



IN PERSON & PREVIEWS

Being Blacker

+ Q&A with Molly Dineen, Blacker Dread and Naptali, hosted by the renowned DJ and remixer, Radio 1Xtra's Seani B

After a ten-year absence, BAFTA award-winning filmmaker Molly Dineen returned with this intimate feature documentary, which tells the story of renowned Jamaican-born reggae record shop owner, music producer, businessman, father, son and community pillar Blacker Dread. Blacker invites Dineen to film his mother's funeral, opening the door to his life at a time of great personal crisis. As the story unfolds, he reflects on the issues that have dogged his last 40 years in the UK: inequality, poverty, crime and racism, and why he sent his youngest child back to school in Jamaica.

A 2-disc BFI DVD, *The Molly Dineen Collection Volume 4: Being Blacker / Sound Business* will be released on Monday 8 August. Cult documentary *Sound Business* (1981) follows the legendary Sir Coxsone Sound System and Young Lion, offering a fascinating insight into the workings of sound systems in the 1980s. Extras include a short film dedicated to the memory of Jamaican reggae singer, producer and sound-system operator Sugar Minott.

Me a Talk Fi You

Both *Being Blacker* and *Sound Business* give rare insights for outsiders into contemporary Black culture and community building. Filmmaker Molly Dineen's camera catches glimpses of the subtexts and the contexts, the resilience and the fragility of the world within a world of the Black communities in London, particularly of Blacker Dread's generation.

Sound Business shows community being performed. On one level as literal performances by sound system crews that intersperse and underlay the narrative, and on another level the performance by the interviewees. The film's subjects explain and translate their culture for Dineen. *Being Blacker* is different. The tragedy that affects Blacker Dread charges the story by showing how the community he is within draws up and around him in support and disbelief.

In *Sound Business*, DJ Country translates some of his patter for the camera, explaining some of the patois and the references a general audience wouldn't understand. In *Being Blacker* there's a scene in which Blacker asks his friend Naptali why he's talking 'like an Englishman'. Naptali says, 'I'm talking for her [Dineen], for the audience behind the camera.' In contrast Blacker says, 'Me a talk fi you.' Although he is joking around with Naptali this phrase marks a boundary between the mainstream white culture with which Blacker can work when he's negotiating on behalf of the community, and the Black community whom he tries to nurture and support. This instinct of translating, code-shifting, between identity community and mainstream community is endemic for people of colour, and in this case especially for people of African descent. The way that British history has been shaped by people from the African diaspora has a particular meaning for those first- and second-generation people of the Windrush era.

DIY community building also meant that sound system culture was never only a music scene. In *Sound Business* DJ Country explains how he would use his sets to give community news headlines. In a performance shown in the film he speaks about the New Cross Fire. This fire at a house party of young Black people in 1981, the same year that Dineen made *Sound Business*, killed thirteen. Feeling

that there was a cover up of how the fire broke out, Black people came together to march in the first Black People's Day of Action, a precursor to the cross-cultural Black Lives Matter marches in 2020 following the killing of George Floyd by police officers in America.

The Black Peoples Day of Action in March 1981 was part of a continuum of community activism that wanted to find more to living than having to constantly protect one another from racist onslaught and subtle discrimination. The uprisings of the 1980s in Bristol, Liverpool, Birmingham and in Brixton in London, characterised at the time as riots, were only part of the story. There were also groups working for a collective empowerment. One such group was led by the late Len Garrison to set up the Black Cultural Archives, an institution still present in Brixton which preserves and celebrates the histories of Black people in the UK. Another example would be Blacker Dread's record shop on Coldharbour Lane, which we see in *Being Blacker* function as a meeting point for community and a space in which and from which Blacker could provide cross-generational advice and support. It's never only about the music for Blacker. It's about community. He's working for them, talking to them. In his words again, 'Me a talk fi you.'

Arike Oke, extract from *The Molly Dineen Collection Volume 4: Being Blacker / Sound Business* DVD booklet essay (BFI, 2022)

Molly Dineen

Molly Dineen is one of Britain's most acclaimed contemporary documentary filmmakers, known for her intimate and probing portraits of British individuals and institutions, and recipient of numerous accolades, including BAFTA, Grierson and RTS awards for documentary.

Seani B

Radio DJ, Presenter, Label Owner, Club DJ, Remixer, Producer – Seani B wears all of these titles with great aplomb! In the mid 90's he amalgamated his technical skills and his knowledge of crowd pleasing and released a bootleg dancehall reggae remix of the Case and Foxy Brown classic track 'Touch Me, Tease Me'. Demand grew for his unique sound, which prompted him to set up his own production company, Big League Productions. Before long, some of the world's biggest artists were feeling the 'Remix Kid' touch. The Big League record label was next to follow, featuring collaborations with the Dancehall 'A' list.

