary London – the prolific Elvey returned to Dickens, now more conventionally. This deft condensation concentrates 'the most dramatic of all the tales embedded in the book': 'Lady Dedlock's Secret'. She is strikingly played by Constance Collier, who had made her name nearly 20 years previously, as Nancy in Herbert Beerbohm Tree's stage version of *Oliver Twist*.

Thu 8 March 18:20 NFT2

Sat 17 March 18:20 NFT

Charles Dickens, Crime Fiction & Film

Dickens not only had a significant influence on the creation of cinema's language but profoundly shaped the development of popular genres, particularly those of crime and detective fiction. In this illustrated talk, season co-curator, and CEO of Film London, Adrian Wootton traces the history of Dickens' own fascination with true crime (including his reporting and comments on criminal law, penal reform and the development of modern policing) and the incorporation of the crime genre into his work. The talk also looks at how filmmakers have treated the crime elements of Dickens's work and how his work has been an inspiration for crime thrillers and *film noir*.

Fri 2 March 18:10 NFT3

Dickens the Man

As one of the first great celebrities, biographers and documentary filmmakers have always been drawn to try to expose the real Charles Dickens. Dickens' politics and philanthropy and his concerns with poverty and the London environment are all well known, as are the theories surrounding his ambivalence towards very young women. Using extensive clips from the many television documentaries and biographical dramas on the subject, our distinguished panel of Dickens experts try to separate the man from the myth.

Panel & Q&A with Dickens biographer Michael Slater, actor Simon Callow and Grahame Smith, author of Dickens and the Dream of Cinema

Sun 18 March 15:20 NFT3

Bleak House

BBC 1985. Dir Ross Devenish. With Diana Rigg, Denholm Elliott, Peter Vaughn, Bernard Hepton, Kathy Burke. 8 x 52min + intervals

The most lavish Dickens production by the BBC up to that point, this lovingly shot adaptation by Arthur Hopcraft created a gold standard for the production of Dickens on UK television. Director Ross Devenish marshals a superb cast to capture the psychological depth of the novel as well as Dickens' concern to show how all sections of society are morally bound to each other from the highest born to the lowest street cleaner. Very different in tone and style to the recent 2005 BBC production, it makes for a fascinating comparison.

Tickets £13.75, concs £10.75 (Members pay £1.50 less)

Sat 10 March 13:00 NFT3

Dickens & London

An evening of splendid documentary archive material, using the results of a Film London research project, exploring the various Dickens-related, mainly non-fiction materials contained in the collections of the London Screen Archives network (including, of course, the BFI itself). A lovely selection of very varied material that is either directly connected to Dickens (such as newsreel footage depicting past Dickens commemorative events) or thematically linked because of location or social history.

Mon 12 March 18:20 NFT3

Across the Atlantic: A Celebration of Classic US TV Dickens Dramas

Drawing on the unique collections of the Paley Center (New York's Museum of Television and Radio), we are delighted to present this two-part celebration of Dickens on the American small screen. Although the exact line-up of each package is still subject to final confirmation, we can promise that this material is very rare indeed and will undoubtedly include fiction material never before screened in the UK, from Christmas specials and animated material through to marvelous renditions of classic novels.

Introduced by Adrian Wootton

Programme One

Wed 7 March 18:10 NFT2

Programme Two

Wed 7 March 20:30 NFT2

As these programmes were made for US TV, the BFI requests a voluntary donation of £10 (Members £8.50) per programme to assist with covering costs

NOTES TO EDITORS

More Dickens from the BFI

Selected titles from BFI Southbank's Dickens on Screen season - including David Lean's celebrated adaptations of Great Expectations and Oliver Twist - will be made available to UK cinemas and literary festivals for screening throughout 2012. A programme of rare silent shorts from the BFI National Archive will screen internationally in partnership with the British Council.

The small town of Rochester in Kent was a great favourite of Dickens and features in several of his works. Celebrating this historic connection, a special screening of Great Expectations (1946) - organised by BBC South East in association with the BFI and with kind permission of the Dean and Chapter of Rochester - will take place on 10 February 2012 in the wonderfully atmospheric setting of Rochester Cathedral.

