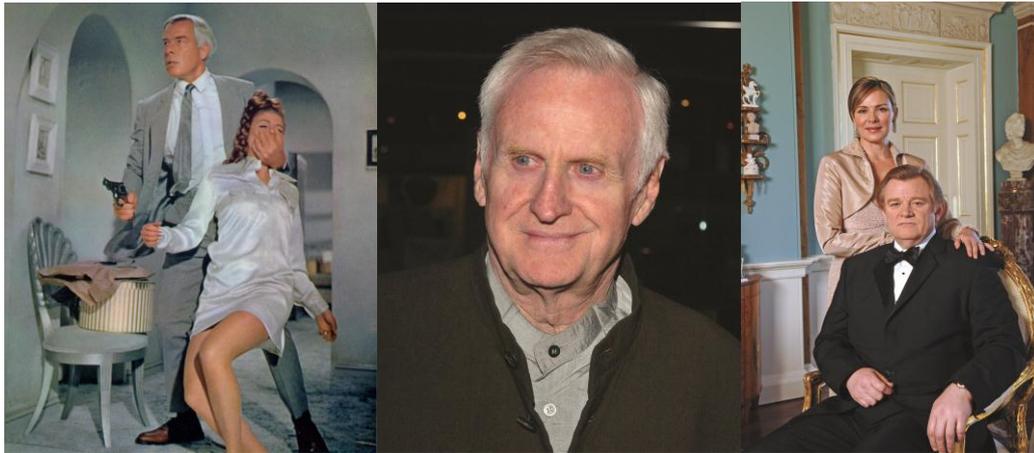


13/15

John Boorman



BFI Southbank to honour the director with a BFI Fellowship on 25 March followed by a career retrospective throughout April

On 25 March **John Boorman** will be presented a **BFI Fellowship** – the highest accolade that the nation’s leading organisation for film can award. To mark the occasion he will be interviewed by **Michel Ciment**, on-stage at **BFI Southbank**, to launch a major retrospective of his work and to celebrate his recent 80th birthday. There will also be an **Extended Run** and nationwide release of *Point Blank* (1967) and an exhibition of artefacts from Boorman’s personal archive, on display in the Mezzanine – including a dress worn by **Helen Mirren** in *Excalibur* (1981). To complement this season there will be an exclusive run of *Me and Me Dad* (2011), an intimate insight of life in the Boorman family, directed by John’s daughter **Katrine Boorman** (who will appear in conversation on 27 March, following a preview of her film).

According to Philip French, John Boorman is ‘one of the greatest filmmakers this country has produced’. He began his career as a documentary director for the BBC with *Citizen 63* (BBC, 1963) and *The Newcomers* (BBC, 1964), and this season will feature these early works and follow his varied filmmaking career to date. His first feature film, *Catch Us If You Can* (1965), was a showcase for the **Dave Clark Five** and caught the attention and support of **Pauline Kael**. It was followed by *The Quarry: Portrait of a Man as a Parylsed Artist* (BBC, 1966), inspired by Fellini’s 8½ and events in Boorman’s own life.

Adapted from a Donald Westlake novel, the noir style gangster title *Point Blank* provided Boorman with his breakthrough film in Hollywood and, in turn, led to *Hell in the Pacific* (1968), both starring Lee Marvin, who Boorman developed a lasting friendship with. A variety of films followed, with the nightmarish experience set upon **John Voight**, **Burt Reynolds** and **Ned Beatty** in *Deliverance* (1972) - earning Boorman his first box-office hit and **Oscar** nominations for Best Director and Best Picture - and fantasies such as *Zardoz*

(1973), starring **Sean Connery** as the hero in a dystopian 2293. *Excalibur*, based on the Arthurian legend, was a long-dreamed of project for the director and soon gained cult status. In contrast, *Hope and Glory* (1987) is an autobiographical tale of suburban London during WWII; a gentle and tender comedy that won Boorman three **BAFTA** and three Oscar nominations.

