



*My Death is a Mockery (1952), Stars in Your Eyes (1956), Adelphi Films*

## **80<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY OF ADELPHI FILMS BRINGS *MY DEATH IS A MOCKERY*, CONTROVERSIAL BRITISH NOIR UNSEEN FOR OVER 70 YEARS, TO BFI PLAYER**

**\*\*MY DEATH IS A MOCKERY – NEWLY AVAILABLE TO SUBSCRIBERS THROUGH BFI PLAYER –**  
<https://player.bfi.org.uk/rentals/film/watch-my-death-is-a-mockery-1952-online> \*\*

**\*\* Indiegogo crowdfunding campaign to restore *Stars in Your Eyes* launches 23 May**  
<https://iqg.me/at/starsinyoureyes> \*\*

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**For immediate release: 23 May 2018, London**

Adelphi Films holds the honour of being Britain's longest running independent film company. In celebration of their 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary year in 2019, Adelphi's spirited 1952 film noir *My Death is a Mockery* has been salvaged from the turbulent waves of time and digitally remastered by Adelphi. This dark, bullet-spattered tale of smuggling, murder and capital punishment, unseen for over 70 years, is now available to subscribers on BFI Player.

In *My Death is a Mockery* a down-on-his-luck fisherman (British screen stalwart Donald Houston) is tempted into a dangerous but more lucrative line in black-market booze at the urging of his wayward wife (Kathleen Byron of *Black Narcissus* fame) after a brief bar-room liaison with a small-time spiv (Tony Hancock's old radio co-star Bill Kerr, in a rare serious role).

A fascinating part of British legal history, *My Death is a Mockery* was taken out of circulation in 1953 when it became embroiled in the infamous murder trial which led to Derek Bentley's death penalty. It was reportedly the film Christopher Craig saw at the cinema shortly before killing policeman Sidney Miles in a bungled burglary. Craig was too young to be hanged so his older accomplice Derek Bentley was convicted and hanged.

The real life case stirred up considerable debate in the UK over the ethics of capital punishment, eventually leading to the abolition of the death penalty. This conviction was a major miscarriage of justice and Derek Bentley was finally pardoned and the conviction quashed 50 years later. It was said at the trial that the film contributed to the violence, ironically in view of its plot – a man hanged for the murder of a policeman he did not commit. *My Death is a Mockery* was withdrawn in 1953 and has not been seen since then.

On the back of remastering *My Death is a Mockery* Adelphi are turning their sights to a very different title from their catalogue, launching a crowdfunding campaign to restore their 1956 colour musical comedy ***Stars in Your Eyes***. Starring Pat Kirkwood the film also stars Welsh singer Dorothy Squires, in her only appearance on the big screen, with stellar support featuring performances by Jimmy Clitheroe, Joan Sims, Vera Day and Freddie Frinton.

Adelphi was established in May 1939 and is Britain's oldest trading film company. Adelphi is known for its British black and white films giving actors their early career screen roles, Ronnie Corbett, Prunella Scales, Alistair Sim, Diana Dors, Max Bygraves, John Gregson, Sid James, Dora Bryan, Vera Day, Petula Clark, Donald Houston, James Mason and especially the first feature films starring Peter Sellers and Spike Milligan. The collection of over 40 films is stored in the BFI archive

**Adelphi Films Kate Lees and BFI Video Publishing's Vic Pratt are available for interview.**

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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.

**ABOUT THE BFI NATIONAL ARCHIVE**

The BFI National Archive was founded in 1935 and has grown to become the one of the largest and most important collections of film and television in the world with over 180,000 films and 750,000 television programmes. For over 80 years the BFI has been an international leader in film preservation and guardian of Britain's unparalleled film and TV heritage. The BFI is an innovator in presenting films to audiences in new and dynamic ways, from cinemas to film festivals, outdoor events to online video-on-demand. At the heart of all its activities is the BFI's central aim to ensure that everyone in the UK has access to the widest possible range of film and their own film heritage.

That heritage includes all time great British directors Alfred Hitchcock, David Lean and Powell and Pressburger; and the rich vein of documentary filmmaking, in which Britain led the world, including the lyrical work of Humphrey Jennings. The archive also boasts a significant collection of filmmakers' papers as well as extensive stills, posters and production and costume designs along with original scripts, press books and related ephemera.

Expert teams undertake the time-consuming and complex task of restoring films at the BFI John Paul Getty Jr Conservation Centre in Hertfordshire. The BFI's most precious film materials are kept in optimum conditions in the world-leading Master Film Store in Warwickshire.

**ABOUT ADELPHI FILMS**

Adelphi Films was a major producer and distributor of British films throughout the 1940s and 1950s from noir-ish crime pictures and buoyant romance and musicals to colourful melodramas and slapstick comedies. It produced and

distributed numerous feature films, more than 40 of which form The Adelphi Films Collection. Run by Arthur Dent and his sons Stanley and David Dent, Adelphi is now managed by Arthur Dent's granddaughter Kate Lees. Sid James, Diana Dors, Peter Sellers, James Mason, Dennis Price, Petula Clark, Ronnie Corbett, and Prunella Scales are just some of the many well-loved performers who appeared before Adelphi's cameras early on in their careers. The company's original film materials – for a long time stored in a suburban garage in London – are now safely held and preserved at the BFI National Archive. For further information on Adelphi please contact <http://www.adelphifilms.com/>