

HippFest declared a huge success

The organisers of the Hippodrome Silent Film Festival have declared 2024 as their biggest and most successful year yet.

The festival ran in late March over five days when 2,970 tickets were sold with 1,390 online views. The festival closed on 24 March with the world premiere of a new restoration of Victor Sjöström's 1928 *The Wind*.

The 340 strong audience one evening for *The Rugged Island: A Shetland Lyric* was the biggest in the Hippodrome since the early twentieth century. This film was also a premiere with a new score from Shetland musicians Inge Thomson and Catriona Macdonald for the film by Scottish filmmaker Jenny Gilbertson (née Brown).

The Steele designed building is the oldest purpose built cinema in the country and it also hosted many other films with musical accompaniment. Inspired by the cinema in which it takes place, the Hippodrome Silent Film Festival is a champion for Bo'ness community and the Falkirk District. The Festival continued to prioritise accessibility for local audiences, young people, and deaf and hard-of-hearing people. All spoken content was live captioned and the Opening Night live stream featured creative captioning to describe the musical accompaniment. The Festival's Pay-it-Forward scheme ensured that carers and service users of Friends of Scottish Settlers were able to attend free of charge, and young audiences were supported through a range of ticket schemes, special events,

and workshops.

HippFest Director, Alison Strauss said: “The whole team are thrilled by the success of this year’s Festival celebrating silent film with live music... and what a celebration it was! With the difficulties we have seen in the cinema industry in Scotland these past couple of years, it is heartening to see audiences come out in such numbers for titles which are often obscure or unknown. Their faith has been rewarded by exceptional performances and films, and has made this year’s event our biggest yet. I’d like to thank everyone who participated, from the musicians and speakers, to the Festival team and staff of Falkirk Council, and most of all, everyone who joined us in person and online for HippFest 2024 – we’ll see you next year!”

Councillor Cecil Meiklejohn, Leader of Falkirk Council added: “Hippfest has always seen cinema enthusiasts attracted from across the world attending and helping to boost the local economy. It’s great to see they have had another successful year.”

The Hippodrome Silent Film Festival 2024 took place Wednesday 20 to Sunday 24 March 2024 at the Hippodrome Cinema in Bo’ness, Falkirk. HippFest will return next year for its 15th edition, Wednesday 19 – Sunday 23 March 2025. For further information and to sign up to receive news visit www.hippfest.co.uk.

The Hippodrome Silent Film Festival is a project of **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**.



The Rugged Island



Sound Tracks



Pen to Picture exhibition



Peggy PHOTO Lisa Evans



Hippodrome PHOTO Lisa Evans

