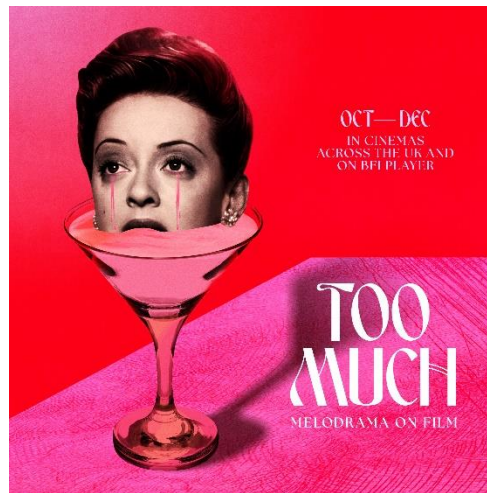




**PRESS
RELEASE**

BFI announces TOO MUCH - MELODRAMA ON FILM, a major UK-wide season celebrating cinema's biggest emotions and heightened dramatics from around the world



The season will be presented by BFI Southbank and at venues across the UK in partnership with the BFI Film Audience Network from October-December 2025, with highlights including:

- Park Circus rerelease of Douglas Sirk's **ALL THAT HEAVEN ALLOWS** (1955), in cinemas UK-wide on 24 October
- UK-wide screenings and events presented in partnership with the BFI Film Audience Network
- Major season at BFI Southbank of screenings and contextual events including a keynote introduction with Laura Mulvey
- The biggest emotions on the UK's biggest screen. Melodrama's most expressionistic, sumptuous films at BFI IMAX.
- A curated collection of films to stream on demand on BFI Player

bfi.org.uk/too-much

Wednesday 27 August 2025, 13:00 BST, London

The BFI today announces a new season celebrating the vivid visual language, heightened dramatics and emotional pathos at the heart of film melodrama, inviting film audiences to follow their emotions. United by their emotion driven plots, vivid visual language and self-conscious audience manipulation, these films are designed to make you break down in tears, cause a scene, fall in love, *feel something*. Presented by the BFI at BFI Southbank and BFI IMAX and by the **BFI Film Audience Network** (BFI FAN) using funds from the National Lottery at cinemas and venues across the UK, **TOO MUCH** will take place from October-

December 2025 via programmes of special events, talks and screenings. **TOO MUCH** will also be available UK-wide online via a curated collection of films available to stream on demand on BFI Player.

The season will explore the world of melodrama through the ages, with films ranging from cult classics to lesser-known international gems. Melodrama is steeped in contradiction. Swooningly romantic, people fall in love at first sight, sacrifice their lives in acts of devotion, find one another across space and time. Simultaneously they are grounded in the trappings of reality: rigid class boundaries, threat of punishment, and fear of scandal loom at every corner. The characters in these films are culturally diverse, from different generations and social backgrounds, but endlessly human and relatable. Their stories shed light on injustice and oppression.

Whilst expansive in its reach and impact across all genres of cinema, melodrama has long been associated with its rare embrace of women's inner lives and concerns. This expansive drama is employed to express longing, rage and desire in characters facing motherhood, infidelity, exploitation and scandal. The legacy of early 'women's pictures', created for female audiences with their favourite female stars, echoes across generations and around the world. As in life, these women do not always triumph. Imperfectly feminist yet endlessly empathetic, their sensationalist struggles carry searing social commentary beneath the glossy veneer of attention-grabbing colours, lurid plotlines and sentiment.

Accessible but ripe for dissection and reappraisal, while melodrama may lack the recognition of a genre like horror or action, **TOO MUCH** aims to illuminate melodrama as a key cinematic form, banish the stigma attached to the term, and spotlight how it has created masterpieces of world cinema.

From the early days of cinema and the evolution of the 'women's pictures' of the 1930s and female film stars such as Joan Crawford, Bette Davis, Barbara Stanwyck and Claudette Colbert, cult classics and underseen gems, through to work from some of contemporary cinema's biggest names such as Todd Haynes **FAR FROM HEAVEN** (2002), Pedro Almodóvar **VOLVER** (2006), Lars von Trier **BREAKING THE WAVES** (1996) as well as masterpieces of world cinema. The season will feature screenings of **7TH HEAVEN** (1927, Frank Borzage), **IMITATION OF LIFE** (1934, John M. Stahl), **STELLA DALLAS** (1937, King Vidor), **NOW VOYAGER** (1942, Irving Rapper) **BRIEF ENCOUNTER** (1945, David Lean), **THE LIFE OF OHARU** (1952, Kenji Mizoguchi) **ÉL** (1953, Luis Buñuel), **JOHNNY GUITAR** (1954, Nicholas Ray), **LOLA MONTES** (1955, Max Ophüls), **STELLA** (1955, Michael Cacoyannis) **THE CLOUD-CAPPED STAR** (1960, Ritwik Ghatak) **THE ARCH** (1968, T'ang Tsu Shuen), **THE BITTER TEARS OF PETRA VON KANT** (1972, Rainer Werner Fassbinder), **THE SILENCES OF THE PALACE** (1994, Moufida Tatli) and many more.

