



MEDIA RELEASE
EMBARGOED 8 MAY 2013

Sydney Film Festival presents Brit Noir: Rainy Sundays, Stormy Mondays

Presented in collaboration with the National Film and Sound Archives of Australia, the 60th Sydney Film Festival announces twenty-three films in the 'Brit Noir' program strand.

When people think of Film Noir, they think of American hard-boiled detectives and femme fatales. Across the Atlantic, a very different kind of Noir was being produced. These are gritty explorations of the underbelly of Britain, featuring some of the UK's biggest stars playing completely against type. In this selection you'll find famous faces like Richard Attenborough, Peter Sellers, Diana Dors and James Mason as killers, sociopaths, losers and terrorists – disillusioned and broken by fading post-war optimism. There are also some unexpected Australian connections on both sides of the camera to explore.

Twenty-three **Brit Noir** films (thirteen features; ten shorts) will feature in the **60th Sydney Film Festival**. Highlights include **Carol Reed's** post-war thriller *Odd Man Out*, Ealing Studio's *It Always Rains On Sunday* featuring the legendary **Googie Withers** alongside **John McCallum**, **Stanley Baker's** star-defining performance in *Hell Drivers* and arguably the only genuine Oz-noir ever made, *The Siege of Pinchgut*.

"Programmed by Quentin Turnour, this revelatory collection of films rewrites the rulebook of British cinema history, and there are also many fascinating Australian connections to be unearthed here. These gritty, dark and compelling films are a very different kind of noir, and the results are shocking, engrossing and totally unexpected. We look forward to the reactions of the audience, some of whom will be rediscovering old favourites, and others who will have their first introduction to these extraordinary films," said Nashen Moodley, SFF Festival Director.

Brit Noir Films:

Brighton Rock | Director: **John Boulting** | Cast: Richard Attenborough, Hermoine Baddeley, William Hartnell
Pre-war Brighton, off-season. Spiv gangster 'Pinkie' Brown (Richard Attenborough) needs to conceal a killing committed on the funfair ghost train. Naïve waitress Rose (Carol Marsh) is one potential witness. Pinkie figures the best way to shut her up is to ask her out – at least until he can figure if she's got to be murdered too. Graham Greene's original 1938 'entertainment' had craftily embroidered Catholic theology into American-style pulp fiction. Director-producers John and Roy Boulting worked closely with Greene on a post-war screen adaptation that would respect the milieu of ethical and suburban grimness. Greene

Principal State Government partner

Strategic partner

Government partners



scripted his character's insights into the paradoxes of religious faith – then was dumbfounded when these 'uplifting' scenes were cut by the censor. The released film speaks more symbolically – but through an explicit cruelty and casual violence that's louder than in almost any other post-war British noir.

Screens with:

Sunday by the Sea | Director: **Anthony Simmons** | Screenwriter: Anthony Simmons | Producer: Leon Clore
This Venice Film Festival-winning celebration of a Margate summer holidays was one of the first major post-war successes of post-war British documentary, preceding the first of the better-known 'free cinema' films.

Daybreak | Director: **Compton Bennett** | Cast: Ann Todd, Eric Portman, Maxwell Reed
Hangman Eddie Mendover's last job is a young Norwegian sailor, Olaf Tyson. But the condemned man recoils more at Eddie's appearance than at the sight of the noose. Shattered, Mendover admits he knows the reason for Olaf's terror: he recognised his executioner as the man he thought he'd murdered. Of all British noir's frequent variations on James M. Cain's *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, this is the most achingly poignant. *Daybreak* upsets the usual moral role play of the noir fable. Here, instead, husband and wife are tender but too-late lovers, sympathetic victims of past mistakes, bad luck and an inner confusion between their good natures and deepest anxieties. The film's commercial potential dissolved when censorship problems delayed its release for two years. Yet in a sense the censors understood the potency of the material better than its producers.