Further titles saw further autobiography, with John Hurt playing the director, or alter-ego, in *I Dreamt I Woke Up* (1991), the return to documentary with a tribute to Lee Marvin, and a more political agenda that include *Beyond Rangoon* (1995) and *Country of My Skull* (aka *In My Country*, 2004). *The General* (1998) won Boorman the prize for **Best Director** at **Cannes** the same year and was his first film to depict contemporary Ireland, starring **Brendan Gleason** as Dublin folk hero and criminal Martin Cahill. Since then he has returned to Ireland - where he also resides - for *The Tiger's Tail* (2006), for a second collaboration with Gleason that anticipates the country's economic crash.

This programme of John Boorman's talents as a filmmaker provides the perfect opportunity to remind or familiarise audiences with his work. And with a new project in development now is the perfect time to reflect on the amazing and diverse career of one of the UK's most daring directors.

John Boorman: Programme 25 March to 30 April 2013

New BFI Fellow John Boorman in Conversation

To mark the presentation of a BFI Fellowship to John Boorman, and as a highlight of our retrospective of his work in film and television, we are delighted to welcome him back to the NFT1 stage to discuss his career. Renowned as an excellent raconteur who has written both wisely and wittily about the world of film, John will be interviewed by Michel Ciment and take questions from the audience, before the BFI bestows its highest honour on him at this very special evening.

Joint ticket available with Point Blank at 20:45: £15, concs £11.50 (Members pay £1.50 less)

Mon 25 Mar 18:30 NFT1

EXTENDED RUN: *Point Blank* (1967) 29 Mar – Thu 11 April NEW PRINT

Boorman's American debut remains a landmark crime film, mixing fast-paced, hard-hitting Hollywood action with European stylistic experimentation to intoxicating effect. **Lee Marvin** is cast to career-best perfection as Walker, an old-school gangster left to die in Alcatraz after an otherwise successful heist. Like an avenging angel, he returns to seek out those who betrayed him and retrieve his share of the loot from the outwardly respectable, strangely faceless 'Organisation'. Bringing a sharp outsider's eye – and Philip Lathrop's superb 'Scope compositions – to the strikingly angular cityscapes of Los Angeles and San Francisco, Boorman also deployed a teasingly fragmented chronology, innovative sound design and careful colour schemes to create a consistently surprising, acerbically witty and gripping narrative. Though there have been subsequent adaptations of Donald Westlake's *The Hunter*, this terse masterpiece remains by far the best and still feels exhilaratingly modern.

USA 1967. Dir John Boorman. With Lee Marvin, Angie Dickinson, Keenan Wynn. 92min 15

A BFI release

John Boorman Exhibition

Complementing our John Boorman season, the Mezzanine at BFI Southbank is hosting an exhibition of original production materials charting the career and working practices of the director and his collaborators. Items on display include striking costume designs, illuminating correspondence and annotated shooting scripts drawn from the BFI's Special Collections, as well as some rare and wonderful treasures generously loaned by Boorman and his family.

FREE Until 28 April

Citizen 63

BBC 1963. 3x30min

+ Six Days to Saturday

BBC 1963. 30min

Boorman began his directing career in Bristol, making documentaries for BBC West. The three episodes of the five-part series *Citizen 63* focus on individuals who somehow represent aspects of life in a changing Britain: businessman and pop-music agent Barry Langford, rebellious secondary schoolgirl Marion Knight and Alsatian-owner and police inspector Richard Callicott. *Six Days to Saturday*, meanwhile, chronicles a week in the life of Swindon Town Football Club. Cinema vérité meets the spirit of Humphrey Jennings...

Thu 28 Mar 17:40 Studio

The Newcomers

BBC 1964. c180min

Continuing with his examination of everyday life in contemporary Britain, for *The Newcomers* Boorman availed himself of six half-hour episodes to cover half a year in the lives of a young couple, Alison and Anthony Smith, as they prepared for a major change to their routines: the birth of twins, and the consequent need to find a new home. The series, which saw Boorman experimenting with innovative style and techniques to impressive effect, was so well received that a sequel, *Ten Years After*, was made in 1973.

