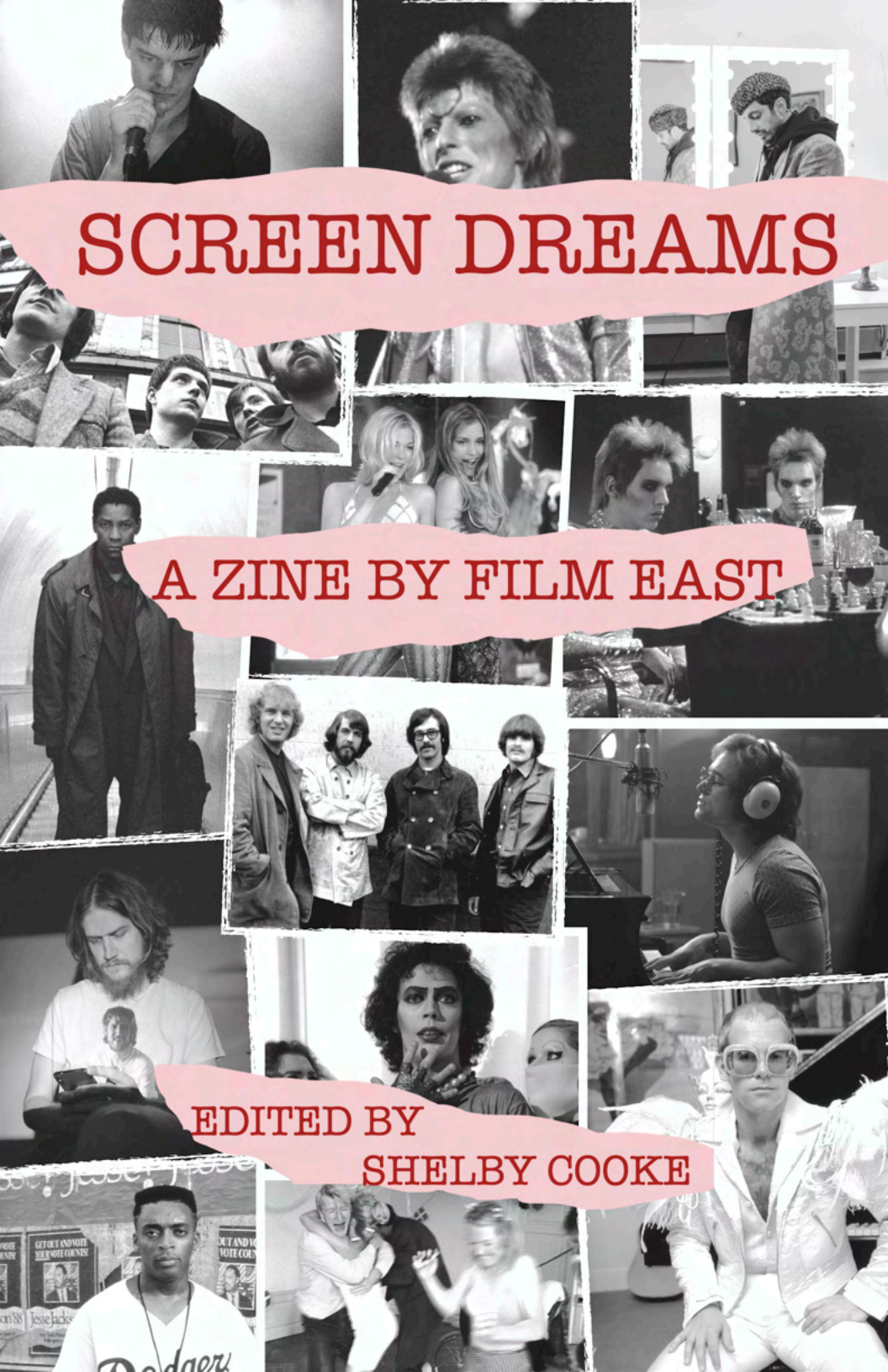

SCREEN DREAMS

A ZINE BY FILM EAST

EDITED BY
SHELBY COOKE

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Film East Presents:
SCREEN DREAMS

This zine is a companion to Film East's ROCKETMAN and VELVET GOLDMINE double bill screening at the 2021 Norwich Film Festival.

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PRELUDE

Oh, I was moved by your *screen dream*...

Celluloid pictures of living...

What are movies without sound?

Even before sound was officially synched with film in 1923, live musicians would accompany the moving images on screen, providing audience members with a complete sensory experience. So, it's no surprise that music and film have always, since the creation of the cinematic medium, been intertwined.

Perhaps, sound is something we take for granted in modern cinema, as we're just used to the art form capturing our every sense. We've never had one without the other. But have you ever considered what sound actually does for the viewing experience?

A swelling soundtrack can move you to tears, a pop song can bring you to your feet, a musical number can incite a collective sing along. And silence can be deafening.

There's something completely visceral and soulful when a piece of music fits so perfectly with the images flashing on screen.

Listening, imaging, dreaming... that's what music brings to film... a collection of endless possibilities for exploration. When music and film come together, magic happens.

So, that's why we want to talk about it!

Within these pages, you will find ten original articles exploring the use of music in film. From glam rock to punk, modern musicals and visual albums, SCREEN DREAMS dissects the many ways music can manifest on screen and how it impacts our viewing experience.

Part one, MUSICAL MEMORIES, uses biographical narratives to reflect on the influence music has had on our culture and society. This section dives into the music scene from the '60s and '70s, looking at how pivotal musical moments (like activist songs, glam rock and punk) are revisited in contemporary films.

Part two, MODERN MELODIES, looks at how music and sound are used as part of the cinematic form. These articles explore how music becomes part of a film's narrative, communicating the story's message through an auditory medium.

Continuing our mission of championing the newest voices in film criticism, each essay is written by a budding film

journalist and critic. Keep an eye on these names... because they are going to be big!

This is Film East's first-ever zine, so we thank you for supporting it and us! We are a volunteer organisation made up of people all under 30. The Film East team, along with all our contributors, commit their talent and energy all for free to help us accomplish our group's missions and aims. If you feel so inclined, please do consider donating to Film East by contacting us directly. Your donations will help to keep Film East hosting in-person film screenings and to allow us to pay the writers who contribute to our blog and any future books or print publications.

Without further ado, enjoy SCREEN DREAMS!

— Shelby Cooke, Editor


Part I
MUSICAL
MEMORIES

THE GHOST OF DAVID BOWIE

Capturing Bowie's Cultural Legacy in Todd Haynes' *Velvet Goldmine*

By Shelby Cooke

"So, um. W-what was he like?"
"Who's that? Brian? Like nothing I'd ever seen before.
And in the end... Like nothing he appeared."

So, what was *he* like? David Bowie, I mean.

It's hard to say. He was a man of change; an enigma of his own image, a hypocrite to his cause.

David Bowie based his career on evolution: his identity, image, music — all constantly shifting and morphing to reflect on the world he was living in at that moment. Bowie changed as an artist and as a member of society, turning himself into a piece of performance art, blurring the line between what was real and what was fiction.

So, it's practically impossible to capture just one "authentic" Bowie, with each of his eras encompassing a new cultural environment. Bowie's many masks give him his own unique spirit, a spirit that lingers within pivotal moments in popular culture, imprinting on our collective consciousness. Even if you don't "know" David Bowie, you've surely interacted with some version of him: whether it be the famous *Aladdin Sane* album cover, "Let's Dance" on the radio, the Goblin King in your favourite childhood movie or the strange alien-like man asking if there's life on Mars.

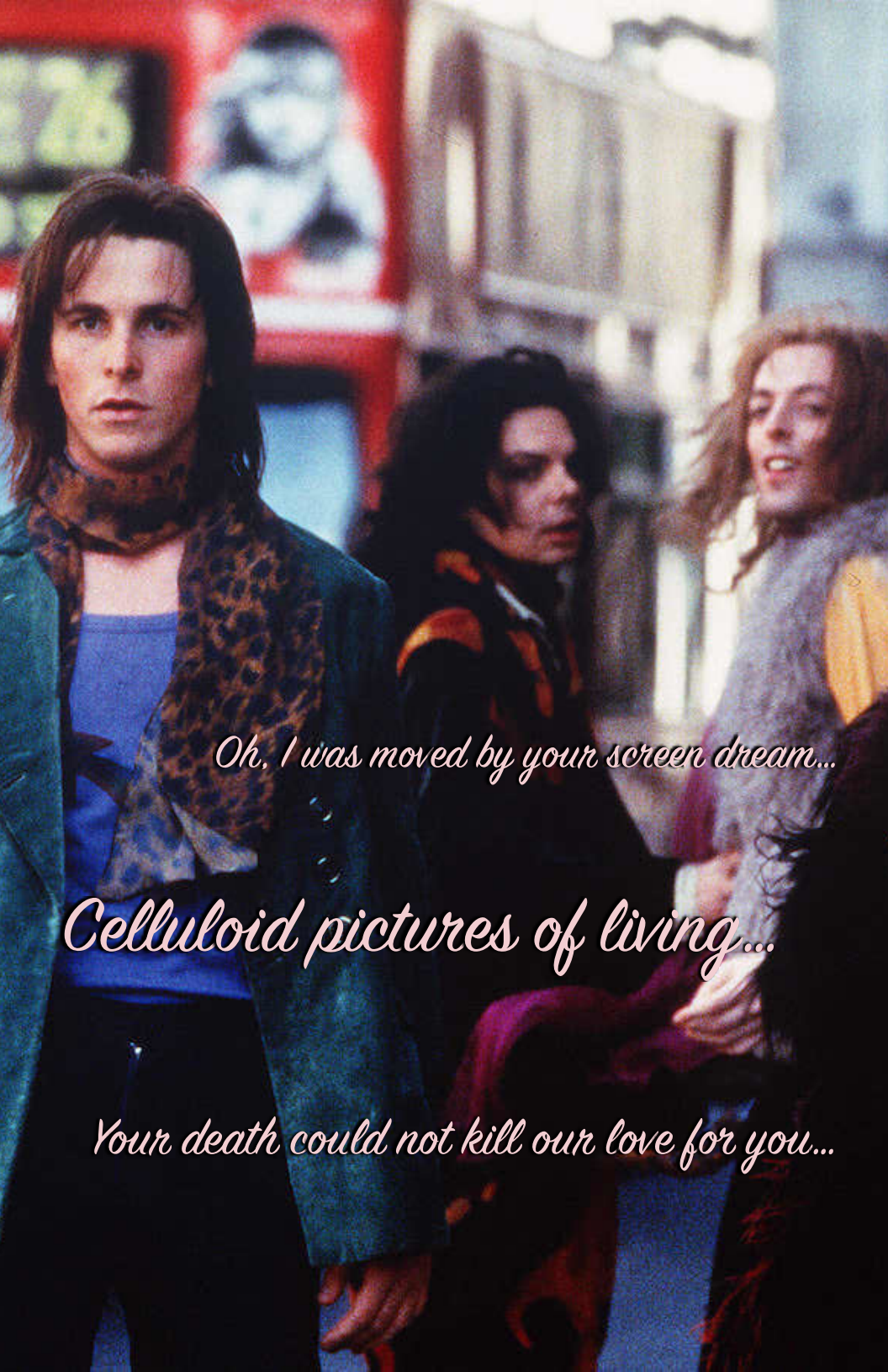
This cultural ghost of David Bowie has appeared in various films and tv shows over the years, such as Uli Edel's *Christiane F* (1981) and Anton Corbijn's *Control* (2007) to

