

HippFest silent film festival makes a 2022 return

Falkirk Community Trust has announced today (Tuesday 8 February) the homecoming programme for the Hippodrome Silent Film Festival, Wednesday 16 – Sunday 20 March. The Festival, affectionately known as HippFest, will return live and in-person to the Hippodrome Cinema in Bo'ness, Scotland's oldest purpose-built cinema, after hosting its 11th edition online last year.

The programme includes films and presentations rescheduled from 2020's long-awaited line up, as well as new commissions and additions for 2022 – bringing the stars of the silent era back to Bo'ness once more. Stan Laurel, Oliver Hardy, Buster Keaton, and Douglas Fairbanks, all return to the Hippodrome screen; plus, Lon Chaney, Joan Crawford, Gloria Swanson and more.

The big names won't be restricted to the screen at this year's Festival, with live appearances from storyteller Marion Kenny and Scottish folk singer Mairi Campbell; musical accompaniment from The Dodge Brothers with Mark Kermodie; and the much-anticipated live narration from actor Paul McGann.





The Hippodrome will open its doors for the Festival on Wednesday 16 March, with the world premiere of a new restoration of *The Loves of Mary, Queen of Scots* (1923). Rescheduled from 2020, the film forms part of HippFest's Silent Cinema: Telling Old Stories, Singing Songs strand, three events programmed for Scotland's Year of Stories 2022. This extremely rare British feature film chronicles the life of one of Scotland's most celebrated and romantic historical figures: Mary Stuart. With narration from storyteller Andy Cannon, and live musical accompaniment from Wendy Wetherby (cello and voice), Frank McLaughlin (guitar and pipes) and David Trouton (piano).

The film will be preceded by *Queen of Hearts: Mary Queen of Scots in Popular Culture*, a lively talk from author, storyteller, and Director of the Scottish International Storytelling Centre, Donald Smith; who will celebrate the Mary of legend, while inviting the equally interesting Mary of history to step out of the silver shadows.

The third and final event in Silent Cinema: Telling Old Stories, Singing Songs, is a special commission for Scotland's Year of Stories 2022. Journey to the Isles: Marjory Kennedy-Fraser, Thursday 17 March, will offer a mesmerising glimpse into the landscapes, folktales and songs that inspired one of Scotland's great early collectors of Traditional Arts. With live performances from storyteller Marion Kenny (storytelling, piano, flute, gu-xheng) and Mairi Campbell (voice, viola).

Thursday's other event will take audiences around the world in seven films, with a specially curated programme to mark the 90th anniversary Institute of Amateur Cinematographers (IAC). A Movie World Tour: Institute of Amateur Cinematographers Award-winners film programme (1935-1939) will present newly digitised 2K scans of seven award-winning amateur films that were sent on a "World Tour" in 1935. With live musical accompaniment from students of the Reid School of Music (Edinburgh College of Art) and John Sweeney (piano).

HippFest's Friday programme begins by celebrating more silver starlets of the silent era, beginning with welcoming the Nasty Women Programme to Bo'ness for the first time, with Gender Rebels. Co-curated by Maggie Hennefeld and Laura Horak, this fun-filled double bill showcases two short films about gender hijinks in the Wild West. Actor-Producer Texas Guinan plays a self-sufficient rancher in *The Night Rider* (1920); and the hugely popular comedy actress Fay Tincher is "rowdy" by name and "rowdy" by nature in *Rowdy Ann* (1919). With live musical accompaniment from Meg Morley (piano).

On Friday afternoon HippFest presents its rescheduled screening of the uncensored Belgian version of *Dawn* (1928). One of the most controversial films of the 1920's, *Dawn* tells the story of British nurse Edith Cavell, played by Sybil Thorndike, who helped rescue over 200 Allied troops from German occupied Belgium; with musical accompaniment from Stephen Horne (piano, flute, accordion), and Frank Bockius (percussion). The film will be preceded by an illustrated talk

on Wartime propaganda and peacetime diplomacy: Edith Cavell on Film 1915 – 1928, with musical accompaniment from Mike Nolan.





HippFest 2022's Friday Night Gala features the original caped crusader – 1920's style, with *The Mark of Zorro* (1920). The King of Hollywood, Douglas Fairbanks takes on the titular role, and pretty much defined the swashbuckling genre with his performance in this rip-roaring adventure flick. Come dressed in your best HippFest glamour or swashbuckler style for this entertaining evening, with pre-show music from Rapido Mariachi, and film accompaniment by Neil Brand (piano) and Frank Bockius (percussion).

Saturday morning begins with the HippFest tradition of the Jeely Jar Screening; a double-bill of classic comedy shorts, with 2-4-1 tickets when you bring a clean jam jar and lid. Charlie Chaplin plays an overworked stagehand who gets a shot at comeuppance in *Behind the Screen* (1916). Followed by Buster Keaton at his very best, as a sleepy cinema projectionist in

Sherlock Jr. (1924). Both films will have live piano accompaniment from Neil Brand.

British screenwriter Lydia Hayward, is rightfully given the spotlight in Saturday afternoon's programming, as Curator of Silent Film at the British Film Institute National Archive Bryony Dixon highlights Hayward's outstanding contribution to some of the era's most widely enjoyed films, and introduces her comedy short *The Boatswain's Mate* (1924), with John Sweeney providing musical accompaniment. Followed by Hayward's delightful rom-com, *Not For Sale* (1924), with musical accompaniment from Stephen Horne (piano, flute, accordion).

