

BFI MONSTER WEEKEND AT THE BRITISH MUSEUM

curtain-raiser for

GOTHIC: THE DARK HEART OF FILM

BFI's autumn blockbuster



Wednesday 30th May, London Last night at a special screening at BFI Southbank marking Peter Cushing's centenary, Heather Stewart, Artistic Director, BFI revealed how the BFI is gearing up for its UK-wide Autumn blockbuster project **GOTHIC: THE DARK HEART OF FILM** with three nights of spectacular open air screenings at the British Museum featuring three classic 1950's horror films: ***Night of the Demon***, introduced by its star Peggy Cummins, ***Dracula*** and ***The Mummy*** – both starring Sir Christopher Lee and Peter Cushing. These events will prepare the way for the terrors to come in the BFI's next major season Gothic, launching in the autumn and prior to a major unveiling of the entire project on Thursday 27th June.

Heather Stewart, BFI Creative Director said, "*The British have a genius for creating nightmares and we are very excited to be launching **GOTHIC: THE DARK HEART OF FILM** with a spectacular collaboration with the British Museum. Few things are more delicious than the frisson of terror which so many great film-makers can give. For the Twilight and Harry Potter generation we promise Gothic will be a revelation.*"

BFI & BRITISH MUSEUM MONSTER WEEKEND

Scene of last year's acclaimed open air screening of Hitchcock's ***Blackmail***, a highlight of the London 2012 Festival, the BFI returns to the British Museum for an unparalleled weekend of outdoor screenings of classic British horrors in its spectacular forecourt, complete with themed food and drink and a guarantee of warm-blooded entertainment which promises an invigorating summer chill like no other. The British Museum has inspired many films based on the premise of secret knowledge and terrifying ancient lore contained within its collections, including a world class collection of Ancient Egyptian artefacts. Whilst writing the novel *Dracula*, Bram Stoker is known to

have been a researcher at the British Museum Library, which was the setting for key scenes in ***Night of the Demon***.

Three major monster films screen on successive nights:

Night of the Demon dir. Jacques Tourneur, UK/USA, 1957, 95 min on Thursday 29th August

WORLD PREMIERE NEW DIGITAL REMASTERING.

With Dana Andrews, Peggy Cummins, Niall MacGinnis

Sceptical American psychologist Holden (Andrews) must reconsider his beliefs when genial occultist and children's entertainer Karswell (MacGinnis) passes him a cursed parchment at the British Museum and informs him that he will die within four days. Aided by perceptive Joanna Harrington (Cummins), Holden races to escape his destiny. Adapted from M.R. James' *Castling the Runes* by Hitchcock collaborator Charles Bennett, the film was atmospherically directed by the legendary Jacques Tourneur, who'd built his reputation with an exceptional string of Val Lewton-produced horrors, including ***Cat People***. Yet ***Night of the Demon*** - gripping, intelligent, eerily entertaining, and chillingly plausible in its depiction of witchcraft – still might be the finest of Tourneur's works.

The film has been digitally remastered in high definition by the BFI National Archive from 35mm negatives, and screens here in a version considerably longer than the original British release.

Doors open 6.30pm. Film programme 8pm. Tickets £15.

Dracula dir. Terence Fisher, UK/USA, 1958, 82 min on Friday 30th August

THEATRICAL PREMIERE NEW RESTORATION.

With Peter Cushing, Christopher Lee, Michael Gough, Melissa Stribling

Maligned and misunderstood by critics on first release, Hammer's bloodily beautiful reworking of Dracula has grown in reputation over the decades and is widely regarded as the definitive film adaptation of Stoker's novel. Wonderfully cast, with Lee icily magnetic as the centuries-old vampire and Cushing a resolutely upstanding Van Helsing, it was evocatively directed by Gothic-auteur Terence Fisher; and here the viscerally erotic allure of the Count and his shadowy realm was captured – in full colour – as never before. The titanic climatic confrontation between Cushing and Lee, though much imitated, remains unsurpassed.

Restored by the BFI National Archive in 2007, the film screens here in a new digitally remastered version with further footage thanks to additional restoration by Hammer, Icon and Lionsgate including newly rediscovered footage which was originally banned by the British Board of Film Classification in 1958.

Doors open 6.30pm. Film programme 8pm. Tickets £15

The Mummy dir. Terence Fisher, UK/USA, 1959, 88 min on Saturday 31st August

WORLD PREMIERE NEW RESTORATION

With Peter Cushing, Christopher Lee, Yvonne Furneaux, Felix Aylmer

The success of ***Dracula*** saw Lee and Cushing – by now referred to by one newspaper as “The Horror Boys” – teamed again in Hammer's Universal-sanctioned refresh of the Mummy mythos. But whereas Karloff had quickly relinquished his bandages, Lee – as reanimated Ancient Egyptian Kharis - retains his. Devoid of dialogue, his chillingly expressive eyes tell a tale of torment, as he wreaks violent vengeance on those who desecrated the resting place of his long lost love (Furneaux). Director Fisher expertly piles on atmosphere and excitement, as supernaturally strong Kharis erupts

nightmarishly from shadowy swamp to violate the well-ordered world of enfeebled archaeologist Banning, impeccably portrayed by Cushing.

