

British Silents,  
British Film Institute  
& Phoenix presents



THE 20TH  
**British Silent  
Film Festival**

WED II — SUN 15 SEP

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# Welcome to the 20th British Silent Film Festival

We're very pleased to present this programme of rarely-seen, rediscovered silent and early sound films at Phoenix Cinema and Leicester Museum and Art Gallery. We've selected highlights from international festivals and archives along with treasures from the BFI National Archive. 2019 marks the centenary of the birth of the Weimar Republic and the influential films that came out of Germany from 1919 and we're celebrating the interchange of ideas and personnel between Germany and Britain in the silent period. Leicester Museum and Art Gallery houses a superb collection of Expressionist art and we'll be opening with a special screening at the Museum linked to this collection. 1919 was also pivotal as national cinemas recalibrated after WWI and we have a selection of remarkable films from Germany, Sweden, the US and Britain which illuminate that moment. We'll also be screening a selection of early British sound films featuring musical soundtracks, looking at the origin of the Musical in British cinema.

We are also proud to present some of the world's leading silent film musicians and long-term collaborators including Neil Brand, Lillian Henley, Stephen Horne and Elizabeth-Jane Baldry on harp. Enjoy!



## From Morn to Midnight (Von morgens bis mitternachts)



**Wednesday 11 September 7.30pm**

Leicester Museum and Art Gallery

**Dir:** Karlheinz Martin

Germany 1920, 73mins, silent with live music

**Cast:** Ernst Deutsche, Erna Morena, Roma Bahn

Made a few months after the better-known *The Cabinet of Dr Caligari*, the film's disorientating angles and artistic bravura make it one of the most radical films of its time. Adapted from Georg Kaiser's original play, the film follows a dissatisfied bank clerk who falls for a rich Italian woman and steals from the bank in order to woo her. But it's the painted sets that mesmerise here, encapsulating the topsy-turvy world and disturbed psychology in the aftermath of WWI.

Screening will be preceded by "Glitter and Doom? Culture in the Weimar Republic", a short presentation by Dr Paul Moore, University of Leicester.

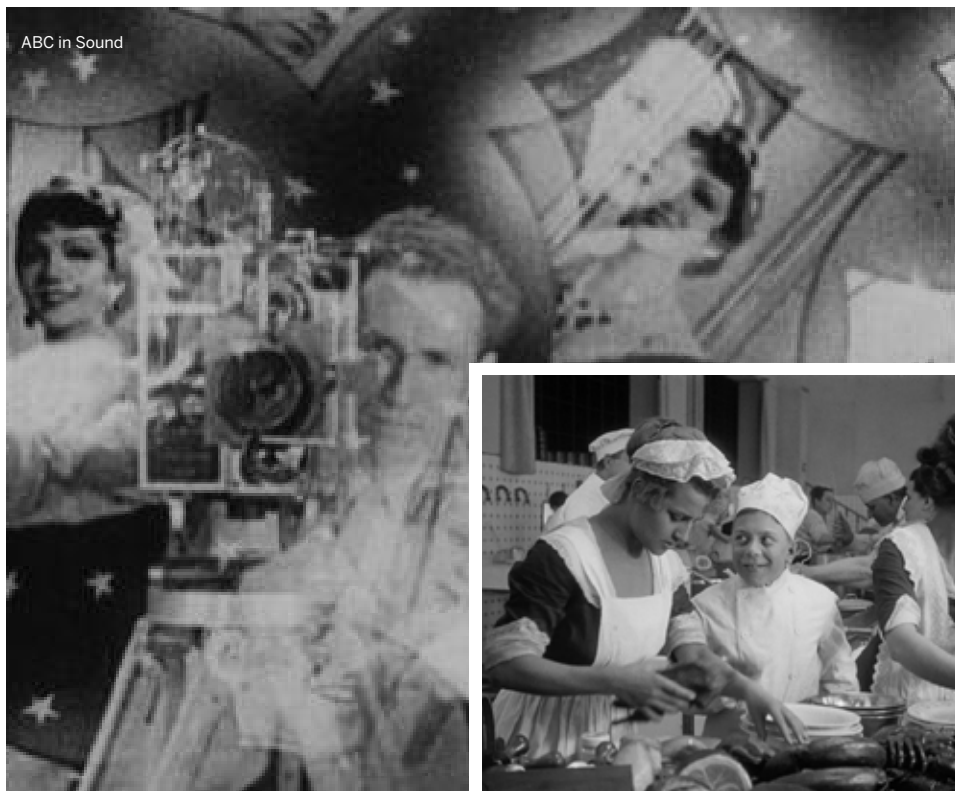
## From Music Hall to Cinematograph The films, life and work of Alf Collins and the Collins' Family