name a few. But none capture the Bowie zeitgeist quite like Todd Haynes' underground classic *Velvet Goldmine* (1998), which creates a narrative that explores Bowie's lasting legacy without ever once bringing the man to life.

Told through a *Citizen Kane*-style narrative, *Velvet Goldmine* follows journalist Arthur Stuart (Christian Bale), who is assigned to write an anniversary article on the hoax shooting of the mysterious, now reclusive, glam rock star Brian Slade (Jonathan Rhys Meyers). While pursuing the truth behind Brian's fall from fame, Arthur meets with numerous people from Brian's past, including his jilted manager Cecil (Michael Feast), ex-wife Mandy (Toni Collette) and former lover/fellow musician Curt Wild (Ewan McGregor), who all end up recalling the influence Brian had on their lives.

A love letter to Britain's glam rock era, *Velvet Goldmine* functions as a fictional chronology of David Bowie's stint as the spaceman alter-ego Ziggy Stardust. Unable to use Bowie's factual biography (as the musician threatened to sue the production should they use any of his music or life story), Haynes, instead, reimagines the various figures that revolutionised the queer music scene in the early 70s, with characters based loosely on Iggy Pop, Marc Bolan, Brian Eno, Lou Reed and so on. But Bowie is its main attraction.

It's easy to compare the events of the film to Bowie's biography: Brian Slade, in order to make his mark on the music industry, creates the space-age rock persona Maxwell Demon with the help of his eccentric American wife and


Oh, I was moved by your screen dream...
Celluloid pictures of living...
Your death could not kill our love for you...

inspired by the chaotic and violent performances of Curt Wild. This is almost an exact retelling of how Ziggy Stardust came to be: Bowie, after failing multiple times to break out in the music scene, created Ziggy with the assistance of his American wife Angie and taking elements from Lou Reed's and Iggy Pop's anarchic stage characters. Theatrical, camp and glamorous, Maxwell Demon follows Ziggy's rise to cult stardom, disrupting the status quo by challenging gender norms and popularising bisexuality. The film's catalyst — the staged assassination of Maxwell Demon — itself mirrors the abrupt ending to the Ziggy character, with Bowie's final live performance as the Martian often being referred to as the character's "killing". The correlation to Bowie's legacy is clearly there; so much so, that even Brian Slade's outfits can be compared directly to those of Bowie's.

But since Haynes was restricted from using Bowie's actual biography, what he captures instead is the star's cultural legacy, creating a Bowie story with Bowie entirely absent. He understands that Bowie simply didn't have a biography; everything that we know and understand about "David Bowie" is merely part of a performance by an actor playing the role of the rock star. So naturally, his film about Bowie could only be a mirage of the man, focusing, instead, on the influence of one man on an entire generation. Brian Slade, Haynes' stand-in Bowie figure, is used to enhance the myth of the man; it's not about the man Bowie was but rather what he stood for.

Like Bowie, we only get to know Brian through the people that surrounded him. His story is told entirely from

memories and experiences, giving us a projection of the man, an outline of his persona. We never get to know him for real, just who he was to others. Much like how *Citizen Kane*, in theory, is about Charles Foster Kane (Orson Welles), it's the "less important" people in Kane's life that serve as the film's protagonists. Arthur, like *Citizen Kane*'s Jedediah Leland (Joseph Cotten), is the focal point of *Velvet Goldmine*, as his journey of discovery becomes much more important than the newspaper article he's out to write.

Behind *Velvet Goldmine*'s glitz and glamour of fabulous rock stars and extravagant people is a poignant coming-of-age story about understanding yourself in an intolerant environment. Through Arthur's narrative, Haynes effortlessly interweaves the spectacle of glam rock with the reality of growing up queer in a conservative Britain, allowing us to see how icons like Brian function as a figure that can incite cultural movements and challenge prejudicial thinking.

Arthur has many pivotal life moments with Brian in the background: he masturbates to images of Brian in music magazines, exploring his sexuality and attraction to men; while watching one of Brian's press conferences on TV with his family, he, during a daydream cutaway, points to the television, jumps up and down and tells his judgemental parents, "that is me!", longing to be able to be as open and proud as his musical hero; after being kicked out by his parents because of his queerness, he finds a safe place with an adoptive family of fellow glam rock outsiders; he has sex with Curt Wild (which we can assume is the first time he sleeps with another man) after a concert mourning the

death of glam rock and Slade's career. All of these crucial events in Arthur's early life are narrated by Brian's ghostly presence.

Through Arthur's voyage of sexual discovery and independent evolution, Haynes shows us how just one man, a man who we really didn't know or understand but feel like we did, can revolutionise any entire generation. The spectacle of the myth, the societal idea of a man, has the power to rewrite cultural norms and social standards. Brian's queer artistic expression in this fictional world (just like Bowie's in our own) challenges older generations' biases while allowing the youth to break free from the repressive restraints of social standards.

Ultimately, this is Bowie's legacy, and Haynes captures that perfectly. *Velvet Goldmine* isn't a film about Bowie. Rather, it's a film that explores how staged celebrity personalities have the ability to redirect the path of social history. Bowie, like Brian, isn't just one single concept. Instead, they are understood through personal experience, with each individual reflecting on to them a different purpose and meaning.

So, while Arthur may have asked Cecil what Brian was like as a person, what he really should have been asking about the cultural icon is: "what was he like *to you*?"

ELTON VS FREDDIE

Why Elton John's biopic *Rocketman* triumphs over Queen's *Bohemian Rhapsody*

By Niamh Brook

"People don't pay to see Reginald Dwight.
They pay to see Elton John!"

In recent years, biographical films have become a staple of modern cinema. They are almost inescapable at this point, with more and more biopics being released every year. They become bait for Oscars voters, who, frankly, enjoy their films boring and uninspiring. They allow type-casted Hollywood stars to dabble in character acting and take on a "real challenge." We've become almost numb to them at this point. And no biopic fits these clichés more than *Bohemian Rhapsody* (2018).

Bohemian Rhapsody tells the story of legendary '80s rock band, Queen, and follows a basic biopic structure: a nobody becomes a somebody, then they can't handle being a somebody, thus drama ensues. The plot, matched with some pretty simplistic direction and meme-worthy editing, results in a lacklustre viewing experience; a film to pop on for some background noise whilst you do your big clean.

To be frank, I find the film frustrating. Freddie Mercury (Rami Malek), famously an out and proud homosexual man, is the centrepiece of the film, but little is done to really delve into the life he led and the hardships he went through. Although he sits as the film's protagonist, we never really learn anything about him or his past. In fact, he comes across as a bit of an arsehole throughout the film with no real reasoning behind his behaviour.

Article originally published by Film East Online in July 2020. Printed with permission.

It feels like a somewhat Disney-fied adaptation of Mercury's life, focusing more on his platonic friendship with Mary Austin (Lucy Boynton) than with his partner of seven years, Jim Hutton (Aaron McCusker). It dabbles in Mercury's queerness, but it's as if the film is scared to fully embrace the man he was; scared they won't please certain audiences and lose out on potential box office figures. It lures you in with the promise of learning the real story of Freddie Mercury, but instead, you receive montage after boring montage of songwriting sessions.

And, of course, there is still debate about who is actually singing when it comes to the film's vocals. According to an article on NME, the vocals you hear within the film are a mixture of Mercury, Malek and an impressionist Marc Martel. It is common for actors to have a voice double on film soundtracks, but it's the film's level of secrecy surrounding this that I find disturbing. No one is sure how much of Malek's performance is used; none of which features on the soundtrack (which is just repackaged original Queen songs). I'm not sure if I'm nitpicking here (let's be honest, I probably am), but Rami Malek was awarded Best Actor at the Academy Awards for this performance — and he didn't even give full vocals on the soundtrack. Whilst his performance is undeniably great, I do feel more should have been done to be granted such a prestigious accolade.

