

BFI announce STEPHEN KING ON SCREEN to celebrate his 70th birthday, including screenings, talks, special events and a selection of films chosen by the author



Tuesday 11 July 2017, London.

The BFI today announce **STEPHEN KING ON SCREEN**, a season of film and television dedicated to living legend **STEPHEN KING**, one of the most frequently adapted and versatile writers in history, and as formidable a cinematic force as a literary one. As 2017 sees an exciting new crop of adaptations including *It* (Andres Muschietti, 2017) - which will preview in the season - and *The Dark Tower* (Nikolaj Arcel, 2017), as well as King's 70th birthday on 21 September and the release of a new novel *Sleeping Beauties* (co-written with son Owen) on September 26, there's no better time to celebrate and re-evaluate his invaluable contribution to the moving image. Taking place at **BFI Southbank** from **Friday 1 September - Tuesday 3 October**, the season will include screenings of classic adaptations such as *Stand by Me* (Rob Reiner, 1986) and *The Shawshank Redemption* (Frank Darabont, 1994), talks and discussions, selected screenings of films including *Carrie* (Brian De Palma, 1976) and *The Shining* (Stanley Kubrick, 1980) on the huge screen at the **BFI IMAX**, and a special **Birthday Weekender** (21-23 September) including a **Stephen King Film Quiz** and a **Stephen King Summit**.

Alongside the season Stephen King has chosen a selection of his favourite films to screen exclusively at BFI Southbank. These include *The Hitcher* (Robert Harmon, 1986), of which King says "*what sets this apart...is the amazing performance of Rutger Hauer*"; *Night of the Demon* (Jacques Tourneur, 1957) – "*although it's old school... the horror here is pretty understated, until the very end*"; *The Changeling* (Peter Medak, 1980) – "*there are no monsters bursting from chests; just a child's ball bouncing down a flight of stairs was enough to scare the daylights out of me*"; *Village of the Damned* (Wolf Rilla, 1960) – "*on the subject of British horror...you can't do much better than Village of the Damned*"; and *The Stepfather* (Joseph Ruben, 1987) – "*There's that classic moment when he goes blank and says, "Saaay, who am I this time?" before bludgeoning his wife with a telephone*".

STEPHEN KING ON SCREEN SEASON

The first King novel to receive the big-screen treatment, the seminal *Carrie* (Brian De Palma, 1976), established both the young author and emerging director De Palma as significant Hollywood players. De Palma's trademark baroque visuals lend an almost operatic extravagance to King's tragic tale of a

telekinetic teen who gets revenge on her taunting classmates. King returned to this theme – a child with special powers – in *Firestarter* (Mark L Lester, 1984), a tale of a young girl (played by a nine-year-old Drew Barrymore), who has pyrokinetic abilities; while in *Children of the Corn* (Fritz Kiersch, 1984), a couple driving across the Midwest stumble upon an isolated town populated only by children. Finding themselves trapped, the doomed pair soon understand the horrific fate met by the absent adults. One of Stephen King's most terrifying creations gets a modern update in Andrés Muschietti's new adaptation of *It* (2017), which previews on **Monday 4 September** ahead of its UK-wide release on **Friday 8 September**. When the sleepy town of Derry, Maine, becomes plagued with unsolved child disappearances, a group of misfit kids must face their real-life demons as well as the child-killing clown Pennywise, to take down the inhuman force that's wreaking havoc on their town.

Masterful prison drama *The Shawshank Redemption* (Frank Darabont, 1994) is a film that needs little introduction; a permanent fixture on most 'greatest films' lists, but something of a box-office failure on its original release, it is a fitting testament to the enduring impact of King's non-horror output. Darabont's second King adaptation *The Green Mile* (1999) saw him once again venture behind bars to tell the story of a gentle giant on death row in possession of an extraordinary gift. For his third and final King adaptation to date, Darabont opted for a good old-fashioned monster movie. *The Mist* (2007) is a deft blend of heady Lovecraftian horrors and biting social commentary, in which an inexplicable fog brings forth an army of deadly creatures, leaving a disparate gang seeking refuge in a grocery store. To open our **Stephen King Weekender**, on King's 70th birthday on **Thursday 21 September**, we're thrilled to offer a rare screening of the film in Darabont's preferred black and white version, as was his original intention. **The Stephen King Weekender**, which will be in partnership with Hodder & Stoughton, **will run from Thursday 21 September – Saturday 23 September**, and as well as the special black and white screening of *The Mist*, it will include a dedicated #KingForADay fan space, a devilishly entertaining **Stephen King Film Quiz** and a day-long **Stephen King Summit** with richly illustrated presentations, lively discussions and debate, and a chance to engage with King's work both on screen and in print.

The small screen proved the perfect vessel for *Salem's Lot* (Tobe Hooper, 1979), King's story of a sleepy Maine town infiltrated by vampires; a heavily edited two-hour cut was released theatrically in Europe, but the full-length version which will be screened in the season most effectively captures the spirit of the original text. *The Shining* (Stanley Kubrick, 1980) was publically denounced by King, who likened Kubrick's take on his bestseller to a 'big, beautiful Cadillac with no engine inside'; this tale of a writer's breakdown in the vast expanse of a haunted hotel is nonetheless widely regarded as a masterpiece. Taking many liberties with the source novel - perhaps explaining the author's displeasure - the result is most certainly Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining*, and not King's. If you thought The Overlook Hotel in *The Shining* is the scariest guesthouse in horror movie history, why not check into The Dolphin from *1408* (Mikael Håfström, 2007). Set almost entirely in one room, this taut psychological chiller follows a writer who is known for his books debunking reports of paranormal activity. Ignoring the warnings he's given, he agrees to spend a night in the reportedly haunted suite 1408 – a decision he may come to regret.