Tue 26 Mar 18:40 Studio

Catch Us If You Can

UK 1965. With Dave Clark, Barbara Ferris, David de Keyser. 91min. PG

John Boorman was given a chance to direct, as a showcase for the Dave Clark Five, his first feature. The film reveals a sense of fantasy, humour and visual invention while anticipating future work. Two young people flee the synthetic glitter of the publicity world in search of an 'elsewhere' that finally proves inaccessible. During this quest, the director plays with illusion and reality, from a fancy dress ball to the shoot of a TV commercial.

Fri 29 Mar 20:30 NFT3, Sun 31 Mar 20:40 NFT2

The Quarry: Portrait of a Man as a Paralysed Artist

BBC 1966. 62min

+ The Great Director: The Epic Story of DW Griffith

BBC 1966. 50min

Though part of the *Sunday Night* documentary series, *The Quarry* was in fact Boorman's first TV fiction drama. About a sculptor undergoing a creative crisis, the film – inspired partly by Fellini's *8½*, partly by events in Boorman's own life – includes contextualising material which uses non-actors in semi-documentary scenes. Meanwhile, *The Great Director*, also made for *Sunday Night*, is an homage to a man Boorman even now considers to be of extraordinary importance and influence, not only for himself but for all fiction filmmakers.

Fri 29 Mar 15:50 NFT3

Hell in the Pacific

USA 1968. With Lee Marvin, Toshiro Mifune. 103min. PG

Two 'larger than life' stars, archetypal images of their countries of origin, embody this Beckettian fable (humour included) of two men on an island, neither speaking the other's language. An American marine and a Japanese officer at the end of World War II play successively the role of master and servant. The only other protagonists are the air, earth, water and fire, which Boorman directs with utmost power.

Wed 27 Mar 20:30 NFT3, Fri 29 Mar 18:10 NFT3

Leo the Last

UK 1970. With Marcello Mastroianni, Billie Whitelaw, Calvin Lockhart. 104min. 18

From his sumptuous house in London Leo, an exiled prince, contemplates the poverty of the street outside, inhabited by blacks and poor whites. This modern fable about a withdrawn, solitary man who starts to communicate with the world is one of Boorman's most daring achievements (rewarded with the Best Director prize at Cannes). A Brechtian tale, revising 'The Love Song of J Alfred Prufrock', and featuring a quintessential Mastroianni performance.

Thu 28 Mar 20:30 NFT3, Tue 2 Apr 20:45 NFT1, Thu 11 Apr 18:10 NFT3

Deliverance

USA 1972. With John Voight, Burt Reynolds, Ned Beatty. 110min. Digital. 18

Four city men go for a weekend of river adventures in the Appalachians. The expedition turns into a nightmare after they meet two hillbillies and steer their canoes through turbulent rapids. James Dickey's novel is the source of a terrifying cinematographic experience where Boorman debunks the myth of regeneration through violence so dear to the old west. As with earlier Boorman protagonists, Ed (John Voight) – in his quest for his own identity – lives out a bad dream.

Sat 30 Mar 16:15, 20:45 NFT1, Thu 4 Apr 20:30 NFT1, Sun 7 Apr 18:30 NFT3, Sun 14 Apr 20:30 NFT3, Sat 20 Apr 20:40 NFT3

Zardoz

UK 1973. With Sean Connery, Charlotte Rampling, Sara Kestelman. 105min. 15

Set in 2293, where a self-contained world is peopled with the Brutes, the Exterminators and the Eternals. *Zardoz* is a dystopia, a pessimistic view of a possible future, and a cautionary tale coloured by Boorman's concern for the evolution of humanity. Shot – like *Excalibur*, *The General* and *The Tiger's Tail* – near his house in Wicklow, it is the most baroque of all his films, where he gives free rein to his imagination in flamboyant hues, and features Sean Connery as the embodiment of a life force. Sat 30

Mar 18:20 NFT2, Wed 3 Apr 20:40 NFT2

Exorcist II: The Heretic

USA 1977. With Richard Burton, Louise Fletcher, Kitty Winn. 118min. 18

Conceived as a sequel to *The Exorcist*, *The Heretic* was the big commercial disaster of Boorman's career, disappointing audience expectations of the gruesome effects of the original and providing instead a metaphysical thriller. Science and religion, a psychiatrist and a priest combine efforts to save a sick child while, in the heart of Africa, a magician offers an answer. Shot on spectacular sets, the film is reminiscent of the great German Expressionist cinema.

