

# The Museum of Modern Art

For Immediate Release  
December 1985

## BRITISH MUSICALS AND COMEDIES OPEN AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART DECEMBER 20

Farce and dry wit, streetsong and operetta characterize the wide range of the more than fifty British films to be screened in the exhibition "The Musical and Comedy Tradition" at The Museum of Modern Art. The series opens Friday, December 20, with two Gracie Fields musical comedies, Sally in Our Alley (1931) and Sing as We Go (1934), at 2:30 p.m., and Alfred Hitchcock's silent film Champagne (1928), starring Betty Balfour, at 6:00 p.m., and continues through February 18, 1986. The films in "The Musical and Comedy Tradition," the third of the five sections of the ongoing series BRITISH FILM- TRADITIONS, will be shown chronologically (complete schedule attached).

The works in the program reflect the strong influence of the British music hall. Among the music hall performers besides Gracie Fields who made the transition to film and are represented in the exhibition are George Formby (Keep Your Seats Please, No Limit), Max Miller (Hoots Mon!), Will Hay (Oh, Mr. Porter!), Jessie Matthews (It's Love Again, Evergreen), Jack Hulbert and Cicely Courtneidge (Elstree Calling), and Sid Field (London Town). A Victorian music hall is the subject of Alberto Cavalcanti's Champagne Charlie (1944). Thomas Bentley's Harmony Heaven (1930) and Walter Summers's Raise the Roof (1930), which will be featured on a double bill, are early backstage musicals, as is Victor Saville's Evergreen (1934).

The music hall tradition has helped to define British comedy. Laurence Kardish, curator in the Department of Film and coorganizer of the exhibition, states "The English music hall, which gave America Chaplin, gave British film comedy roots and direction through its playful attitudes, healthy vulgarity, and performers like Fields and Formby." The Carry On series, represented here by Gerald Thomas's Carry On Nurse (1954), and the Crazy Gang comedies, such as Marcel Varnel's Okay for Sound (1937) and Gasbags (1940), retain the inoffensive zaniness and good-natured crassness of the music hall. Walter Forde, who directed and starred in the silent film Would You Believe It? (1929), began his career as a music hall performer and became Britain's version of Harold Lloyd. The romantic whimsy of the music hall is evident in films such as Hitchcock's Waltzes from Vienna (1934), which relates the composing of "The Blue Danube" to the plopping sound of pastries fresh from the oven; Ken Annakin's Miranda (1948), a precursor to Splash in its tale of a man's obsession with a mermaid; Peter Ustinov's Vice Versa (1948); and Bill Forsyth's Gregory's Girl (1982) and Local Hero (1983). Richard Attenborough's Oh! What a Lovely War (1969) and Malcolm Mowbray's A Private Function (1985)

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add observations on the dissolution of the British social fabric to this comic tradition.

The program continues to present the best of British cinema. Other actors featured include Dirk Bogarde, Alec Guinness, Stanley Holloway, Glynis Johns, Kay Kendall, Vivien Leigh, Anna Neagle, Merle Oberon, Laurence Olivier, Ralph Richardson, Margaret Rutherford, Peter Sellers, and Michael Wilding. The series includes two films directed by women, Muriel Box's Simon and Laura (1955) and Wendy Toye's Raising a Riot (1955). The British penchant for female impersonation, rooted in the tradition of Christmas pantomime, is represented in Oswald Mitchell's Old Mother Riley, M.P. (1939), Frank Launder's The Belles of St. Trinians (1954), Terry Gilliam's and Terry Jones's Monty Python and the Holy Grail (1975), and Michael Blakemore's Privates on Parade (1982).

The sources of the films in "The Musical and Comedy Tradition" are diverse. Fred Zelnick's Mister Cinders (1934) and Walter Forde's Chu-Chin-Chow (1934) are both adaptations of West End musicals. A Cuckoo in the Nest (1933), one of a series of farces written by Ben Travers for the West End's Aldwych Theatre, was directed by Tom Walls, a leading Aldwych performer. Saville's Evergreen (1934) was written directly for the screen. The American William Rose supplied the stories for Henry Cornelius's Genevieve (1953) and Basil Dearden's The Greatest Show on Earth (1957). Anthony Dav's The Rebel (1961) stars Tony Hancock, a comedian borrowed from television.

A major book on the traditions of British film, prepared and published by the British Film Institute in association with the Museum's Department of Film, will accompany the exhibition.

