

# Ssshhhhh! It's HippFest 2018

Silent movies was where it all began for the silver screen, but these old films appear to be as popular as ever at the Hippodrome in Bo'ness. This is not just any cinema, it is the first purpose built cinema in Scotland, and following its refurbishment it is still going strong.



The Falkirk Community Trust backs the Hippodrome Silent Film Festival in Bo'ness and this March will be the 8th annual festival. The films themselves may have no dialogue and depend on inter-scene captions, but they will be accompanied by music produced by some of the best film musicians around. A newly acquired vintage piano will be used by some of them, adding to the authenticity of the accompaniment.

Maureen Campbell the Chair of Falkirk Community Trust explained how the new piano came about : "This year we have the greatest number of partnerships and opportunities that we have ever had in light of the programme. Last year I was sitting in the audience and got chatting to someone about the piano we had on stage. As a result of that conversation we have been crowdfunding and have secured a new piano for the building. It is of course an old piano, but we wanted to have our own here in Bo'ness."

Some of the music which multi-instrumentalist David Allison has devised involves many more instruments than just a piano, and we were entertained to a short rendition of the score which he has written to accompany The Last of the Mohicans.



There will be three world premieres of exciting new scores

including an international co-commission with the Goethe Institute and a new score by acclaimed German composer and musician Alois Kott with the film *The Treasure*, a dark German fantasy.

There are films from all over the world, a Saturday night late night horror double bill, workshops and spoken word events. Although most films are shown in the Hippodrome there are other venues in the town and in Falkirk.

***Our top three picks are as follows :***

### ***The Last of the Mohicans***

*Opening night premiere with an atmospheric score by guitarist and multi-instrumentalist, David Allison.*

### ***The Great K&A Train Robbery***

*Food will be served at 18.30 and an outdoor screening at 19.00 at the Bo'ness and Kinneil Railway. The screening is held under the platform awning.*

### ***Saving Sister Susie and the Kid Reporter***

*A jeely jar double bill for children who have to bring a clean jeely jar with matching lid and get two tickets for the price of one. The jars will be re-used for jam-making in the Georgian Kitchen at Callendar House.*

This is a festival worth travelling out of town for, and travel from Edinburgh is made easier by partnerships with local taxi companies which will pick you up at Linlithgow Railway Station, and also the Community Bus. This is a not for profit bus service running between Bo'ness and Edinburgh. [More information here.](#)

For full information on all methods of transport [click here.](#)



Alison Strauss Director Hippfest and Dr Trevor Griffiths of University of Edinburgh

Dr Trevor Griffiths is an academic at University of Edinburgh who is the leading researcher on the life of actor Billy Ritchie. He will present a talk on Billy Ritchie : The Man Who Made the World Laugh, and we were entertained to a short snippet of it this morning. Ritchie was born in Glasgow and became a star of silent movies, culminating in a front page cover of Variety magazine in New York in 1906. Rather than being just a copy cat Charlie Chaplin, Griffiths explained to us that Ritchie was a real star.

We spoke with Alison Strauss the Director of HippFest who told us a little about what you might expect. You can watch our video interview with her below.

She said : “Since HippFest was established we have welcomed over 12,000 people to Bo’ness to experience out of the ordinary cinema. We have been inviting them to dive into the extraordinary range of films made when cinema was still inventing itself.

“Silent film transcends the era in which it was made. The stories are thrilling and fantastic and the heroines feisty and the heroes handsome. There are great stories from the same genres that we are familiar with like the horror film, thriller, action and adventure films, westerns, rom-coms as well – we have lots of rom-coms!

“We have six days packed with films from morning till night. There are also documentaries and films which come from archives all around the world. We have Chinese and Indian productions and a range of Scottish films of course.

“The formative years of cinema have given us countless

dazzling films and it is our very great pleasure to present a handful of these to an audience which far from being put off by the film's age its use of inter titles or unfamiliar actors, has really embraced the enticing world of silent cinema."

The full programme is here:



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21-25 March 2018 HippFest takes place in Bo'ness mainly at the Hippodrome Cinema | 10 Hope Street | Bo'ness | EH51 0AA | t 01324 506850 | [hippfest.co.uk](http://hippfest.co.uk)