



MORRICONE

The Sounds of Ennio Morricone

To launch the Ennio Morricone season, we gather together a panel of special guests to discuss Morricone's celebrated career as the cinema's foremost film composer. Through clips and lively conversation our speakers will explore how Morricone approached film scoring, brought experimentation to his most memorable compositions, worked with directors across various genres, and influenced the next generation of film composers.

We are delighted to announce that composer, musician and BBC presenter Neil Brand, film and TV composer Nainita Desai (*For Sama* and *The Reason I Jump*), and academic, musician and broadcaster Helen Julia Minors will join us for this discussion hosted by Justin Johnson, season curator and BFI Lead Programmer.

Speakers' Bios

Neil Brand has been a silent film accompanist for over 30 years, regularly in London at the Barbican and BFI National Film Theatres, throughout the UK and at film festivals around the world. Neil now has a very fruitful relationship with the BBC Symphony Orchestra with his acclaimed orchestral scores for Hitchcock's silent *Blackmail* (commissioned by Cinema Ritrovato, Bologna), the BBCSO / Barbican commission to score Asquith's silent *Underground*, Chaplin's *Easy Street* (released on DVD/Blu-Ray) and Fairbanks's *Robin Hood*. His most recent scores are for Hitchcock's *The Lodger*, and Jackie Coogan's *Oliver Twist* (premiered by Ben Palmer and the Covent Garden Symphonia). He is published by Faber Music. Neil is well known as a TV presenter on BBC4 with his hugely successful series *Sound of Cinema*, *The Music that Made the Movies* (2013), *Sound of Song* (2015), *Sound of Musicals* (2017) *Sound of Movie Musicals* (2018) and most recently the acclaimed *Sound of TV* (2020). He is a regular presenter on Radio 4's Film Programme, a Fellow of Aberystwyth University and a Visiting Professor of the Royal Academy of Music, was awarded the BASCA Gold Badge in 2016 and is considered one of the finest improvising piano accompanists in the world. www.neilbrand.com

Nainita Desai is an RTS award winning composer, an Ivor Novello, BIFA nominee and a BAFTA Breakthrough honoree. Amongst numerous BAFTA, Oscar and Emmy acclaimed productions, Nainita's recent projects include Oscar nominated and BAFTA & Cannes winning feature documentary *For Sama*, Sundance winning feature *The Reason I Jump*, an immersive cinematic exploration into neurodiversity, *American Murder*, Netflix's most watched documentary to date, and BBC drama series *Unprecedented* (James Norton, Olivia Williams, Gemma Arterton). Upcoming drama series include a superhero series for Marvel Studios, *The Tower* (ITV) and *Crossfire* (BBC1). Following a degree in Maths, Nainita began her career working as a sound designer on features for directors including Werner Herzog and

Bertolucci and assistant music engineer to Peter Gabriel. Nainita moves seamlessly between working with orchestras, to scores utilising her collection of custom made instruments, incorporating electronics and found sound which has informed her experimental, deeply immersive approach.

Dr. Helen Julia Minors is the School Head of Performing Arts and Associate Professor of Music at Kingston University, London and Visiting Professor at the School of Music, in Piteå, Luleå University of Technology, Sweden. Helen is a musician, performer, musicologists, educator and broadcaster. She has published widely on European music of the last 100 years, on music and dance, and notably on multimodal artistic translation, including books: *Music, Text and Translation*, *Paul Dukas: Legacies of a French Musician*, *Artistic Research in Performance Through Collaboration*, and *Music, Dance and Translation*. As a DJ/Broadcaster, she has two weekly shows which are broadcast currently on Radio Wey, one is an audio book, and the other a classical music show dedicated to diversity, equality and inclusion. Helen is the out-going chair of MusicHE, and the founder and now co-chair of EDI Music Studies Network. Additionally, she is the co-series editor, for Routledge, of *Music's Interdisciplines: Critical Practices in the Study of Music*.

Chair: Justin Johnson is the BFI's Lead Programmer for BFI Southbank and also selects films for the BFI London Film Festival. He is a regular contributor to radio and TV on matters concerning films and animation and has produced films for Atticus Films. He has served on juries at many European Film Festivals including Berlin, Copenhagen and Zlin and has served as both a selector and a juror for the British Animation Awards. Justin has been a member of the BAFTA Film Committee and Deputy Chair of the BAFTA Children's Committee as well as chairing professional juries for different award categories and for the Royal Television Society.

Ennio Morricone: 1928-2020

In 1968 nothing could be less cool than the sound of a pop orchestra. Yet the way most people first heard the coyote call from Sergio Leone's epic western *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* (1966) was through Hugo Montenegro's plodding hit single. It did not prepare you for Ennio Morricone's shock-of-the-new original: an out-of-this-world melding of weird vocal sounds, ocarina, flute, Mexican trumpet, machine-gun effects and surf guitar. That coyote call was Morricone's breakthrough, a rallying cry to experience the greatest of all composers on screen.

Raised in the hunger-ridden open-city Rome of World War II, Morricone learned trumpet as a child so he could stand in for his musician father. Studying composition at the Santa Cecilia Conservatory was thought odd for a trumpet player, but composing quickly on paper became his métier. Against advice, the restless graduate worked pseudonymously as a pop song writer and arranger for the likes of Paul Anka and Charles Aznavour, plus theatre, radio and TV, all of which became a financial necessity when he married Maria Travia in 1956 and started a family.

