

Newsreel

Newsletter for Film Studies at Southampton | Summer 2012

Welcome

In the following pages, we focus on some of the many activities with which our Film Studies students are involved, both on and off campus. This newsletter also gives something of the flavour of what has also been another busy and productive year for Film staff. We are delighted, for example, to include an item on the publication of a much anticipated new book – *British Silent Cinema and the Great War* – edited by Southampton’s Dr Michael Williams and Dr Michael Hammond. It is also pleasing to see achievements like this recognised nationally, with Film at Southampton continuing to be highly ranked in the UK by the influential *Guardian’s* University Guide. Furthermore, in the 2011 National Student Survey of all final year undergraduate students, Film ranked third among all Russell Group universities (the UK’s leading research intensive universities) for overall student satisfaction.

Anne Hogan | Editor

Film journalist prize

Film student Alysia Wildman was runner-up in the prestigious *Sight and Sound* Young Journalist competition in November 2010. She had to pick any film director, past or present, and send in five questions to ask him or her in an interview. *Sight and Sound* editor, Nick James, writes: ‘Our runner-up Alysia Wildman proposed five eminently simple, protean and open questions for [British director] Danny Boyle about the perspiration and inspiration behind *27 Hours*.’ These included: ‘Did Boyle feel that filming in sequence resulted in a stronger performance from James Franco? Why did he work with two cinematographers? How did he work towards making the film have pace?’

Student nominated for filmmaking prize

The Laytons a film produced and co-directed by BA Film student Emily Reynolds has been nominated for no less than five awards, including Best Film, Best Director, Best Script, Best Cinematography, and Best Performance, at The National Student Film Festival; the results will be announced in

March 2012. The drama set in the 1940s and 1960s is about, as Emily puts it: ‘a slightly bizarre family with two sets of identical brothers.’ Emily, who hopes to pursue a career in filmmaking after graduating this summer, has clearly made an impressive start during her time at Southampton.



Still from *The Laytons*

Reviewing the movies

Barnaby Walter, second-year Film and English student, has found a way to put his love of film to good use as Film editor for the University of Southampton’s entertainment magazine *The Edge*. Barnaby explains:

“Ever since I can remember I’ve enjoyed writing about films, and have written a film blog for many years, so to be elected as Film editor for *The Edge* was very exciting. This year we’ve established relationships in the film industry with big companies, such as Universal Pictures and Lionsgate, which means we get preview DVDs of upcoming releases to review. We have lots of great writers on *The Edge* so it can be challenging deciding which reviews get printed. I am keen to pursue a career in film journalism after graduating, so my time working on the magazine should help me achieve this goal.”

Barnaby Walter



Barnaby with pile of review DVDs



Group at UKFC offices

Finding audiences for British film

What is the future of the UK's film industry? How is funding going to change? What new initiatives will the Government establish to maintain and develop the film sector? These were the kinds of questions upper most in my mind when as part of a small group of MA Film Studies students, in March 2011, I was able to visit the London offices of government film agency, UKFC, to meet with one of its senior executives, Alex Stoltz. This visit gave us an excellent opportunity to look behind the curtain of the UKFC, before it fell for good following the Coalition Government's decision to close it, giving responsibility for most of its activities back to the British Film Institute.

It was soon made clear that developing a carefully thought out marketing and distribution strategy was crucial to the success of any film. Mr Stoltz informed us that there are key questions which should be asked of every film: Are people going to see it? Does it have a good hook? And, if so, will audiences like it?

It is asking questions like these that have helped contribute to some standout successes for British cinema: *The King's Speech* being a notable recent example. To help make the decision over which films to fund, the UKFC undergoes rigorous market research through exit polls then posted on their website. These surveys are taken by audience members following screenings.

With regard to how audiences watch film, Mr Stoltz felt optimistic that, in spite of competition from the internet, multi-platform releasing, and on-demand services, traditional cinema is in a healthy position. This was an encouraging conclusion to our conversation, particularly for those of us who still enjoy watching films at our local cinema.

Adam Vaughan | MA Film Studies student

Postgraduate gives paper at New York conference

'Music and the Moving Image' is held annually at New York University and is the pre-eminent conference on the subject in the world. It has been running since 2006 and is a forum not only for discussion about film music but also about television, video games, and beyond. In 2011, Dr Kevin Donnelly from Southampton was one of the co-organizers. These are Film postgraduate Beth Carroll's impressions of the event.

"This conference not only has an influential journal attached to it, but also attracts many of the most well-known academics in the field. I was somewhat daunted even by the prospect of attending it as a new researcher, but with the support of my supervisor – Dr Kevin Donnelly – I decided to go and experience my first international conference.

Within five minutes of arriving at New York University's Steinhardt School of Music, it became clear that this conference was not only welcoming but also very relaxed. The variety of papers delivered was far ranging, from the music of *Space 1999* to specific musical numbers from films. Attending the conference also eased any anxiety about giving papers in the future, as the response when I gave mine was positive and helpful. I also had the chance to see New York, which, as a city that has been so often filmed, was an experience which I enjoyed immensely. That my PhD research was the means of my visiting this city for the first time made this experience doubly exciting and memorable."

Beth Carroll

Swedish exchange

Film at Southampton University has a reciprocal arrangement with Lund University in Sweden which was agreed under the auspices of the European Union's Socrates programme. It includes staff exchanges and the possibility for students from either university to visit the other. Lund is one of the oldest universities in Sweden and also one of its most prestigious. Ann-Kristin Wallengren, one of Lund's film staff, stayed at the University of Southampton as a visiting researcher for a semester in 2009, which inaugurated the idea of a more permanent agreement. Last year, Dr Kevin Donnelly visited Lund University and visited the nearby Ystad Film Studios, home of popular TV detective Wallander, where some of the Lund University's teaching has taken place.