Sat 30 Mar 20:40 NFT2, Mon 1 Mar 20:40 NFT2

Excalibur

UK 1981. With Nigel Terry, Helen Mirren, Nicol Williamson. 140min. Digital. 15

From a very early age, Boorman was influenced by the Grail mythology, which informed a number of his films. He finally decided to adapt the Arthurian legends and audaciously dealt with the complete cycle, focusing on the romantic triangle of Arthur, Guinevere and Lancelot along with Perceval's search for the hidden chalice. The splendour of the visuals is never divorced from the energy of the narrative, and the mixture of the epic, the tragic, the elegiac and the comic proves exhilarating.

Sun 31 Mar 15:30 NFT1, Sat 6 Apr 15:40 NFT2, Sun 21 Apr 20:20 NFT3, Tue 30 Apr 20:20 NFT1

The Emerald Forest

UK 1985. With Powers Boothe, Meg Foster, Charley Boorman. 114min. 15

Like several other Boorman films, *The Emerald Forest* is about a clash of cultures. The child of an American engineer is abducted and raised into adolescence by an Amazonian Indian tribe, and refuses to return to white civilisation. The father, a builder of dams, believes in technology but comes to recognise the natives' point of view and his own responsibility. Once more the director proves that he is a great painter of landscapes, with a fabulous bestiary and a quivering nature.

Sun 31 Mar 18:20 NFT1, Mon 15 Apr 20:30 NFT2

Hope and Glory

UK 1987. With Sebastian Rice-Edwards, Ian Bannen, Sarah Miles. 113min. 15

It took 20 years for John Boorman to write and direct an autobiographical film: the war years that he lived through as a child of seven in suburban London by the river Thames. As expected, the point of view is strikingly original, the Blitz being perceived by the young boy as a cheery experience, all fireworks and plunder in the ruins of houses. Warm and funny, and a key to his cinema.

Mon 1 Apr 18:10 NFT3, Fri 5 Apr 14:00 NFT3 (Seniors' Matinee, with intro), Fri 12 Apr 18:20 NFT2

Where the Heart Is

USA 1990. With Dabney Coleman, Uma Thurman, Joanna Cassidy. 107min. 15

A humorous comment on the 1980s trend of adult offspring who won't leave home. Co-written by Boorman and his eldest daughter Telsche, the film is a modern fable, in the wake of *Leo the Last*, about a harassed demolition tycoon who locks out his daughters and son to help them live on their own merits. A kind of *King Lear* treated as a festive comedy, it shows again how eccentric Boorman can be.

Thu 11 Apr 20:30 NFT3, Sun 14 Apr 18:10 NFT3

I Dreamt I Woke Up

Ireland 1991. With John Boorman, John Hurt, Janet McTeer. 44min

+ **Two Nudes Bathing** UK 1995. 30min

Among directors, Boorman is one of the best writers on cinema (his diary *Money into Light*, his autobiography *Adventures of a Suburban Boy*), and here filmed a self portrait, *I Dreamt I Woke Up*, with John Hurt playing his alter ego. Imbued with a wicked sense of humour, the film is as much a revelation as it is revelatory. Hurt is also present in *Two Nudes Bathing*, a variation on a famous painting of the Fontainebleau school. A nobleman commissions a young man for a portrait of his two daughters. Witty and sensuous.

Mon 15 Apr 18:20 NFT2, Sun 21 Apr 16:00 NFT2

Journey Into Light

BBC 1985. 40min

+ **Lee Marvin: A Personal Portrait by John Boorman**

BBC 1998. 55min

A complement to Boorman's acclaimed book *Money into Light*, *Journey into Light* is a filmed essay-cum-diary about the trials and tribulations, the pressures and pleasures of filmmaking, particularly with reference to his experiences bringing *The Emerald Forest* to fruition. *Lee Marvin...* is both a tribute to and an anecdotal reminiscence about the star of *Point Blank* and *Hell in the Pacific* who was also Boorman's friend. Affectionate, funny and illuminating.