I'M NOT CROSS. I'M DISAPPOINTED WITH *BOHEMIAN RHAPSODY*.

It could have been great, a truly in-depth discussion and exploration of fame and sexuality in the '80s. But no, what we were given instead was a film you can watch with your nan after your Sunday lunch.

Less than a year later, we were treated to a film that dealt with similar themes that did not disappoint. That film, ladies and gentlemen, is *Rocketman* (2019).

Since first watching *Rocketman* in the cinema, I've seen the film 12 more times. It encapsulates everything I love about film: over the top visuals that mix with surrealism. Musical numbers, drama, fantastic performances! Everything about this film is so elaborate and camp and quintessentially Elton John.

The narrative depicts events in Elton's (Taron Egerton) life by framing his stories through his own perspective during a stint in rehab. The film plays with both fact and fiction, allowing Elton's character to be an unreliable narrator, creating erratic visuals to match his hyperbolic personality. We see the world, both good and bad, through Elton's eyes: we see him fall victim to his success, battle addiction and become the unlikeable hero of his own story.

The film is not afraid to show the nitty-gritty of the star's life: gay sex, orgies, cocaine and domestic abuse to name a few. Studios wanted to tone down some of the mature themes in the film (to follow in a similar path as *Bohemian Rhapsody)*, but as Elton said himself: "I just haven't led a PG-13 life." So why would his film be?

I think it's gonna be a long, long time
'til touchdown brings me 'round again…

I'm a **ROCKET MAN**, *burning out his fuse up here alone*

This is one of the reasons I adore this film: it's not afraid to be itself. In every way, it is unapologetic, juxtaposing the elaborate highs and extreme lows of his life with lavish, camp musical numbers such as "Honky Cat" and "Goodbye Yellow Brick Road." But none of the sequences shows off the themes of the film quite as well as the titular track, "Rocket Man."

The sequence shows the tragic true story of Elton's suicide attempt and the little time he had to recover before he next went on stage. Egerton's performance in this scene alone is outstanding: he balances a grand performance, alongside the pain and symptoms of a drug overdose, with raw emotion — it's breathtaking. The film isn't afraid to tackle the uncomfortable nature of this situation: we see him rushed to a stadium and get his stomach pumped mere seconds before he is shoved into a costume and subsequently on stage. The scene itself is somewhat of a microcosm of Elton's real life; he was trapped in a vicious cycle of substance abuse and performance until the two became almost intertwined.

And unlike our unnamed friend, Egerton wasn't afraid to perform all 22 songs on the soundtrack, retraining his voice from musical theatre to Elton's rock styling. This alone shows the pure dedication from both cast and crew to perfect every detail of the film. No effort was spared for this film, with every second dripping in a lavish Elton-seal-of-approval, elevating the film to a whole new level.

IN CASE YOU HAVEN'T NOTICED BY NOW, I LOVE *ROCKETMAN*.

Unlike *Bohemian Rhapsody, Rocketman* grants us access to Elton's private life, his childhood, the hardships he faced; ultimately allowing us into his psyche, to understand him completely. To avoid myself being all together biased, the film isn't completely perfect — some of the CGI is questionable and Bryce Dallas Howard's accent can be jarring at times, but to me, all of these add to the impeccable charm of the film.

QUEER HORROR

Normalising the Queer Identity in *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*

By Niamh Brook

"I see you shiver with anticipation!"

The Rocky Horror Picture Show was first released way back in August 1975. Directed by Jim Sharman, it tells the bizarre story of Brad (Barry Bostwick) and Janet (Susan Sarandon), a young couple who find themselves caught up in the unique world of the sexy, alien scientist Dr Frank-N-Furter (Tim Curry).

Unsurprisingly, this B-movie did not do well both critically and financially during its first theatrical run, with '70s cinema-goers not fully grasping the film's absurdist themes. However, in the 40 years since its release, the film has achieved cult status, making history as the longest-running cinematic release and cultivating a fan base unlike any other: unique, accepting, and proudly queer.

But this poses the question, why do fans continually turn to *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*? What about the film invites audiences into its community? What makes *Rocky Horror* so proudly queer?

The best way to answer these questions is to look at the film's gloriously twisted antagonist, Dr Frank-N-Furter. Perhaps the most openly queer addition to the film, Dr Frank-N-Furter oozes bravado, glamour and above all else, sex appeal. Outwardly queer throughout the duration of the film, we are first introduced to them in the musical number "Sweet Transvestite." A wonderfully sexual number that introduces the character dressed head to toe in the now-

iconic corset, tiny knickers, platform heels and blood-red lipstick. Tim Curry's muscular male figure draped in feminine pearls and stockings creates a queer visual of pure self-acceptance. The confidence that exudes from Frank-N-Furter throughout this sequence introduces the audience to a character with no shame in being themselves, even when Brad and Janet are visibly repulsed and terrified by their appearance. The song notes this reaction, with a lyric telling the pair to not "judge a book by its cover." The character's reactions mirror those found within heternormative society, when open acceptance of one's queer identity was not commonplace. Witnessing someone so erotic and queer truly would have truly been a shock to people during the film's release.

Rocky Horror's deep-rooted respect for its queer characters presents their differences as aspects to be celebrated rather than condemned. Dr Frank-N-Furter is never once the butt of the joke, but, instead, is seen to be respected by those around them and in charge of almost every situation. To have a queer figure in such a position is a powerful visual for audience members.

It can also be noted that the narrative decision to make many of the queer characters in the film aliens from the planet Transylvania is arguably a play on the alienation many queer people feel within society. The somewhat on-the-nose decision to literally alienate the queer figures in the film makes fun of this feeling, reflecting how unless you are literally from another planet, then there is no need to feel this way.


I'M
JUST A
SWEET
TRANSVESTITE
FROM
TRANSEXUAL
TRANSYLVANIA

But the film doesn't just feature solely queer characters... Well, at least not at the start. Brad and Janet offer the viewer a heterosexual perspective on the time spent in Frank-N-Furter's castle. When we first meet the young couple, we see Brad propose to Janet in a graveyard (of all places). This unique location offers more than just a dance floor during the musical number "Damm it, Janett." Rather, this dark imagery can be read as the death of heterosexual dominance in the film's narrative. Whilst Brad and Janet lend themselves as our protagonists, they ultimately serve as vehicles for us to understand a wider, more exciting array of queer characters. Through Brad and Janet, we are invited to contemplate the rigid confines of heteronormativity, as we see how suffocating these ideals can truly be.

As the couple's time in the castle progresses, the pair (who arrive as virgins) find themselves seduced by the bisexual transvestite, giving in to their temptations and experimenting sexually for the first time. After this scene, we see a far more open Brad and Janet: Brad is seen smoking and relishing in his homosexual encounter, whereas Janet accepts her newfound sexual freedom and proceeds to have a fling with the titular Rocky (Peter Hinwood). This presentation of Brad and Janet's newfound sexual acceptance allows viewers, who perhaps are closeted or unsure of their own sexuality, to find solace in these characters' exploration.

The film concludes with the musical sequence "Rose Tint My World": a truly fabulous number that encapsulates all of the film's main themes — sexual liberation, acceptance and

breaking boundaries. The sequence starts with both the men (Rocky and Brad) and the women (Columbia and Janet) dressed in corsets and fishnets with feather boas and high heels. By dressing the masculine characters, who have shown no interest in cross-dressing prior to this scene, in such an effeminate manner, their stereotypical idea of masculinity is stripped from them, allowing for their true individual self to take centre stage. This is furthered by the makeup worn by the characters in this scene. Colourful and abstract, the makeup blurs the idea of gender and acts further as an element of expression. This unification of costuming and makeup creates a powerful visual for an audience, a visual where gender is erased and one's true self is presented on stage before you.

But Brad's feeling of empowerment in his sexuality, which has been suppressed by heteronormative ideals, capture the impact of this scene. His anxieties about this newfound queer freedom can be heard within the lyrics of the song: "It's beyond me. Help me, Mommy." The lyric highlights Brad's initial trepidations surrounding this sexual liberation and is later furthered by the lyric "what's this. Let's see. I feel sexy."

Brad's uncertainty of this feeling is arguably a commentary regarding the toxic masculinity that plagues our society, forcing him to play a certain role, as opposed to experimenting with his identity. *Rocky Horror* challenges typical ideals found within our society and offers its audience an alternate option. By presenting various queer identities, the film opens its audience up to a range of

discussions about discovering one's true self and their place in the world.

For a queer audience, this image of pure self-acceptance could act as a catalyst for change, and inspire individuals to live by the film's teachings of "don't dream it, be it." Seeing others live so proudly on screen allows for queer individuals to follow in their footsteps and live both proudly and authentically. *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* still creates a community to this day, as the film offers fans a safe-haven of acceptance, where you can gather with fellow fans who might not share the same experiences or sexual identity as you, but rather share in the film's values, wit and, above all else, its cracking soundtrack.

The Rocky Horror Picture Show will continue to break boundaries in the decades to come, queering ideals so ingrained in our culture that the film's message will always ring true. "Don't dream it, be it" is a message everyone needs to hear, and I will happily sing that message with Frank-N-Furter alongside other *Rocky Horror* fans for the rest of my days.

THE SAD EYES OF PUNK

Subverting the Rock Star in Anton Corbijn's *Control*

By Shelby Cooke

"When I'm up there, singing, they don't understand how much I give and how it affects me. And now they want more. They expect me to give more... And I don't know if I can."

The words "punk rock" produce a very specific image in one's mind: darkness engulfing a stage with raging men, throwing drum sets into the audience, screaming "fuck you" to just about every establishment in their sphere.

