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200,000+ FREE CINEMA TICKETS AVAILABLE FOR FILM FANS THIS WEEKEND

The National Lottery welcomes back film fans with free tickets to over 500 cinemas across the UK on Saturday 19 and Sunday 20 June for National Lottery Cinema Weekend

Edith Bowman and directors Dexter Fletcher and Prano Bailey-Bond share their excitement for this support for cinema as anyone who plays The National Lottery can claim a free pair of tickets at www.cinemaweekend.co.uk

Wednesday 16 June 2021: Over 200,000 free cinema tickets are available to film fans this weekend (Saturday 19 and Sunday 20 June), as a thank you to National Lottery players for their vital contribution to film.

The National Lottery Cinema Weekend, in partnership with the British Film Institute (BFI), will take place at more than 500 cinema sites across the UK, including Cineworld, Odeon, Vue and other chains and independent cinemas from Thurso to Penzance, and from Coleraine to Cardiff.

Players can use any National Lottery ticket, instant win game or scratchcard bought online or in retail (T&Cs apply) to claim a free pair of tickets to use at participating cinemas at www.cinemaweekend.co.uk.

This National Lottery Cinema Weekend, there's something for everyone to see; from BFI National Lottery funded independent films like *After Love* starring Joanna Scanlan and British Independent Film Awards (BIFA) winning documentary *The Reason I Jump*, to blockbusters like the musical *In the Heights*, Disney's *Cruella* and horror *A Quiet Place Part II*, as well as BAFTA and Oscar® winning drama *The Father* starring Sir Anthony Hopkins.

Edith Bowman, broadcaster and spokesperson for the campaign, said: "As someone who loves the experience of watching films with other people, I've missed going to the cinema massively over this past year. Once the lights go down and the film starts playing on the big screen, everything else fades and you're immersed into the beautiful world of that particular story, the filmmaker's vision, the characters, the music – the communal experience is escapism in its purest form and provokes such wonderful conversation. I'm so excited about this amazing initiative from The National Lottery and the BFI and really hope film fans across the UK embrace this wonderful opportunity to support their local cinema."

Dexter Fletcher, director of films such as *Eddie The Eagle* and the BAFTA-nominated Elton John biopic *Rocketman*, received National Lottery support through the BFI earlier in his career for the Scottish musical *Sunshine On Leith*. Dexter said: "I'll always be grateful and appreciative to the BFI and the National Lottery players for the support and funding they gave to the making of *Sunshine On Leith*. Low budget films are the launch pad for aspiring film makers and enable new and experimental visionaries to come through, get their start and make their mark on a larger stage. *Sunshine On Leith* was an important stepping stone in my own journey as a director and the BFI and National Lottery helped make that possible. "

Welsh director **Prano-Bailey Bond** has experienced the benefits of the impact of National Lottery funding directly. Prano, who makes psychological horrors, was one of the emerging filmmakers chosen to be part of a BFI professional development programme that runs alongside with the BFI London Film Festival in 2017. Her debut feature film, *Censor*, which was backed by the BFI and Ffilm Cymru Wales using funds from the National Lottery, will be in cinemas later this year. Prano said: “The BFI has been incredibly supportive and I couldn’t have made *Censor* without their support. Having watched filmmakers I hugely admire come up through the BFI, such as Lynne Ramsay (the acclaimed Scottish director of films such as *Morvern Callar* and *We Need to Talk About Kevin*) and Sarah Gavron (director of recent BAFTA winner *Rocks*), it’s a dream to have had this backing for my debut feature. Thank you to all National Lottery players!”

Chapter Arts Centre in Cardiff is one of the venues taking part in National Lottery Cinema Weekend and knows first-hand the support the National Lottery gives to cinemas all year round. **Claire Vaughan, Cinema Programme Manager at Chapter Arts Centre**, said: “The past year has been particularly challenging for independent cinemas as we had to close the doors and sometimes repurpose our venues for other types of essential community work. As one of the lead organisations for the BFI’s UK-wide Film Audience Network, the wonderful team here at Film Hub Wales was able to support venues with emergency funding at the start of the pandemic and offer additional support to engage a diverse range of audiences as restrictions began to ease. It’s wonderful to be able to repay National Lottery players for their generosity this weekend and give them a chance to see some fantastic films. We look forward to welcoming them!”

Ben Roberts, Chief Executive at the BFI, said: “Thanks to the generosity of National Lottery players we’re able to support bold filmmakers, film education and training, the cinemas that mean so much to local communities, and enable UK audiences to see a wide range of films. Over the past year so many of us have missed that special communal experience of watching film on the big screen, so what better way to say ‘thank you’ than a free trip to the cinema!”

The National Lottery has funded the making of more than 600 films, including award-winning and commercial hits across the years such as *Bend it Like Beckham*, *The King’s Speech* and, more recently, seven-time BAFTA nominee *Rocks*. The funded films combined have won 15 Oscars®, 109 BAFTAs and 29 awards at the prestigious Cannes Film Festival.

As a result of the money raised by The National Lottery for good causes, the BFI invests over £50 million a year to develop and support authentic UK filmmakers and films, enriching independent film culture with their original voices.

The National Lottery Cinema Weekend is part of a wealth of activity in June to thank National Lottery players for contributing over £30 million each week to good causes across the UK.

Players of all National Lottery games must be aged 18 or over.