Presented by Ray and Sylvia Spare

**Thursday 12 September 10.00am**

Running time 75mins

We're pleased to welcome Ray and Sylvia Spare whose great-grandfather was the pioneering film maker Alfred Collins. This illustrated presentation includes new research on Alf and his extended family of talented song-writers, performers and film makers and includes films unseen in the UK for decades. The family's research shows the interconnectedness between cinema, popular music and theatre and the collaborations among the early pioneers like Alf Collins, RW Paul and Gaumont's Alfred C. Bromhead.



## ABC in Sound

Presented by Bryony Dixon



**Thursday 12 September 11.45am**

Running time 50mins

To celebrate the rediscovery, after 86 years, of Lazlo Moholy Nagy's ABC in Sound (1933) we look at the roots of the experiments in sound film from the earliest days of film into the era of modernist art film. Moving image arrived on the scene in a maelstrom of electrical, chemical and mechanical innovation as the 19th century turned to the 20th. Artists and scientists responded to it in many ways combining image sound and colour. When it became possible to record sound as an image in the 1920s there was a flurry of experiments with 'drawn' sound tracks - images that made sound, sound that triggered images - combinations of media; moving image, radio and art leading to bold, beautiful and frankly bizarre experiments in film form.

## The Oyster Princess (Die Austernprinzessin)

Introduced by Margaret Deriaz



**Thursday 12 September 1.30pm**

**Dir:** Ernst Lubitsch,

Germany 1919, 61mins, silent with live music

**Cast:** Ossi Oswalda, Harry Liedtke, Victor Janson, Julius Falkenstein

From the playful imagination of one of silent film's geniuses comes a delightful comedy classic. The Oyster Princess tells of the spoiled and demanding Ossi Quaker (Oswalda), heiress to her father's vast oyster fortune who insists upon finding (and marrying) a real-life prince charming. Chaos, confusion and mistaken identity reign until Ossi finally stumbles on Prince Nucki (Liedtke) and they swiftly fall in love after a serendipitous meeting at a 'cure for alcoholics' gathering. A delightful and biting satire on the shallow desires of the upper classes, The Oyster Princess is an utterly intoxicating comedy of errors. "Down with dipsomania!"



## Peace on the Western Front



Introduced by Toby Haggith, Senior Curator from the Imperial War Museum.

**Thursday 12 September 3.15pm**

**Dir:** Fred Swann, Hans Nieter

UK, 1931, 33mins, silent with live music

**Cast:** Moore Marriott, Eric Pavitt

A moving anti-war drama in which a father explains the futility of war to his young son. The film includes flashbacks from the father's own nightmare experiences alongside documentary footage from Verdun, Arras and Ypres with the message that War is not a glorious adventure but "a hideous ugly thing, involving sacrifices on the part of the finest manhood of every combatant nation".



## Comradeship

Introduced by Lucie Dutton



**Thursday 12 September 4.15pm**

**Dir:** Maurice Elvey

UK 1919, 90mins, silent with live music

**Cast:** Gerald Ames, Lily Elsie, Guy Newell, Peggy Carlisle, Teddy Arundell, Dallas Cairns, Kate Gurney

One of the first British films made after the Armistice and the first produced by the Stoll Company. Comradeship covers the sweep of WWI, from Home Front to battlefield, to class relations, the role of women and the plight of wounded soldiers returning to civilian life. It follows a middle-class pacifist, John (Ames) who enlists and befriends the cheeky working class Ginger and as the title suggests, this is a film about the lasting bonds of friendship as well as romantic love forged during the War. Comradeship doesn't shy away from the realities of the war, and documentary-style scenes of London during the Armistice imparts authenticity.





## The Song of the Scarlet Flower (Sången om den eldröda blomman)



**Thursday 12 September 6.15pm**

**Dir:** Mauritz Stiller  
Sweden 1919, 100mins,  
original recorded music score.

**Cast:** Lars Hanson, Greta Almroth,  
Lillebil Christensen, Louise Fahlman.

A big-budget classic from the golden age of Swedish silent cinema starring Lars Hanson as the wilful homme fatale and farmers' son Olof, who is expelled from home after a familial disagreement. Olof joins an itinerant group of loggers who ride through rapids down river. But despite his bravado, Olof can't forget a woman he left behind. Stunning location cinematography and a justifiably famous log-riding sequence highlight the relationship between humans and their magisterial landscape. The original music score by Armas Jarnefelt, who along with Sibelius was Finland's most popular composer, is here reproduced to perfection.