Coorganizing BRITISH FILM from the Department of Film are Adrienne Mancina and Mr. Kardish, curators, and, from the National Film Archive of the British Film Institute in London, Clyde Jeavons, deputy curator; Elaine Burrows, viewings supervisor; and David Meeker, feature films officer. Scott Meek, former feature films officer, also participated in the selection.

A majority of the 35mm prints in the exhibition are borrowed from the National Film Archive. Individual titles have also been loaned by Films Inc./Paramount, Almi Releasing, Island Alive, and the Samuel Goldwyn Company.

BRITISH FILM is sponsored by Pearson, and Goldcrest Films and Television, London. Additional support comes from the National Endowment for the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts, the British Council, London, and The Roy and Niuta Titus Fund.

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For additional press information and photographic materials, contact Howard Feinstein, film press representative, The Museum of Modern Art 212/708-9752.

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BRITISH FILM: TRADITIONS  
"The Musical and Comedy Tradition"

December 20, 1985 - February 18, 1986

The Museum of Modern Art - The Roy and Niuta Titus Theater 1

SCHEDULE

- Friday, December 20 at 2:30 p.m.: TWO WITH GRACIE FIELDS- Sally in Our Alley. 1931. Maurice Elvey. 77 min./ Sing as We Go. 1934. Basil Dean. With John Loder, Stanley Holloway. 80 min.
- Friday, December 20 at 6:00 p.m.: Champagne. 1928. Alfred Hitchcock. With Betty Balfour. Silent film. 81 min.
- Saturday, December 21 at 2:00 p.m.: Goodnight Vienna (Magic Night). 1932. Herbert Wilcox. With Anna Neagle, Jack Buchanan. 75 min.
- Saturday, December 21 at 5:00 p.m.: Wedding Rehearsal. 1932. Alexander Korda. With Roland Young, John Loder, Maurice Evans, George Grossmith, Merle Oberon, Wendy Barrie. 84 min.
- Sunday, December 22 at 2:00 p.m.: Chu-Chin-Chow. 1934. Walter Forde. With Anna May Wong, Fritz Kortner, George Robey, Francis L. Sullivan. 102 min.
- Sunday, December 22 at 5:00 p.m.: TWO EARLY BACKSTAGE MUSICALS- Harmony Heaven. 1930. Thomas Bentley. 61 min./ Raise the Roof. 1930. Walter Summers. With Betty Balfour, Maurice Evans. 77 min.
- Monday, December 23 at 2:30 p.m.: Champagne. See Friday, December 20 at 6:00 p.m.
- Monday, December 23 at 6:00 p.m.: TWO WITH GRACIE FIELDS- Sally in Our Alley/ Sing as We Go. See Friday, December 20 at 2:30 p.m.
- Tuesday, December 24 at 2:30 p.m.: Wedding Rehearsal. See Saturday, December 21 at 5:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, December 24 at 6:00 p.m.: Goodnight Vienna (Magic Night). See Saturday, December 21 at 2:00 p.m.
- Friday, December 27 at 2:30 p.m.: TWO EARLY BACKSTAGE MUSICALS- Harmony Heaven/ Raise the Roof. See Sunday, December 22 at 5:00 p.m.
- Friday, December 27 at 6:00 p.m.: Chu-Chin-Chow. See Sunday, December 22 at 2:00 p.m.
- Saturday, December 28 at 2:00 p.m.: The Only Girl (Heart Song). 1933. Friedrich Holländer. With Lilian Harvey, Charles Boyer, Mady Christians, Ernest Thesiger, Maurice Evans. 84 min.
- Saturday, December 28 at 5:00 p.m.: Elstree Calling. 1930. "Variety" film directed by Adrian Brunel, Alfred Hitchcock, Andre Charlot, Jack Hulbert, Paul Murray. With, among others, Anna May Wong, Jack Hulbert, Cicely Courtneidge. 86 min.
- Sunday, December 29 at 2:00 p.m.: Mister Cinders. 1934. Fred Zelnick. With Clifford Lollison, Zelma O'Neal. 72 min.
- Sunday, December 29 at 5:00 p.m.: A BEN TRAVERS FARCE- A Cuckoo in the Nest. 1933. Tom Walls. With Tom Walls, Ralph Lynn, Yvonne Arnaud, Robertson Hare. 85 min.
- Monday, December 30 at 2:30 p.m.: Squibs Wins the Calcutta Sweep. 1922. George Pearson. With Betty Balfour. Silent film. 78 min.
- Monday, December 30 at 6:00 p.m.: Would You Believe It? 1929. Walter Forde. With Forde. Silent film. ca. 70 min.
- Thursday, January 2 at 2:30 p.m.: Would You Believe It? See Monday, December 30 at 6:00 p.m.
- Thursday, January 2 at 6:00 p.m.: Squibs Wins the Calcutta Sweep. See Monday, December 30 at 2:30 p.m.

