



Stand Up! Stand Up!

Momma Don't Allow

Directed by: Karel Reisz, Tony Richardson
Made with the support of the:
British Film Institute Experimental Film Fund
Assistants: Dorothy Rose Harper,
Kenneth Goodman, Kenneth Lindsay, David Pitt
Written by: Karel Reisz, Tony Richardson
Camera: Walter Lassally
Editing: John Fletcher
Sound Recording: John Fletcher
With:
The Chris Barber Band:
Chris Barber (*trombone*)
Monty Sunshine (*clarinet*)
Pat Halcox (*trumpet*)
Ron Bowden (*drum*)
Lonnie Donegan (*guitar*)
Jim Bray (*bass*)
Ottlie Patterson (*vocal*)
UK 1956
8 mins (extract)
Digital

Every Day Except Christmas

Direction: Lindsay Anderson
a Graphic Films production
Presented by: Ford of Britain
Producers: Leon Clore, Karel Reisz
Assistants: Alex Jacobs, Brian Probyn,
Maurice Ammar
Screenplay: Lindsay Anderson *
Photography: Walter Lassally
Editor: John Fletcher
Music: Daniel Paris
Recording and Sound Editing: John Fletcher
With:
Alun Owen (*narrator*)
The Happy Wanderers (*music performer*) *
UK 1957
42 mins
Digital

March to Aldermaston

Production Assistance: Lindsay Anderson,
Karel Reisz, Allan Forbes, Kurt Lewenhack,
Lewis Mcleod, Eda Segal, Elizabeth Russell,
Derek York, Kevin Connor, John Crome,
Lawrence G. Knight, Peter Jessop,
Bernice Nassauer, Ramsay Short, Chris Menges,
John Arnold, Terence Twigg,
Wolfgang Suschitzky, Roger Tully, Manny Yospa,
Llew Gardner, Bill Smeaton-Russell, Stephen Peet,
Derek Hill, Harry Woof, Rex Tasker
Production Assistance [Producer]: Derrick Knight
Post-production Assistance: Christopher Brunel,
Charles Cooper, Mary Beales
Co-Editor: Mary Beales
With:
Richard Burton (*narrator*)
David Meeker (*on-screen participant*) *
UK 1959
33 mins
Digital

O Dreamland

Director: Lindsay Anderson
Photography: John Fletcher
UK 1953
13 mins
16mm

* Uncredited

Momma Don't Allow

In March 1954, Karel Reisz and Tony Richardson submitted a proposal to the BFI Experimental Film Fund for a short documentary. At the time, Reisz was working for the BFI as programmer of the National Film Theatre, while Richardson was a young BBC television director. The film, originally titled *Jazz*, was about a Saturday evening in a North London jazz club.

The film was shot on 16mm film during Winter 1954-5 with a total grant of just £425 (the pair had requested only £232). By the time it was completed in November 1955, its title had been changed to *Momma Don't Allow*.

On 25th January 1956, a few days before the Free Cinema event, *Momma Don't Allow* was screened as part of a programme of BFI-funded films for press and industry representatives at the NFT. Press reviews were very encouraging.

Momma Don't Allow was warmer and more sympathetic to its working-class subjects than Lindsay Anderson's earlier *O Dreamland* (1953), which also formed part of the first Free Cinema programme. The film captures the emerging 'youth culture' – a term unheard of before the 1950s – contrasting the relaxed, confident working-class Teddy Boys and their girlfriends with the more awkward 'toffs' whose arrival threatens to change the mood of the evening.

Following *Momma Don't Allow*, Richardson became increasingly involved in theatre and film production, and never made another Free Cinema film. He was, however, the first of the Free Cinema figures to make the move into feature films, setting up Woodfall Film Productions with playwright John Osborne. Woodfall's first release was an adaptation of Osborne's stage hit *Look Back in Anger* (1959), directed by Richardson.

Reisz was appointed film officer by car manufacturer Ford, which later funded Lindsay Anderson's *Every Day Except Christmas* (1957) and Reisz's own *We Are the Lambeth Boys* (1959).

Christophe Dupin, BFI Screenonline, screenonline.org.uk

Every Day Except Christmas

1956 proved to be a crucial year in Lindsay Anderson's career. Not only did he initiate the first Free Cinema screening, but he also wrote one of his most passionate theoretical pieces, 'Stand Up! Stand Up!' (*Sight and Sound*, Autumn 1956), and he started the production of his new film, *Every Day Except Christmas*.