A centrepiece of **TOO MUCH** will be Douglas Sirk's colourful, high-octane love story **ALL THAT HEAVEN ALLOWS** (1955) which will return to cinemas UK-wide on 24 October, courtesy of Park Circus. Jane Wyman and Rock Hudson entrance as the star-crossed lovers at the centre of Sirk's transgressive, saturated portrait of 1950s Eisenhower-era Americana, class friction and moral values.

Ruby McGuigan, BFI Programme Development Manager and TOO MUCH BFI Southbank season curator, said: *“A story’s emotional heart is what brings us back to it time and time again and allows it to translate across generations and cultures. Melodrama – an embrace of emotion above all – is the lifeblood of great cinema, across decades and geographic borders.*

Melodrama has always revelled in the squashing of emotions too volatile for everyday life, and the inevitable explosion under pressure. As a young woman discovering these films, I felt understood. Perhaps I wasn’t insane, or ‘too much’. Perhaps life is just overwhelming sometimes. In recent years we’ve finally seeing women’s emotional worlds take centre stage in literature, music and television – there’s a legacy of this in cinema which I believe is often overlooked.

‘I’m so excited to share and discuss with audiences how these films make us feel today, and how these bold stories of melodrama’s heroines have driven some of world cinema’s timeless masterpieces. Don’t forget to pack your tissues.’

The season will be programmed around key themes, **Love** featuring star-crossed lovers, sacrificial acts of devotion, connections across space and time and melodrama as romance incarnate, **Obsession** brimming with tales of unrequited love, impossible desires and toxic jealousy, **Duty** stories of maternal sacrifice, marital constraints and dreams denied simmering beneath the serene surface of family life. **Defiance** showcasing rebellion in all its forms, both righteous and frivolous, regardless of the consequences, **Scandal** featuring tales of melodrama’s tragic heroines, who fall victim to its judgmental gaze. Melodrama’s most expressionistic, sumptuous films will also screen at **BFI IMAX**.

More than 60 venues UK-wide will host events and screenings supported by the BFI Film Audience Network, with some of the highlights set to include:

- **The New Black Film Collective presents The Nolly-Oh Season**, a nationwide tour celebrating iconic Nollywood films (from peak nineties to noughties), showcasing melodramatic, vibrant, stories rooted in Nigerian culture. Launching on 1 October, marking Nigeria’s 65th Independence Day. Tour venues include Hyde Park Picture House, Leeds and Broadway Cinema, Nottingham.
- **Stronger Than Love: ¡Too Much Mexican Melodrama!** is a touring season of four visually lush, emotionally explosive films from Mexico’s Golden Age. Curated through a feminist lens by Invisible Women, the programme celebrates melodrama’s heightened aesthetics and unruly emotions as a radical space for female expression: on screen and behind the camera.
- **Crip Melodrama: She’s Hysterical**, an Independent Cinema Office touring season of melodrama focused on representations of disabled women, programmed by disabled curators Emily Simmons, Charlie Little and Florence Grieve. The tour will celebrate the 30th anniversary of Todd Haynes’ *SAFE* (1995), looking at depictions of disabled women on-screen through accessible, thoughtfully-curated spaces and conversations centring disabled audiences.
- **Phizzical Productions**, a programme screening the classic Bollywood melodramas *DEVDAAS* and the new 4K restoration of *SHOLAY* at 5 venues across the UK