- Friday, January 3 at 2:30 p.m.: Elstree Calling. See Saturday, December 28 at 5:00 p.m.
- Friday, January 3 at 6:00 p.m.: The Only Girl (Heart Song). See Saturday, December 28 at 2:00 p.m.
- Saturday, January 4 at 2:00 p.m.: Radio Parade of 1935. 1935. Arthur Woods. With Will Hay, Helen Chandler, Clifford Mollison. 94 min.
- Saturday, January 4 at 5:00 p.m.: Evergreen. 1934. Victor Saville. With Jessie Matthews, Betty Balfour, Sonnie Hale. 94 min.
- Sunday, January 5 at 2:00 p.m.: Keep Your Seats Please. 1936. Monty Banks. With George Formby, Florence Desmond, Alastair Sim. 82 min./ No Limit. 1935. Monty Banks. With George Formby, Florence Desmond. 79 min.
- Sunday, January 5 at 5:15 p.m.: Waltzes from Vienna (Strauss' Great Waltz). 1934. Alfred Hitchcock. With Jessie Matthews, Edmund Gwenn, Fay Compton. 81 min.
- Monday, January 6 at 2:30 p.m.: A BEN TRAVERS FARCE- A Cuckoo in the Nest. See Sunday, December 29 at 5:00 p.m.
- Monday, January 6 at 6:00 p.m.: Mister Cinders. See Sunday, December 29 at 2:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, January 7 at 2:30 p.m.: Evergreen. See Saturday, January 4 at 5:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, January 7 at 6:00 p.m.: Radio Parade of 1935. See Saturday, January 4 at 2:00 p.m.
- Thursday, January 9 at 2:30 p.m.: Keep Your Seats Please/ No Limit. See Sunday, January 5 at 2:00 p.m.
- Thursday, January 9 at 6:00 p.m.: Okay for Sound. 1937. Marcel Varnel. With Flanagan & Allen, Nervo & Knox, Naughton & Gold, Fred Duprez. 85 min./ Gasbags. 1940. Marcel Varnel. With Flanagan & Allen, Nervo & Knox, Naughton & Gold, Moore Marriott. 77 min.
- Friday, January 10 at 2:30 p.m.: Okay for Sound / Gasbags. See Thursday, January 9 at 6:00 p.m.
- Friday, January 10 at 6:00 p.m.: Waltzes from Vienna. See Sunday, January 5 at 5:15 p.m.
- Saturday, January 11 at 2:00 p.m.: Hoots Mon! 1939. Roy William Neill. With Max Miller, Florence Desmond, Hal Walters. 77 min.
- Saturday, January 11 at 5:00 p.m.: It's Love Again. 1936. Victor Saville. With Jessie Matthews, Robert Young, Sonnie Hale, Sara Allgood. 83 min.
- Sunday, January 12 at 2:00 p.m.: London Town (My Heart Goes Crazy). 1946. Wesley Ruggles. With Sid Field, Greta Gynt, Tessie O'Shea, Claude Hulbert, Sonnie Hale, Petula Clark, Kay Kendall. 126 min. Preceded by Challenge to Hollywood, March of Time, vol. 12 no. 5, 1945. 18 min.
- Sunday, January 12 at 5:00 p.m.: Shipyard Sally. 1939. Monty Banks. With Gracie Fields, Sydney Howard. 79 min.
- Monday, January 13 at 2:30 p.m.: It's Love Again. See Saturday, January 11 at 5:00 p.m.
- Monday, January 13 at 6:00 p.m.: Hoots Mon! See Saturday, January 11 at 2:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, January 14 at 2:30 p.m.: Shipyard Sally. See Sunday, January 12 at 5:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, January 14 at 6:00 p.m.: London Town (My Heart Goes Crazy)/ Challenge to Hollywood. See Sunday, January 12 at 2:00 p.m.
- Thursday, January 16 at 2:30 p.m.: The Divorce of Lady X. 1938. Tim Whelan. With Merle Oberon, Laurence Olivier, Binnie Barnes, Ralph Richardson. 92 min.
- Thursday, January 16 at 6:00 p.m.: Oh, Mr. Porter! 1937. Marcel Varnel. With Will Hay, Moore Marriott, Graham Moffatt. 84 min.
- Friday, January 17 at 2:30 p.m.: Champagne Charlie. 1944. Alberto Cavalcanti. With Tommy Trinder, Stanley Holloway, Betty Warren. 79 min.

