

5th July 2007

Welsh Film Industry to Discuss the Growth of Specialist Film

Increasing the development of cultural cinema in Wales will be discussed by Welsh filmmakers, exhibitors, educationalists and representatives of the National Library (housing the National Film and Sound Archive), at an event to be hosted by the Film Agency for Wales at the Muni Arts Centre, Pontypridd on Tuesday 10th July.

As a guest of the Film Agency, Amanda Nevill, Director of the British Film Institute (BFI) will be seeking guidance on how the wide spectrum of film and knowledge about film provided by the BFI can be made more available to all audiences across Wales by extending its collaborative relationships with the full range of professional, not-for-profit specialist film exhibitors and a variety of educationalists across Wales, as well as through the Film Agency itself. She will also highlight two UK-wide initiatives being led by the BFI and in collaboration with regional and national partners to deliver a joined up archive strategy and national education strategy

As a leading distributor of archive, classic and specialised films, the BFI works with a range of cinemas, from large multiplexes through to independent regional cinemas and rural film clubs. During 2006/07 some 25 venues in Wales showed 113 specialised and classic films from the BFI to an audience of over 10,000 people. Eight BFI touring programmes also played in Welsh venues.

Furthermore, some 1,800 primary, secondary and LEA-maintained schools in Wales currently take advantage of BFI Screenonline as a teaching resource with more than 2,700 video download requests in the first four months of the year, ranking 6th highest in the UK.

Commenting on cultural cinema in Wales Amanda Nevill said: "We provide a wonderful richness of cinema in the UK and we are really pleased to be working with the Film Agency to make a wider choice of film titles available in Wales and increase the geographical spread of provision. Importantly, education has a pivotal role to play by developing audience knowledge, interest and behaviour. We have ongoing initiatives with partners in Wales to deliver this."

“The BFI cares for the largest and most significant archive of moving image material in the world. Every year thousands of films from the archive are screened in cinemas, festivals, film societies and other venues up and down the UK – no screen is too small or too remote.”

“We believe that film and television have the power to enhance all our lives and will therefore be working hard to ensure that we are reaching out to all corners of the UK, including Wales, where we have an open relationship with the new Film Agency.”

Pauline Burt, Chief Executive of the Film Agency for Wales added: “From the on-set, we have been committed to supporting the growth and sustainability of specialist film exhibition across Wales, both through core funding exhibitors and providing project funding for film festivals.”

“Additionally, we are determined to improve the Wales-wide access to high quality film education, which has many and varied benefits, including enhanced overall literacy, improved communication skills, and the encouragement of social engagement. Film education is also a pleasurable and enlightening experience that can increase the overall awareness and appetite for a greater variety of films.”

“This event is a natural extension of the Film Agency’s activities, as fostering and enhancing collaborative relationships and networks can play a significant role in adding value to the activities of all concerned. In particular, I’m delighted that Amanda and her colleagues have come to Pontypridd to demonstrate their commitment to the cultural lives of individuals in Wales”.

The Film Agency for Wales is funded by the Arts Council for Wales, the UK Film Council and the Welsh Assembly Government, via Creative Business Wales, the latter of which was set up to support, encourage and increase the range and number of films being produced in Wales and to foster the abundance of creative talent in Wales.

Established in 1933, the BFI promotes understanding and appreciation of Britain’s rich film and television heritage and culture.

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For further information please contact Lisa Jenkins on 0790 873 8763

NOTES TO EDITORS:

- Information on the BFI is available at www.bfi.org.uk
- Information on the Film Agency for Wales is available at www.filmagencywales.com