## The Alley Cat

**Thursday 12 September 9.00pm**

**Dir:** Hans Steinhoff

UK/Germany 1929, 79mins, silent with live music.

**Cast:** Jack Trevor, Mabel Poulton, Clifford McLaglen.

An East-End murder-mystery that teeters on the absurd. When successful West End songwriter Jimmy Ryce (Trevor) believes he has inadvertently killed a well-to-do man in a brawl, he flees to the deepest East End, to Whitechapel in fear of arrest. There, amidst the opium dens and rain-soaked streets he meets Polly (Poulton), a plucky Cockney lass. The two become close and through a succession of crazy coincidences we're taken on a riotously fast-paced excursion between the highs and lows of London. Full of action, character, fun and frenzy!

## The City of Song

Introduced by Geoff Brown

**Friday 13 September 9am**

**Dir:** Carmine Gallone

UK/Germany 1931, 65mins, sound

**Cast:** Jan Kiepura, Betty Stockfield,  
Hugh Wakefield, Heather Angel

A British/German co-production and the first of our two musical romances featuring the wonderful Polish-born tenor Jan Kiepura. The film opens in Naples where Kiepura, a singing tourist guide, is discovered by a wealthy English woman (Stockfield) who makes him her protégé, brings him to London and introduces him to upper-crust society. But success comes at a price among the shallow socialites he meets and London society proves fickle compared to the authenticity of his homeland.



## British silent rarities from the Archive Film Agency

Introduced by Laraine Porter

**Friday 13 September 10.45am**

**Dir:** Various, UK, 90mins, silent with live music

A selection of comedies and dramas from the 1910s and early 1920s, recently digitised from nitrate originals by the Archive Film Agency and unseen in the UK for decades. A Merry Night is a drunken comedy with some disorientating special effects, The Nervous Curate and The Curate's Double both feature hapless clergymen (always good for a joke), as are henpecked husbands, in Mr O'Kelly Takes His Missus to Southend. Part II of the programme changes tone and features H.B Parkinson's A Tale of Two Cities (1922) and The Oath 1921 made as part of Fred Paul's 'Grande Guignol' series.



### The Silver Lining

Friday 13 September 1.15pm

Dir: Thomas Bentley

UK 1928 90 mins, live music

**Cast:** Marie Ault, Pat Aherne, John Hamilton, Sydney Fairbrother



A rarely-seen family melodrama about two brothers Thomas and John (Ahearn and Hamilton) who live with their widowed mother (Ault) in a rural location. But jealousy festers between the brothers and when both men fall in love with the same girl (Grey), the morally weaker sibling frames his brother for a theft. A classic Cain and Abel fable with a strong cast that plays out in the stunning English countryside.

### Tons of Money

Friday 15 September 3.15pm

Dir: Frank Hall Crane

UK 1924, 80mins, silent with live music

**Cast:** Leslie Henson, Flora Le Breton, Mary Brough, Clifford Seyler, Douglas Munro



Aubrey Allington (Henson) is pursued by creditors and on learning of a family inheritance is persuaded by his wife to fake his own death and return as his own long-lost relative, George Maitland, the rightful claimant. Things get complicated when the real Maitland turns up along with another Maitland impersonator, the brother of Aubrey's butler, Sprules. A very funny British comedy with a great cast, adapted from Will Evans' successful 1922 play.

### Spring Awakening (Frühlingserwachen)

Introduced by Michael Eaton

Friday 13 September 5.15pm

Dir: Richard Oswald

Germany 1929, 95mins, silent with live music.

**Cast:** Mathilde Sussin, Toni van Eyke, Paul Henckels



Based on the play by Frank Wedekind, Oswald explores 1920s Berlin life through a group of teenagers, in this revealing and sensitive drama. We follow Moritz, a student struggling with prejudice for his poor grades. When Moritz is caught reading an essay entitled "Shame and Lust" his teacher wastes no time in expelling him. Isolated from his friends and pressured by the adults in his life, Moritz becomes increasingly desperate, feeling forced to make a drastic decision. Part of a series of social awakening films that Oswald directed during his long and varied career, Spring Awakening could well be considered one of the first examples of the 'teen movie' genre.



