



**PRESS
RELEASE**

BFI unveils full programme for BFI MUSICALS! THE GREATEST SHOW ON SCREEN

Including BFI UK-wide re-releases of *Tommy*, *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg* and *Singin' in the Rain* – across the UK from Oct '19 – Jan '20

Embargoed until 18:30, Tuesday 10 September 2019.

This evening the BFI revealed the programme for the UK's greatest ever season celebrating the film musical, at an all-singing, all-dancing event at **BFI Southbank** with special guests including actors **Petula Clark** and **Clarke Peters** and **Patricia Ward Kelly**, wife and biographer of Hollywood legend Gene Kelly. **BFI Musicals** will celebrate the greatest stars including **Gene Kelly**, **Barbra Streisand**, **Judy Garland** and **Doris Day**, and spotlight the directors and composers whose creativity was the driving force behind countless beloved musicals; from the virtuoso choreographer and director **Bob Fosse** (*Cabaret*, *Sweet Charity*) to the late great composer **Michel Legrand** (*Yentl*, *Les demoiselles de Rochefort*). The programme will also shine a light on the musicals which engage with socio-political themes, such as racism or the horrors of the Depression, as well as celebrate the films which provide audiences with escapism from political uncertainty and troubled times; from the Golden Age of Hollywood's box office boom during WW2 and in the post-war years, to the phenomenal successes of the latest musical films like *The Lion King* (Jon Favreau, 2019), which has already surpassed \$1.5 billion globally. From singalonga-screenings to Q&As and immersive events for the whole family, **BFI Musicals** is guaranteed to have the UK singing and dancing in the aisles this autumn.

Head Curator of the BFI National Archive, and BFI Musicals Programmer Robin Baker tonight revealed that the programme would span the length and breadth of the UK, with nationwide re-releases of Ken Russell's rock opera *Tommy* (1975), starring Roger Daltrey, Ann-Margret, Elton John, Oliver Reed and Tina Turner, and of Jacques Demy's Palme d'Or-winning *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg* (1964) starring Catherine Deneuve and Nino Castelnuovo. Alongside the previously announced BFI re-release of *Singin' in the Rain* (Gene Kelly, Stanley Donen, 1952), these re-releases will screen at venues across the UK, alongside a touring programme of 12 musicals presented by the ICO (Independent Cinema Office) and a major series of special events programmed in partnership with the BFI Film Audience Network (BFI FAN). Highlights of the UK-wide BFI FAN programme will include the *Wizard of Oz* (Victor Fleming, 1939) in **Belfast Cathedral**; an immersive screening of *Brigadoon* (Vincente Minnelli, 1954) in **Edinburgh**; *Reframing Streisand*, a UK-wide film tour celebrating the iconic star; a series of aquatic themed musicals in and around **Belfast** harbour; and a Russian musicals season in **London, Bristol** and **Nottingham**. The full UK-wide programme will be revealed soon.

Special guests from the world of film, TV and musical theatre will take part in events throughout the season, with full line-ups being announced by individual cinemas soon. Guests confirmed for **BFI Southbank** so far include:

- **Imelda Staunton** (Theatre: *Gypsy*, *Follies*, *Sweeney Todd*, *The Wizard of Oz*)
- **Patricia Ward Kelly** (Wife and biographer of Hollywood legend Gene Kelly)
- **Clarke Peters** (Theatre: *Five Guys Named Moe* (writer), *Guys and Dolls* (actor), TV: *The Wire*)
- **Kerry Ellis** (Theatre: *Wicked*, *We Will Rock You*)
- **Tommy Steele** (Film: *Half a Sixpence*, *Finian's Rainbow*)
- **Howard Schuman** (TV: *Rock Follies*)

While the movie musical never truly went away, the last few years have seen a major resurgence in the popularity of the genre, with *La La Land* (Damien Chazelle, 2016), *The Greatest Showman* (Michael Gracey, 2017) and *Mamma Mia: Here We Go Again* (Ol Parker, 2018) taking a combined global box office of more than \$1.25 billion, emulating the Golden Age of Hollywood, when MGM musicals ruled the box office. Meanwhile, Rupert Goold's forthcoming biopic *Judy* (2019) starring Renée Zellweger as **Judy Garland**, and TV series *Fosse/Verdon*, which immortalises director and master choreographer **Bob Fosse** and Tony Award-winning actor and dancer **Gwen Verdon** also point to a

renewed interest in the life and work of musical icons. As well as the recent success of the movie musical, theatre audiences continue to lap up musicals on stage, with revenue from the genre in London's West End increasing year on year by 15.4% in 2018 to just shy of £504 million. With stage successes being regularly developed into feature films – such as Tom Hooper's much talked-about *Cats* (2019) and next year's adaptations of Lin Manuel Miranda's *In The Heights* and British hit *Everyone's Talking About Jamie* – it's clear that the movie musical is here to stay.

