

BFI announce Working Class Heroes: a day exploring working class screen talent – past, present and future



Saturday 14 April at BFI Southbank

With actors and filmmakers in conversation including: Leslie Manville, Maxine Peake, Vicky McClure, Asif Kapadia, Johnny Harris, Daniel Mays, Naomi Ackie, Cathy Tyson

Monday 12 March 2018, London.

The BFI today announces the line-up for **Working Class Heroes**, a day of talks, discussions and screenings looking at the working-class heroes behind and in front of the camera, and asking, how can working-class British film talent thrive in 2018? This unique live celebration will take place at **BFI Southbank** on **Saturday 14 April**, and will welcome guests including actors **Lesley Manville** (*Phantom Thread*), **Maxine Peake** (*Funny Cow*), **Vicky McClure** (*Line of Duty*), **Daniel Mays** (*Shifty*), **Naomi Ackie** (*Lady Macbeth*) and **Cathy Tyson** (*Mona Lisa*), actor and writer **Johnny Harris** (*Jawbone*) and director **Asif Kapadia** (*Amy*). The events are open to the public, industry and actors with ticket prices kept to a minimum, and under 25s able to book sessions from just £3. The day will be a taster for a comprehensive **Working Class Heroes** season, at BFI Southbank throughout September 2018, with more details to be announced soon.

Danny Leigh, BFI Senior Curator of Fiction Film and TV and programmer of Working Class Heroes said:

“Having seen Gary Oldman, Lesley Manville and Daniel Kaluuya all enjoy Oscar recognition this year, it seems the perfect moment to celebrate working class screen talent. And it is - but for complicated reasons. Despite the stellar success of a handful of role models, are working class actors in the Britain of 2018 in crisis? Established stars talk of being typecast and shut out of high-profile projects - and for the next generation, austerity has left young low-income actors struggling even to train. Britain needs to talk about class and film.

And actors are only part of the story. Money and connections shouldn't be the making of a writer or director – or a producer or executive. So Working Class Heroes on April 14 will be a celebration and a roadmap to the future – but we have to ask some tough questions first.”

The day will kick off with **Maxine Peake** in conversation with BFI programmer and curator **Danny Leigh**, during which Peake will discuss her extensive career, from roles in *Dinnerladies* and *Shameless* to her latest film ***Funny Cow*** (Adrian Shergold, 2017) which will preview at BFI Southbank the previous evening. **The Acting Class Live** will be a live onstage event featuring interviews with **Lesley Manville**, recently Oscar-nominated for her role in *Phantom Thread*, and **Naomi Ackie**, winner of BIFA's Most Promising Newcomer award in 2017. In **How to Make It** award-winning actors and filmmakers will reveal how to get stories told as a working class talent in the film industry. Panellists will

include actor **Johnny Harris** (also writer of the BAFTA nominated *Jawbone*) and *Line of Duty*'s **Vicky McClure**, who is currently launching her own production company, alongside the Oscar-winning director of *Amy* **Asif Kapadia**.

Best in the Scene will be a practical session for young working class actors featuring actor **Craig Parkinson** (*Line of Duty*) with leading casting directors **Shaheen Baig** and **Des Hamilton**. Representatives from drama schools and youth groups including RADA, The BRIT School, Diversity School, National Youth Theatre and Open Door will also be present to answer questions from aspiring young actors. Audiences will be able to hear from industry experts on the role of class and money in the film business in the session **Class and the Green Light**. Panellists will include producers **Rebecca O'Brien** (*I, Daniel Blake*), **Robyn Slovo** (*Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*) and **Derrin Schlesinger** (*Four Lions*), and director **Shola Amoo** (*A Moving Image*), who will also be joined by a representative from the BFI Film Fund, who will address how the BFI Diversity Standards are seeking to ensure that people from lower socio-economic groups are better represented in the industry. There will also be a debate on what it means to be working class in the time of Brexit, Grenfell and zero hours contracts, led by writer **Frank Cottrell Boyce** and **Dr Faiza Shaheen**, Director of think tank CLASS (Centre for Labour and Social Studies) – **Who is the Working Class Hero?** will look to address some of the big questions around the meaning of class in 2018.

Completing the line-up for the day will be screenings of Debbie Tucker Green's **Second Coming** (2014), the brilliantly original drama of extraordinary events and an ordinary London family; landmark British crime drama **Mona Lisa** (Neil Jordan, 1986), followed by a **Q&A** with star **Cathy Tyson** and writer **David Leland**; and a 10th anniversary screening of the micro-budget modern classic **Shifty** (Eran Creevy, 2008) starring Daniel Mays and Riz Ahmed, which will be followed by a **Q&A** with **Daniel Mays** and director **Eran Creevy**.

Working Class Heroes coincides with BFI Southbank's month-long celebration of the 60th anniversary of legendary film company **Woodfall Films**, who helped to establish the gritty world of 'kitchen sink' dramas of the 1960s like **Saturday Night and Sunday Morning** (Karel Reisz, 1960) and **A Taste of Honey** (Tony Richardson, 1961). As part of the season – **Woodfall: A Revolution in British Cinema** – there will be a panel event during the **Working Class Heroes** day, in which guests including **Rita Tushingham** and **Tom Courtenay** will examine the transformative impact Woodfall Films had on filmmaking.