### The Struggle for the Matterhorn (Der Kampf ums Matterhorn)

Introduced by Miranda Gower-Qian.

Friday 13 September 8.15pm

Dir: Mario Bonnard, Nunzio Malasomma,  
Germany 1928, 117mins, silent with live music

**Cast:** Luis Trenker, Peter Voß, Clifford McLaglen, Marcella Albani.



This striking 'berg film' is based on the novel by Carl Haensel, which depicted the historical battle between climbers Anton Carrel (Trenker) and Edward Whymper (Voß). In the 1860s the pair attempted to conquer the Matterhorn twice, firstly as part of a joint Italian-British team and then as reluctant competitors. The film presents a fictional subplot, involving sexual jealousy, stirred up by a malign stepbrother. However the stunning climbing sequences are only too real and must have involved considerable danger for cast and crew alike. Ultimately, the solidarity between the two men and, by extension, European nations is the film's real message.

### Tell Me Tonight

Introduced by Geoff Brown

Saturday 14 September 9am

Dir: Anatole Litvak

UK/Germany 1933, 91mins, sound

**Cast:** Jan Kiepura, Magda Schneider, Sonnie Hale



An engaging musical comedy set in Switzerland and based around the popular song of the title. German star, Magda Schneider, plays the local Mayor's daughter and Kiepura, a famous Italian tenor who exchanges places with a fugitive in order to escape the limelight. Naturally, he falls for the daughter, but how can he reverse his disguise and prove that he's not a con-man? A light-hearted romance, also made in French and German-language versions, which makes much of Kiepura's wonderful tenor voice and a title song that will stay with you long after the film ends. Like City of Song, Tell Me Tonight was a German co-production, this time filmed in UFA's Babelsberg Studios and directed by the talented Anatole Litvak.





## The Runaway Princess

Introduced by Laraine Porter



**Saturday 14 September 11am**

**Dir:** Anthony Asquith and Fritz Wenhäusen,  
UK/Germany 1928, 80mins,  
silent with live music

**Cast:** Mady Christians, Paul Cavanagh,  
Norah Baring, Anne Grey, Fred Rains

A British –German co-production based on Elizabeth Russell's 1905 riches-to-rags novel, *Princess Priscilla's Fortnight*. Mady Christians stars as the lonely Ruritanian princess, betrothed to a man she has never met, who runs away to London with her professor (Rains) to escape her arranged marriage. When her money runs out, she gets a job as a sales assistant with a fashionable Bond Street milliner, but unwittingly gets caught up with a gang of forgers. And who is that handsome, mysterious detective who pursues her?



## The Boer War on Screen

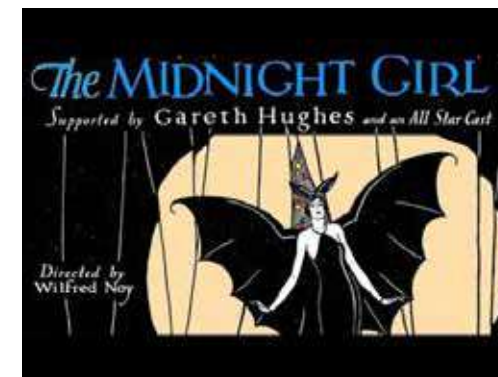


Introduced by Bryony Dixon and Matthew Lee

**Saturday 14 September 1.45pm**

Running time 60mins, silent with live music.

Presented by Bryony Dixon and Matt Lee  
The Boer War and the three-and-a-half year-old moving picture industry had a reciprocal effect on each other. The conflict between the British Empire and the forces of the Transvaal and Orange Free State in South Africa marked a complete change in the nature of warfare - making it practically un-filmable - just as film acquired a new status as one of a number of new media delivering both authentic reportage and entertainments concerning the war. In this selection of films from the BFI National Archive and the Imperial War Museum, we will see how the Boer War affected the development of film and how in turn film affected the military.



## DOUBLE BILL The Midnight Girl



Introduced by Michelle Facey

**Saturday 14 September 3.15pm**

**Dir:** Adolf Philipp  
USA 1919, 29mins, silent with live music.

**Cast:** Marie Pagnano, Adolf Philipp,  
Gladys MacClure, Phil Sanford.

Adapted from the successful Broadway musical of 1914, this charming comedy most notably boasts the talents of Marie Pagano in one of her few lead roles as a nurse-come-stage performer who catches the eye of a wealthy patron of the arts.

