



Big Screen Classics

The Garden

The Garden

Director: Derek Jarman
Production Company: Basilisk
In association with: Channel Four, British Screen, ZDF – Zweites Deutsches Fernsehen, Uplink
Producer: James Mackay
Production Manager: Nick Searle
Production Manager (Studio): Sarah Swords
Production Assistant: Jo Scarlett Coriat
Assistant Directors: Matthew Evans, David Lewis, Ian Francis
 Casting: Debbie McWilliams, Michelle Guish
 Casting (Extras): Simon Turner
 Director of Photography: Christopher Hughes
 Additional Photography: David Lewis, James MacKay, Nick Searle
 Camera Operators: Steve Farrer, Richard Heslop, Christopher Hughes, Derek Jarman
 Editor: Peter Cartwright
 Production Designers: Derek Brown, Christopher Hobbs
 Scenic Artist: Annie Lapaz
 Costume Designer: Annie Symons
 Make-up: Thelma Mathews
 Music: Simon Fisher Turner
 Music Performed by: Martyn Bates, Dean Broderick, Glen Fox, Paul Jayasinha, Andrew Okrzeja, Melanie Pappenhiem, Ian Shaw, David Sinclair, Brian Springbacrou, El Tito, Hugh Webb, Alexander Balanescu, Tony Hinnigan, Jonathan Carney, Kate Musker, Mark Horn
 String Arrangements: Dean Broderick
 Music Recording: Marvin Black, Richard Preston
 Synclavier Operator: Andy Kennedy
 Sound Recording: Gary Desmond
 Sound Re-recording: Peter Maxwell
 Sound Editor: Nigel Holland
 Foley Artists: Bill Garlick, Beryl Mortimer
 Adviser: Simon Goldberg
 Cast:
Tilda Swinton (*Madonna*)
Johnny Mills, Kevin Collins (*lovers*)
Pete Lee-Wilson (*Devil*)
Spencer Leigh (*Mary Magdalene/Adam*)
Jody Graber (*young boy*)
Roger Cook (*Christ*)
Jessica Martin (*singer*)
Philip Macdonald (*Joseph/Jesus*)
Dawn Archibald (*nature spirit*)
Michael Gough (*voice-overs*)
Maribelle La Manchega (*Spanish dancer*)
Orlando (*Pontius Pilate*)
Mike Tezcan, Matthew Wilde (*policemen*)
Milo Bell
Vernon Dobtcheff
Leslie Randall
UK-Germany-Japan 1990
92 mins
Digital

The screening on Wed 1 Apr will be introduced by artist Sarah Wood

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This film was such an inspiration to me when I first saw it. It has a lot to do with what was coming out of the speakers. So much of it is shot silently on Super 8, so the sound had to be created from scratch. That's the way I prefer to work. But with this film, I've never been able to separate the sound design and Simon Fisher Turner's brilliant score.

Mark Jenkin

A contemporary review

Derek Jarman's feature film work has become increasingly experimental in form, particularly since the silence imposed on him in the early 80s by lack of funding. *The Angelic Conversation* (1985), *The Last of England* (1987) and now *The Garden* all reflect Jarman's frustration with the conventions of mainstream cinema and a new-found confidence in allowing his material to dictate its own form. This is due in part to the plain fact that what Jarman now needs to express can no longer be contained in a narrative format. In the 70s, his films were public celebrations of his homosexuality, a necessary stance at the time which excluded his own more private emotions. In the 80s, Jarman began to turn inwards, a tendency reinforced perhaps by the death of his father and the onset of AIDS. Home-movie footage of Jarman as a child with his family begins to appear in his films almost as a recuperation of 'the good' in the context of a film career dominated until then by aggressive, violent and sadistic themes and images.

The Garden is an explosive combination of scenes plumbing a variety of loves, hates and desires, all welded together by the story of the Passion. The film, among other things, is about Christianity, the media, police brutality, advertising, gay love and repression, the family, old age, AIDS and, in the end, Jarman himself. Biblical characters are fragmented so that Christ appears – once in a marvellous scene in the present day, on a road cutting through a desolate landscape – but is represented mainly by two gay lovers; similarly Tilda Swinton is an angel, a beachcomber and the Madonna. A young man in drag is Mary Magdalene, while the police in an extremely brutal scene become the torturing soldiers of Pontius Pilate.

