



**S.O.U.L. FEST 2021: PREVIEW**

# Rebel Dread

*+ Pre-recorded Q&A with Don Letts*

Delayed S.O.U.L Fest 2021 are proud to present the first UK festival screening of *Rebel Dread*, the story of Don Letts, the iconic cultural mover and shaker, filmmaker, musician and raconteur. Narrated by the man himself, William E. Badgley's film explores his relationship with the UK's punk scene in the 70s, his burgeoning career as a music video and filmmaker. Insightful, generous and crackling with energy, *Rebel Dread* is a must see.

[bfi.org.uk](http://bfi.org.uk)

## Director's Notes

For Don Letts, the instrument is influence... influences from politics, film, fashion and music; influences that you can either play or be played by.

Being first generation British-born-Black in the 1950s, Don was born into a divergent cross section of two different, radically creative and explosive cultures: the Jamaican roots culture of his immigrant parents and the desperate post-war climate of working class British youth. Both were hostile environments where the odds were stacked against you, but as the world would soon see, both unlikely sources held the potential to change the world forever. But at the time, the outlook for both were grim, incredibly separate and seemingly at odds.

For newly arrived immigrants of Caribbean descent, the promise of prosperity in their new home, was hard won on the streets. Enoch Powell's 'Rivers of Blood' speech challenged the white working class to mount a resistance against the newly arrived immigrants and rip them from their homes; unrest, hostility and political instability permeated the country.

And for Don's friends, the disaffected working class white kids of London, the promises of a new future weren't much better. England's economy was in a massive downturn and the city of London was barely functional, garbage was piling up in the streets and the destruction of wartime lingered across the city like a heavy blanket, a weight some feared may become a permanent part of the landscape.

For the children of immigrant parents as well as the working-class white kids of Britain, there were no jobs, no hope and no future. But for both, out of the desperation and the hopelessness came beauty, art and music unlike anything that had come before it.

In the light of a bright and emerging Jamaican independence from British rule in the early 1960s had come Ska, ever evolving to bring us Rock Steady and eventually Reggae. This was the music of Don's parents, the music that brought a peaceful yet powerful revolution to the powerless, something the streets of London in the mid-70s could use desperately, but were without.

For Don's white brethren, they had come to the same decision from the other side, they needed something; they were powerless and they knew it. Popular music of the middle 70s had become bloated and out of touch, it was

completely inaccessible to working class kids, it didn't speak to them or represent them.

The art, sound, fashion and economy of England wasn't for them anymore, they didn't have any place in it and the whole thing needed to be ripped up, thrown away and re assembled, and out of that explosive search for a voice came the worldwide revolution that the media would soon describe as 'Punk'.

Don stood in the cross section of these two movements, a violent intersection that could have – would have – torn a lesser man apart. But those with true vision see cohesion in chaos and so Don, due to his truly unique heart and intellect, along with his DJ gig at punk's first club, The Roxy, was in a rare position to show us the future. At long last there was dread at the controls.

The beautiful and defiant music of Don's culture would speak to and be understood by his rebellious comrades, they only needed to be shown it.

A world where we fit together, rather than tear apart, a world that without these unique, unifying voices would be ripe for the manipulation of the powers that struggle to divide us. A message that now, in the culturally hostile climate of today could not be more relevant or more needed.

The politics of England had unconsciously created the battleground for this revolutionary healing to take place, it could not have happened anywhere else!

And really, what choice did Don have? He was both parts equally; even so, it's no news to anyone that the influences at work in the world, wherever they come from, have forced a countless many to choose a side, to become less than what they truly are, and to be ultimately divided in the end – but this was not to be so for Don.

From being on the ground floor of revolutionary and divergent London-based fashion scenes poised to be worldwide forces, to introducing first wave British Punk to Reggae at London's first punk Club, The Roxy, to being an early multi-cultural voice as the music video director who brought MTV their first video starring a black musician, to decades worth of feature film work, Don was able to see past the divisions and find unity in the world and in himself.

As a result of Don's heart and vision he has shown us the connection between us all by connecting the lives and careers of artists such as Joe Strummer and Paul Simonon of The Clash, John Lydon of The Sex Pistols and PiL, Bob Marley, Jimmy Cliff, Musical Youth, Gil Scott-Heron, Sun Ra, Mick Jones and Don's own band Big Audio Dynamite.

Through it all, Don seemed to know that becoming who you truly are means having the courage to be someone who has never been before.

**William E. Badgley, Production notes**

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## REBEL DREAD

*Directed by:* William E. Badgley  
*Production Company:* Molasses Manifesto  
*Presented by:* Hindsight Media, Bohemia Media, Head Gear Films, Moviehouse Entertainment  
*Executive Producers:* Don Letts, Compton Ross, Gary Phillips, Lucy Fenton, James Swarbick, Christos Michaels  
*Produced by:* Phil Hunt, Mark Vennis  
*Associate Producer:* Allyson Baker  
*Written by:* William E. Badgley  
*Directors of Photography:* Alasdair Oglivie, William E. Badgley  
*Motion Graphics by:* Burak N. Kurt  
*Edited by:* Eric Pritchard  
*Original Score by:* Von Wildenhaus  
*Music Supervisor:* Samantha Simmons

## With

Don Letts  
Desmond Coy  
Norman Jay  
Andrea Oliver  
Jeanette Lee  
Leo Williams  
Trevor Romeo  
Grantley Marshall  
Chris Salewicz  
John Lydon  
Mick Jones  
Paul Simonon  
Vivien Goldman  
Greg Roberts  
Dennis Bovell  
Grace Letts

UK 2020  
86 mins

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## S.O.U.L. FEST 2021

### S.O.U.L Fest Symposium

Sat 21 Aug 12:00

### UK Premiere: Ailey + pre-recorded Q&A with director Jamila Wignot

Sat 21 Aug 17:50

### Exclusive Preview: Candyman + Pre-recorded cast intro

Sun 22 Aug 18:30

### Film4 and Fruit Tree Media present: Foresight

Sun 22 Aug 16:00

## NEW RELEASES & RE-RELEASES

**Now, Voyager** From Fri 6 Aug

**Censor** From Fri 20 Aug

**I'm Your Man (Ich bin dein Mensch)** From Fri 20 Aug

**Souad** From Fri 27 Aug

**Wildfire** From Fri 3 Sep

**The Maltese Falcon** From Fri 17 Sep

(preview + extended intro on Wed 8 Sep 17:50)

## IN PERSON & PREVIEWS

### BFI & Radio Times Television Festival presents:

#### TV Preview: Vigil + Q&A with cast and creatives

Mon 23 Aug 18:10

#### UK Premiere: I've Been Trying to Tell You

#### + Q&A with Alasdair McLellan and Bob Stanley

Fri 3 Sep 18:30, 21:00

#### Mark Kermode Live in 3D at the BFI

Mon 6 Sep 18:00

#### Black to Front + Q&A with special guests TBA

Tue 7 Sep 18:00

#### Doctor Who: The Evil of the Daleks (animated)

Sun 12 Sep 12:00

#### Preview: Sweetheart + Q&A with director Marley Morrison

Mon 13 Sep 17:50

#### Prime Suspect: 30th Anniversary (First Series Complete Screening)

Sun 19 Sep 14:00

#### Lynda La Plante in Conversation

Sun 19 Sep 18:45

#### 60th Anniversary: Whistle Down the Wind +

#### actor Hayley Mills in Conversation

Sun 3 Oct 12:00



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