## Toni



**Dir:** Arthur Maude  
UK 1929, 60mins, silent with live music

**Cast:** Jack Buchanan, Dorothy Boyd,  
W. Lawson Butt, Moore Marriott

Jack Buchanan is superb in this little-known comedy where he plays the depressive Toni, whose doctor diagnoses 'idleness' and recommends more excitement and danger. Another patient, a celebrated detective who bears a striking resemblance to Toni, is diagnosed with exhaustion and told to rest. The two swap places but Toni's first client turns out to be an exiled princess whose jewels are about to be stolen by a ruthless gang and the amateur detective finds more thrills than he bargained for.



## Neil Brand's Laurel and Hardy Show



Leicester Museum and Art Gallery

**Saturday 14 September 11am**

Running time 90mins, live music

Neil Brand's delightful and entertaining family show on the immortal comedy duo, Laurel and Hardy. Illustrated with clips (both silent and sound) and Neil's superlative piano accompaniment and culminating in two of the Boys' best silent short films, this is a show that promises gales of laughter throughout, as well as getting under the skin of two warm, funny men who continue to make the world laugh when it needs it most.

## The Phantom of the Moulin Rouge (Le fantôme du Moulin Rouge)

**Saturday 14 September 5.30pm**

**Dir:** Rene Clair

France 1925, 78mins,

sound and silent with live music

**Cast:** Albert Préjean, Sandra Milovanoff, Paul Ollivier, Madeleine Rodrigue.

Rene Clair's first feature shows this wonderful filmmaker experimenting with the medium in an uninhibited and mischievous way. As Jean (Prejean), a respectable businessman, discovers the secret of astral projection, the temptation of mischief becomes irresistible to him and he reaps havoc on Paris and in particular, the Moulin Rouge! Indulging in pure fantasy, there are flights of fancy worthy of Melies in this supernatural precursor to some of his phantasmagorical later works, such as *The Ghost Goes West* (1935). Thanks to Lobster Film in Paris for this UK premiere of their new restoration.



## Tesha

**Saturday 14 September 8.30pm**

**Dir:** Victor Saville

UK, 1928, 85mins, sound and live music

**Cast:** Maria Corda, Jameson Thomas, Paul Cavanagh, Mickey Brantford

The luminous Maria Corda stars as the eponymous Tesha, a celebrated Russian dancer who marries an Englishman (Thomas). The couple long for a child but after five years of happy marriage, remain childless. On a trip to Southampton Tesha succumbs to a brief fling with a stranger (Cavanagh), unleashing a barrage of unforeseen consequences and emotional turmoil. The superb cinematography is by the great German cinematographer Werner Brandes who worked on dozens of prestige British productions in the 1920s. Originally shot silent, sound was added in 1929.

## Secret Film?

**Introduced by Geoff Brown**

**Sunday 15 September 9am**

Running time 72mins, sound

You won't be disappointed by taking a punt on this surprise film with a stellar cast!



## A slow journey across Europe

A programme of early travelogues presented by Bryony Dixon

**Sunday 15 September 10.45am**

Running time 80mins, silent with live music



We start our leisurely journey in London, the centre of the world's largest empire in the 1900s. From here we travel to Europe, touring the continent from cold northern climes to the balmy Mediterranean, taking tram rides across bustling cities to leisurely boat trips down its great rivers. We see diverse landscapes from fjords and mountains to a ghost town on the deserted plains of Armenia and all kinds of human activity, from cheese-making in Holland to metal working in the Ukraine.





## 'An Appreciation of Film': The Leicester Film Society in the 1930s

Presented by Sue Porter

**Sunday 15 September 12.30pm**

Running time 45mins

The Leicester Film Society was founded in 1931 to promote wider interest in the cultural possibilities of the cinema and to screen 'artistic films' from Britain and the continent that the commercial cinemas in the city were not screening. They were particularly interested in the silent films coming out of Ufa in Germany. Using the Society's archive, this illustrated presentation will examine the range of films screened during this period including *Cinderella* (Berger, 1924), *The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari* (1919), *Westfront 1918* (1918) and *Mutter Krausen* (1930).