Fri 19 Apr 20:40 NFT2, Sun 21 Apr 18:20 NFT2

Beyond Rangoon

USA 1995. With Patricia Arquette, U Aung Ko, Frances McDormand. 100min. 12A

An American woman in a state of crisis after a loss finds herself in a Burma under political oppression, and discovers a new cultural reality that will change her. Again Boorman is attuned to the world at large while sensitive to a personal quest. A walk in the night, the crossing of a river, the haunting presence of the jungle make the viewing a sensuous experience.

Mon 22 Apr 20:40 NFT2, Sun 28 Apr 20:30 NFT2

The General

Ireland-UK 1998. With Brendan Gleeson, Sean McGinley, John Voight. 124min. 15

Shot in colour but printed in black and white, and inspired by the life of Martin Cahill, the film sees Boorman for the first time depicting contemporary Ireland. Awarded the Best Director prize by the Cannes jury presided over by Martin Scorsese, the film – like its main actor, the astonishing, Cagney-esque Brendan Gleeson – has a biting humour, a plebeian truculence and a compulsive energy. Cahill, a modern gangster, is both a seducer and a scoundrel.

Fri 26 Apr 20:30 NFT2, Sat 27 Apr 15:40 NFT3

The Tailor of Panama

USA-Ireland 2001. With Pierce Brosnan, Geoffrey Rush, Jamie Lee Curtis. 109min. 15

Collaborating with John Le Carré, Boorman adapted his novel and stayed faithful to its iconoclastic spirit. After *Beyond Rangoon* and *The General* and before *Country of My Skull*, the film is part of a political tetralogy, and presents itself as a cruel satire of a general paranoia without forsaking the complexity of its main character. Facing Geoffrey Rush, Pierce Brosnan relishes his part as an anti-James Bond. An enthralling *divertimento*.

Fri 26 Apr 18:20 NFT3, Mon 29 Apr 18:10 NFT3

Country of My Skull aka *In My Country*

UK-Ireland-South Africa 2004. With Samuel L Jackson, Juliette Binoche, Brendan Gleeson. 103min. 15

Like *The General*, a film inspired by true events, but this time with a portentous subject: the Truth and Reconciliation Commissions investigating abuses of human rights under Apartheid. This probably explains Boorman's rare adoption of classical form. Surveying the confrontation of an Afrikaner radio reporter in opposition to her family and an African-American journalist ill at ease with black Africans, Boorman once more makes the search for identity one of his themes.

Sun 28 Apr 16:00 NFT2, Mon 29 Apr 20:40 NFT2

The Tiger's Tail

Ireland-UK 2006. With Brendan Gleeson, Kim Cattrall, Sinead Cusack, Ciarán Hinds. 107min. 18

Shot in Dublin, the film relates to *Leo the Last* and *Where the Heart Is* with its sense of humour, its interest in family relationships and its moral compass. The protagonist, played with gusto by Brendan Gleeson, a property developer with a big house and a beautiful wife, faces his double, a brotherly lumpen proletarian who wants to take his place. Anticipating the Irish economic crash, Boorman mixes drama and comedy in a new search for identity.

Sat 27 Apr 18:10 NFT3, Tue 30 Apr 18:20 NFT2

Me and Me Dad Preview plus Q&A with Katrine Boorman on Wed 27 Mar 18:10 NFT3

UK 2011 Dir Katrine Boorman With John Boorman, the Boorman family 66min Digital

Katrine Boorman's quietly remarkable documentary about her father is very different from most filmed portraits of artists. While it does deal with his career and the making of the films, it's essentially a movie about life, as lived both by John Boorman the director and one of his several offspring. Her intimate knowledge of her subject and her warm but far from uncritical relationship with him make for an unusually frank and revealing look at the effects of Boorman's work, his needs, obsessions and personality on herself and the rest of the immediate family. At the same time, as we see Katrine, her siblings and their mother in conversation with John, both at the family home in Ireland and in London, we also see how this man – a cineaste through and through to this day – tends to take control of any shoot. Brave, funny, touching – and quite special.

Fri 5 – Thu 25 Apr

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