

Hippodrome Silent Film Festival 2023 – full programme announced

**The Hippodrome Silent Film Festival
2023 organised by Falkirk Council,
will take place between 22 and 26
March at the Hippodrome in Bo'ness.**

The programme has been announced and tickets and new festival passes are now on sale for the 13th edition of the festival dedicated to silent film.



The Blue Bird _ Image courtesy George Eastman Museum

This year's programme opens with a screening of *The Blue Bird* (1928) which is Maurice Tourneur's fantasy fairy tale of two children seeking happiness. Mimicking the *Wizard of Oz* with an allegory about what is important in life, there are bewitching costumes and stunning sets.

Earlier in the day critic and filmmaker David Cairns will be joined by Chris Heppell, a Campaigner with Changing Faces, the UK's Visible Difference and Disfigurement charity for a talk "All Faces are Masks": Visible Difference in Silent Cinema. The talk will examine the ambivalent attitude of Hollywood to themes of disfigurement and difference with images and clips from *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and *The Man who Laughs*, explore the early origins of the "horror" genre, and discuss the *I Am Not Your Villain* campaign, which calls out those in the film industry using scars, burns or marks as a shorthand for villainy. *The Man who Laughs* will be shown as

part of the HippFest Community screening programme at the atmospheric Victorian Barony Theatre on Saturday 18 March, and at the Hippodrome on Saturday 25 March.

The programme continues with a range of extremely rare and precious films, most being shown in the first purpose-built cinema in Scotland and other events in and around Bo'ness.

The festival will use one of the best-loved attractions in the area when British Film Institute National Archive Curator Bryony Dixon and composer and railway enthusiast Neil Brand will invite audiences to ride the rails back to the turn of the 20th century when cinema's love affair with the railway began, for HippFest's site-specific heritage railway platform screening Platform Reels. This will be held in the station in Bo'ness used by the Steam Railway.

HippFest Director, Alison Strauss said: "HippFest has grown to be a world class festival for silent film, cultivating a real community of people who share an adventurous appetite for extraordinary cinema and live music. We can't wait to welcome everyone to explore the programme with us, and to come and be part of the unique atmosphere of the Festival, of Bo'ness and of the Hippodrome itself. The team has worked incredibly hard to pull together all the ingredients of HippFest that our audiences love, and this year the mix of great films, great fun and great music will be hard to beat."

There are also events which you can watch online ahead of the festival. All details of the full programme and tickets are on the website. There is a new pass which will give access to all events and there is a shuttle bus to and from the railway station in Linlithgow.

www.hippfest.co.uk

The Hippodrome Silent Film Festival is organised by Falkirk Council, supported by Film Hub Scotland part of the BFI's Film Audience Network, and funded by Screen Scotland and National

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Pictured: Conrad Veidt and Mary Philbin in THE MAN WHO LAUGHS, 1928. Image courtesy of Park Circus Universal