



SIGHT AND SOUND GREATEST FILMS OF ALL TIME 2022: 6=

2001: A Space Odyssey

Kubrick's epic contemplation of the nature and origins of humanity, completed a full year before the first moon landing, remains one of cinema's greatest technical feats and a highpoint in the film's representation of space travel. But *2001: A Space Odyssey* is so much more than the skill that went into its making. Its philosophical and spiritual depth, along with the rhapsodic beauty of the unfurling imagery, make it one of cinema's most poetic and awe-inspiring experiences.

Stuart Brown, bfi.org.uk

'If Kubrick could get rid of the human element, he could make the perfect film,' joked Malcolm McDowell. But here, he almost does. By acting, arrogantly, as if nobody had ever made a really good science-fiction film before, Kubrick solves all the genre's problems methodically but also pushes it into epic, mythic, spiritual terrain. It's stately, bold, astonishingly beautiful. The great rationalist suddenly blasts us off into a psychedelic experience which doesn't yield fully to reason. It's not even certain if the film is optimistic or despairing (yet colourful).

David Cairns, *Sight and Sound*, Winter 2022-23

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

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©
150 mins

SIGHT AND SOUND GREATEST FILMS OF ALL TIME 2022

Jeanne Dielman, 23 quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles

Wed 1 Mar 18:00; Thu 2 Mar 18:50; Sat 11 Mar 18:50

Philosophical Screens: Jeanne Dielman, 23 quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles

Wed 1 Mar 21:30 Blue Room

Daisies (Sedmikrásky) + Meshes of the Afternoon

Wed 1 Mar 20:50; Wed 8 Mar 18:20 (+ intro)

Au hasard Balthazar

Thu 2 Mar 20:50; Mon 6 Mar 18:30

Taxi Driver

Thu 2 Mar 21:00 BFI IMAX; Fri 3 Mar 18:10; Mon 13 Mar 20:40

La Règle du jeu (The Rules of the Game)

Fri 3 Mar 14:30; Sat 4 Mar 13:20; Sat 11 Mar 18:05

Persona

Fri 3 Mar 18:30; Thu 9 Mar 21:05

Portrait of a Lady on Fire (Portrait de la jeune fille en feu)

Fri 3 Mar 20:30; Wed 8 Mar 20:30

Do the Right Thing

Fri 3 Mar 20:35; Sat 11 Mar 18:10

Singin' in the Rain

Fri 3 Mar 20:40; Thu 9 Mar 18:10 (+ intro by Miles Eady, Film Writer and Curator); Tue 14 Mar 14:30

Man With a Movie Camera (Chelovek s kino-apparatom)

Sat 4 Mar 15:30; Sun 5 Mar 10:30 BFI IMAX; Thu 9 Mar 20:50

Playtime

Sat 4 Mar 17:00; Sat 11 Mar 20:30

The Searchers

Sat 4 Mar 17:40; Tue 7 Mar 20:35

Seven Samurai (Shichinin no samurai)

Sat 4 Mar 18:50; Tue 14 Mar 18:40

Apocalypse Now: Final Cut

Sat 4 Mar 19:40; Sun 12 Mar 20:00 BFI IMAX

Tokyo Story (Tôkyô monogatari)

Sat 4 Mar 20:15; Fri 10 Mar 18:00; Wed 15 Mar 14:30

Shoah

Sun 5 Mar 11:00; Sun 12 Mar 11:00

Sunrise: A Song of Two Humans

Sun 5 Mar 11:45; Mon 6 Mar 14:00; Mon 13 Mar 20:35

The Passion of Joan of Arc (La passion de Jeanne d'Arc)

Sun 5 Mar 14:00 (with live accompaniment); Wed 15 Mar 20:40 (with score)

Citizen Kane

Sun 5 Mar 16:15; Tue 7 Mar 20:30

Cléo from 5 to 7 (Cléo de 5 à 7)

Sun 5 Mar 17:45; Wed 8 Mar 21:00

2001: A Space Odyssey

Sun 5 Mar 19:00; Thu 9 Mar 18:00

Vertigo

Mon 6 Mar 20:30; Thu 9 Mar 14:30; Wed 15 Mar 18:10

In the Mood for Love (Fa yeung nin wah)

Mon 6 Mar 20:40; Fri 10 Mar 21:00; Sun 12 Mar 18:30

Late Spring (Banshun)

Mon 6 Mar 20:45; Tue 7 Mar 14:30; Sun 12 Mar 18:20

The Night of the Hunter

Tue 7 Mar 18:00; Sat 11 Mar 20:45

Mulholland Dr.

Tue 7 Mar 20:10; Tue 14 Mar 20:15

Beau Travail

Wed 8 Mar 14:30; Fri 10 Mar 20:45; Mon 13 Mar 18:20 (+ intro by Catherine Wheatley, Reader in Film Studies, King's College London)

Close-Up (Nema-ye Nazdik)

Fri 10 Mar 18:30; Wed 15 Mar 20:50

The Godfather

Fri 10 Mar 19:00; Sun 12 Mar 18:15

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