The film exemplifies Jarman's idea of a personal cinema, which previously existed only in the shorter Super-8 'home-movies' he began in 1970 but which has now moved to centre stage. Interestingly, Jarman's own cinematic ideas have gained from the imagistic camerawork of younger gay experimental filmmakers like John Maybury, Cerith Wyn-Evans, Chris Hughes and Richard Heslop, so that fast-cutting, pixillation and a sweeping camera have replaced what was once a much more static aesthetic, focused on tableaux rather than the energy and excitement of manipulating the film surface itself. As in *The Last of England*, *The Garden* is constructed around Jarman's own persona as dreamer/fantast/consciousness. The film is a dream in which the filmmaker plays or is the central protagonist, as in the 'trance' films of such American avant-gardists of the 1940s as Kenneth Anger, Gregory Markopoulos and Maya Deren. But its most immediate and perhaps conscious debts are to Cocteau (*The Testament of Orpheus* and *Orphée* itself), Pasolini (*The Gospel According to St Matthew*) and Powell (*The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp*).

Big Screen Classics

Punishment Park

Mon 30 Mar 20:50; Sun 12 Apr 12:20;

Fri 24 Apr 18:10

Pickpocket

Tue 31 Mar 20:30; Wed 8 Apr 18:20 (+ intro by film scholar, writer and international curator Dr Omar Ahmed); Mon 20 Apr 18:20; Thu 30 Apr 14:40

The Garden

Wed 1 Apr 18:15 (+ intro by artist Sarah Wood);

Thu 16 Apr 21:00

The Thin Red Line

Thu 2 Apr 14:00; Mon 6 Apr 17:30;

Sat 18 Apr 19:50

The Conversation

Thu 2 Apr 20:45; Tue 7 Apr 20:40; Wed 15 Apr 18:00 (+ intro by writer and broadcaster Matthew Sweet); Tue 21 Apr 14:40

Bad Timing

Fri 3 Apr 20:40; Tue 14 Apr 14:40; Fri 17 Apr 20:40;

Wed 22 Apr 18:00 (+ intro by film critic and improviser Tara Judah)

Inland Empire

Sat 4 Apr 19:40; Sun 19 Apr 14:50

Wendy and Lucy

Sun 5 Apr 14:50; Mon 13 Apr 14:40;

Thu 23 Apr 20:50

The Perfect Storm

Fri 10 Apr 20:25; Sat 25 Apr 12:00 (+ intro by filmmaker Mark Jenkin)

Small Axe: Lovers Rock

Sat 11 Apr 20:30; Wed 29 Apr 18:30 (+ intro)

Gallivant

Sun 26 Apr 12:20 (+ Q&A with director Andrew

Kötting, hosted by filmmaker Mark Jenkin);

Mon 27 Apr 20:30

Yet of all Jarman's features it is also the most allegorical, using the Passion of Jesus Christ to articulate not only emotional states but the nature of life itself, a Christian view by any account in which spiritual survival against the onslaught of corruption is paramount, where personal salvation is all. The style is quintessential Jarman in its overwrought tableaux, montage editing and bricolage 'narrative'. Images and motifs recur: of fire (a Jungian symbol which first appeared in the home movies of the early 1970s); the passive gay male couple (first met in *Angel and Sphinx* in *Jubilee* and most intensely celebrated in his sadly neglected *The Angelic Conversation*); the splitting and excessive idealisation of women, particularly of late through the iconic presence of Tilda Swinton; and the indictment of modern society through a recuperation of the past, typically a pre-capitalist one, the period of the English Renaissance (Shakespeare and John Dee).

The Garden can be seen as the final film in an unwitting trilogy on the subject of the moral, social and spiritual decline of England which began with *Jubilee* in the late 70s, was followed by *The Last of England* in the late 80s, and ends with *The Garden's* intensely private and painful allegory. The three films trace, almost tragically, Jarman's shifting perspective from a largely public and social critique in which historical bonds were imaginatively tied through the ever-present figure of John Dee in *Jubilee*, to the bleak, fragmented and paranoid avant-gardism of *The Last of England*, and now a coming to rest in which hope is balanced against despair, love against anger, fear and loathing against peace and reconciliation.

Michael O'Pray, *Monthly Film Bulletin*, January 1991

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