Kevin Donnelly and Ann-Kristin Wallengren outside the Ystad Film Studios



Film Professor is Invited Guest in Belgrade

In October 2011, Professor Tim Bergfelder was an invited guest at an international meeting on the theme of 'Intercultural dialogue and cinema' in Belgrade. Hosted by the Serbian Ministry of Culture and the Central European Initiative (CEI), the event brought together delegates from eighteen different European countries, including academics, policymakers, and film industry professionals. Apart from constructive discussions to encourage greater contacts between the various film cultures in Europe, the meeting also included a visit to the newly renovated Yugoslav Film Archive. Tim was delighted to be able to meet and have a chat with the legendary Serbian film director Dusan Makavejev who was accompanied by Milena Dravic, the star of one of his most famous films, *W.R.: Mysteries of the Organism*.



Tim Bergfelder (right) with Dusan Makavejev (left) and Milena Dravic (centre)

New Film module – Women and Hollywood

A new module – Women and Hollywood – will be offered to Film students from October 2012. Dr Shelley Cobb will teach the module, which builds on her own research interests in women filmmakers. Shelley is writing a monograph *Women, Adaptation, and Post-Feminist Filmmaking* focussing on women who have directed, written, produced or starred in films based on novels since 1990. Recently, she won an Adventures in Research award from the University of Southampton to begin a project that collates the number of women working in key roles – director, screenwriter, producer, cinematographer, and editor – within the British film industry during the years 2009 and 2010.

New Research Fellow for Film

Southampton is delighted to welcome Dr Claudia Sandberg who started her position as research fellow in November 2011. Claudia's research project, supported by the Berlin-based DEFA foundation (DEFA is the name of the East German state-owned production company) is concerned with the role played by Chile and Chileans in East and West German feature films and documentaries during the 1970s and 1980s. She is preparing for a research trip to Santiago de Chile in April 2012 where she will attend a DEFA retrospective about Chilean films made in East Germany. She hopes to interview actress Irina Gallardo and director Orlando Luebbert, two former émigrés who worked for DEFA in the 1980s, as well as visiting national libraries and archives, and meeting with fellow scholars.

As Claudia explains:

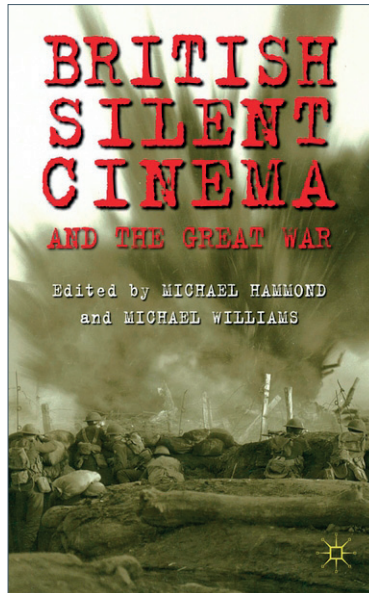
“While I focus on the sometimes traumatic personal experience of exile as impetus for creative activity, I also examine the wider impact of the political, cultural and social climate of exile cultural production in both Germanys, asking the question: Is there something like an East German exile film?”



Claudia Sandberg

Latest publication from Film Studies

British Silent Cinema and the Great War is a new collection of essays edited by Southampton's Dr Michael Hammond and Dr Michael Williams, both experts in the field of British silent cinema and in particular its complex relationship to the Great War and its aftermath in popular culture. This book presents a unique insight into an extraordinary period of European history that had far-reaching significance not only for British cinema but also for the way that history itself has, and continues to be, represented. The work collected in this volume draws from the best historians of the British Film Institute and Imperial War Museum, as well as personal insights from leading silent film musician Neil Brand. With the Great War having just passed from living memory, it is a significant moment from which to look back at how the cinema industry responded to that conflict as it unfolded, and how it shaped the war's memory as it continues to fascinate today.



Film and English host networking event with Southampton arts organisations

Postgraduate students thinking about a career in the arts or staff members interested in potential research collaborations with local arts organisations were invited, in December 2011, to come along to a networking event, organised by Professor Lucy Mazdon and Dr William May, to meet with representatives from local arts organisations: these included the Nuffield Theatre, Turner Sims, John Hansard gallery, City Eye, and Sea City Museum. Arts officers from Southampton City Council and Eastleigh Borough Council were also available to discuss the work they do. The evening provided the opportunity for students to learn more about the arts resources on campus, to hear about forthcoming cultural and arts programmes in the city, and find out about potential internships or collaborative opportunities with the local cultural sector.

Talks and Seminars

Leading researchers continue to engage staff and students at Southampton through the Research Seminar series.

This year's presentations include:

Charles Barr (University of East Anglia)
'Irish Hitchcock'

Iain Smith (Roehampton University)
'The Anxiety of Endorsement: The BBFC and the Rushdie Affair'

Pam Cook (University of Southampton)
The Professor Emerita Lecture
'Nicole Kidman: What a Performance'

Philip Tagg (University of Huddersfield)
'Why Study Film Music?'

Peter Kramer (University of East Anglia)
'Taking Avatar seriously: Global Hollywood, Film Studies and the World Today'



Professor Emerita Pam Cook talking to students.

For further information please contact:

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