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- Friday, January 17 at 6:00 p.m.: The Divorce of Lady X. See Thursday, January 16 at 2:30 p.m.
- Saturday, January 18 at 2:00 p.m.: Vice Versa. 1948. Peter Ustinov. With Roger Livesey, Kay Walsh, Anthony Newley, Petula Clark, James Robertson Justice. 111 min.
- Saturday, January 18 at 5:00 p.m.: Champagne Charlie. See Friday, January 17 at 2:30 p.m.
- Sunday, January 19 at 2:00 p.m.: Miranda. 1948. Ken Annakin. With Googie Withers, Glynis Johns, Griffith Jones, David Tomlinson, Margaret Rutherford. 80 min.
- Sunday, January 19 at 5:00 p.m.: Maytime in Mayfair. 1949. Herbert Wilcox. With Anna Neagle, Michael Wilding, Tom Walls. 96 min.
- Monday, January 20 at 2:30 p.m.: Vice Versa. See Saturday, January 18 at 2:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, January 21 at 2:30 p.m.: Maytime in Mayfair. See Sunday, January 19 at 5:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, January 21 at 6:00 p.m.: Miranda. See Sunday, January 19 at 2:00 p.m.
- Thursday, January 23 at 2:30 p.m.: The Happiest Days of Your Life. 1950. Frank Launder. With Alastair Sim, Margaret Rutherford, Joyce Grenfell. 91 min.
- Thursday, January 23 at 6:00 p.m.: The Belles of St. Trinians. 1954. Frank Launder. With Alastair Sim, Joyce Grenfell, George Cole, Hermione Baddeley, Beryl Reid. 91 min.
- Friday, January 24 at 2:30 p.m.: Laughter in Paradise. 1951. Mario Zampi. With Alastair Sim, Fay Compton, George Cole, Joyce Grenfell. 93 min.
- Friday, January 24 at 6:00 p.m.: The Card (The Promoter). 1952. Ronald Neame. With Alec Guinness, Glynis Johns, Valerie Hobson, Petula Clark. 88 min.
- Saturday, January 25 at 2:30 p.m.: The Belles of St. Trinians. See Thursday, January 23 at 6:00 p.m.
- Saturday, January 25 at 5:00 p.m.: The Happiest Days of Your Life. See Thursday, January 23 at 2:30 p.m.
- Sunday, January 26 at 2:00 p.m.: The Card (The Promoter). See Friday, January 24 at 6:00 p.m.
- Sunday, January 26 at 5:00 p.m.: Laughter in Paradise. See Friday, January 24 at 2:30 p.m.
- Monday, January 27 at 2:30 p.m.: Old Mother Riley, M.P. 1939. Oswald Mitchell. With Arthur Lucan. 76 min.
- Monday, January 27 at 6:00 p.m.: Trouble in Store. 1953. John Paddy Carstairs. With Norman Wisdom, Margaret Rutherford, Moira Lister, Derek Bond. 85 min.
- Tuesday, January 28 at 2:30 p.m.: Trouble in Store. See Monday, January 27 at 6:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, January 28 at 6:00 p.m.: Old Mother Riley, M.P. See Monday, January 27 at 2:30 p.m.
- Thursday, January 30 at 2:30 p.m.: Doctor in the House. 1954. Ralph Thomas. With Dirk Bogarde, Muriel Pavlow, Kenneth More, Kay Kendall, James Robertson Justice. 91 min.
- Thursday, January 30 at 6:00 p.m.: Genevieve. 1953. Henry Cornelius. Written by William Rose. With John Gregson, Dinah Sheridan, Kenneth More, Kay Kendall, Geoffrey Keen. Print courtesy of Films Inc. 82 min.
- Friday, January 31 at 2:30 p.m.: Raising a Riot. 1955. Wendy Toye. With Kenneth More, Ronald Squire, Mandy Miller. 91 min.
- Friday, January 31 at 6:00 p.m.: Simon and Laura. 1955. Muriel Box. With Peter Finch, Kay Kendall, Muriel Pavlow, Ian Carmichael. 91 min.
- Saturday, February 1 at 2:00 p.m.: Simon and Laura. See Friday, January 31 at 6:00 p.m.
- Saturday, February 1 at 5:00 p.m.: Raising a Riot. See Friday, January 31 at 2:30 p.m.
- Sunday, February 2 at 2:00 p.m.: Genevieve. See Thursday, January 30 at 6:00 p.m.