It could have been a straightforward versatile career in pop and lounge music, but Luigi Nono's avant-garde vocal piece *Cori di Didone* in 1958 and a seminar by John Cage further opened Morricone's mind. He would eventually join the Gruppo di Improvvisazione Nuova Consonanza, a loose collection of avant-garde composers. In the meantime his first film score was for Luciano

Salce's *The Fascist (Il federale)*, 1961). It began an avalanche of film music of stunning invention, amounting to more than 500 scores.

The game-changing collaboration with Leone began with *A Fistful of Dollars* (1964) – the director had not remembered they were at primary school together. Morricone played Leone his adaptation of Woody Guthrie's 'Pastures of Plenty', which already had the American folk-meets-avant-garde elements that defined their 'spaghetti western' sound (though this was a term you could not use in Morricone's presence – he found it 'disrespectful': 'Spaghetti is a thing you eat'). Leone trusted Morricone so much he often got him to write and record music before a shoot so that he could play it to the actors on set in films like *Once upon a Time in the West* (1968) and edit the images precisely to fit his themes and character motifs. Westerns were a small part of his output. Among the scores that established his Italian reputation were Gillo Pontecorvo's masterpiece of resistance struggle *The Battle of Algiers* (1966), Dario Argento's giallo *The Bird with the Crystal Plumage* (1970), Pier Paolo Pasolini's *Salò* (1975 – 'It's not to my taste,' he said), Bernardo Bertolucci's historical epic *1900* (1976), and Giuseppe Tornatore's sentimental international hit *Cinema Paradiso* (1988).

Hollywood came calling – Terrence Malick for *Days of Heaven* (1978), Brian De Palma for *The Untouchables* (1987) and Warren Beatty for *Bugsy* (1991). All those scores were nominated for Academy Awards, but Morricone kept his distance, refusing to learn English and, for a while, refusing Hollywood after finding he was being paid no more than average. His score for Roland Joffé's *The Mission* (1986), seen as a shoo-in for the Oscar (it went instead to 'Round Midnight'), got the fee bumped up 'to the maximum', but he had to wait until 2007 for an honorary Oscar. By then Quentin Tarantino was using fragments of his scores in *Kill Bill Vol. 1* (2003) and *Death Proof* (2007), a practice he continued in *Inglourious Basterds* (2009) and *Django Unchained* (2012). So it was a fitting climax when Morricone's commissioned score for Tarantino's *The Hateful Eight* (2015) won him his second Oscar in a career showered with awards. What made the scores a seemingly bottomless well of inspiration was his insistence that good film music has to be as vivid and distinctive as the images – a harmonica aping twisting agony, deafening pocket-watch chimes counting down to a gunfight. The maestro of such dramatic tension, he made many bad films watchable and good films superb. He was an artist of his time, his scores so eclectic each is a thesis in postmodernism; yet, crucially, in an age that preferred riff, drone and repetition, he also had a great melodic gift. He could marry kitsch and high art, myth and glory in such ways as to make them heartbreaking or terrifying or whatever the film needed.

Nick James, *Sight & Sound*, September 2020

MORRICONE

The Battle of Algiers (La battaglia di Algeri)

Sun 1 Aug 15:10; Wed 25 Aug 14:30

The Sounds of Ennio Morricone

Mon 2 Aug 18:10

A Fistful of Dollars (Per un pugno di dollari)

Mon 2 Aug 20:45; Sat 7 Aug 11:30; Tue 10 Aug 20:50; Mon 30 12:20

Two Mules for Sister Sara

Wed 4 Aug 18:00; Sat 21 Aug 20:30

Salò, or the 120 Days of Sodom (Salò o Le 120 giornate di Sodoma)

Thu 5 Aug 20:45; Tue 10 Aug 17:45; Wed 25 Aug 17:50

The Untouchables

Fri 6 Aug 17:45; Tue 24 Aug 14:30

The Thing

Fri 6 Aug 20:50; Tue 24 Aug 20:50

For a Few Dollars More (Per qualche dollaro in più)

Sat 7 Aug 14:00; Sun 22 Aug 12:10; Mon 30 Aug 15:00

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly (Il buono, il brutto, il cattivo)

Sat 7 Aug 17:10; Sun 29 Aug 18:20; Mon 30 Aug 18:15

White Dog

Sat 7 Aug 20:50; Fri 20 Aug 18:10; Fri 27 Aug 20:45

Once upon a Time in the West (C’era una volta il west)

Sun 8 Aug 12:00; Fri 27 Aug 14:00; Tue 31 Aug 14:00

The Mission

Sun 8 Aug 15:10; Thu 12 Aug 20:30; Thu 26 Aug 18:00

Days of Heaven

Mon 9 Aug 21:00; Tue 31 Aug 17:50

Tie Me Up, Tie Me Down (Atame!)

Wed 11 Aug 20:50; Thu 19 Aug 14:15; Mon 23 Aug 21:00; Tue 31 Aug 20:45

The Hateful Eight

Sun 15 Aug 15:00; Sun 22 Aug 18:00

Once upon a Time in America

Tue 17 Aug 17:40; Sat 28 Aug 11:20

The Legend of 1900 (La leggenda del pianista sull’oceano)

Sat 21 Aug 11:50; Sun 29 Aug 15:10

Cinema Paradiso (Nuovo Cinema Paradiso)

Sat 21 Aug 14:30; Thu 26 Aug 14:30

Promotional partner



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