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S.O.S. – The Titanic Centenary At BFI Southbank in April 2012



April 2012 marks the centenary of the tragic sinking of the **Titanic** along with the loss of 1,517 passengers. The intervening years and countless tales of heroism to emerge from the disaster have caused the event to gain near mythical status in film and television; the distinct lack of footage from either the disaster and of the ship prior to its departure only fuelling the intrigue. **BFI Southbank** gathers together many of the filmed dramatisations of the disaster for a commemorative season that spans interpretations of the event from Britain, (**Atlantic** 1929, **A Night to Remember** 1958) and the US (**Titanic** 1953) via a unique take on the disaster from the propaganda machine of Nazi era Germany (**Titanic** 1943).

Other highlights of the centenary are set to include an exclusive preview of ITV's upcoming series, **Titanic** (2012), written by **Julian Fellowes** followed by a Q&A with the writer, director and cast members that will kick off **BFI's** celebrations on **20 March**, the newly re-mastered version of **James Cameron's** Blockbuster **Titanic 3D** (2012) opening at **BFI IMAX** on **April 5**, an illustrated lecture from author **Join Charles Barr** on Alfred Hitchcock's abandoned Titanic Project, a specially curated **Mediateque** collection and a **Mezzanine** display marking the event.

Shortly before midnight on 14 April 1912, the maiden voyage of the White Star Line's beacon of luxury and progress, RMS Titanic, ended in tragedy when she struck an iceberg and sank in the early hours of 15 April. Less than a third of the vast liner's passengers and crew survived, prompting international outrage. A century later, this unprecedented maritime catastrophe maintains its grim fascination, not least for generations of filmmakers drawn into the tangled web of fact and fiction now firmly embedded in our popular culture.

The earliest newsreel reactions to the tragedy embraced poetic license from the off, piecing together the story for a public now hungry for the moving image in ingenious, if morally rather suspect, ways. Lavish dramas immortalised the putative heroes and villains of April 1912, from the rich and famous (John Jacob Astor IV, 'Unsinkable' Molly Brown Bruce Ismay) to the humbler likes of Wireless Operator Jack Phillips and his Captain, Edward J Smith.

While Rank's **A Night to Remember** (1958) remains for many the definitive screen portrayal, the Titanic canon encompasses, among others, an almost forgotten multi-language epic (**Atlantic**, 1929), a 1943 Nazi propaganda vehicle championed by Goebbels, and James Cameron's 1997 box office behemoth (now re-launched in 3D, naturally), not forgetting IMAX explorations of the wreck and a legion of documentaries unpicking the minutiae of the sinking and myriad conspiracy theories. Two major new mini-series produced to coincide with this anniversary offer a reminder that among the defining events of the 20th century, the Titanic endures as the most potent symbol of man's fallibility - and the cinematic lure of the sea.

- Ends -

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NOTES TO EDITORS

TV Preview: Titanic + Q&A

Deep Indigo-Sienna Films-Mid Atlantic Films-Lookout Point-ITV Studios 2012. Dir Jon Jones. With Linus Roache, Celia Imrie, Toby Jones, Geraldine Somerville, Maria Doyle Kennedy. Episode One: 46min

As we look towards our Titanic season in April, we present this new production, written by Oscar-winning screenwriter Julian Fellowes. Titanic is the extraordinary re-telling of that doomed voyage, weaving action, mystery and romantic narratives featuring fictional and historical characters, before coming together in an explosive finale. While James Cameron's 1997 film was primarily a love story between the two central characters, BAFTA-winning producer Nigel Stafford-Clark was inspired by the hundreds of untold stories of those aboard, and the drama provides a unique portrait of the society which gave birth to the liner, and which was heading as obliviously towards its own nemesis in 1914 as Titanic was towards its iceberg.

Screening followed by a panel discussion & Q&A with Julian Fellowes, producers Nigel Stafford-Clark and Simon Vaughan, director Jon Jones and cast members (check BFI website for panel confirmation). Presented in association with BAFTA Tickets £10, concs £6.75 (Members pay £1.50 less)

Tue 20 March 18:20 NFT1

Titanic 3D

An IMAX 3D Experience

USA 2012. Dir James Cameron. With Leonardo DiCaprio, Kate Winslet, Billy Zane. 194min
James Cameron's epic romance – set against the ill-fated maiden voyage of the RMS Titanic – launched the careers of DiCaprio and Winslet, broke boxoffice records and won 11 Academy Awards in 1998. The digital remastering from Super 35 to stunning IMAX 3D – supervised by Cameron himself – results in a larger aspect ratio than the original and is therefore best enjoyed on the biggest screen in Britain.