Seani joined BBC 1Xtra at its inception in 2002 with the award winning show *Seani B's Mixlab*, which went against the grain of conventional single genre music programming at the time. After a consistent and varied run of international bookings as a club and festival DJ, he went back into the studio as a producer in 2016, during which he won a Grammy for producing tracks on the Morgan Heritage album *Strictly Roots*.

The world's leading dancehall and reggae DJ, his weekly BBC 1Xtra show is the most listened to specialist programme on the network, as well as having amassed over 90 million views for his sessions from Jamaica. His 'This is BrukOut' column in Europe's biggest Black newspaper, *The Voice*, has attracted much praise for its informed and relaxed style, giving an insight into the world of music from the Caribbean.

In 2021 he was awarded the prestigious Broadcasters Press Guild Award for Best Broadcaster Of The Year across all radio programmes in the UK.

BEING BLACKER

Directed by: Molly Dineen

©: RTO Pictures

Production Company: RTO Pictures

For: BBC

Executive Producer: Peter Dale

Executive Producer for the BBC: Emma Loach

Produced by: Molly Dineen

Filmed by: Molly Dineen

Film Editor: Tom Dixon-Spain

On-line Editor: Ian Mander

Additional Editing: Henri Plint

Editorial Consultant: Catherine Bailey

Additional Editorial Consultant: Harry Hook

Post-production Producer: Claudia White, Clear Cut Pictures

Colourist: Stuart Fyvie

Re-recording Mixer: Jamie Hartland

UK 2018©

90 mins

NEW RELEASES

Hit the Road (Jaddeh Khaki)

Continues from Fri 29 Jul

Conscientious Protectors

From Mon 1 Aug

The Feast

From Fri 19 Aug

Where Is Anne Frank

From Fri 19 Aug

Queen of Glory

From Fri 28 Aug

RE-RELEASES

The Big City (Mahanagar)

Continues from Fri 22 Jul

Paris, Texas

Continues from Fri 29 Jul

The Harder They Come

From Fri 5 Aug (+ intro by season curator and author Lloyd Bradley on Fri 5 Aug 18:15)

Burning an Illusion

From Fri 19 Aug

FROM JAMAICA TO THE WORLD: REGGAE ON FILM

Rockers

Thu 4 Aug 20:40; Sat 13 Aug 14:45

No Place Like Home: Redux

Fri 5 Aug 21:00; Fri 19 Aug 18:40

Riddim Moves – A Dancehall Day Event

Sat 6 Aug 13:00-18:00

Dancehall Queen

Sat 6 Aug 18:40; Tue 9 Aug 18:20

Steppin' Razor: Red X

Sun 7 Aug 18:00; Sat 20 Aug 14:45

Rudeboy: The Story of Trojan Records

Fri 12 Aug 18:20; Sun 28 Aug 18:30

Better Mus' Come

Sat 13 Aug 18:15; Sat 27 Aug 20:45

Sprinter

Sat 13 Aug 20:40; Fri 26 Aug 18:10

African Redemption: The Life and Legacy of Marcus Garvey

Mon 15 Aug 20:40; Sun 28 Aug 14:50

Reggae Futures

Sat 20 Aug 17:30

Lion of Judah, War in Ethiopia, 1935-1936 + discussion

Tue 23 Aug 18:20

Bob Marley: The Making of a Legend + Q&A with directors

Esther Anderson and Gian Godoy

Tue 30 Aug 18:10

IN PERSON & PREVIEWS

BFI Expanded: Child of Empire

1-7 Aug 14:00-21:00

BFI Expanded: World Premiere: Lost Migrations

Mon 1 Aug 17:30, 19:30

TV Preview: The Sandman + Q&A with creator Neil Gaiman and cast member Tom Sturridge

Wed 3 Aug 19:00

Being Blacker + Q&A with Molly Dineen, Blacker Dread and Naptali

Tue 9 Aug 20:30

Preview: My Old School + Q&A with director Jono McLeod

and actor Alan Cumming

Fri 12 Aug 18:15

Tony Hancock: Oddities and Rarities

Sat 13 Aug 12:00

RRR

Sat 13 Aug 19:00

TV Preview: Am I Being Unreasonable? + Q&A with writer/actors

Daisy May Cooper, Selin Hizli and exec producer Jack Thorne

Wed 31 Aug 18:15

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Programme notes and credits compiled by the BFI Documentation Unit

Notes may be edited or abridged. Questions/comments? Email prognotes@bfi.org.uk

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