- Sunday, February 2 at 5:00 p.m.: Doctor in the House. See Thursday, January 30 at 2:30 p.m.
- Monday, February 3 at 2:30 p.m.: Carry On Nurse. 1954. Gerald Thomas. With Kenneth Connor, Kenneth Williams, Charles Hawtrey, Wilfrid Hyde-White, Hattie Jacques. 86 min.
- Monday, February 3 at 6:00 p.m.: The Rebel. 1961. Anthony Day. With Tony Hancock, George Sanders, Paul Massie. 105 min.
- Tuesday, February 4 at 2:30 p.m.: The Rebel. See Monday, February 3 at 6:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, February 4 at 6:00 p.m.: Carry On Nurse. See Monday, February 3 at 2:30 p.m.
- Friday, February 7 at 2:30 p.m.: Private's Progress. 1956. John Boulting. With Richard Attenborough, Dennis Price, Terry-Thomas, Ian Carmichael. 102 min.
- Friday, February 7 at 6:00 p.m.: The Smallest Show on Earth. 1957. Basil Dearden. Written by William Rose. With Virginia McKenna, Bill Travers, Peter Sellers, Margaret Rutherford, Bernard Miles. 81 min.
- Saturday, February 8 at 2:00 p.m.: The Smallest Show on Earth. See Friday, February 7 at 6:00 p.m.
- Saturday, February 8 at 5:00 p.m.: Private's Progress. See Friday, February 7 at 2:30 p.m.
- Sunday, February 9 at 2:00 p.m.: Catch Us If You Can (Having a Wild Weekend). 1965. John Boorman. Written by Peter Nichols. With the Dave Clark Five. 91 min.
- Sunday, February 9 at 5:00 p.m.: Under Your Hat. 1939. Maurice Elvey. With Jack Hulbert, Cicely Courtneidge, Cecil Parker, Glynis Johns. 79 min.
- Monday, February 10 at 2:30 p.m.: Under Your Hat. See Sunday, February 9 at 5:00 p.m.
- Monday, February 10 at 6:00 p.m.: Catch Us If You Can. See Sunday, February 9 at 2:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, February 11 at 2:30 p.m.: Monty Python and the Holy Grail. 1975. Terry Gilliam and Terry Jones. With Graham Chapman, John Cleese, Eric Idle, Terry Jones, Michael Palin. Print courtesy of Almi. 89 min.
- Tuesday, February 11 at 6:00 p.m.: Oh! What a Lovely War. 1969. Richard Attenborough. With Laurence Olivier, John Gielgud, Ralph Richardson, Michael Redgrave, John Mills, Vanessa Redgrave, Dirk Bogarde, Susannah York, Maggie Smith. Print courtesy of Paramount Pictures/Films Inc. 144 min.
- Friday, February 14 at 2:30 p.m.: Local Hero. 1983. Bill Forsyth. With Burt Lancaster, Peter Riegert, Fulton MacKay, Dennis Lawson. Print courtesy of Warner Communications. 111 min.
- Friday, February 14 at 6:00 p.m.: Gregory's Girl. 1982. Bill Forsyth. With Gordon John Sinclair, Jake D'Arcy, Dee Hepburn. Print courtesy of Samuel Goldwyn Company. 91 min.
- Saturday, February 15 at 2:00 p.m.: Oh! What a Lovely War. See Tuesday, February 11 at 6:00 p.m.
- Saturday, February 15 at 5:00 p.m.: Monty Python and the Holy Grail. See Tuesday, February 11 at 2:30 p.m.
- Sunday, February 16 at 2:00 p.m.: Gregory's Girl. See Friday, February 14 at 6:00 p.m.
- Sunday, February 16 at 5:00 p.m.: Local Hero. See Friday, February 14 at 2:30 p.m.
- Monday, February 17 at 2:00 p.m.: Privates on Parade. 1982. Michael Blakemore. Written by Peter Nichols. With John Cleese, Denis Quilley. Print courtesy of Orion Classics. 100 min.
- Monday, February 17 at 5:00 p.m.: A Private Function. 1985. Malcolm Mowbray. Written by Alan Bennett. With Michael Palin, Maggie Smith, Denholm Elliott, Richard Griffiths. Print courtesy of Island Alive. 93 min.
- Tuesday, February 18 at 2:30 p.m.: A Private Function. See Monday, February 17 at 5:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, February 18 at 6:00 p.m.: Privates on Parade. See Monday, February 17 at 2:00 p.m.