Punk, in many ways, evokes connotations of violence and extreme ideologies, of hyper-masculine spectacle and performance, of tough personas and hardened exteriors. Iggy Pop, Sid Vicious, the Sex Pistols, the Clash... all encapsulating this wild, almost primordial, concept of the punk mentality. But in 1976, a group of four average lads from Manchester formed a band that would completely revolutionise the idea of what punk could be.

Despite their limited discography, Joy Division transformed not just punk, but the entire soundscape of Northern Britain. Their short presence on the music scene invented a sound that would far surpass their generation, creating a type of musical style that can still be heard in even our most contemporary music. Yet, it seems that Joy Division's greatest legacy is the simple act of bringing emotions to punk. Or as better said by Tony Wilson, co-founder of Factory Records and an influential figure in the rise of Joy Division:

"PUNK ENABLED YOU TO SAY, 'FUCK YOU.' BUT SOMEHOW, IT COULDN'T GO ANY FURTHER. [...] SOONER OR LATER, SOMEONE WAS GOING TO WANT TO SAY MORE THAN 'FUCK YOU.' SOMEONE WAS GOING TO WANT TO SAY 'I'M FUCKED.' AND IT WAS JOY DIVISION WHO WERE THE FIRST BAND TO DO THAT, TO USE THE ENERGY AND SIMPLICITY OF PUNK TO EXPRESS MORE COMPLEX EMOTIONS."

— TONY WILSON

Capturing the atmosphere of Joy Division's presence, Anton Corbijn's film *Control* (2007) explores the rise and eventual traumatic ending of Manchester's most prominent band. The film follows the life of the band's lead singer, Ian Curtis (Sam Riley), depicting his work within the group, as well as his deteriorating domestic life which led to his eventual suicide.

Perhaps because of his relationship as the band's photographer during their career or simply just because of a pure understanding of what Joy Division emulated, Corbijn's film doesn't project the band as the standard larger-than-life music figures. Rather, he makes their stories familiar by rejecting the preconceived idea of 'what they are' for 'who they were.'

Corbijn depicts Joy Division's rock stardom not as the glamorous and unrelenting narrative we're used to seeing; but rather, he shows just four mates with a passion for

music. Throughout the film, we find ourselves watching scenes typical of a rock biopic: sweaty and soulful performances, groupies sharing drinks backstage, tensions in recording sessions, and a plethora of beautiful women. But, in the true spirit of Joy Division's place within music history, Corbijn subverts these moments by having them play out not how we expect. After the show, the band goes home and back to their daily lives; they don't overdose on hard drugs, but opt for bottles of beer; fan affairs evoke tender, complex emotions as opposed to simply sexual lust. There's no fanfare or exoticism about them; they wear office attire and have thick Northern accents. They have banal day jobs and relationship issues.

Unlike the Bowie's or the Elton's or the Jagger's, who used the spectacle of their grand and over the top performance to lighten the sensitivity of their musical subject matter, Joy Division didn't shy away from the darkness within their music, combining the stripped-back simplistic performance style of punk with the lyrical complexities of the glam rock era before them. But it's the figure of Ian Curtis, in particular, that epitomises this contraction, depicting how Curtis's physical, mental and emotional sensitivity doesn't fit within the archetype of the rock persona.

Based on the real Deborah Curtis's biography of her late husband, *Control* spends much of its runtime exploring the domesticity of Ian's life. This comes in the form of medical scares, romantic woes and fatherhood troubles, culminating in what would generically be a kitchen sink drama. True to Ian's life, the film depicts his diagnosis as an

epileptic, with him going to doctor's appointments, getting treatments, having episodes and taking medication. As his physical health begins to deteriorate, so does his mental health, with chronic depression, anxiety and borderline paranoia impacting his ability to perform with the band. Unlike the stereotypical rock star, which traditionally comes in the form of an able-bodied man, using drugs for recreation, unhinged by his chaotic lifestyle and projecting a heightened sense of self-importance, Corbijn's depiction of Ian is emotionally sensitive and physically unwell. He projects a more feminine energy, differentiating him from that of his contemporaries.

In the same vein, we also watch the relationship thrive, and eventually dissolve, between Ian and his wife, Debbie (Samantha Morton). This, in particular, is where Corbijn plays the most with gender tropes expected for his character. We watch Ian win over Debbie by reciting poems he has written, asking her to marry him after just a few months together, wanting them to get pregnant and have a baby together... Ian is a hopeless romantic, willing to bare his heart and soul, unashamed of his delicate side.

But tenderness isn't in the brief for a rock star. When Debbie shows up to a concert, heavily pregnant, wanting to support her husband, members of the band's management shun her and remove her from the guest list, clearly indicating that she's not welcome. As the band grows bigger, Debbie and Ian grow further apart, as the idea of the happily married husband and father doesn't project the essence of the tormented musician. The image of Joy

WHEN ROUTINE BITES HARD AND AMBITIONS ARE LOW. AND RESENTMENT RIDES HIGH, BUT EMOTIONS WON'T GROW. AND WE'RE CHANGING OUR WAYS, TAKING DIFFERENT ROADS. **LOVE, LOVE WILL TEAR US APART AGAIN**

WHY IS THE BEDROOM SO COLD, TURNED AWAY ON YOUR SIDE? IS MY TIMING THAT FLAWED, OUR RESPECT RUN SO DRY? YET THERE'S STILL THIS APPEAL THAT WE'VE KEPT THROUGH OUR LIVES. **LOVE, LOVE WILL TEAR US APART AGAIN**

DO YOU CRY OUT IN YOUR SLEEP, ALL MY FAILINGS EXPOSED? GET A TASTE IN MY MOUTH AS DESPERATION TAKES HOLD. IS IT SOMETHING SO GOOD, JUST CAN'T FUNCTION NO MORE?

BUT LOVE, LOVE WILL TEAR US APART AGAIN

Division's Ian Curtis became something he wasn't, rebranding his identity for the expectations of his profession.

While on tour in Europe, Ian meets Annik (Alexandra Maria Lara), a journalist interviewing the band for a fan magazine. An intimate bond forms between the two, based mostly on an intellectual connection rather than a purely sexual one. Unlike normal groupie affairs, the romance between Ian and Annik is brought about through engaging conversations, sharing their hopes and fears and falling in love with each other's spirit rather than bodies.

In his relationships, Ian's insecurities and troubles dominate. With Debbie, he bursts into a fit of tears and panic while having sex. With Annik, he allows her to care for him like a mother, comforting him after epileptic episodes. These tender moments between Ian and the women in his life forces us to see the intense vulnerability of his character. Corbijn shows us beyond the proverbial curtain of music management and marketing to the core of Ian's personality, allowing us to understand Ian's true emotional sensitivity, combating rock's hyper-masculine stereotype.

In the forward for Deborah's book *Touching from a Distance* (1995), which served as the source material for Corbijn's film, famed music journalist Jon Savage writes:

"[THIS BOOK] MAY ALSO HELP US TO UNDERSTAND THE NATURE OF THE OBSESSION THAT CONTINUES TO STALK ROCK CULTURE: THE ROMANTIC NOTION OF THE TORTURED ARTIST, TOO FAST TO LIVE, TOO YOUNG TO DIE. HIS IS THE MYTH THAT BEGINS WITH THOMAS CHATTERTON AND STILL CARRIES ON, THROUGH RUDOLF VALENTINO, JAMES DEAN, SID VICIOUS, IAN CURTIS AND KURT COBAIN. *TOUCHING FROM A DISTANCE* SHOWS THE HUMAN COST OF THAT MYTH."

— JON SAVAGE

As with Deborah's book, *Control* contradicts our societal expectations of how and what the rock star should be. Unlike other music biopics, *Control* isn't afraid to show the menial and the mundane. The film actively makes its star normal, showing the complexities of his mental and physical illnesses and not glamorising him as something larger than life. The film brings a sensitivity to Ian's biography, negating the cult status that is attached to the name "Ian Curtis." *Control* breaks down Ian's star identity, depicting him not as a divine rock star, but as the complex and ill person he was.

UN[FORTUNATE] [SON]G

How the Creedence Clearwater Revival Track is Misused in Films

By William Schofield

"There'll be no more debate, no more discussion, no more compromise... It's time for a new course of action. A new direction. A game change... You're joining me in the Navy!"

When one reads the words "Vietnam War", certain images are conjured in the mind's eye: a fleet of helicopters flying low over yellowed grassy fields; a platoon of spunky young rogues carefully wading through a swampy marsh of tropical foliage, and Richard Nixon partaking in one of his two favourite pass-times – grinning victoriously or sweating profusely.

There is also a significant likelihood that, montaged across these vignettes, a specific song is playing. The discography of the Vietnam War is a long and complicated one, with a plethora of playlists and myriad of mixtapes being created over the years to capture the zeitgeist of the era. However, across all of these lists, one song seems to recur almost more frequently than any other.

'Fortunate Son' is a song originally released in November 1969 – roughly two-thirds into the Vietnam conflict – by the American rock band Creedence Clearwater Revival. By this point, the band were already, in no uncertain terms, countercultural icons: their shaggy hair and ruffled outfits put them in step with their rebellious musical brethren, their distinctive style of bluesy-rock blended with lyrics centring on Southern US iconography put them at the forefront of American pop-culture, and their status as the first major act

signed to appear at the 1969 Woodstock festival capped off their position as forerunners in the scene.

‘Fortunate Son’ is no exception to their reputation, being a commentary on the US military’s draft system during the Vietnam war and the inequalities therein. The lyrics lament that the “senator’s son”, “millionaire’s son” and “military son” - the very same people who force average civilians into conflict – are themselves immune from such a system. Though the elites espouse intensely nationalistic ideologies, being “born to wave the flag” with “star-spangled eyes”, it is largely the average Joe who is forced to fight and die, simply by virtue of the fact they aren’t “fortunate sons.”

