



**HOOKED TO THE SILVER SCREEN:  
BOWIE AT THE MOVIES**

# 2001: A Space Odyssey

Stanley Kubrick's cosmic sci-fi masterpiece was cited by Bowie as the inspiration for 'Space Oddity', his first hit. Opening with the dawn of man before voyaging to the limits of the known universe in the company of Dr David Bowman and a sentient computer called HAL, *2001* is now established as a landmark in cinema. Young audiences with a taste for the psychedelic were the ones who first took the film to their heart – perhaps inspired by a marketing campaign that branded it the 'Ultimate Trip'.

## **David and His Goliaths: on set with Stanley Kubrick**

The sets spectacularly monopolise most of the stages at MGM Elstree studios... The space lounge set is almost 150 feet long; and the floor is constructed in an arc which gives strange, giddy effects if you attempt to walk up or down it. There are moon-stations and spacecraft of equally daunting scale. The most staggering set constructed for the film is, however, the great centrifuge, designed and built for the film by Vickers Armstrong. It looks rather like a fairground big wheel of exceptional bulk, heavily studded with arc lights and back projection devices and festooned with swags of cable. The wheel itself stands 36 feet high – half as tall again, roughly, as the rooftop of a reasonably sized two-storey house. The working area of the set is the inner part of the wheel or drum, which can be rotated in either direction at a pretty fair pace. This operation is quite alarming. Movement is at all times heralded by a warning hooter of eerie pitch and piercing volume; and the wheel picks up speed with disconcerting muted creaks and grunts. Clearly it could be dangerous; and to add to the menace of the thing, the technicians who work inside it wear heavy crash helmets. The actors are not so protected.

Kubrick at work on his stages has rather the air of a David embattled with several Goliaths, or, perhaps, Quixote tilting at the windmills. Sometimes the machines seem to be getting the upper hand. Shooting was held up for nearly a fortnight because the centrifuge, it seemed, simply *would* not be finished. But if Kubrick seems to be battling with his machinery, it is at least a contest of his own setting-up; and probably one that excites and extends him.

Kubrick, currently wearing a beard, looks rather like Orson Welles playing a short man, or else Buñuel's younger brother. On the set he is quiet, severe, giving an impression of being rather forbearing than actually patient (which is his reputation) and keeping himself, for the most part, to himself. It seems no accident that he has an assistant director of NCO firmness. *The New York Times Magazine* made great play of the 'awe' in which his collaborators hold him; and you feel that this is the sort of relationship that he encourages. Only occasional small jokes break the intensity of his concentration and suggest that his work actually gives him pleasure. In between attending to everything else, he is forever snatching up a Polaroid camera and snapping off photographs, some apparently for immediate reference, but others, it seems, simply as stills.

His attention to detail is legendary, and extends from close control over every technical aspect to minute observations of the actors' presence and performance. A scene with William Sylvester, already meticulously set up and rehearsed, was reshot several times because Kubrick was not happy with the way the moisture in the corner of the actor's eye glistened; and then again reshot because Kubrick felt that Sylvester gave an inflection that was vaguely British to a line of very little importance.

Actors speak highly of Kubrick, and there is no doubt that their performances may often owe much to his care for detail in directing them. It must also be fairly gruelling at times. Another scene I watched required a supporting player to address a scientific congress. The lines set down for him were already trying enough: 'In this stressful environment for HAL, we suspect that your threat of disconnection might have been the proverbial last straw. HAL had not known unconsciousness since his operational acceptance. This might have seemed for him the equivalent of death as we know it...'

Constant reiteration under Kubrick's fierce eye rapidly reduced the actor to a terrible series of fluffed deliveries, not helped by Kubrick's progressive revisions of the lines during rehearsals, or by his rather unconvincing reassurances. ('Cut it... Pretty nice though... Now you're doing sump'in funny with your eyes... Now you're getting a bit public speakerish... Now you sound a little sad... Wanna try it again?... You sound like you're reading a eulogy. Very sombre. Just keep it factual, casual... Just try it once more without the camera...')

Kubrick in fact appears happiest when faced with a direct technical challenge; and *2001* provides him with several. As one instance, the space suits devised for Keir Dullea and Gary Lockwood have to have their own air supply; and when the actors are in them, only Kubrick can communicate with them through two-way transmitters fixed in the suits. Despite the immediate difficulties, Kubrick looks appreciably gayer directing on the centrifuge stage, imposing as it does quite exceptional working conditions. There is only room for the actors and the camera inside the set, so the director and the main technical unit must sit inside a sort of cage at some distance from the set, watching on the monitor... and communicating with the actors and cameraman by microphones and headsets.

The day I watched Kubrick on set he was shooting a scene in which Gary Lockwood was doing track exercises around the inside rim of the centrifuge. The set-up required that as the wheel moved round, Lockwood ran in the opposite direction so as to maintain his position on one spot; while the camera was moved so as also to keep in position a little ahead of him. Since the camera was shooting on its side, the effect was that the camera was tracking back around a (comparatively speaking) stationary centrifuge, to show Lockwood running around the *side*, holding to the floor by the centrifugal force of the vehicle's movement in space. The effect, heightened by the strains of a Chopin waltz (shades of *Strangelove*) played by Kubrick on a small portable player, was unexpectedly comic on the screen. Kubrick was evidently fascinated by the prospects of editing this material and seeing the effects of conventional cutting with such a set-up.