Screens with:

Cine Gazette no. 12: The Elephant Will Never Forget | Director, Screenwriter: **John Krish** | Producer: Edgar Anstey | Cast: Brewster Mason

John Krish's famous documentary about the end of the line for London trams – a sweet tribute, also, to the passing of pre-war South and East London popular culture.

Hell Drivers | Director: **Cy Endfield** | Cast: Stanley Baker, Herbert Lom, Peggy Cummins
After doing a year in jail for an accident that crippled his brother, Joe 'Tom' Yateley is only good for a piece-work job driving ballast trucks for haulage contractor Hawlett's. Manager Cartley runs a 'just in time' business, with their drivers on dangerous deadlines, taking all the risks and expected to kick back some of the rewards. The workplace is speed-tribal: wildcat, risk addicted, alpha male and dominated by Red (Patrick McGoohan), the fastest driver and biggest bully. Accidents are bound to happen... American director Cy Endfield was another UK refugee from the Hollywood blacklist. He's best-known today for 1964's *Zulu*, but *Hell Drivers* has become his cult film. And what better go-to cast of Brit- (and Euro-) trash character actors to speed him there, including Baker, Patrick McGoohan, Herbert Lom, Sean Connery, Sid James and more.

Screens with:

Pedestrian Crossing | Director: **Michael Law** | Producer: Richard Massingham | Cast: Richard Massingham
See Richard Massingham films at the end of the document.

Hell is a City | Director, Screenwriter: **Val Guest** | Cast: Stanley Baker, John Crawford, Donald Pleasence
Manchester detective Inspector Martineau (Stanley Baker) is the sheriff of his northern beat: respected by the local criminal element (and even loved by the odd barmaid). He's rough round the edges, cuts a bit of slack but isn't bent. The one part of his patch he can't master is his disintegrating marriage. Then the news gets back that nasty piece of work Starling (John Crawford) has broken out of jail and is heading north. Val Guest was British cinema's complete journeyman, working in every genre in over 70 movies. He directed often, but never the right sort of films to secure his reputation. Alongside *The Quatermass Xperiment* this is the best example of a filmmaking sensibility that when expressed, was surprisingly hard-boiled and cynical. Guest and Baker's Martineau is one-off, overlaid with the gloom of the Lancashire moors.

Principal State Government partner

Strategic partner

Government partners



Screens with:

Tomorrow's Saturday | Director: **Michael Grigsby**

Shot over 1959 and '60 summers in the Lancashire mill towns of Blackburn and Preston, *Tomorrow's Saturday* depicts the slowly passing rhythms of northern English working-class town life, society and popular culture.

It Always Rains on a Sunday | Director: **Robert Hamer** | Producer: Michael Balcon | Cast: Googie Withers, Jack Warner, John McCallum

It's one dreary early Sunday morning in London's Bethnal Green, early in 1947 but at the height of Britain's post-war gloom. Before her husband and stepdaughters are awake, unhappily married housewife Rose finds her old wartime lover Tommy on her doorstep – on the run from jail and a long prison term for robbery. She hides him in the old air-raid shelter and gets on with the Sunday chores. But Tommy wants to make up for lost time and for the remaining slow Sunday hours he will be for Rose an alluring, dangerous reminder of the thrills of her past life. This is the masterpiece of the troubled career of director Robert Hamer, and a great double role for two of Hamer's regular acting collaborators – Australian John McCallum and Australian-by adoption Googie Withers, perhaps doing their best work in UK studio cinema. The screening will be introduced by members of John McCallum and Googie Withers' family and followed by a discussion on Brit Noir cinema.

Screens with:

What A Life! | Director: **Michael Law** | Cast: Michael Law, Russell Waters

Commissioned to help the post-war British masses feel better about themselves, Richard Massingham subversively made a film where its characters gloomily agree: yes, things are that bad, it just isn't worth going on.