The song’s origins have been traced to a brief scandal in 1968, wherein former President Eisenhower’s grandson avoided the draft by joining the army reserves. Certainly, the song isn’t explicitly ‘anti-war’, with band member John Foggerty once stating “the song speaks more to the unfairness of class than war itself.” That said, the song’s harsh criticisms of the contemporary US socio-political climate – centring on its handling of the war, coupled with the rest of the band’s oeuvre makes calling it an anti-Vietnam protest song not exactly a stretch.

Despite the track’s “Flower Power” origins, its appearance within popular culture stems not from its subtle critiques of socio-political realities, but from the Frankensteinian warping of its original purpose into a symbol of US intervention. While this change could be attributed to a number of origins, an odd pattern emerges when tracing

the song's growing usage across film. Throughout film history, the song's appearances have time and time again been at moments of intense American patriotism and military might, erasing all original nuance and understanding of the song's intentions. At this point, it has evolved almost exclusively into a patriotic dog-whistle, a leitmotif to signify the might and grandeur of the US military.

A cover of the song plays over the end credits of the 2004 remake of *The Manchurian Candidate*. Its usage here feels more appropriate than most – if not a little on the nose (given the film's main antagonists are literally a corrupt US senator and her brainwashed son). That said, the film seems to reinterpret the song's message as a warning, not about the corrupt and unfair mechanisms by which the US government and militaries are run, but instead a cautionary tale of a few 'bad apples' perverting an otherwise flawless system; the solution is to send in a hardcore no-nonsense ex-marine to save the President's life. Through the might of the government and military working hand-in-hand, both institutions are saved and the American status quo can continue! Hooray!

This idea of the military being the solution, rather than the problem, is transposed onto the song itself. Its iconic twangy bassline is replaced with a slow percussive drumbeat, eerily similar to that of a marching band, shifting the tune's rock and roll vibe to one of a slow, jingoistic chant. While it can be imagined Wycleaf Jean - who covered the song - intended to invoke the imagery of protest tunes

and rebellion, the connotations to military parades and a drill sergeant's Duckworth chant are far more pervasive. The most telling part, however, is the removal of the song's final verse, in which the singer laments he "ain't no military son"; instead, the song takes a vague jab at the "FBI, CIA and Secret Service." It is no longer a barbed critique of the callous and rigged military system, but instead a celebration: the military has won against each and every vague, undefined threat which faced it, and the status quo remains.

The 2012 sci-fi film *Battleship* likewise used the song in its credits, though its means of twisting the song into a celebration of military might is somehow even *less* subtle. The film openly received massive amounts of funding from the US Navy during its pre-production period. Its script was repeatedly revised and edited by members of the Navy Office of Information West – effectively their PR department - with the film's producer Sarah Aubrey cheerily admitting "we made this movie because we wanted to showcase the *modern* Navy" (which apparently includes aliens, giant lasers and Rihanna). The song's use in the credits acts as a means to this end: as it plays, a menagerie of military weapons and gadgets fly across the screen in amongst the names of the cast and crew. They start realistically, highlighting missiles and bullets, but as the credits roll on, the weapons grow more and more fantastical, with exploding battleships and futuristic spaceships darting across the screen - notably ending on one such spaceship being destroyed by military forces. The credits (beyond depicting the insanity of Aubrey's "modern navy") act as a

SOME FOLKS ARE BORN MADE TO WAVE THE FLAG
THEY'RE RED, WHITE AND BLUE
AND WHEN THE BAND PLAYS "HAIL TO THE CHIEF"
THEY POINT THE CANNON AT YOU, LORD
IT AIN'T ME, IT AIN'T ME
I AIN'T NO SENATOR'S SON, SON
IT AIN'T ME, IT AIN'T ME
I AIN'T NO FORTUNATE ONE

cathartic cap to the film, coming shortly after the human's victorious final battle and once again displaying the power of the US Navy as a virtuous, defensive force. It acts as a reminder meant to reinforce the lessons the film was designed to impart: the US Navy is a powerful force for good and the last line against threats from outside. Let us bask in the glow of military might and cheer, as we witness the destruction of those wicked 'aliens' threatening our way of life!

Once again, the song's meaning has found itself buried beneath a wash of blind patriotism, being used in what could - or rather, should - be labelled propaganda. The Navy themselves seem to be openly agreeable with this interpretation: so happy were they with the finished film that they ended up using sequences of it in their online recruitment material, with NOIW director Bob Anderson stating "we just hope that a lot of people see the movie and think that it's neat and that maybe inspires them to check us out and see what we're all about."

A litany of other examples exist in other films such as *War Dogs*, *Die Hard 4.0*, *Suicide Squad* and *Forrest Gump*, all of which - in different degrees of severity - use the song as a shorthand to denote military power. That's not even talking about the plethora of video games and TV shows which use the song almost exclusively to the same effect. The song has become so inexorably tied to war media that a 2018 episode of *Family Guy* showcased a plotline in which a character, returning from Vietnam, is shown to experience severe PTSD – not from the conflict, but the omnipresence

of the song underscoring his memories. At this point, the song's linkage to war media is so ubiquitous that it is inherently ingrained within the popular psyche; a phenomenon which is now in and of itself worthy of parody. At this point, all understanding of the song's original meaning has effectively been washed away, replaced with a slap-dash veneer of American patriotism.

The song is now a symbol of everything it is not: a celebration of the US military and government, a motivator for further army recruitment, and, most of all, a song representing joy and victory, instead of the crushing existential reminder of society's inherent unfairness.

Perhaps no symbol of the song's downfall is clearer, and more painful, than its use by former-US President Donald Trump during campaign rallies throughout 2020. In a beautiful piece of irony, Trump is not only a draft dodger himself - avoiding Vietnam thanks to his father's connections - but his family initially arrived in America after his father was exiled from Bavaria for dodging their draft in 1904, making him not only the spitting image of the "fortunate son" but also something of a "fortunate grandson."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By Jack Chavez
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Part II

MODERN MELODIES

FIGHT THE POWER

Revisiting Spike Lee's *Do The Right Thing* Soundtrack in the 21st Century

By Ella Gorman

"You the man!"
"No. I'm just a struggling Black man, trying to keep my dick hard in a cruel and harsh world."

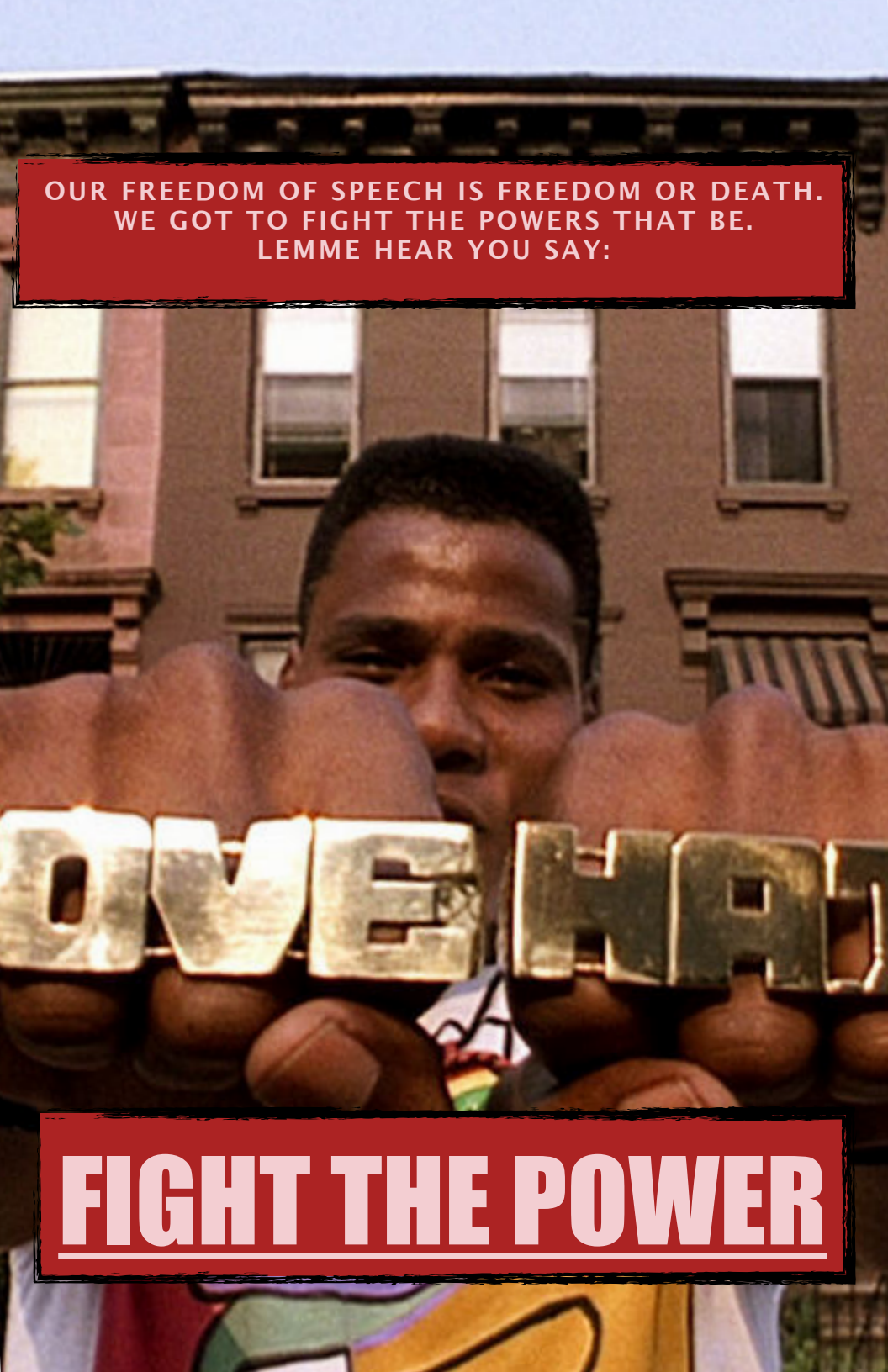
Traditional Hollywood films typically maintain an audience of passive consumers, with a soundtrack that remains almost invisible to them. According to Kathryn Kalinak, sound in film serves as "a stimulus that we hear but, by and large, fail to listen to." Unlike other Hollywood filmmakers, who try to make film language unnoticeable, Spike Lee dodges the conventional formulas and patterns of the medium in order to 'wake up' his audience to what they are watching. With his frequent breaking of the fourth wall and irregular filmmaking style, Lee highlights the themes present in his films, forcing his audience to confront the difficult conversations he is having with them. And none of his films captures this like *Do The Right Thing (1989)*, where the use of music, much like heat of the day in Bed-Stuy Brooklyn, is simply unavoidable.