The new project was made possible because his Free Cinema accomplice Karel Reisz was working for the Ford company. Reisz had accepted the job on condition that he would be allowed to produce a series of non-advertising documentaries. He invited Anderson to make the first film. They started looking for a subject, and when the idea of a film about Covent Garden came up, Anderson spent a few nights following workers around the market.

A very rough treatment was written, but most of the film was improvised on the spot. The material shot over 4 weeks – either through the night or from dawn

O DREAMLAND! LINDSAY ANDERSON'S DARK BRITISH CINEMA

Stand Up! Stand Up!

Thu 23 May 20:30

If....

Fri 24 May 12:10; Tue 28 May 20:45

Never Apologize

Fri 24 May 17:50

The Whales of August

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

Britannia Hospital

Sat 25 May 18:00

If You Were There...

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

In Collaboration: Anderson and Others

Sun 26 May 18:10

O Lucky Man!

Mon 27 May 19:20

Lindsay Anderson Experimenta Mixtape, curated by Stephen Sutcliffe

Thu 30 May 18:10

TIGRITUDES: A PAN-AFRICAN FILM CYCLE 1956-2024

Early Archive Shorts

Sat 1 Jun 15:35; Mon 3 Jun 18:00 (+ season

introduction discussion with season curator Valérie Osouf)

Cabascabo + Rhodesia Countdown

Sat 1 Jun; Fri 14 Jun 18:20

One Way or Another De cierta manera + Four Women

Sun 2 Jun 15:40; Fri 21 Jun 18:15 (+ discussion)

Muna Moto The Child of Another

Wed 5 Jun 18:20 + intro; Sat 15 Jun 17:30

Nahla

Thu 6 Jun 20:35; Sat 22 Jun 18:10

Den Muso The Young Girl

Sat 8 Jun 13:30; Wed 12 Jun 18:00

Bless Their Little Hearts

Sun 9 Jun 18:10; Thu 20 Jun 20:40

Handsworth Songs + intro and discussion

hosted by curator and writer Xavier Pillai

Mon 10 Jun 18:15

EXPERIMENTA Presents:

Symbiopsychotaxiplasm: Take One + intro by writer and curator Matthew Barrington

Thu 13 Jun 18:15

African Odysseys Presents: Polisario, A People in Arms Polisario, un peuple en armes + intro and discussion on film restoration with chair

Nikolaus Perneczky QMUL and Keith Shiri of

Film Africa + Rain Nyesha

Sat 15 Jun 14:00

Mortu Nega Those Who Death Refused

Tue 18 Jun 21:00; Sun 30 Jun 18:00

Bezness

Mon 1 Jul 18:10 + intro; Sat 13 Jul 20:30

Coming Forth By Day Al-khoroug lel-nahar

Tue 2 Jul 20:40 (+ intro by producer, curator, writer

and translator Elhum Shakerifar); Fri 12 Jul 18:20

Bye Bye Africa

Thu 4 Jul 18:00 + discussion with film curator Abiba

Coulibaly; Wed 17 Jul 21:00

Bled Number One

Sun 7 Jul 17:45; Tue 23 Jul 20:40

Shirley Adams + Firstborn Eersgeborene

Mon 8 Jul 20:40; Wed 17 Jul 18:00 + discussion

to lunchtime – was so abundant that Anderson had to persuade the producers to expand the film from the planned 20 minutes to over 40.

Every Day was the centrepiece of the third Free Cinema programme at the National Film Theatre in May 1957. Reviews of the film were almost unanimous in their praise. It went on to win the Grand Prix at the Venice Festival of Shorts and Documentaries later that year. Yet it was Anderson's last direct contribution to the cinema until his first feature, *This Sporting Life* in 1963.

The film evokes what Anderson has called the 'poetry of everyday life' and has the best lyrical qualities of the wartime films of Anderson's idol Humphrey Jennings. After a rather cynical view of working-class leisure in *O Dreamland*, Anderson clearly celebrates the virtues and dignity of ordinary people at work. The film makes perfect use of Free Cinema's trademark features: virtuoso cinematography alternating highly poetic moments with candid camera shots, and an imaginative soundtrack using natural sounds, voices and added music. This time though, Anderson added a voice-over commentary as a concession to the sponsor.

Every Day Except Christmas was one of the most ambitious of all Free Cinema films, and remains probably the best representative of the movement in retrospectives around the world today.

Christophe Dupin, BFI Screenonline, screenonline.org.uk

March to Aldermaston

1958's Easter march to Aldermaston enjoys landmark status in the annals of peaceful protest. Its filmed record is similarly recalled as a milestone for campaigning documentary.

