

HippFest 2019 – begins on Wednesday

On Wednesday 20 March the 9th Hippodrome Silent Film Festival begins at the Hippodrome in Bo'ness.

Affectionately known as 'HippFest' this annual festival run by Falkirk Community Trust, is packed with film gems from the silent-era, talks on early cinema pioneers and world-class live music.

International Highlights include ***The Red Heroine (1929)*** – the oldest surviving Chinese martial arts film starring Fan Xuepeng who was one of the first stars of the genre and an influential figure in the Chinese film industry; the world premiere of a new restoration of ***Au Bonheur Des Dames (1930)*** which portrays all the glitz and glamour of a Parisian department store, and at the same time a damning portrait of consumerism and the decline of small, local shops; the world premiere of the Imperial War Museum's latest digital restoration project (following their high-profile collaboration with Peter Jackson on *They Shall Not Grow Old*): ***Peace on the Western Front***;

Further notable music commissions and collaborations include the return of multi-instrumentalist **David Allison** who accompanies a rare screening of ***Rob Roy (1922)*** on Opening Night.

Jane Gardner, Roddy Long and **Frank Bockius** who will premiere a new score for ***Forbidden Paradise (1924)*** directed by Ernst Lubitsch and starring screen-diva Pola Negri; **Stephen Horne** five times winner of the Silent London 'best screening with a single accompanist award' who will close the festival

with a new semi-improvised accompaniment for *Hindle Wakes* (1927); a new score composed by **Lillian Henley** for silent film pioneer Lois Weber's *The Blot* (1921); Norwegian/Scottish folk duo **Marit Fält and Rona Wilkie** who have been commissioned by HippFest to write their first-ever silent film score to accompany *Laila* (1929) – an epic-scaled romantic drama set in Norway amongst the Sami people; and German musicians **Frank Bockius** and **Günter Buchwald** who have been brought together to collaborate with British musician **Jonny Best** (the Director of the Yorkshire Silent Film Festival), on lavish British-German co-production *Moulin Rouge* (1928).



Alison Strauss and Mike Nolan

Festival Director **Alison Strauss** said: *“We are thrilled to have such a fantastic line-up of musicians and performers coming to the Festival this year, we have returning HippFest favourites – Stephen Horne, Jane Gardner, John Sweeney and Mike Nolan, but also a number of artists whom we are welcoming for the first time including Rona Wilkie and Marit Fält, Jonny*

Best – the Director of the Yorkshire Silent Film Festival and Lillian Henley who is currently touring and accompanying the works of silent film pioneer – Lois Weber.

Comedy highlights include slapstick star Harold Lloyd in ***The Freshman (1925)***; a late-night screening of haunted-house mystery ***The Cat and the Canary (1927)*** – described as Agatha Christie meets Scooby Doo with a generous dash of German expressionism; unexpectedly light-hearted comedy-drama in ***The Parson's Widow (1920)*** from the famously dour **Director Carl Theodor Dreyer**; and, on the back of the new *Stan and Ollie* film, HippFest once again celebrates this comic duo's early career with a triple bill of some of their finest moments.

The Festival's talks programme, with UK and US academics, Toby Haggith from the Imperial War Museum, and Holmes expert (actor/novelist) David Stuart Davies, includes a look at ***The Birth of Horror***, the rise of the spook era of the 1920s and the dark genius of Alfred Hitchcock; ***Holmes of the Movies*** – the world's best known fictional detective as represented on screen; the rise of the peace movement after the war (***Peace on the Western Front***); and the changing roles of working women in the 1920s in ***Kitty the Telephone Girl***.

HippFest's Youth Engagement Programme includes primary school workshops on Foley sound effects and how they can change our understanding of the meaning of film; workshops with local youth clubs; and a new short silent film produced by **Falkirk's Champions Board** (young people who have been, or are currently in care) as part of Cashback for Creativity. At New Found Sound music students from schools in the Falkirk area will come together to accompany a selection of silents from the National Library of Scotland's Moving Image Archive.

Finally, at Bo'ness and Kinneil Railway on Saturday night, Platform 2 will be the venue for one of the biggest tickets of the festival – action packed double-bill of ***The Railroad***

Stowaways (1926) (starring Perthshire-born Andy Clyde) and ***The Railway of Death*** (1912): a French Western, full of death-defying stunts, hi-jinks, shoot-outs and hijacked engines.

The Hippodrome Silent Film Festival is organised by Falkirk Community Trust with key funding and support from Falkirk Council, Film Hub Scotland (BFI Film Audience Network), Creative Scotland and Visit Falkirk.



The Hippodrome is the oldest purpose-built cinema in Scotland.