Participating cinemas in Wales:

- Maxime Blackwood
- Odeon Bridgend
- Brynamman Public Hall

- Chapter Arts Centre
- Odeon Cardiff
- Showcase Cardiff Nantgarw
- Vue Cardiff
- Vue Carmarthen
- Vue Cwmbran
- Odeon Llanelli
- Vue Merthyr
- Reel Port Talbot
- Scala Cinema, Prestatyn
- Vue Rhyl
- Odeon Swansea
- Vue Swansea
- Odeon Wrexham Eagles Meadow

-ENDS-

NOTES TO EDITORS:

Pictures, interviews and case studies of people and projects who have benefitted from National Lottery funding through the BFI are available on request.

National Lottery Cinema Weekend is an expansion on two previous Cinema Days (in 2018 and 2019) which enabled National Lottery players to attend film screenings for free.

During the COVID-19 pandemic the BFI has provided a package of measures worth over £5m to support the film sector including: funding for productions that have had to halt before completion; a resilience fund for festivals and exhibitors; a contribution to the COVID-19 Film and TV Emergency Relief Fund for freelancers; a sales company support fund; and funding flexibility for its partners and projects. The BFI is also administering the Culture Recovery Fund for Independent Cinemas in England as part of the Government's £1.57 billion recovery package for arts and cultural organisations.

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About Camelot

- Camelot UK Lotteries Limited is the licensed operator of The National Lottery® and is committed to raising money for National Lottery Good Causes designated by Parliament. Camelot is not responsible for distributing or awarding these funds.
- On average, The National Lottery generates over £30 million each week for National Lottery-funded projects. To date, £43 billion has now been raised and more than 635,000 individual grants have been made across the UK - more than 225 lottery grants in every UK postcode district.
- The National Lottery has awarded £80 billion in prizes to date and created more than 6,100 millionaires or multi-millionaires since its launch in 1994.
- For further information on Camelot, The National Lottery and its games, please visit: www.camelotgroup.co.uk and www.national-lottery.co.uk
- Players of all National Lottery games must be aged 18 or over.

About the BFI

We are a cultural charity, a National Lottery distributor, and the UK's lead organisation for film and the moving image.

Our mission is:

- To support creativity and actively seek out the next generation of UK storytellers
- To grow and care for the BFI National Archive, the world's largest film and television archive
- To offer the widest range of UK and international moving image culture through our programmes and festivals - delivered online and in venue
- To use our knowledge to educate and deepen public appreciation and understanding
- To work with Government and industry to ensure the continued growth of the UK's screen industries

Founded in 1933, the BFI is a registered charity governed by Royal Charter. The BFI Board of Governors is chaired by Tim Richards.

Supported by National Lottery funding, the **BFI Film Audience Network (FAN)**, is central to the BFI's aim to ensure the greatest choice of film is available for everyone. Established in 2012 to build wider and more diverse UK cinema audiences for British and international film, FAN is a unique, UK-wide collaboration made up of eight Hubs managed by leading film organisations and venues strategically placed around the country. FAN also supports talent development with BFI NETWORK Talent Executives in each of the English Hubs, with a mission to discover and support talented writers, directors and producers at the start of their careers.

BFI FAN Film Hubs are:

- Film Hub Midlands is led by Broadway, Nottingham working in partnership with the Birmingham-based Flatpack
- Film Hub North is led collectively by Showroom Workstation, Sheffield and HOME Manchester

- Film Hub South East is led by the Independent Cinema Office
- Film Hub South West is led by Watershed in Bristol
- Film Hub Scotland is led by Glasgow Film Theatre
- Film Hub Northern Ireland is led by Queen's University Belfast
- Film Hub Wales is led by Chapter in Cardiff
- Film Hub London is led by Film London

The **BFI Audience Fund** invests £5.6m of National Lottery funding each year to expand access and encourage greater enjoyment of cinema by connecting audiences with great films - in venues, at events and online. We do this by supporting:

- leading exhibition organisations, including film festivals, to deliver culturally rich and nationally significant programmes and events on a year round basis
- projects which help exhibitors and distributors bring the best of UK and international cinema to audiences across the UK through events, distribution releases, multiplatform distribution proposals, touring film programmes and more
- initiatives that address under-representation and are innovating audience development

bfi.org.uk/audience-fund

The **BFI Film Fund** invests around £30 million of National Lottery funding a year into developing and supporting filmmakers with diverse, bold and distinctive projects, that have a cultural relevance or progressive ideas, and which reflect people from different backgrounds, as well as a range of activities to increase the opportunities for audiences to enjoy them.

Recent features supported include seven-time BAFTA nominee ***Rocks*** directed by Sarah Gavron, ***Ammonite*** by Francis Lee starring Kate Winslet and Saoirse Ronan, and ***Saint Maud*** directed by Rose Glass featuring EE BAFTA Rising Star nominee Morfydd Clark. Upcoming titles include Aleem Khan's feature debut ***After Love*** and Harry MacQueen's second feature ***Supernova***, starring Colin Firth and Stanley Tucci, with films currently in prep, production or post such as ***ear for eye***, the second feature from BAFTA-winning director debbie tucker green. Joanna Hogg's ***The Souvenir: Part II***, her follow up to 2019's BIFA-nominated release, is screening in Directors Fortnight at Cannes this year, alongside ***Ali & Ava***, directed by Clio Barnard. Also at Cannes in 2021 is ***Mothering Sunday***, directed by Eva Husson.