Opens 5 April

Atlantic

UK 1929. Dir EA Dupont. With Madeleine Carroll, Franklin Dyll, John Longden, Monty Banks, Donald Calthrop. 90min. **PG**

German émigré Dupont followed silent classic *Piccadilly* with a costly sound adaptation of Ernest Raymond's 1915 play *The Berg*. A thinly-veiled retelling of the Titanic disaster – direct reference to which was forbidden by the White Star Line – *Atlantic* is something of a curate's egg. Among the earliest British sound films and the first produced in multiple languages (English, German, and later French), this all-but-forgotten entry in the Titanic canon boasts spectacular sets and a gripping finale.

***Introduced by season curator Simon McCallum; **Extended introduction by Archive curator John Oliver**

Wed 11 Apr 20:40 NFT3*

Sun 15 Apr 16:00 NFT2**

Titanic

Germany 1943. Dir Herbert Selpin [& Werner Klingler (uncred)]. With Sybille Schmitz, Hans Nielsen, Kirsten Heiberg, EF Fürbringer. 85min. **EST**

Nazi propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels casts a sinister shadow over this budget-busting production, almost as troubled as the disaster it depicts from its fervently anti-British perspective (complete with fictional German hero). Original director Selpin died in custody after failing to toe the party line; Goebbels eventually banned the film entirely. UFA star Sybille Schmitz was shunned as a collaborator, her sad decline inspiring Fassbinder's *Veronika Voss* (1982).

+ In Nacht und Eis

Germany 1912. Dir Mime Misu. With Ernst Rückert, Otto Rippert, Waldemar Hecker. c36min. With live piano Accompaniment

The earliest surviving dramatisation of the Titanic tragedy, thought lost until its rediscovery in the 1990s and restored by the Deutsche Kinemathek.

Wed 18 Apr 18:20 NFT2

Wed 25 Apr 20:30 NFT2

Titanic

USA 1953. Dir Jean Negulesco. With Clifton Webb, Barbara Stanwyck, Robert Wagner, Brian Aherne, Thelma Ritter. 97min. **PG**

Surprisingly it took some four decades for the Titanic story to get the full Hollywood treatment. Thankfully audiences were in safe hands with co-writer Charles Brackett (awarded the 1953 Academy Award for Best Story & Screenplay), and the indomitable Barbara Stanwyck as a first-class passenger fleeing her selfish socialite husband (Webb). Will he redeem himself in Titanic's hour of need? Look out, too, for Thelma Ritter in a Molly Brown inspired supporting role.

Introduced by an Archive curator

Tue 24 Apr 20:40 NFT2

Sat 28 Apr 18:40 NFT2

A Night to Remember

UK 1958. Dir Roy Ward Baker. With Kenneth More, Ronald Allen, Robert Ayres, Honor Blackman. 123min. New digital restoration. **PG**

For many filmgoers and historians, *A Night to Remember* has never been bettered in its exciting yet heavily researched recreation of the Titanic's fate. Based on Walter Lord's book, the film moves the focus from first class by drawing on the experiences of crewmen like Second Officer Charles Lightoller (a landmark role in More's career) and exposing the rigid class structure that shaped events before and after the fatal collision. Haunting moments – children's toys sliding eerily, crockery crashing to the floor – superbly evoke the simple human horror of that freezing night.

Mon 16 Apr 20:20 NFT2
Introduced by John Graves, National Maritime Museum
Fri 13 – Sat 28 Apr Studio & NFT3
See calendar for times

Special Event:

Hitchcock's Titanic Project

Join Charles Barr (author of *English Hitchcock* and the BFI Film Classic on *Vertigo*) for this unique presentation, shedding light on the Titanic film which was to have been Hitchcock's first Hollywood assignment in 1939 before Selznick replaced it with *Rebecca*. Hitchcock had described it as a 'marvellously dramatic subject for a motion picture'; a specially edited sequence draws upon shipboard extracts from his other films in order to show 'what might have been'. This event marks the Titanic centenary and looks ahead to the BFI's major project for later in 2012, *The Genius of Hitchcock*.

Wed 11 Apr 18:20 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 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 £9.50, concs £6.75 Members pay £1.50 less on any ticket. Website www.bfi.org.uk/southbank

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

BFI Filmstore

The BFI Filmstore 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.

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.

***** 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 /