CND emerged from Aldermaston as a campaign uniting disparate wings of the political left with otherwise apolitical concerned citizens. Echoing this, the volunteers responsible for the film, under the Film and Television Committee for Nuclear Disarmament, united different sectors of their industry: from lab technicians processing footage for free, to Contemporary Films, which handled its distribution. The involvement of Free Cinema practitioners Lindsay Anderson and Karel Reisz is noteworthy, but this is not a Free Cinema film. Equally important were the contributions of contemporaries outside that movement (such as the Committee's Secretary Derrick Knight, and Stephen Peet) and others (like Wolfgang Suschitzky) with roots in the older Documentary Movement.

Credited only to the Committee, *March to Aldermaston* demands appreciation as the product of selfless collaboration. By most accounts, however, Anderson came to dominate the film at the editing stage. The crisp documentary shaped from the miles of raw footage is amazingly coherent. With the crucial addition of Richard Burton sensitively reading Christopher Logue's commentary, it is succinct and moving, never hysterical or sentimental. Courageously, it does not flinch from criticising the Eastern Bloc as harshly as Western politicians. And, in documenting the march's generally middle-class demographics (despite attempts to portray the movement as more broadly-based), it's now a great period piece, awash with cut-glass accents, trad jazz, and sensible hats and coats.

Precisely because it deserves recognition as a sincere attempt to advance its cause through documentary, it deserves the respect of being asked tough questions. It echoes the weaknesses, as much as the strengths, of the

Original Voices

Wed 10 Jul 20:50; Sat 27 Jul 12:10

African Odysseys Presents Night of the Kings La

Nuit des rois + intro & panel discussion on the role of griot with Tony Warner of African

Odysseys and Black History Walks

Sat 13 Jul 14:00

Félicité

Sun 14 Jul 14:40; Thu 18 Jul 18:00 (+ intro with author and presenter Kevin Le Gendre)

Faya Dayi

Fri 26 Jul 18:15; Wed 31 Jul 20:35

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disarmament movement. Politically, CND influenced only the Labour Party - mainly to Labour's electoral detriment. It soon caused damaging divisions within the party and, as late as 1983, Aldermaston veteran Michael Foot's landslide defeat was widely blamed on Labour's anti-nuclear platform. The film, too, fails to mount a convincing case for unilateral disarmament (its best shot is the claim that Britain can set a powerful moral example, arguably reflecting a dated faith in the UK's international influence). It no doubt had an electrifying effect at campaign meetings, but was less likely to win over the undecided, if it even reached them. Like too many other campaigning films, *March To Aldermaston* is ultimately a feel-good film for activists.

Patrick Russell, BFI Screenonline, screenonline.org.uk

O Dreamland

Lindsay Anderson's *O Dreamland* was made in 1953, around the same time as Anderson was making his Oscar-winning documentary *Thursday's Children*, co-directed with Guy Brenton. Anderson had just one assistant – John Fletcher, who was to be a mainstay of the Free Cinema films. Equipment was a single 16mm camera and an audiotape recorder.

Once completed, the film was shelved, with little prospect of ever being shown. As Anderson said, 'you don't do anything with a 10-minute, 16-millimetre film. It's just there, that's all.' It wasn't until early 1956, when the idea for the first Free Cinema programme was born, that it occurred to Anderson to include *O Dreamland*.

This is one of the most personal of the Free Cinema films. A 12-minute tour of the Margate funfair Dreamland (which still stands – in disrepair – today), the film features bleak and unattractive photography and a spare and impressionistic soundtrack. Despite the absence of a commentary, the film clearly conveys Anderson's critical view of Dreamland's 'attractions' – a 'Torture through the Ages' exhibit; bingo; penny arcades; bangers, beans and chips and seemingly endless mechanical puppets.

The lack of commentary was a characteristic of the Free Cinema films, as was the absence of live sound. This was initially forced on the filmmakers by the costs involved in synchronised sound, but the financial constraints freed Anderson and his colleagues to be creative and to use sound in expressive ways: a feature of *O Dreamland*'s soundtrack is the recurring laughter of the mechanical dummies, which takes on a sinister, mocking tone.

The effect of *O Dreamland* is summed-up by Gavin Lambert in his article on Free Cinema:

'Everything is ugly... It is almost too much. The nightmare is redeemed by the point of view, which, for all the unsparing candid camerawork and the harsh, inelegant photography, is emphatically humane. Pity, sadness, even poetry is infused into this drearily tawdry, aimlessly hungry world.'

Christophe Dupin, BFI Screenonline, screenonline.org.uk