BFI Musicals will explore the reasons for the current success of the movie musical, including the notion that it is the best form of escapism from the troubled times we are living in. The season will celebrate the greatest stars, directors, composers and choreographers, and look at the stories of the Hollywood, British and international musical. The season will also look to confirm the musical as a genre which, hidden beneath the glitz and glamour, speaks to audiences about profoundly serious subjects, from the hardship of the Depression and the insidiousness of racism to the fight for LGBTQ+ rights.

Robin Baker, Head Curator, BFI National Archive and BFI Musicals Programmer said: *“Welcome to the new golden age of the movie musical. Audiences flock to musicals in troubled times – from Busby Berkeley's spectacular routines during the Depression to the masterpieces of MGM's Freed Unit during WW2 – so it's no surprise that the big screen musical is currently enjoying a major revival. We're delighted to be bringing both classic musicals and rarities to cinemas across the UK in Britain's biggest ever celebration of the musical. So, time to leave your woes behind and immerse yourself in the emotional, hairs-on-the-back-of-your-arms-raising joy brought to you on the big screen by Barbra Streisand, Gene Kelly, Doris Day, Bob Fosse, Judy Garland, Beyoncé and an all-singing, all-dancing cast of thousands.”*

BFI MUSICALS THE GREATEST SHOW ON SCREEN will be in cinemas and venues across the UK from **October 2019 to January 2020** and will celebrate the joyful, emotional, shared experience of watching film musicals; with the biggest stars, the most iconic scenes and the best-loved song and dance numbers on the big screen where they belong. **BFI MUSICALS** will include:

- A major season at **BFI Southbank**, with screenings and one-off events, immersive venue takeovers, a pop-up piano musicals bar, quiz nights and much more
- BFI UK-wide re-releases of *Singin' in the Rain* (Gene Kelly, Stanley Donen, 1952), *Tommy* (Ken Russell, 1975) and *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg* (Jacques Demy, 1964)
- Hundreds of screenings and events at venues across the UK programmed in partnership with the **BFI Film Audience Network** (BFI FAN) and the **Independent Cinema Office** (ICO); details to be announced in full soon.
- **BFI home entertainment** releases of *Yentl* (Barbra Streisand, 1983) (Blu-ray), *Hair* (Miloš Forman, 1979) (Dual Format Edition) and *Les demoiselles de Rochefort* (Jacques Demy, 1967) (Blu-ray)
- A major musical collection on the BFI's VOD service **BFI Player**
- 100 newly digitised musicals-themed TV programmes available to watch for free in the **BFI Mediatheque** at **BFI Southbank**

#BFIMusicals

Visit www.bfi.org.uk/musicals for more information and www.bfimusicals.co.uk for full UK-wide listings

PRESS PACK WITH FULL PROGRAMME NOTES AVAILABLE HERE:

<https://www.bfi.org.uk/sites/bfi.org.uk/files/downloads/bfi-press-pack-bfi-musicals-the-greatest-show-on-screen-2019-09-10.pdf>

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About the BFI

The BFI is the UK's lead organisation for film, television and the moving image. It is a cultural charity that:

- Curates and presents the greatest international public programme of World Cinema for audiences; in cinemas, at festivals and online
- Cares for the BFI National Archive – the most significant film and television archive in the world
- Actively seeks out and supports the next generation of filmmakers
- Works with Government and industry to make the UK the most creatively exciting and prosperous place to make film internationally

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 Film Audience Network

Supported by National Lottery funding, the BFI Film Audience Network (FAN), is central to the BFI's aim to ensure the greatest choice of film is available for everyone. Established in 2012 to build wider and more diverse UK cinema audiences for British and international film, FAN is a unique, UK-wide collaboration made up of eight Hubs managed by leading film organisations and venues strategically placed around the country. FAN also supports talent development with BFI NETWORK Talent Executives in each of the English Hubs, with a mission to discover and support talented writers, directors and producers at the start of their careers.

BFI Musicals is a celebration of musicals on screen, led by BFI, the Independent Cinema Office and Film Hub Midlands on behalf of the BFI Film Audience network, supported by funds from the National Lottery.



*** PICTURE DESK ***

A selection of images for journalistic use in promoting BFI Southbank can be found via the link below:

<https://www.dropbox.com/sh/av0g17iommr5wp/AACmgr03qxb1g0o5Uo-a6uRja?dl=0>

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