- **Broadway Cinema, Nottingham** (1-15 November) will work with a number of programme partners to present a season of films that chart the history of melodrama throughout film history. The first half of the season focusing on 'traditional' examples of the genre from Classical Hollywood including Douglas Sirk, the second half showcasing the work of directors inspired by these films – RW Fassbinder, Pedro Almodóvar, John Waters and Todd Haynes. Accompanying activity will include an illustrated talk, an immersive screening of John Waters' *POLYESTER*, and an installation, the Lonely Hearts Hotline, curated by Light After Dark Film Festival's Niki Harman.
- **Cary Comes Home** an immersive event at Bristol Megascreeen will explore heightened emotions, family themes, and the power of music George Stevens' classic melodrama *PENNY SERENADE*, a poignant exploration of love, family, and resilience starring Bristol's most famous son, Cary Grant.
- **Chapter Arts Centre, Cardiff** will explore the representation of Welshness on screen, presenting three key classic Melodrama films that solidify the idea of what Wales was – *The PROUD VALLEY* (1940), *HOW GREEN WAS MY VALLEY* (1941) and *TIGER BAY* (1959) - alongside discussions and short archive films depicting the reality of the life and racial diversity in Wales. Plus discussions around Melodrama in women's pictures including the legacy of actress Rachel Thomas, a screening of *MAM* (1988), a look at LGBTQ life today with Iris Prize founder Berwyn Rowlands alongside a screening of *VICTIM* (1961) and immersive 'soap opera' performances from artists Kitsch & Sync! Season from October-December.
- **Day Dream Cinema: From Peyton Place to Twin Peaks** A duo of accessible craft-along film screenings in Newcastle upon Tyne aimed at neurodivergent, LGBTQIA+ and intergenerational audiences that explore the influence of 50s melodrama *Peyton Place* on cult classic *Twin Peaks*.
- **Exeter Phoenix** will examine six maternal melodramas from the 1940s to the 2000s to explore how melodrama humanises maternal flaws and shapes our understanding of maternal identity.
- **Flatpack Projects, Drama-rama** aims to introduce the concept of 'melodrama' to family audiences, specifically targeting children aged 8-12 and their parents/guardians (aged 30-50) through a focused mini festival alongside a series of engaging workshops to foster a deeper understanding of melodramas core tenets and traditions.
- **FLY! Emancipate yourself** a Wales-wide touring project curated by Sheba Soul Ensemble, screening Moufida Ttlatli (*THE SILENCES OF THE PALACE*), Kinuyo Tanaka (*THE ETERNAL BREASTS*), Euzhan Palcy (*RUBY BRIDGES*) and Emma Hough Hobbs & Leela Varghese (*LESBIAN SPACE PRINCESS*). exploring the mechanisms used to restrain women in different parts of the world/universe with discussions, director Q&As and food.
- **Hyde Park Picture House, Leeds** will explore both the classic and lesser-known side of melodrama featuring Nollywood, Bollywood, Hollywood and Hallmark. In addition to the drama on screen, there will be live musical scores, 35mm restored prints, live performance and a cosy Christmas hot cocoa romance cuddle-in.
- **Everybody's Darling: Melodrama in 90s DIY Punk Cinema**, London Short Film Festival will programme of radical shorts centering women and queer perspectives and rooted in an underground film scene where Love and Obsession meet excess, spectacle and subversion.
- **Magnificent Melodrama** is a young programmer audience development project at the Electric

Palace, Hastings aiming to reposition Melodrama as a critically significant film style, celebrating both the women's picture and emotion on screen, through the lens of female and queer spectators.

- **Melodrama at the Torch** the Torch Theatre, Milford Haven, Pembrokeshire will explore themes of Love & Obsession with a screening of BRIEF ENCOUNTER, followed by a conversation around the work of Noel Coward with Chelsey Gillard (Artistic Director, Torch Theatre). They will also explore family melodrama and the vibrant visuals in ALL THAT HEAVEN ALLOWS alongside a discussion with local film maker. Finally, a local costume maker will join a screening of STELLA DALLAS to discuss the impact of fashion on the film.
- **Melodrama: Wong Kar-wai style** at Riverside Studios will pivot around the 25th anniversary release of IN THE MOOD FOR LOVE, with the programme completed by HAPPY TOGETHER and 2046, ituate the films in the context of the tropes of the melodrama genre, cinema from the region, and Wong Kar-wai's filmography
- **Never Too Much: Melodrama Nights at Theatreship, London** will champion strong female leads and showcase underrepresented voices with each screening enhanced by bespoke live performances, insightful talks and contemporary short films, celebrating and welcoming diverse POC and FLINTA (Femme, Lesbian, Intersex, Trans, and Agender) audiences.
- **Queen's Film Theatre, Belfast** will invite audiences into a heart-bursting world of emotional drama with a 3-month programme exploring the history of melodrama on screen, with much-loved classics alongside lesser-known international films. The season will include a special focus on East Asian melodrama, alongside event screenings including, a lip sync drag performance with WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO BABY JANE? Belfast Philharmonic Choir performing with THE MAGNIFICENT AMBERSONS and an Almodóvar wine tasting event.
- **Screen Argyll** will bring a programme of Joan Crawford films to remote Scottish islands and rural communities this November. Three classic Joan Crawford features – WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO BABY JANE? MILDRED PIERCE and JOHNNY GUITAR - will tour community cinemas in the region over one melodramatic weekend.
- **Strand Arts Centre, Belfast** whilst the Strand is closed for refurbishment, the team are taking melodrama on the road - delivering a season of emotional cinema in unexpected places. From 'Melodrama Matinees' for older audiences taking place in a bowling club, to a large-scale pop-up at Ulster Transport Museum, and a high-energy, youth-led screening in a high school, in partnership with Banterflix, the season will make a bold, beautiful statement about the power of film to move us and bring us together.
- **Ultimate Picture Palace, Oxford** will pair classic melodramas from the 1940s–60s with modern counterparts in a season celebrating the scandal, spectacle, and excess of melodrama. Each screening will feature an intermission event designed to amplify the drama, including themed quizzes, "bad taste" cabaret performances, curated cocktails, and short films.
- **With hearts on sleeves**, Glasgow Film Theatre will offer audiences from Glasgow and beyond a chance to be overwhelmed by melodrama throughout October and November. A central season of 5 headline titles, consisting of classics from the US, Europe and Asia, will be complemented by