**David Robinson, *Sight and Sound*, Spring 1966**

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**2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY**

*Directed by:* Stanley Kubrick  
*©/Presented by:* Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer  
*Production Company:* Stanley Kubrick Productions  
*Produced by:* Stanley Kubrick  
*Associate Producer:* Victor Lyndon  
*1st Assistant Director:* Derek Cracknell  
*Screenplay:* Stanley Kubrick, Arthur C. Clarke  
*Based on the short story by:* Arthur C. Clarke  
*Director of Photography:* Geoffrey Unsworth  
*Additional Photography:* John Alcott  
*Camera Operator:* Kelvin Pike  
*Special Photographic FX Designed and Directed by:* Stanley Kubrick  
*Special Effects Supervisors:* Wally Veevers, Douglas Trumbull, Con Pederson, Tom Howard  
*Special Photographic Effects Unit:* Colin J. Cantwell, Bruce Logan, Bryan Loftus, David Osborne, Frederick Martin, John Jack Malick  
*Editor:* Ray Lovejoy  
*Editorial Assistant:* David De Wilde  
*Production Designed by:* Tony Masters, Harry Lange, Ernest Archer  
*Art Director:* John Hoesli  
*Wardrobe:* Hardy Amies  
*Make-up:* Stuart Freeborn  
*Filmed in:* Cinerama, Super Panavision  
*Music:* Aram Khachaturian, György Ligeti, Johann Strauss Jr, Richard Strauss  
*Sound Supervisor:* A.W. Watkins  
*Sound Mixer:* H.L. Bird  
*Chief Dubbing Mixer:* J.B. Smith  
*Sound Editor:* Winston Ryder  
*Scientific Consultant:* Frederick I. Ordway III  
*Studio:* MGM British Studios

*uncredited*

*Production Co-ordinator:* Merle Chamberlin  
*2nd Assistant Director:* Richard Jenkins  
*Casting:* James Liggat  
*Additional Photography:* Michael Wilson  
*Rostrum Cameraman:* Dennis Hall  
*Additional Matte Cinematography:* Richard Yuricich  
*Aerial Photography:* Robert Gaffney  
*Assistant Camera:* Peter MacDonald  
*Unit Stills Photographer:* John Jay  
*Stills - MGM:* Ken Bray  
*Music Editor:* Frank J. Urioste  
*'Dawn of Man' Choreography:* Daniel Richter, Adrian Haggard, Roy Simpson  
*Boom Operators:* Bill Cook, Don Wortham

**Cast**

Keir Dullea (*Mission Commander David Bowman*)  
Gary Lockwood (*Astronaut Frank Poole*)  
William Sylvester (*Dr Heywood Floyd*)  
Daniel Richter (*moonwatcher*)  
Leonard Rossiter (*Smyslov*)  
Margaret Tyzack (*Elena*)  
Robert Beatty (*Halvorsen*)  
Sean Sullivan (*Michaels*)  
Douglas Rain (*voice of HAL 9000*)  
Frank Miller (*mission controller*)  
Bill Weston (*spacewalker*)  
Edward Bishop  
Glenn Beck  
Alan Gifford (*Poole's father*)  
Ann Gillis  
Edwina Carroll (*Aries stewardess*)  
Penny Brahms, Heather Downham (*stewardess*)  
Mike Lovell  
John Ashley (*astronaut*)  
Jimmy Bell  
David Charkham  
Simon Davis  
Jonathan Daw  
Peter Delmar  
Terry Duggan  
David Fleetwood  
Danny Grover  
Brian Hawley  
David Hines  
Tony Jackson  
John Jordan  
Scott MacKee  
Laurence Marchant  
Darryl Paes  
Joe Refalo  
Andy Wallace  
Bob Wilyman  
Richard Wood

*uncredited*

Vivian Kubrick (*Floyd's daughter*)  
Burnell Tucker (*photographer*)  
John Swindells (*first technician*)  
John Clifford (*second technician*)  
Martin Amor (*interviewer*)  
Kevin Scott (*Miller*)  
Krystyna Marr (*Russian scientist*)  
Kenneth Kendall (*BBC-12 announcer*)  
Ann Boman, Penny Pearl, Julie Croft  
Keith Denny (*ape*)

UK 1968©

149 mins

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Sat 1 Jan 14:20, Sun 23 Jan 18:00, Wed 26 Jan 14:00, 17:30 (IMAX)

**Metropolis**

Sun 2 Jan 12:00, Tue 4 Jan 14:30, Sun 30 Jan 12:00 (with live piano accompaniment)

**A Clockwork Orange**Mon 3 Jan 13:10, Wed 12 Jan 20:25, Sun 23 Jan 15:00,  
Wed 26 Jan 20:40 (IMAX)**Querelle**

Tue 4 Jan 20:20, Tue 18 Jan 18:00

**Taxi Driver**

Fri 7 Jan 18:00, Sun 16 Jan 18:20, Thu 27 Jan 20:45

**The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari (Das Cabinet des Dr. Caligari)****+ Un chien andalou**

Sat 15 Jan 12:30 (+ Inside Cinema: David Bowie), Sat 22 Jan 15:15

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