Before Spike Lee, 1980s Hollywood's representation of Black American men fell into five general categories: slave, buffoon, convict, wise-cracking detective and pimp-like player. With the rise of the new wave of Black filmmaking, those stereotypical and racist representations of the Black identity were now being challenged on screen. Films like *Do The Right Thing* challenged the white hegemony of the commercial film industry by introducing complex and nuanced Black characters. However, Lee refuses to offer simplistic positive representations to counter Hollywood's

historically negative ones, which leads to a more authentic character construction; one that is grounded in the reality of Black America.

Do The Right Thing takes place on a single block in Brooklyn on the hottest day of the year and explores the residents' lives as anger, hate and racial tensions build in the community and explode into violence. When local Buggin' Out (Giancarlo Esposito) questions why the neighbourhood pizzeria, owned by Sal (Danny Aiello), only has pictures of famous Italian-Americans on their Wall of Fame (despite most customers being Black), the complaint leads to an ongoing argument. As the film progresses, many other residents are introduced into the narrative: Mookie (Spike Lee), delivery man Da Mayor (Ossie Davis), the friendly town drunk Mother Sister (Ruby Dee), Radio Raheem (Bill Nunn) and Smiley (Roger Guenveur Smith). We witness how their lives become entangled in the neighbourhood's divided ideology, resulting in arguments that turn into brutal riots.

Looking deeper into the film, you can begin to see how Lee uses specific pieces of music to communicate the film's message. This becomes evident within the opening movements of the film, as Lee forces you into this political narrative right from the start. As the film opens, an alto saxophone plays a solitary refrain from J. Rosamond Johnson and James Weldon Johnson's "Lift Every Voice and Sing," a song traditionally referred to as the Black national anthem. It was written at a time in American history where Jim Crow replaced slavery, and Black Americans were searching for an identity of their own. Adopted by the


OUR FREEDOM OF SPEECH IS FREEDOM OR DEATH.
WE GOT TO FIGHT THE POWERS THAT BE.
LEMME HEAR YOU SAY:
FIGHT THE POWER

National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the song was used as a rallying cry during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s and 1960s. It discusses the difficulties Black Americans have faced, celebrating their achievements and looking forward to the bright future ahead. By positioning the song at the beginning of the film, Lee draws parallels between the song's themes and his film, suggesting that *Do the Right Thing* will explore similar ideas. With this song, he establishes the cultural context of his narrative, indicating that the film, like the song, is a rallying cry.

Lee then abruptly cuts to four fierce minutes of "Fight the Power," which demand your full attention. Synonymous with *Do The Right Thing,* Public Enemy's "Fight the Power" was written and recorded for the film, epitomising the energy and intensity of the narrative. Producer Keith Shocklee blended funk, soul and rap, deliberately merging traditionally dissonant sounds and placing percussive samples slightly ahead of or behind the beat to build tension and unease. It captures elements of soul, R&B, rap, jazz and reggae, traditional Black American genres, which shines a light on their place throughout Black history.

Through the lyrics, Public Enemy's message and, thus Spike Lee's message, becomes evident: they urge people to listen ("what we need is awareness, we can't get careless") and emphasise the importance of joining forces ("make everybody see, in order to fight the powers that be"). The line, ''most of my heroes don't appear on no stamps. Sample a look back you look and find, nothing but rednecks

for 400 years if you check" foreshadows the film's plot, where the characters fight back at the lack of Black representation on the pizzeria's Wall of Fame. Chuck D is also referring to real life and the magnifying of white people's accomplishments compared to the concealment of contributions from Black people. Brimming with rage, the song, even thirty years after its release, remains a universal call to action, from the Black Civil Rights Movement of the 1950s/60s to Black Lives Matter in 2013 up to today. "We needed an anthem," Spike Lee said and with its provocative lyrics and unconventional sound, "Fight the Power" delivers just that.

After introducing the song in the opening sequence, it is broadcast diegetically through Radio Raheem and his boombox, time after time throughout the film. Despite saying or doing little, Raheem has a dominating presence within the narrative, blasting the song on repeat wherever he goes. The song speaks for him. Thus, when Sal destroys the boombox with a baseball bat, he is silencing the voices of the unheard, shown through the literal silencing of this Black anthem.

The camera cuts to each person, speechless and silent. After the constant accompaniment of music and relentless repeated use of "Fight the Power," Lee shows in this scene just how powerful the absence of music can be. Through the eradication of the song, Sal silences the Black community's voice, identity and fight for equality. His refusal to listen to the demands of others and negotiate or compromise benefits no one in the end.

Eventually, when Sal's pizzeria burns to the ground, "Fight the Power" reappears for the final time, as the searching camera lands on the remnants of the boombox. At first, it sounds muffled, an echo of the past. But soon the song returns to full volume, as Smiley pins a photograph of Malcolm X and Martin Luther King on the Wall of Fame. The endurance of the song, despite the death of the person who embodied it, suggests that its powerful lyrics and their meaning cannot be destroyed.

30 years after its release, the film still remains relevant, as, unfortunately, the torment and mutilation of the Black body in American society remains a pressing issue. "Fight the Power," in the same sense, remains current because of the continuation of unjust murders of Black men by police officers, which, according to Lee, is "a goddamn shame."

In June of 2021, Lee stated:

> **"WHEN YOU SEE BROTHER ERIC GARNER, WHEN YOU SEE KING GEORGE FLOYD, MURDERED, LYNCHED, I THINK OF RADIO RAHEEM. AND YOU THINK AND HOPE THAT 30 MOTHER-FUCKING YEARS LATER, BLACK PEOPLE WOULD STOP BEING HUNTED DOWN LIKE ANIMALS."**
>
> — SPIKE LEE

His point is simple but fundamental — we must do better and we must do the right thing to ensure a murder like Radio Raheem's is not repeated in real life. The music in this

film is key in demonstrating this message. Spike Lee's ability to immerse the viewer in Black culture with a soundtrack that is inescapable is the reason *Do The Right Thing* is just as memorable for its music as the film is memorable for its exploration of racial conflict.

PLAY SOMETHING!

Dogme 95 and the Power of Silence

By James Davies

"I would propose an interval... Play something, nice and easy!"

In 1995, two Danish filmmakers took a long hard look at contemporary cinema (30 minutes according to the pair) and concluded that it was not as it used to be, nothing too radical in the grand scheme of things. Cinema, to them, had become something of a factory, in which parameters were set and films churned out at the optimal rate to rake in the most cash. However, seeking to return filmmaking to the artistic glory of the French New Wave, this pair manufactured a manifesto; something for filmmakers of the movement to follow, something to guide their cinematic vision and lead the form back to its expected beauty. In March of that year at a Parisian film conference entitled 'Le cinéme vers son deuxième siècle' (or 'Cinema towards its second century)' in front of hundreds from the industry, Lars Von Trier and Thomas Vinterberg laid out the parameters for their new movement: Dogme 95.

The Dogme 95 movement radically diverged from what cinema looked like at the time. Filmmakers were to follow the 'Vow of Chastity:' a set of parameters directors were expected to follow if they wanted to receive the seal of approval from the movement's founding fathers, allowing the director to declare their film as part of this filmmaking experiment. This means that there is a finite number of official Dogme films — 35 to be exact — and each of these films adequately met the rules expected of this newfound genre. Some of these rules required filmmakers to work

exclusively on location, use only hand-held cameras and receive no accreditation for their work. However, of all of these requirements, arguably the most intriguing is the expectation to use solely diegetic sound.

Within contemporary cinema, we as audiences often take for granted the use of sound, particularly music. From the sweeping epic scores of Hans Zimmer to classic musical compositions from Ennio Morricone, cinematic scores underpin so much of cinema. With the aid of an expertly crafted score, a scene, previously dry and uninspired, is transformed into an emotional rollercoaster, where rising strings act as climbing carriages and blaring horns, trumpet and tuba drops send you flying and your heart racing. In other words, music is to cinema as light is to art; without it, a piece can feel barren and empty. But when correctly implemented, not only does it complete the piece, it elevates it to an entirely new level, allowing the viewer to have a whole new experience.

However, if this is the case, what becomes of cinema when music is left to the will of the world? When sound is dependent on the characters on screen and their interactions with one another, rather than put in the hands of a craftsman? These are questions one can begin to answer when exploring the Dogme movement.