Screens with:

The People at no. 19 | Director: **J B Holmes** | Cast: Tilsa Page, Desmond Carrington, Margery Fleeson

Made in response to the rise in sexually transmitted diseases in postwar Britain, this instructional film has become notorious for replacing the usual approach of such films – shock and scientific facts – with dramatisation.

Never Let Go | Director: **John Guillermin** | Cast: Richard Todd, Peter Sellers, Elizabeth Sellars

As dreary post-war Britain gives way to swinging '60s UK, a travelling salesman needs a car. John Cummings (Richard Todd) over-extends his credit to buy a Ford Anglia. Then it's nicked just days later. Job, marriage and self-esteem at stake, he stumbles into a car rebirthing racket run by Lionel Meadows (Peter Sellers). Cummings has bitten off far more than he can chew. Yet a stubborn rage keeps him banging his head against the criminal order. This is a film made against all sorts of types. Richard Todd was a keeper of the stiff upper lip in post-war British cinema; but here it trembles with self-pity and humiliation. Peter Sellers' role in British noir was typically as an Ealing little man, but here he is a monstrous sociopath who can't understand why Todd's annoying little man won't just go away.

Screens with:

Coughs and Sneezes | Director: **Richard Massingham** | Cast: Richard Massingham

See Richard Massingham films at the end of the document.

Noose | Director: **Edmond T. Gréville** | Cast: Carole Landis, Derek Farr, Joseph Calleia

Black-market racketeer Sugiani is amassing vast fortunes and a fine-art collection of questionable taste. Then an American fashion reporter in London learns about his habit of beating up young women. Linda Medbury decides to wage a crusade against him and all Soho spivs just like him, enlisting to her side a strike force of cockney boxers. With Warner Bros. money, and the Anglo-American 'special relationship' in play, Hollywood's Carole Landis and Joseph Calleia are the official stars. Both do their bit: Landis (who sadly

Principal State Government partner

Strategic partner

Government partners



killed herself just before the film's release) as the feisty, wasted light comic talent that she always was; Calleia by enjoying a chance to satirise his real-life Maltese origins to an audience who got the joke ("I'm a British... foreign national..."). It's very best parts certainly feel more '30s gay than late-'40s gloom.

Screens with:

The Dark Stairway | Director, Screenwriter: **Ken Hughes** | Cast: Edgar Lustgarten, Russell Napier, Vincent Ball

This is one of the renowned episodes of the Scotland Yard B-noir theatrical short series that the Anglo-Amalgamated Productions studio produced in the mid-50s. Australian expats Robert Napier and Vincent Ball had recurring roles as detectives.

Odd Man Out | Director, Producer: **Carol Reed** | Cast: James Mason, Robert Newton, Cyril Cusack

In the dark hours after a violent Belfast robbery attempt goes wrong, IRA gunman McQueen (James Mason) tests the loyalty of friends, the kindness of strangers and his wounded belief in the Irish Republican cause. This was Carol Reed's first collaboration with the Australian-raised cinematographer Robert Krasker, with whom he would soon make *The Third Man*. As in all Reed's films, storytelling is allegorical and gothic. But the work of source novelist F. L. Green was always brooding with cosmic judgment and the acid of human kindness. As McQueen crosses paths with the fears, desires and shabby morals of the gallery of supporting characters, the film weighs, tests and finds his character wanting. The lesson is richly illustrated through Krasker's camerawork, sometimes making the point through angular expressionist framing that visually miniaturises Mason's character, ruthlessly cutting him 'down to size'.

Robbery | Director: **Peter Yates** | Cast: Stanley Baker, Joanna Pettet, James Booth

The Great Train Robbery of 1963 has always spun off countless dramatisations. One of the first remains the best by being utterly cold to what nearly all subsequent movie stories of the robbers have tried to do: find sentiment and pity in their subsequent fate. The film's producer Stanley Baker plays a character loosely based on the mastermind behind the robbery, and it's also a parade of the most charismatic and pock-marked character actors of the British screen of the 1960s and '70s. Director Peter Yates' style is cool, procedural, verbatim: the robbery's recreation was timed to each nerve-wracked minute from court transcripts. The film had considerable US success – and received one of British noir's greatest compliments: when actor Steve McQueen saw its opening, white-knuckle, Jaguar v. Jaguar car chase, he knew he had his director for *Bullitt*.