a strand focusing on Queer Hollywood Melodramas, and a special Cinemasters season showcasing adaptations of the work of Tennessee Williams.

- **The Women of Almodóvar**, ahead of next year's release of his newest film: *AMARGA NAVIDAD*, the Lexi will be celebrating Pedro Almodóvar, the modern master of melodrama with a focus on the women he has directed. The activity will spotlight the performances of Victoria Abril, Marisa Paredes, Cecilia Roth and Penélope Cruz across four of their iconic collaborations.

The full UK-wide line-up of screenings, events and touring programmes will be announced soon via bfi.org.uk/too-much

BFI Southbank will play host to a major season from **20 October – 30 December**, focusing on the strong cross cultural appeal of melodrama, including titles from Greece, Egypt, China, Hong Kong, Japan, India, Tunisia, Italy, Spain, Germany, Denmark, Mexico, Argentina, Russia curated under the five thematic pillars of Love, Obsession, Duty, Defiance and Scandal. **BFI IMAX**, the UK's biggest screen, will play host to some of melodrama's most expressive films, **FAREWELL MY CONCUBINE** (1993 Chen Kaige), **DEVADAS** (2002, Sanjay Leela Bhansali) and **WRITTEN ON THE WIND** (1956, Douglas Sirk). Special events celebrating the expansive melodrama genre will include a **keynote introduction with leading academic and author Laura Mulvey** and a special day of playful panels and presentations - **Melo-dramarama**, an immersive day delving into the labyrinth of themes, tropes and quirks of melodrama beyond women on screen, from its embrace by queer audiences to male weepies and soap operas.

Audiences will also be able to stream films from the season at home on **BFI Player**, with a selection of 20+ curated titles set to include, **BODY AND SOUL** (1925, Oscar Micheaux), **CRAIG'S WIFE** (1936, Dorothy Arzner), **THE RECKLESS MOMENT** (1949, Max Ophüls), **VICTIMS OF SIN** (1951, Emilio Fernández), **CAIRO STATION** (1958, Youssef Chahine), **RED ANGEL** (1966, Yasuzo Masumura), **MORGIANA** (1972, Juraj Herz), **BROKEBACK MOUNTAIN** (2005, Ang Lee), **PORTRAIT OF A LADY ON FIRE** (2019, Céline Sciamma) and **THE DAMNED DON'T CRY** (2022, Fyzaal Boulifa).

– ENDS –

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All talent appearances are work permitting and subject to change.

About the BFI Film Audience Network

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 UK 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 Hubs in England, 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 London is led by Film London
- Film Hub Midlands is led by Broadway, Nottingham working in partnership with the Birmingham-based Flatpack
- Film Hub North is led jointly by Showroom Sheffield and HOME Manchester
- Film Hub Northern Ireland is led by Queen's University Belfast
- Film Hub Scotland is led by Glasgow Film Theatre
- Film Hub South East is led by the Independent Cinema Office
- Film Hub South West is led by Watershed in Bristol
- Film Hub Wales is led by Chapter in Cardiff



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 of film and the moving image.
- 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 Jay Hunt OBE.

***** PICTURE DESK *****

A selection of images and artwork for journalistic use in promoting the BFI and Too Much are available below:

Venue images: [BFI Southbank](#), [BFI IMAX](#)

Film stills: [Too Much programme images](#)