Stand By Me (Rob Reiner, 1986) was the first non-horror King adaptation, and the wistful coming-of-age movie came as a surprise to many expecting another tale of terror. Adapted from '**The Body**' in the collection *Different Seasons*, this much-loved account of four young boys on a journey to locate the dead body of a missing local still displays many recognisable King tropes – the small-town setting, a writer protagonist, and a fascination with mortality, to name a few. Reiner's second King

adaptation saw him plunge headlong into much darker territory with *Misery* (1990). Expertly blending agonising tension with jet-black humour, it remains one of the most successful cinematic distillations of King's writing, and features an Oscar-winning turn from Kathy Bates. Bates also stars in *Dolores Claiborne* (Taylor Hackford, 1995), as a housekeeper accused of murdering her employer, in a role which Bates claims to be the best of all her performances. Often overlooked in the vast pantheons of King adaptations, Hackford's richly rendered psychological melodrama is a fascinating and rewarding piece of work with compelling feminist credentials.

United by their shared love of vintage horror comics, King joined forces with George A Romero on *Creepshow* (1982), a nostalgic love letter to their favourite genre. Comprising five deliciously dark morality tales, this ghoulish explosion of colour and creativity is arguably the definitive horror anthology. Following his unsuccessful attempts to bring both *The Stand* and *Pet Sematary* to the screen, Romero once again turned to King with *The Dark Half* (1993), about a writer pursued by the pseudonym he had recently laid to rest. Despite a significant streamlining of the narrative, David Cronenberg's adaptation of *The Dead Zone* (1983) remains an incredibly effective one. Cronenberg's first literary adaptation marked a surprising shift to the mainstream for the director, although his chilly, brooding aesthetic is still palpable. It's boy-meets-car in John Carpenter's darkly unconventional love story *Christine* (1983); when affable nerd Arnie buys a 1958 Plymouth Fury he gains a new found confidence, but it soon becomes clear his mystery machine is really the one in control.

Stephen King's only stint in the director's chair was deemed an unqualified disaster by many, not least the man himself, who flippantly described it as a 'moron movie.' Looking back now, *Maximum Overdrive* (1986), about an army of homicidal lorries, is a lot of fun. Wickedly amusing, unapologetically campy, and with a killer AC/DC soundtrack, this is a true cult classic. The only feature based on an original King screenplay, *Sleepwalkers* (Mick Garris, 1992) is a loopy tale of a shapeshifting mother and son looking to feed on the life-force of young virgins. King initially feared his tale of a doctor turning to the supernatural in the wake of a devastating family tragedy was too upsetting to be published – *Pet Sematary* indeed stands as one of King's bleakest novels, and in turn, one of the most unsettling film adaptations, which was brought to the big screen in 1989 by director Mary Lambert. Rounding out the season is *Stephen King's The Night Flier* (Mark Pavia, 1997), quite possibly the best King adaptation you've never seen. This little-known gem bypassed many horror fans when it debuted direct to DVD in the late 1990s, but far more than a run-of-the-mill genre cheapie, this curious yarn about a frequent-flying vampire who prowls for victims in deserted airports is a smart and insidious treat ripe for revaluation.

STEPHEN KING'S PICKS

Running alongside STEPHEN KING ON SCREEN will be a side-bar of films which the author loves, and has chosen specially to screen at BFI Southbank.

King on *The Changeling* (Peter Medak, 1980): "For supernatural horror, I like Peter Medak's film *The Changeling*, starring George C. Scott in perhaps his last great screen role. There are no monsters bursting from chests; just a child's ball bouncing down a flight of stairs was enough to scare the daylights out of me."

King on *Night of the Demon* (Jacques Tourneur, 1957): "Although it's old school, I love Jacques Tourneur's *Night of the Demon*, a pretty wonderful adaptation of M. R. James' story, *Casting the*

Runes. Tourneur was a disciple of Val Lewton, which means the horror here is pretty understated, until the very end.”

King on ***Village of the Damned*** (Wolf Rilla, 1960): “On the subject of British horror (wrapped in an sci-fi bow), you can’t do much better than ***Village of the Damned***, directed by Wolf Rilla and – like *Night of the Demon* – shot in beautiful black and white. It’s an adaptation of *The Midwich Cuckoos*, by John Wyndham, and George Sanders does a stellar job as the schoolmaster tasked with teaching some very strange pupils.

King on ***The Hitcher*** (Robert Harmon, 1986): “***The Hitcher*** is a terrifying road movie stripped back to basics. What sets this apart, other than some spectacular stunts, is the amazing performance of Rutger Hauer as the mysterious and homicidal John Ryder. “Where did you come from?” asks the terrified kid Ryder is chasing. “Disneyland,” Ryder whispers back.”

King on ***The Stepfather*** (Joseph Ruben, 1987): “While we’re talking about terrifying men who come from nowhere, there’s ***The Stepfather***, with Terry O’Quinn as the murderous (but charming) psycho looking for a family to love him. There’s that classic moment when he goes blank and says, “Saaay, who am I this time?” before bludgeoning his wife with a telephone.”

- ENDS -

NOTES TO EDITORS:

STEPHEN KING ON SCREEN season listings can be found on the BFI website:

<http://www.bfi.org.uk/sites/bfi.org.uk/files/downloads/bfi-press-release-stephen-king-on-screen-listings-2017-07-11.pdf>

Tickets will be on sale to BFI members from Tuesday 1 August and general public from Tuesday 8 August.

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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
- 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

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The benugo bar & kitchen

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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.

***** 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 / 2017 / September / Stephen King