Saturday's screenings finish with two bumper feature films. In the early evening *The Dodge Brothers* and Neil Brand perform the Scottish premiere of their new live musical accompaniment for F.W. Murnau's lyrical and ravishingly beautiful drama, *City Girl* (1930). Rearranged from the 2020 programme, this is sure to be a highlight of HippFest's 12th edition. And Stephen Horne (multi-instruments) and Elizabeth-Jane Baldry (harp) will premiere their musical collaboration on *The Fall of the House of Usher* (1928); a brooding and impressionistic adaptation of Edgar Allan Poe's creepy Gothic tale of obsession and madness. This screening and performance will be reprised at the Barbican, London, on Sunday 10 April.

Sunday eases into the final day of the Festival, with a triple-bill from iconic comedy duo Laurel and Hardy; the recently re-discovered and restored *Duck Soup* (1927); classic comedy *The Two Tars* (1928); and the people's choice as voted by the Hippodrome's audience in 2020, *Liberty* (1929). Jonny Best on piano and Frank Bockius on percussion will be accompanying the pair's cuckoo antics.



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One of the earliest Chinese features finally gets a showing at HippFest on Sunday afternoon; A String of Pearls (Yichuan Zhenzhu) (1926) is based on Guy de Maupassant's short story

The Necklace, offering a fascinating look at rich, Westernized life in 1920s Shanghai. Introduced by Dr Julian Ward, with John Sweeney on piano.

HippFest 2022 will close with two star-studded features. In the early evening Tod Browning's jaw-droppingly macabre drama, The Unknown (1927); starring box office sensation Lon Chaney and superstar-in-the-making Joan Crawford. With Jonny Best on piano providing live musical accompaniment. Followed by the much-anticipated finale from 2020, L'Homme du Large (1920) with musical accompaniment from John Sweeney (piano), Frank Bockius (percussion), and mesmeric live narration by acclaimed screen actor Paul McGann.

HippFest 2022 will include its regular commission New Found Sound, a unique schools initiative which invites talented young musicians to create and perform music to accompany silent film from the National Library of Scotland Moving Image Archive. The ever popular Platform Reels will take place on Saturday 19 March, with outdoor screenings of Station Content (1918), The Timber Queen (1922), and The Lonedale Operator (1911). And Heritage Engagement Officer (Falkirk Community Trust) Geoff Bailey will lead a Matthew Steele Walking Tour, guiding visitors through Bo'ness to discover the buildings created by this influential architect.

Following on from last year's successful online edition, HippFest At Home will show three entertaining and informative online talks in the run up to the Festival that tie into the 2022 programme. On Wednesday 9 March, join the nation's best-loved film critic in a very special live event: Mark Kermode in conversation with Mike Hammond and Neil Brand, ahead of the long-awaited premiere of their musical accompaniment to FW Murnau's City Girl. Dr Victor Fan presents a talk on A String of Pearls and early Shanghai silent cinema, premiered online on Wednesday 23 February; and on Wednesday 2 March, Composing for A Movie World Tour will also broadcast online for the first time – a lively conversation to discuss composing for

this unique, international film programme of counterculture silent film from the 1930s.

During the Festival itself, HippFest will live stream selected talks from the Hippodrome for the first time as a pilot of hybrid on/offline events. These will be viewable for audiences across the world, welcoming silent films fans virtually to Scotland's oldest cinema.



The Hippodrome was the first cinema in Scotland to sign up to the WelcoME App by Neatebox, a free customer app that supports venues to ensure that the requirements of customers with specific accessibility needs are met, and the team are looking forward to piloting use of the App at the 2022 Festival. Meanwhile HippFest continues to champion Deaf and hard-of-hearing audiences in recognition of the potential of silent film to appeal to that group, partnering with Just Sign and AI Media to ensure high standards of accessibility across the programme. All live events in the Hippodrome and online will be BSL English supported. All live streamed events will also have live captioning for viewers at home. All recorded content will have English subtitles.

The Hippodrome Silent Film Festival 2022 will take place at the Hippodrome Cinema in Bo'ness, Wednesday 16 to Sunday 20 March. For full programme information and tickets visit www.hippfest.co.uk.

The Hippodrome Silent Film Festival is organised by Falkirk Community Trust with key funding from Falkirk Council, supported by Film Hub Scotland part of the BFI's Film Audience Network, and funded by Screen Scotland and National Lottery funding from the BFI.

This event has been supported by the Year of Stories 2022 Community Stories Fund. This fund is being delivered in partnership between VisitScotland and Museums Galleries Scotland with support from National Lottery Heritage Fund thanks to National Lottery players.

Sambrooke Scott, Head of Audience Development at Screen Scotland said: "It's fantastic to see HippFest back in person and what a programme to look forward to. The team have pulled together an exciting selection which promises to enthral local audiences and passionate visiting fans. Through its digital elements they will also be able to welcome visitors from around the world through their virtual doors to experience the magic of this incredibly special cinema and festival."

Marie Christie, Head of Development at VisitScotland said: "We are delighted to be supporting the Hippodrome Silent Film Festival through the Year of Stories 2022 Community Stories Fund. The three events that form Silent Cinema: Telling Stories, Singing Songs are a wonderful example of how film and cinema play an important role in preserving Scotland's history, and how storytelling can be used to share that history with audiences.

"Themed Years are all about collaboration and Museums Galleries Scotland, National Lottery Heritage Fund and VisitScotland are pleased to work in partnership to create

this fund to showcase community stories. By supporting events taking place within our communities, including HippFest, new opportunities will be provided for locals and visitors to come together and find out more about the diverse stories, past and present, that our communities have to share.”

[Hippodrome Silent Film Festival](#), Wednesday 16 – Sunday 20
March