


Edinburgh Filmhouse launch online player



EDINBURGH'S FILMHOUSE JOINS FORCES WITH GLASGOW FILM THEATRE TO LAUNCH NEW ONLINE PLAYER

Edinburgh's Filmhouse and Glasgow Film Theatre (GFT) have joined forces with shareable video-on-demand inventors Distrify to offer online streamings of curated films. In a pioneering move, two of the UK's top independent cinemas will be the first venues in the UK to work together to make available a specially selected online film programme.

Each cinema will host a new online viewing platform on their website – the GFT Player and the Filmhouse Player. The Players will be available as part of an innovative trial, supported by a £90,000 grant from Nesta's Digital R&D Fund, Scotland. The Digital Research and Development Fund for Arts and Culture, Scotland is a partnership between Creative Scotland, Arts & Humanities Research Council (AHRC) and Nesta to support arts and cultural organisations across Scotland who want to work with digital technologies to expand their audience reach and engagement and/or explore new business models. This project has been devised so that these two popular cinemas can reach beyond their walls and engage with audiences in other areas, with those who cannot visit in person and with people who have an interest in curated cinema with a Scottish, UK and international focus.

 Films will be available to stream 24/7 and can be watched on computers, tablets and mobiles anywhere in the UK or Ireland. Streaming prices will start at £3.49, great value for those watching as a group.

A dynamic slate of films will be offered online from November,

carefully chosen by experienced GFT and Filmhouse programmers, to complement their cinema screenings. The Players will feature new releases (available to stream alongside their screenings in the cinema) such as music documentary *Sound it Out* and Japanese comedy-drama *Rent-a-Cat*; favourite films that audiences may have missed on the big screen like enjoyable French comedy *The Women on the 6th Floor*; and exclusive additional content, including films that haven't yet been picked up by UK distributors but merit a wider audience, of which *Morgen*, winner of four awards at the Locarno Film Festival, is a perfect example.

Allison Gardner, Head of Cinemas at GFT said:- "Our reasons for pioneering the curated programme online model are two-fold. There are an ever-growing number of films available to us and with our screens already working very hard, we needed to find a way to ensure that great films were not missing out on the exposure we can give them. Secondly, not everyone has access to cinemas like GFT and Filmhouse, or indeed time to go to the cinema when it suits them."

Rod White, Head of Filmhouse added:- "The Player gives us the opportunity to provide an extra screen – open all hours – showing films that we would not otherwise have the room to screen, or audiences simply couldn't make it along to, or may have missed on the big screen."

Teaming up with video-on-demand providers Distrify is key to the success of this project. This will allow both cinemas to utilise digital technology to research best practice in broadening total audience figures. Analysis of digital metrics will offer valuable information on geographic location of audiences, the routes to purchase and the relationship between Theatrical and Home Entertainment. Sharing this data with rights holders will then inform and improve future relationships between exhibitors and distributors.

A unique feature of the Distrify Player is that anyone can

embed it on their website or on their Facebook page or Twitter feed, thereby extending the reach of each cinema's brand and broadening their audiences. An affiliate's share of 10% is available to anyone who shares the film in this way, creating an exciting and original way of sharing and talking about film.

Andy Green, COO of Distriby said:- "Audiences are finding films they want online and we want to offer cinema tickets as well as VOD, the idea is that a choice increases sales of both. Adding the curatorial voice of GFT and Filmhouse creates trust for an audience and adds an extra revenue stream for the cinemas."

While Nesta's Digital R&D Fund offers an excellent opportunity to launch the Players and undertake valuable research, both cinemas hope to gain further funding to be able to extend the project beyond the initial trial period and offer the Players to audiences on a more permanent basis.

The Films:

Sound it Out is a funny and intimate documentary portrait of the last surviving vinyl record shop in Teesside, North East England. Described as 'hilarious and incredibly heartwarming' by *NME*, the film will be available simultaneously in cinema and online. Also available for streaming and on the big screen at the same time will be engaging Japanese comedy *Rent-a-Cat (Rentaneko)*, in which a young woman hires out friendly felines to lonesome people in need of a little companionship. The film proved popular at this year's Edinburgh International Film Festival and will be available from Monday 3 December at GFT and Friday 7 December at Filmhouse.

Jeanie Finlay, Director of *Sound It Out*, commented:- "I'm very excited that *Sound It Out* is going to be available in so many ways. Watch an independent film about an independent place in the way you want – big screen or at home, it's up to you."

To coincide with the French Film Festival UK, which takes place at Filmhouse and GFT in November, raucous rom-com *The Women on the 6th Floor*, a favourite from last year's Festival, will be offered on both Players. While *Morgen*, a Romanian New Wave gem from writer/director Marian Crisan, will screen at Filmhouse on Wednesday 14 November, followed by a live Q&A with Crisan.

New films will be added to the Players each month. For full programme details please visit www.glasgowfilm.org/player and www.filmhousecinema.com/player.