The films screens here in a digitally remastered version.

Doors open 6.30pm. Film programme 8pm. Tickets £15

www.bfi.org.uk/gothic

GOTHIC: THE DARK HEART OF FILM will run from August 2013 – January 2014 with a UK-wide programme of special screenings, events and more. Invitations to the press launch at BFI Southbank on 27th June will be issued shortly.

NOTES TO EDITORS

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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
- Investing in creative, distinctive and entertaining work
- Promoting British film and talent to the world
- Growing the next generation of film makers and audiences

Screening credits:

Night of the Demon is screened courtesy of Sony Pictures and Park Circus

The Mummy is screened courtesy of Exclusive Media and Park Circus

Dracula is screened courtesy of Hammer Film Production Ltd. and BFI Distribution

About Hammer's restoration project

Hammer's extensive restoration project was first announced in January 2012 and through the collaboration of a wide range of international partners has begun the delivery of 20 iconic library titles including *Dracula*, *The Curse of Frankenstein* and *The Mummy* onto HD format for Blu-ray and new media outlets.

As well as featuring a fully-restored HD picture and restored sound, the remastered films boast a host of newly-filmed extras, including interviews with cast members. These documentary extras are being produced by Hammer expert and historian, Marcus Hearn – author of the recent *"The Hammer Vault"*.

Find out more about the restoration project at <http://blog.hammerfilms.com>

The Mummy will be released on October 14th 2013 on 3 Disc Double Play (2 x DVD and 1 x Blu-ray in one package).

October sees the first ever HD release of Hammer's classic 1959 film by Terence Fisher. This is also the first ever release in the original theatrical 1.66:1 ratio and it will be packed with extensive and exclusive extras.

These include a bonus feature film '*Stolen Face*' (1952) by Terence Fisher, multiple documentaries, an expert commentary, a stills gallery and a PDF booklet by Hammer archivist Robert J. E. Simpson

About Hammer

Originally founded in 1934, legendary British film studio Hammer has delivered a hugely successful run of films over the years including *Dracula*, *Frankenstein Created Woman*, *One Million Years B.C.* and *The Vampire Lovers*. Since 2008, the company has been part of Exclusive Media, which is reinvigorating this beloved global brand through investment across both traditional and new media.

Not in production since the 1980s, Hammer marked their return to features in 2010 with the release of the critically acclaimed *Let Me In*, an adaptation of the highly praised Swedish film *Låt den rätte komma in*. The film was written and directed by Matt Reeves (*Cloverfield*) and stars Chloe Moretz (*Kick-Ass*) and Kodi Smit-McPhee (*The Road*).

In 2011, Hammer released Antti Jokinen's *The Resident* starring two-time Academy Award® winner Hilary Swank (*Boys Don't Cry*, *Million Dollar Baby*), Jeffrey Dean Morgan and Hammer legend Sir Christopher Lee, as well as the critically lauded *Wake Wood* directed by David Keating and starring Aidan Gillen, Eva Birthistle and Timothy Spall.

February 2012 saw the theatrical release of Hammer's first ever feature ghost story *The Woman in Black*, directed by James Watkins, adapted by Jane Goldman from the book by Susan Hill, and starring Daniel Radcliffe. The film has taken over \$130m worldwide making it one of the biggest indie horror films ever.

In addition to *The Quiet Ones*, Hammer's next production will be *The Woman in Black: Angel of Death*, which is a continuation of *The Woman in Black* story forty years on. The film will begin production in 2013, starring Jeremy Irvine (*War Horse*, *The Railway Man*) and Phoebe Fox (*'Black Mirror'*, *'Switch'*).

For further information about Hammer and its parent company Exclusive Media, please visit www.hammerfilms.com and www.exclusivemedia.com

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About Park Circus

Park Circus is an impassioned and dynamic international film sales and distribution company with years of experience helping audiences around the world experience classic films back on the big screen.

Since 2003, Park Circus has represented a number of high profile studios and independent producers, including Metro Goldwyn Mayer Studios, Paramount Pictures, Sony Pictures Releasing International, Warner Bros., ITV Studios, Miramax Films, Channel Four Television Corporation, and Walt Disney Studios Motions Pictures, UK. Park Circus was the pioneer in making classic films available for Digital Cinema with over 1,000 classic films now available for theatrical distribution in this format.

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