Despite the movement only having 35 films in all, it seems only right to turn to the works of one of its founders, Thomas Vinterberg, when exploring Dogme in depth. Although uncredited, Vinterberg's *The Celebration* (1998)


For he's a jolly good fellow!
... which no one can deny.

takes the place as Dogme number one and, as such, paved the way for the movement to flourish in the way that it did. *The Celebration,* also known by its Danish title *Festen*, is one of the most famous Dogme and Vinterberg productions, receiving global acclaim and picking up a number of awards at film festivals across the world, including a BAFTA for Best Film Not in the English Language and the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival. And for good reason.

The Celebration tells the story of Helge's (Henning Moritzen) 60th birthday celebrations, where family and friends gather at an estate to chat, eat and, most importantly, drink in the festivities. However, Christian (Ulrich Thomsen) has some unpleasant truths to reveal about his experiences with his father as a child. *The Celebration* is a slow-burning ride of discomfort, which utilises Dogme practices of subverting your expectations for cinema. And, of course, music plays a huge role in this.

From the film's very beginning, in which audiences are offered only the blaring sound of Michael's (Thomas Bo Larson) speeding car, *The Celebration* reserves the use of music for very few moments. Within the film's opening, audiences bear witness to an uncomfortable exchange in which we see Helene (Paprika Steen) confront her brother for his lack of attendance at their sister's funeral a few weeks prior. This discomfort is emphasised within the stark silence of the scene, so much so that moments later, hearing the beeping horns of arriving vehicles almost acts as a respite for audiences. This is key to *The Celebration's* musical landscape: the film's lack of score and scarce use of

diegetic music generally leaves the audience longing for melodic relief.

This is truly evident during the film's climax when Christian announces his and his sister's mistreatment at the hands of their father in a speech to the party's dinner guests. We, as viewers, are forced to sit amongst deafening silence, stewing in the discomfort of this truth. In all, we wait nearly 10 minutes before being given some lyrical uplift, which comes in the form of guests singing "oh, he's a jolly good fellow," something which, while feeling incredibly inappropriate within the moment, still somehow offers a sense of relief for us, cutting through the painful quiet and offering a distraction from the tense drama before.

The film itself recognises the impact of music in moments of discomfort: just as we had hoped a familiar melody would take us out of the uncomfortable atmosphere, guests experience this also. Following Christian's toast to "the man who killed his sister," an interval in the night's celebrations is proposed and the pianist is prompted to "play something" to alleviate some of the tension. The almost meta moment within the film demonstrates Vinterberg's understanding of the importance of music within cinema. Music is able to guide an audience into a desired state with ease, something Vinterberg understood when proposing the rules of Dogme 95. He understood that filmmakers can very easily manipulate audiences through nothing more than an impactful score... which an audience has come to expect from filmmakers. As such, the sheer lack of melody within Dogme productions simply elevates the discomfort of the

films' difficult subject matters. Not only are viewers uncomfortable on an emotional and psychological level, but also on a physical level due to this unexpected silence. Viewers are left longing for melody throughout the film's duration, something they never receive.

As such, despite the seemingly blasé approach the fathers of Dogme took towards the 'rulebook' of their movement, we can see, within *The Celebration* alone, their understanding of music, its relationship with audiences and its role within cinema. Something which, to this day still seems to revolutionise the use of sound in the cinematic form. In many ways, Dogme films remain unmatched in their ability to psychologically, and more importantly, physically affect their audiences.

PUB SONGS

Singing for Solidarity in the Cinematic Bar

By Jessica Ann Evangelista

"I wanna be the one who writes the music.
Because the great songs last forever."

Selecting the setting of a movie or series is just as hard as determining who your characters will be. The setting helps the audience to understand the situation or emotions that the characters are trying to portray at that moment. Bars, in particular, provide a sense of culture, tribe and belonging. It is commonplace for people to gather and socialise over a few drinks, an ideal meeting place for strangers who are about to become relatively important to each other. A spot for distraction and vulnerability, as well as camaraderie and togetherness. To many, bars are a place where one can forget their struggles and give in for some time of leisure. Nonetheless, bars can be influential in our everyday lives. But aside from drinks, what are bars without music?

Whether it's a soundtrack playing in the background or a live performance, the music featured in cinematic bars can make any scene memorable. Singing can be used to determine the chemistry between characters, highlighting the relationship between the people we are spending our time with. Stage performance can set the tone for how a romance will unfold between the main characters like in *A Star is Born* (2018) or *27 Dresses* (2008). Or help to reveal a character's inner feelings like in Shame (2011).

Regardless of the intention, there is a profound connection that happens between the performer and the audience at a

bar or pub, and it can be quite liberating for both to share in a sense of togetherness spurred by the creative and collaborative outlet that is music.

Coyote Ugly (2000) follows the story of a small-town Jersey girl, Violet Sanford (Piper Perabo), as she dreams of becoming a famous songwriter in the Big Apple. Violet has no intention to become a singer; she just wants famous people to sing her songs, as stage fright prevents her from doing it herself. In order to make ends meet, Violet lands a job as a bartender in a dive bar called Coyote Ugly. The tumble bar is owned by the strict and business-minded, Lil (Maria Bello), who only has two rules for her girls: don't date the customers and don't ever bring your boyfriends to the bar. Lil's attractive barmaids Cammie (Izabella Miko), Rachel (Bridget Moynahan), and Zoe (Tyra Banks) rev up customers with drinks and top dances, bringing the space to vibrant life every night. Violet, who never joins them in performing, is trusted on stage one night after a riot breaks out, singing to calm the tensions. Her soulful performance stuns the wild crowd, controlling the raging patrons with her singing, prompting them all to start jamming along. More often than not, music eliminates negative energy and tries to replace it with good ones, showing how music can be a calming force that binds people together.

Although bars are locations to meet people and mingle, they can also be a place of commotion, as alcohol mixed with differing personalities can result in unsavoury interactions. That's why since that first time, Violet sings every night at the bar while the other girls dance, providing

entertainment for any aggressive guests. All the bar singing eventually helps Violet to overcome her stage fright, and the crowd grows to love her, forming a union amongst themselves because of her musical talent. It's this bar's unwieldy traditions that make patrons feel like they belong, with these musical performances serving as a moment of comfort and inclusion. Violet's time in the dive bar results in a bond of solidarity with the people that come in and out, while also surrendering her performance anxiety.

Wild Rose (2019) is another film that shares this same sentiment. It tells the story of an ex-con and mother of two, Rose-Lynn Harlan (Jessie Buckley), who dreams of moving to Nashville to become a country singer. After getting out of prison, Rose-Lynn storms back into her local saloon to sing, just like what she used to do before. Rose-Lynn feels herself every time she performs, and her deep passion for music allows people to feel all the emotions she's hoarding inside. Aside from her co-prisoners, who believe she is the next Dolly Parton, Rose-Lynn befriends Susannah (Sophie Okonedo), a wealthy woman who stands by her singing abilities.

But singing can also wield the desire to gain control and favour, like in the first season of the TV series *Peaky Blinders* (2014-), when Grace (Annabelle Wallis), an MI5 agent, brings a pub full of violent criminals to their feet with whaling musicality in order to be accepted. But, as part of her mission, Grace utilises her voice as a tool for manipulation to gain the trust of Tommy Shelby (Cillian Murphy), the Birmingham gangster she is assigned to bring down. Grace,


A sad misfortune came over me,
Which caused me to stray from the land
Far away from my friends and relations,
Betrayed by the black velvet band
Her eyes, they shone like diamonds
I thought her the queen of the land
And her hair, it hung over her shoulder
Tied up with a black velvet band

aware that Tommy has unspeakable scars from his time in the war, tries to patch his wounds through a heartrending, intimate moment between them, where she sings for him for the first time. From then on, Tommy feels that Grace fills up the brokenness of his soul, resulting in him falling in love with the spy. Grace's angelic voice makes Tommy gentler and sentimental, which is unusual for this man with such a destructive background.

What is evident between Violet, Rose-Lynn and Grace is whenever they come up on stage to sing, they allow themselves to be vulnerable. They might have different intentions as to why they sing, but they use their talent to touch people on an emotional level, whether it is to inspire or manipulate. Their performances bring the audience together because music has the power to bind what seems to be untangled. A woman's voice is proven to be affecting, whether it is being used to sing or to speak.

Music in movies becomes revolutionary when the characters gather their strength to go after their dreams... no matter how scary the process may be. It can be unconventional to follow a creative endeavour in a world that prioritises being practical, but singers, songwriters and performers try to get past this. Not to mention that these are women trying to seek their places in a rich man's world. Sometimes not everything has to be political to be considered groundbreaking. At times, all it takes is a dream, and a believer in that dream, for something to be drastic. Any artist can stir up a revolution because music is subjectively far-reaching.

In other words: it's personal. Sometimes only the artist and the intended audience understands that. *Coyote Ugly, Wild Rose, Peaky Blinders* and many more films are about coming to terms with your fears and allowing others to believe in you so that you can make that dream come true.

LOOK WHO'S INSIDE AGAIN

How Bo Burnham's *Inside* Speaks for a Covid Generation

By Niamh Brook

"Healing the world with comedy,
making a literal difference metaphorically."

On 30th May 2021, comedian and ex-Vine star Bo Burnham released *Inside* to the world. Having been aware of Burnham's previous comedic excursions (and thoroughly enjoying them as background noise), I thought I might as well follow tradition and pop *Inside* on for a bit of light-hearted entertainment. Little did I know that what I was about to witness would be an hour and a half of pure magic; a comedy special unlike anything I'd ever seen before.

Burnham's work has always had a certain uniqueness to it. It typically features a blend of traditional stand-up comedy and wacky musical numbers, all while utilising different styles and genres to express a wide range of jokes, such as self-depreciation and the struggles of getting your hand into a Pringles can. Unlike other comedians, Burnham uses his music to tell a story, and *Inside* follows suit.