Screens with:

A Warning to Travellers | Director: **John Waterhouse** | Cast: Richard Massingham

See Richard Massingham films at the end of the document.

The Siege of Pinchgut | Director: **Harry Watt** | Cast: Aldo Ray, Heather Sears, Neil McCallum

Ned Kelly-like bank robber Matt Kirk (Aldo Ray) plans a prison escape in order to clear his name. Things go wrong and Kirk, his young idealising brother Johnny and accomplices are trapped on Sydney Harbour's Pinchgut Island. Their only way out becomes an apocalyptic plan to blackmail the New South Wales government. A favourite of Quentin Tarantino's, this is the least-known of the films Ealing Studios made in Australia (in fact the last Ealing made before the studio closed for good). The original script was conceived in the 1940s, by Commonwealth Film Unit employees Lee Robinson and Inman Hunter, with Nazi spies in mind. Arguably the only genuine Oz-noir ever made, it's also unusual for its contemporary urban setting and hints at an Australian ugliness, cynicism and authoritarianism from which the Kirks feel the need to flee.

Principal State Government partner



Strategic partner



Government partners



They Made Me A Fugitive | Director: **Alberto Cavalcanti** | Cast: Sally Gray, Trevor Howard, Griffith Jones
'Narcy' Narcissus is "...cheap, rotten, after-the-war trash." So he needs brains, social skills and respectability as his black-market operation grows. Bored Battle of Britain hero Clem (Trevor Howard) at first does nicely; he needs the money, wants to keep vain girlfriend Ellen interested and also misses the old thrills of wartime. He comes to his senses when the operation shifts from consumer goods to hard drugs; but bailing out of this game proves much harder than getting out of a Spitfire, especially when Narcy fits Clem up for the killing of a copper. Brazilian director Alberto Cavalcanti had an eclectic but fascinating career in UK cinema, making everything from experimental Crown Film Unit documentaries, through Dickens adaptations to gothic horror. Least expected would be this entry in the 'spiv' sub-cycle of late 1940s British noir.

Time Without Pity | Director: **Joseph Losey** | Cast: Michael Redgrave, Ann Todd, Leo McKern, Peter Cushing

David Graham (Michael Redgrave) is a writer whose public success can no longer conceal self-destructive alcoholism and frayed family relationships. Now his estranged adult son Alec sits on death row for a crime he refuses to deny, although probably didn't commit. Graham well understands Alec's motivation: it's the only way to get back at his old man. Searching for a reprieve Graham re-traces the witnesses amongst his son's circle of charming but superficial connections (including Leo McKern as Alec's father substitute – and the father, too of the murdered victim). But it slowly becomes apparent that Graham is really trying to prove his own guilt. Joseph Losey's other British noirs in the '50s were unconventional, but still about stock cops and robbers. Filled with counting-down clocks, self-reflective surfaces, mirrors and Redgrave's twitchy face, this is more existential and alienated.

Screens with:

Watch Your Meters | Director: **Michael Law** | Cast: Richard Massingham

See Richard Massingham films at the end of the document.

