



O DREAMLAND! LINDSAY ANDERSON'S DARK BRITISH CINEMA

In Celebration

In Celebration

Directed by: Lindsay Anderson
©: AFT Distributing Corporation
Made by: Ely Landau Organisation Limited
Presented by: Ely Landau Organization Inc., Cinevision Ltee.
Released by: AFT Distributing Corporation
Executive Producer: Otto Plaschkes
Produced by: Ely Landau
In Charge of Production: Henry T. Weinstein
Production Associate: Les Landau
Production Manager: Roy Stevens
Production Supervisor: Jim Digangi
Producer's Secretary: Rosemary Pearson
Production Assistant: Tunde Ikoli
Assistant Director: Richard Jenkins
Continuity: Valerie Booth
[Screenplay] Written By: David Storey
[Original Play] By: David Storey
Director of Photography: Dick Bush
Focus: Mike Garfath
Gaffer: Steve Birtles
Grip: Stan Patton
Stills: Barrie Payne
Editor: Russell Lloyd
Assistant Editor: Peter Watson
Art Director: Alan Withy
Set Dresser: Harry Cordwell
Props: Cyril Sundborg, Brian Lofthouse
Wardrobe: Brenda Dabbs
Make-up: George Partleton
Hairdresser: Mike Jones
Filmed in: Eastmancolor
Additional Music: Christopher Gunning
Sound Mixer: Bruce White
Dubbing Mixer: Dennis Whitlock
Dubbing Editors: John Poyner, Stanley Fiferman
Unit Driver: Christopher Storey
Filmed with Panavision equipment
Originally Presented by: English Stage Company
Originally Presented at: Royal Court Theatre
Made at: EMI Elstree Studios
Cast:
Alan Bates (*Andrew Shaw*)
James Bolam (*Colin Shaw*)
Brian Cox (*Steven Shaw*)
Constance Chapman (*Mrs Shaw*)
Gabrielle Daye (*Mrs Burnett*)
Bill Owen (*Mr Shaw*)
USA-UK-Canada 1975
131 mins
Digital

BECOME A BFI MEMBER

Enjoy a great package of film benefits including priority booking at BFI Southbank and BFI Festivals. Join today at bfi.org.uk/join

SIGHT AND SOUND

Never miss an issue with **Sight and Sound**, the BFI's internationally renowned film magazine. Subscribe from just £25*

* Price based on a 6-month print subscription (UK only). More info: sightandsoundsubs.bfi.org.uk

SIGHT AND SOUND

David Storey's play *In Celebration* opened at the Royal Court Theatre in London on 22 April 1969, and earned rave reviews in its premiere engagement in the United States at the Arena Stage Theatre, Washington, DC. It is the story of three sons, educated above their class, who return to their home in a coal-mining town in the north of England to celebrate their parents' 40th wedding anniversary. It's a sharply etched, deeply compassionate portrait of a family reunion fatally flawed by the spectres of past guilt and present hypocrisy. Storey powerfully delves beneath the surface appearance of love and unity to reveal the diverse forces that have alienated the sons from the parents.

Storey says that *In Celebration* is his most autobiographical work. 'My father Frank had worked in the mines since he was a boy – a short man in a dark countryside of slag heaps and polluted rivers. He was the son of a miner but he'd taught himself things like algebra. And he was very keen that we boys – there were four of us but one died of privation (as in the play) – should get out and have good middle-class lives. But I was confused as to what he did want. There was this chap down the street, who was becoming middle class, had an office job, a bowler and a little motor, the symbol of the middle class. Every time my father saw that man get in his car and drive past, he would emit the most violent sounds of rage and derision. I felt my father was educating me for a part of society he really despised.'

David Storey and Lindsay Anderson have known each other for over 15 years. 'I share David's way of looking at the world,' says Anderson, and Storey states that he and the director enjoy 'an unspoken intuition.' The film was shot at EMI Studios and on location at the Bestwood Colliery village and at Langwith Colliery in Yorkshire where Storey was born and grew up. Prior to filming, the cast and the director spent three weeks in rehearsal despite their strong familiarity with the roles. This was because 'there is a tremendous difference between staging a play and presenting it as a film,' according to Anderson. 'The stage gives the audience a broader aspect of a scene than film and therefore the rehearsals are more valid for me as a director perhaps, than they are possibly for the actors.'

Anderson and his cast were old friends having worked together on the original stage production of *In Celebration* and in other works by Storey, thus there was a strong feeling of unity on the set. The mood at times approached that of a college reunion. In fact the laughter, and joking of the cast, particularly of Alan Bates, James Bolam and Brian Cox, had to be kept firmly under control with schoolmasterish rebukes from Anderson. Within any given hour during the shooting, Bates would be reprimanded for giggling, Bolam for not concentrating and Cox for being out of position. The dialogue went something like this: 'Alan pull yourself together and do it again – properly this time... Jimmy you haven't remembered what I said – now once again... Brian, what are you doing there? You should be over here – march... Come along, come along everyone – concentrate – we are going to do it all again – now – just see if you can get it right!' Needless to say everything was given and accepted in good humour. 'If I didn't stop them fooling around,' says Anderson, 'we would never have got anything done. We all knew each other so well that I had to take a firm line with them.'