## The Puppet Man

**Sunday 15 September 2.15pm**

Dir. Frank Hall Crane

UK 1921, 60mins, silent with live music

**Cast:** Hugh Miller, Johnny Reid,  
Molly Adair, Harry Paulo.

A moving drama of romance and revenge set among a travelling circus troupe playing to sleepy villages in the beautiful Italian Tyrol. When the handsome and conceited Alcide (Miller) becomes disfigured following a fire, he's presented with a set of puppets and told to resign himself to becoming the eponymous 'Puppet Man' and to hide his disfigurement. But Alcide plots against the talented young acrobat Bobbie (Reid) who he blames for the fire and uses Bobbie's love for fellow circus performer Jenny (Adair) as a means to seek revenge.



## Screening the Victorians Leicester Museum and Art Gallery

Presented by Bryony Dixon

**Sunday 15 September 4pm**

Running time 80 mins, silent with live music

This personal guide to the BFI National Archive's collection of 500+ newly digitised Victorian films by curator Bryony Dixon shows the astonishing range of filmmaking during the first five years of film – from news, travel, drama, fantasy and comedy, even sound and colour. Communicating the passion and invention of our youthful pioneers, these short films from 120 years ago show their power to charm and entertain over a century later.

The Festival is organised by Laraine Porter, Bryony Dixon, Sue Porter, Pete Groschl, Miranda Gower-Qian and Neil Brand and is made possible with funding from the British Film Institute National Lottery.

Special thanks to Avtar Chima, Margaret Deriaz, Jade Evans, Tony Fletcher, Bob Geoghagen and the Archive Film Agency, Amy Harris, Pamela Hutchinson, Caroline Langhorst, Paul Marygold, Phoenix Cinema and De Montfort University Cinema and Television Institute (CATHI).

Design by [graphicworkman.co.uk](http://graphicworkman.co.uk)



# Quick Reference Programme

## Wednesday 11 September

7.30pm From Morn to Midnight (Von morgens bis mitternachts) at Leicester Museum and Art Gallery, Victorian Gallery

## Thursday 12 September

10.00am From Music Hall to Cinematograph: the films, life and work of Alf Collins and the Collins' Family  
11.45am ABC in Sound  
1.30pm The Oyster Princess (Die Austernprinzessin)  
3.15pm Peace on the Western Front  
4.15pm Comradeship,  
6.15pm The Song of the Scarlet Flower (Sången om den eldröda blomman)  
9.00pm The Alley Cat

## Friday 13 September

9am The City of Song  
10.45am British silent rarities from the Archive Film Agency  
1.15pm The Silver Lining  
3.15pm Tons of Money  
5.15pm Spring Awakening (Frühlingserwachen)  
8.15pm The Struggle for the Matterhorn (Der Kampf ums Matterhorn)

## Saturday 14 September

9am Tell Me Tonight  
11am The Runaway Princess  
11am Neil Brand's Laurel and Hardy Show at Leicester Museum and Art Gallery  
1.45pm The Boer War on Screen  
3.15pm The Midnight Girl plus Toni  
5.30pm The Phantom of the Moulin Rouge (Le fantôme du Moulin Rouge)  
8.30pm Tesha

## Sunday 15 September

9am Secret Film  
10.45am A slow journey across Europe in early travelogues  
12.30pm 'An Appreciation of Film': The Leicester Film Society in the 1930s  
2.15pm The Puppet Man  
4pm Screening the Victorians at Leicester Museum and Art Gallery

# Tickets & Booking

## Tickets

Festival 5-day pass  
£110 / £90 concs / £90 Under 25

Festival 1-day pass  
£40 / £35 concs / £35 Under 25

All passes include lunch and refreshments each day. 5-day passes include tickets to all screenings and events. 1-day passes include tickets to screenings and events on the chosen day.

## Individual events @ Leicester Museum & Art Gallery

**From Morn to Midnight**  
**(Von morgens bis mitternachts)**  
Wednesday 11 September 7.30pm  
**Neil Brand's Laurel and Hardy Show**  
Saturday 14 September 11am  
**Screening the Victorians**  
Sunday 15 September 4pm  
Presented by Bryony Dixon

Tickets: £5 Adults under 16: £2.50  
(Free with Festival pass)  
Tickets available from the Leicester Museum & Art Gallery 0116 225 4900

## Booking

Online at [www.phoenix.org.uk](http://www.phoenix.org.uk)  
Or call 0116 2422800  
Festival website and further information  
[www.britishsilentfilmfestival.com](http://www.britishsilentfilmfestival.com)



Phoenix, 4 Midland Street, Leicester LE1 1TG