The BFI's Dickens Before Sound is a 2-disc DVD collection of the surviving earliest adaptations of Dickens' stories spanning 1901-1922. It includes the first existing Dickens adaptation, Scrooge - or Marley's Ghost (1901); an entirely original attempt to animate a series of lantern slides depicting the story of Gabriel Grub; the first Dickensian sound film with Bransby Williams as the character Grandfather Smallweed from Bleak House; and a 75-minute version of Oliver Twist (1922) featuring two iconic performers of the silent screen: Jackie Coogan and Lon Chaney. The films are presented with new scores by the composer and pianist Neil Brand and are available from all DVD retailers and the BFI Filmstore.

About Dickens 2012

Dickens 2012, co-ordinated by the Charles Dickens Museum and Film London in association with the Dickens Fellowship, is an international celebration of the cultural and educational significance of the life and work of Charles Dickens to mark the bicentenary of his birth. Dickens-related activity will take place all over the world under the Dickens 2012 banner to celebrate one of the world's most inspiring authors and provide a legacy for future generations.

Dickens 2012 partners include the **BBC** (Dickens on the BBC: November 11-February 12), **British Council** (International Dickens 2012 Programme: Nov 11-June 12), **BFI** (Dickens on Screen: Dec 11- March 12), **Museum of London** (Dickens and London: Dec 11-June 12), **Museum Strauhof, Zurich** (Charles Dickens: Dec 11-Mar 12), **Penguin** ('Charles Dickens, A Life' by Claire Tomalin and Special 2012 editions) and the **Royal Mint** (Dickens £2 coin).

Dickens 2012 has an expanding list of supporters, which includes names such as Simon Callow CBE, Sir Derek Jacobi, Sir Cameron Mackintosh, Miriam Margolyes OBE and Peter Ackroyd CBE, and is backed by the Mayor of London as a cultural highlight in 2012.

www.dickens2012.org

About Dickens 2012 on Film

Although he died before the advent of cinema, Dickens is the world's most-adapted novelist for film and TV. Pioneers of cinema, including D.W. Griffith, Sergei Eisenstein and Charlie Chaplin, have even suggested Dickens's work provided the very DNA that cinematic language is based upon.

As such **Dickens 2012** is celebrating Dickens's influence on film with a range of activity including: the BBC presenting **Dickens on the BBC** with productions old and new airing across television and radio including a new documentary, **Arena: Dickens on Film**, exploring Charles Dickens's work on screen and his influence on the art form; the BFI **Dickens on Screen** season is the most extensive retrospective of Dickens inspired work ever staged with many wonderful, curious, famous, rare and fascinating adaptations of his work for film and television; the British Council's **Dickens 2012 Programme** will see films screened across 21 countries including India, China, Zimbabwe, Ethiopia, UAE, Malta, Malaysia, Pakistan and Greece; some of the world's greatest cinematheque's, including **Museum of Modern Art (MoMA)** in New York, **TIFF Cinematheque** in Toronto and the **Australian Centre for the Moving Image (ACMI)** in Melbourne, are presenting film seasons of Dickens adaptations throughout the year; Film London has commissioned three new short films about the author and his work and a new artist film commission, *Dickens in London*, is an innovative new collaboration between the BBC and FLAMIN; while Mike Newell is currently shooting a new feature adaptation of **Great Expectations** starring **Ralph Fiennes** and **Helena Bonham Carter**, due to be released in autumn 2012.

www.dickens2012.org/section/film-tv-radio

About the BFI

The BFI is the lead body for film in the UK with the ambition to create a flourishing film environment in which innovation, opportunity and creativity can thrive by:

- Connecting audiences to the widest choice of British and World cinema
- Preserving and restoring the most significant film collection in the world for today and future generations
- Championing emerging and world class film makers in the UK
- Investing in creative, distinctive and entertaining work
- Promoting British film and talent to the world
- Growing the next generation of film makers and audiences

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 £9.50, concs £6.75 Members pay £1.50 less on any ticket. Website

www.bfi.org.uk/southbank/dickens

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

***** 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 / Dickens