In Celebration production notes

O DREAMLAND! LINDSAY ANDERSON'S DARK BRITISH CINEMA

In Celebration

Thu 9 May 20:25; Wed 22 May 18:00

O Lucky Man!

Sun 12 May 14:10; Sat 18 May 14:20; Mon 27 May 19:20

Britannia Hospital

Tue 14 May 20:35; Sat 25 May 18:00

This Sporting Life

Wed 15 May 17:50; Thu 23 May 12:00

The Whales of August

Thu 16 May 12:20; Sat 25 May 16:00; Fri 31 May 20:30

The Old Crowd

Thu 16 May 18:30

If....

Thu 16 May 20:30; Tue 21 May 18:10; Fri 24 May 12:10; Tue 28 May 20:45

Lindsay Anderson vs the Short Films Industry + intro by Patrick Russell, Senior Curator of Non-fiction, BFI National Archive

Thu 23 May 18:20

Stand Up! Stand Up!

Thu 23 May 20:30

Never Apologize

Fri 24 May 17:50

If You Were There...

Sat 25 May 20:40; Fri 31 May 18:30

In Collaboration: Anderson and Others

Sun 26 May 18:10

Lindsay Anderson Experimenta Mixtape, curated by Stephen Sutcliffe

Thu 30 May 18:10

With thanks to

The Lindsay Anderson Archive at the University of Stirling

O Lucky Lindsay Anderson!

4-week course from 7 May – 28 May, 2-4pm at City Lit, Keeley St. exploring the work and influence of visionary director, Lindsay Anderson, with course tutor John Wischmeyer. To book online www.citylit.ac.uk/courses/o-lucky-lindsay-anderson or call 020 3871 3111 and quote course code **HF364**

BFI PLAYER

We are always open online on BFI Player where you can watch the best new, cult & classic cinema on demand. Showcasing hand-picked landmark British and independent titles, films are available to watch in three distinct ways: Subscription, Rentals & Free to view.

See something different today on player.bfi.org.uk

Join the **BFI mailing list** for regular programme updates. Not yet registered? Create a new account at www.bfi.org.uk/signup

Lindsay Anderson on 'In Celebration'

'The advantage of the cinema over the theatre is not that you can even have horses, but that you can stare closer into a man's eyes.' (Grigori Kosintsev, *King Lear: The Space of Tragedy*)

When I was invited to direct a film version of *In Celebration* for the American Film Theatre series, I didn't fully appreciate the truth of Kosintsev's dictum. Like many people, I was over-inclined to associate 'movement' in the Movies with external action, montage, spectacular effects, widespread locations. I was apprehensive too, at the idea of filming long dialogue scenes and of having to keep them visually and cinematically alive. In my films up to that time, I had rarely needed to deal with sustained passages of dialogue, and I wasn't absolutely confident in my capacity to do it. However, the film was going to be made whether I directed it or not and I certainly was not going to let anybody else do it. *In Celebration* was the first of David Storey's plays that I had the pleasure of directing, and we had managed to get together what I felt to be the perfect cast. *In Celebration* had run extremely successfully at the Royal Court, but it had never transferred to the West End – unlike its successors, *The Contractor*, *Home*, *The Changing Room*, *The Farm* and *Life Class*. Here was another reason why, in spite of my apprehensions, I felt it was not just worthwhile but important to bring the play and that particular performance to a much wider audience. And the final inducement was the fact that, by some miracle, all of the original cast were available to play the roles which they had created at the Royal Court in 1969.

The aim of the American Film Theatre series was, in my opinion, both original and valid. It was not simply to record, television-fashion, stage productions of noteworthy plays. Nor was it to render 'filmic' by the conventional means of expansion and rewriting, material which had been conceived for the stage. It was rather to have things both ways – always a difficult thing to do, but always desirable. That is to say, the intention was to preserve the original theatrical text as fully as possible, and to film them with the kind of care and attention and concentration which would enable them to live on the screen in a new way, and to take advantage of everything that the film camera has to offer in the way of penetration, analysis and empathy. The theatrical experience, in spite of the presence of the actor before the audience, is almost bound to be an objective one. You have five or six people sitting talking on a stage: it is tremendously difficult for a director to ensure that the audience will be looking at any moment precisely where he wants them to look, registering exactly that subtlety of feeling or relationship which he feels to be most important. When you have a character like Steven in *In Celebration*, this problem is particularly acute. For Steven is silent for long periods of the play, yet much of the situation needs to be related to his temperament and his intuition. At many points his reactions are all-important, yet he seldom moves and seldom speaks. Here is a case, if ever there was one, where the ability of a camera to 'stare closer into a man's eyes' helps immeasurably the task of the actor and of the director. The cast had all first created their roles five years before. They had created them with a wonderful spirit of ensemble and enjoyment, both of the play and of each other's playing. To return to the same characters and the same relationships five years later, was to experience a deepening and maturing of understanding, which I believe results in one of the finest examples of ensemble playing to be preserved anywhere on film.

Lindsay Anderson