Yield to the Night | Director: **J. Lee Thompson** | Cast: Diana Dors, Yvonne Mitchell, Michael Craig

Perfume-counter blonde Mary Hilton guns down a fashionable London socialite. Why comes out at Hilton's trial: she'd left her husband for a more exciting life with a nightclub pianist (Michael Craig) – only to rage with erotic and class envy when he tosses her aside for a wealthier mistress. The British legal system won't tolerate Hilton's desire – but can't grasp that even the utter terror of dying won't teach her to be 'good'. Putting Diana Dors on Death Row in 1956 linked one tabloid topic then titillating British public opinion – star Dors' private life – to another that made it deeply uneasy: 1955's hanging of ex-starlet Ruth Ellis. Empathetic 'woman's melodrama' specialist director J. Lee Thompson rubs the gloss off (in Dors' case it was literally, proving a brave willingness to play plain, plump and dreadfully frightened), revealing a sadness within both celebrity personalities.

Screens with:

Nice Time | Director: **Allan Tanner and Claude Goretta**

Allan Tanner and Claude Goretta's contribution to 'free cinema' is one of the movement's most ambitious films, collecting impressions of Piccadilly Circus Saturday nightlife shot over six months in 1956-57.

Richard Massingham films:

Richard Massingham (1893-1953) is perhaps the Alfred Hitchcock figure of British information films; perhaps the greatest talent working in the genre, but also a larger than life, almost above the title presence in and around many of his films. Initially a doctor, he found unexpected acclaimed as one of Britain's best amateur filmmakers, often by turning humdrum subjects into musical revelries, like his going to the dentist film, *Tell Me If it Hurts* (1934). It encouraged him to switch careers in late 1930s, setting up his Public Relationship Films company in 1938. World War Two made the company and his reputation. The demand

Principal State Government partner



Strategic partner



Government partners



from government for engaging short films that would inform, but also win the Home Front masses over to various austerity measures served Massingham's filmmaker skills perfectly, whilst his child-like physical presence made him also the ideal acting foil. Post war, Massingham expanded to slightly longer films, made both for corporations and government. They are of interest here for they often tackled many of the same issues that underlie late 1940s British feature films: disappointment, boredom, frustrations with austerity and shortages. Preceding selected sessions in our British noir programs, will feature one of his best known, post-war short films, 1947's *What a Life!*, as well as five of Massingham one minute information trailers.

Sydney Film Festival celebrates its 60th anniversary this 5-16 June bringing a packed program of screenings and special events to even more venues across Sydney. The full program will be announced on **Wednesday 8 May 2013**. For tickets and full up-to-date program information please visit www.sff.org.au.

ABOUT SYDNEY FILM FESTIVAL

Sydney Film Festival screens feature films, documentaries, short films and animations across the city at the State Theatre, Event Cinemas George Street, Dendy Opera Quays, the Art Gallery of NSW and the Hayden Orpheum Picture Palace Cremorne. The Festival is a major event on the New South Wales cultural calendar and is one of the world's longest-running film festivals. For more information visit www.sff.org.au

Sydney Film Festival also presents twelve films that vie for the Official Competition; a highly respected international honour that awards a \$60,000 cash prize based on the decision of a jury of international and Australian filmmakers and industry professionals. Previous Sydney Film Festival Official Competition winners include: *Alps* (2012), *A Separation* (2011) – which went on to win an Academy Award®, *Heartbeats* (2010), *Bronson* (2009) and *Hunger* (2008).

The 60th Sydney Film Festival is supported by the NSW Government through Screen NSW, the Federal Government through Screen Australia, and the City of Sydney. The Festival's Strategic partner is the NSW Government through Destination NSW.

What: Sydney Film Festival

When: 5-16 June, 2013

Tickets & Info: 1300 733 733 www.sff.org.au

MEDIA ENQUIRIES

Charlotte Greig Publicity Manager **Sydney Film Festival**

E: charlotte@sff.org.au P: 02 9690 5314 M: 0404 111 919

Amber Forrest-Bisley Director **Cardinal Spin**

E: amber@cardinalspin.com.au P: 02 8065 7363 M: 0405 363 817

Matt Fraser Communications Advisor **Cardinal Spin**

E: matt@cardinalspin.com.au M: 0401 326 007

Principal State Government partner



Strategic partner



Government partners