– ENDS –

NOTES TO EDITORS:

Press Contacts:

Liz Parkinson – Press Officer, BFI Southbank
liz.parkinson@bfi.org.uk / 020 7957 8918

Prices and listings:

Tickets for all live events = £5/£3 for under 25s

All-day ticket (Maxine Peake onstage plus 3 panels) = £9/£6 for under 25s

Tickets for screenings £6.50/£3 for under 25s

WORKING CLASS HEROES LISTINGS, SATURDAY 14 APRIL

Maxine Peake

Live onstage interview with Maxine Peake/introduction to Working Class Heroes

SAT 14 APR 11:30 – 12:00 NFT1

Best in the Scene

A roadmap for young working class actors featuring leading casting director Shaheen Baig and Des Hamilton, with representatives from drama schools and youth groups including RADA, The BRIT School, Diversity School, National Youth Theatre, Open Door.

SAT 14 APR 12:05 – 13:15 NFT1

The Acting Class Live: Lesley Manville and Naomi Ackie

A live onstage event featuring interviews with Oscar nominee Lesley Manville (*Phantom Thread*) and BIFA Most Promising Newcomer Naomi Ackie (*Lady Macbeth*)

SAT 14 APR 14:10 – 15:20 NFT1

How to Make It: Vicky McClure, Johnny Harris and Asif Kapadia

Award-winning actors and filmmakers reveal how to get stories told as a working class talent in the film industry. Onstage interviews with actors Johnny Harris (also writer of the BAFTA nominated *Jawbone*) and *Line of Duty*'s Vicky McClure (now launching her own production company) – alongside Oscar-winning director Asif Kapadia (*Amy*).

SAT 14 APR 15:50 – 17:10 NFT1

Shifty + Q&A with Daniel Mays

UK 2008. Dir Eran Creevy. With Riz Ahmed, Daniel Mays, Jason Flemyng, Dannielle Brent. 85min. 35mm. 15

Made for just £100,000, the feature debut of Eran Creevy felt hugely fresh when it first came out; a decade later, it still does. *Shifty* is a portrait of friendship, as good-natured Chris (Mays) returns to the corner of suburban London where he grew up, reuniting with long-time best mate Shifty (Ahmed). But in the years since Chris left, things have changed – and not for the better. With a host of fine performances, Creevy's film represents a landmark in modern British cinema.

SAT 14 APR 20:50 – 22:45 NFT1

Class and the Greenlight

Leading producers and filmmakers on the role of class and money in the film business, with contributors including producers Rebecca O'Brien (*I, Daniel Blake*), Robyn Slovo (*Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy*), Derrin Schlesinger (*Four Lions*), and director Shola Amoo (*A Moving Image*).

SAT 14 APR 12:10 – 13:20 NFT3

Second Coming

UK 2014. Dir Debbie Tucker Green. With Nadine Marshall, Idris Elba, Kai Francis Lewis. 105min. Digital. 15

Cosmic mystery collides with everyday life in the beautifully nuanced debut film from playwright Debbie Tucker Green. The setting is a typical family home in London, lived in by married couple Jax and Mark (Marshall and Elba), who are no longer intimate with each other but more-or-less content to raise their teenage son. Their lives are turned upside down when Jax discovers she's pregnant, and what follows is a haunting, singular riff on social realism.

SAT 14 APR 13:50 – 15:35 NFT3

Who Is The Working Class Hero?

A live debate on what it means to be working class in the time of Brexit, Grenfell and zero hours contracts, led by writer Frank Cottrell Boyce.

SAT 14 APR 16:10 – 17:20

Mona Lisa + Q&A with actor Cathy Tyson

UK 1986. Dir Neil Jordan. With Bob Hoskins, Cathy Tyson, Michael Caine, Robbie Coltrane. 104min. Digital. 15

A hard-bitten gangster movie and heart-breaking love story rolled into one, *Mona Lisa* remains one of the most beloved British films of all time. Bringing together the star power of Bob Hoskins and Michael Caine, it also benefits from the presence of Cathy Tyson, who delivers an unforgettable performance as the vulnerable Simone. Though shot in a London now physically transformed, the power of the story is timeless.

SAT 14 APR 20:40 – 22:55 NFT3

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 is a Government arm's-length body and distributor of Lottery funds for film. The BFI serves a public role which covers the cultural, creative and economic aspects of film in the UK. It delivers this role:

- As the UK-wide organisation for film, a charity core funded by Government
- By providing Lottery and Government funds for film across the UK
- By working with partners to advance the position of film in the UK.

Founded in 1933, the BFI is a registered charity governed by Royal Charter.

The BFI Board of Governors is chaired by Josh Berger CBE.

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 £12.10, concs £9.70 including Gift Aid donation. Members pay £2.00 less on any ticket - www.bfi.org.uk/southbank.

Young people aged 25 and under can buy last minute tickets for just £3, 45 minutes before the start of screenings and events, subject to availability - <http://www.bfi.org.uk/25-and-under>.

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

BFI Shop

The BFI Shop 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.

BFI Reuben Library

BFI Southbank is home to the BFI Reuben Library which holds the world's largest collection of books, journals and digitised material about film, television and the moving image. The library is free to access and hosts a year-round programme of talks and events.

'Not just for movie nerds - this huge collection of film and TV books, periodicals, scripts, stills and posters is full of inspiration for anyone involved in the creative arts' – Evening Standard Magazine

The BFI Reuben Library is open 10:30-19:00, Tuesday-Saturday.

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.

BFI Mediatheque

Free to access BFI Mediatheques offer users an opportunity to explore the digital collections drawn from the BFI National Archive and partner collections, at select UK-wide locations.

***** 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 / 2018 / April