Inside is a direct response to our new normal, a society that is now crippled by the Covid-19 pandemic. Written, directed and shot by Burnham, *Inside* tackles a wide variety of themes, from our obsessive social media use to global warming, excessive consumerism and woke big businesses... only to name a few. Created during the pandemic, Burnham wasn't able to access a crew, let alone an audience, for this new special. So in this time of need, he turned his focus onto his music, visuals and, ultimately,

himself. Unlike his past specials, *Inside* uses music to take us on a journey deep into Burnham's psyche, a part of himself typically left at a distance, allowing us to discover not only how he views the world but how he views himself.

Split into two acts, the hour and a half special has a distinctive structure: the first act, tackling how Burnham sees daily life in the modern world and the second delving into how he copes with mental health within our modern society. A gradual acceleration of themes, *Inside* takes you on a musical journey of self-discovery, making you laugh the whole way through.

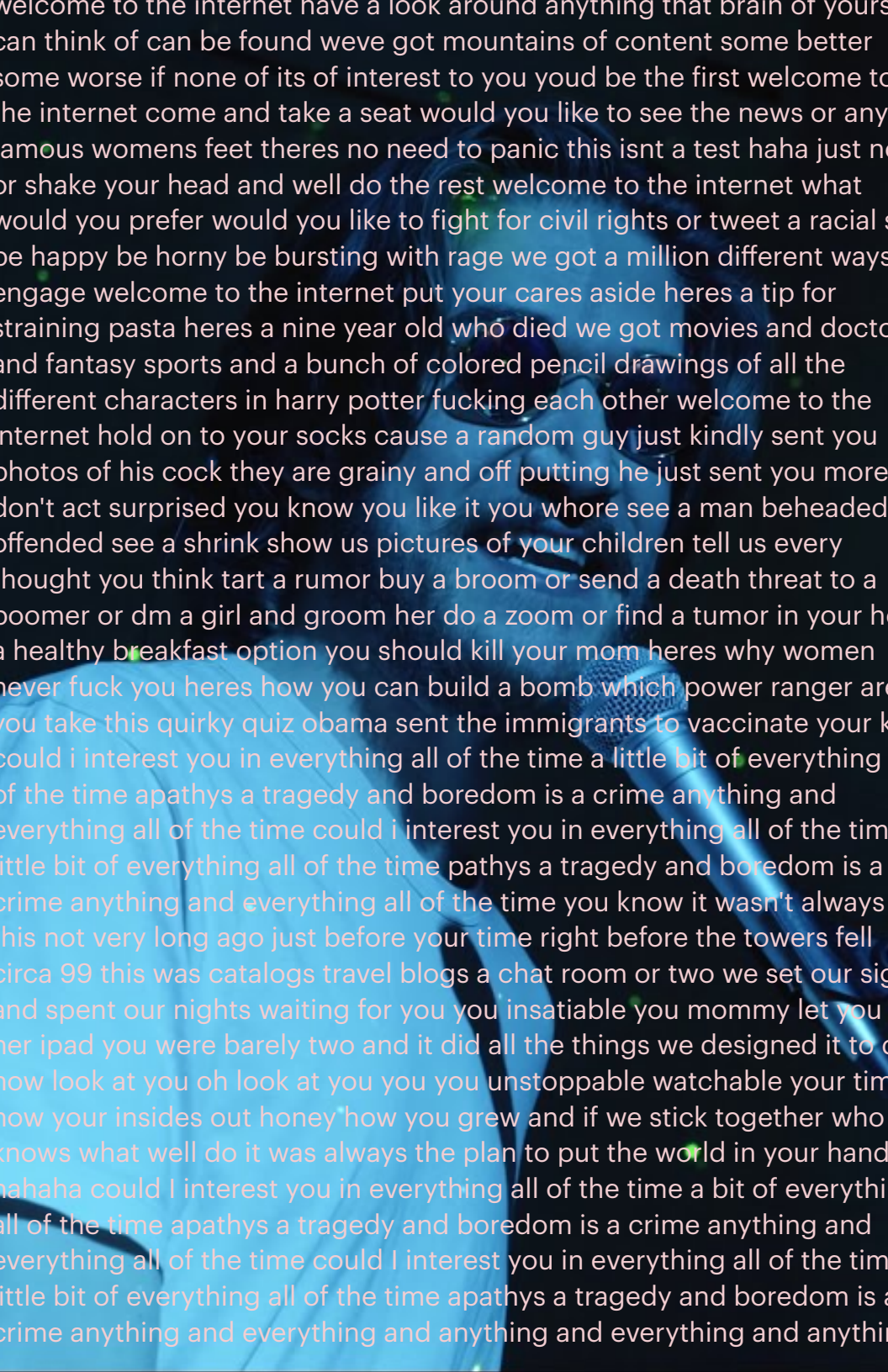
Each song in act one is presented in a wonderfully silly manner, with quirky melodies and witty lyrics that get your foot tapping instantaneously. But their real brilliance is the very serious discussions embedded within each song. Hidden within songs like "FaceTiming with My Mom Tonight", "White Woman's Instagram" and "Sexting" are legitimate critiques about how these everyday behaviours and actions are affecting us and the world we live in. Between the references to latte foam art and Ferris wheels representing vaginas, Burnham manages to communicate the effects social media has on our lives, highlighting not just the awkward and surreal moments brought about by our global connectivity but also the harmful and haunting.

Following in act one's footsteps, part two starts off with the wacky songs we have grown accustomed to but focus, instead, on noticeably more mature themes about mental health and the political turmoil occurring during the 2020

lockdown. The songs in act two take on a darker tone, more nihilistic in nature; no longer highlighting the simple joys in life, but instead pointing out the worst in society and in Burnham himself, forcing you to re-evaluate everything presented before you in act one.

Part two acts as a musical exploration of Burnham's mental health with songs like "Shit", "Look Who's Inside Again", "Don't Wanna Know", and "All Time Low" going into great detail about Burham's struggles. Mostly keeping with the humour found throughout the special, act two is a blunt and sometimes painfully honest discussion about how the pandemic affected him and his mental health. Each of the songs tackle a different avenue of Burnham's struggles, using his music to fully express how painful his experience with mental health has been.

In the special's big climactic number, "All Eyes on Me", Burnham delves deep into his mental state, discussing how his passion to entertain coupled with his mental health issues creates a tragic duality where the profession that brings him so much joy is also the thing that causes him so much pain. The song seems to act as a form of catharsis for the comedian, discussing our shallow interest in changing the status quo amongst other critiques on the way many of us conduct ourselves within society. The song's beat, powerful lyrics and performance by Burnham blows you away, leaving you stunned as the man who has made you chuckle for the last sixty minutes has now let loose the entirety of his innermost thoughts and feelings whilst screaming at you.


welcome to the internet have a look around anything that brain of yours can think of can be found weve got mountains of content some better some worse if none of its of interest to you youd be the first welcome to the internet come and take a seat would you like to see the news or any famous womens feet theres no need to panic this isnt a test haha just n or shake your head and well do the rest welcome to the internet what would you prefer would you like to fight for civil rights or tweet a racial s be happy be horny be bursting with rage we got a million different ways engage welcome to the internet put your cares aside heres a tip for straining pasta heres a nine year old who died we got movies and docto and fantasy sports and a bunch of colored pencil drawings of all the different characters in harry potter fucking each other welcome to the internet hold on to your socks cause a random guy just kindly sent you photos of his cock they are grainy and off putting he just sent you more don't act surprised you know you like it you whore see a man beheaded offended see a shrink show us pictures of your children tell us every thought you think tart a rumor buy a broom or send a death threat to a boomer or dm a girl and groom her do a zoom or find a tumor in your h a healthy breakfast option you should kill your mom heres why women never fuck you heres how you can build a bomb which power ranger ar you take this quirky quiz obama sent the immigrants to vaccinate your k could i interest you in everything all of the time a little bit of everything of the time apathys a tragedy and boredom is a crime anything and everything all of the time could i interest you in everything all of the tim ittle bit of everything all of the time pathys a tragedy and boredom is a crime anything and everything all of the time you know it wasn't always this not very long ago just before your time right before the towers fell circa 99 this was catalogs travel blogs a chat room or two we set our sig and spent our nights waiting for you you insatiable you mommy let you her ipad you were barely two and it did all the things we designed it to now look at you oh look at you you you unstoppable watchable your tim how your insides out honey how you grew and if we stick together who knows what well do it was always the plan to put the world in your hand hahaha could I interest you in everything all of the time a bit of everythi all of the time apathys a tragedy and boredom is a crime anything and everything all of the time could I interest you in everything all of the tim ittle bit of everything all of the time apathys a tragedy and boredom is a crime anything and everything and anything and everything and anythi

It's a song unlike any other in the special, as Burnham's distorted sound design and visuals are designed to make you feel on-edge, uncomfortable and even frightened. The man we see before us is no longer the one we once knew. This is the real Bo Burnham, the person hidden away deep within the depths of his mind. "All Eyes On Me" encapsulates the main theme of the film: an open invitation into Burnham's brain. We learn what troubles him deeply, how he copes with his mental health and discover his deepest fears. Through his music and lyrics, we are offered an honest insight into his world, a world where he doesn't have to hold back.

This frank and authentic discussion about mental health and trauma is rarely seen in media, let alone in a comedy special made by a guy who used to make silly videos on a now non-existent app. It's Burnham's understanding of not only himself but his millennial and Gen Z audience that allows him to create content that not only serves as a platform for him to express his own innermost demons but to also speak for entire generations suffering with the same issues.

Some have criticised *Inside*, describing it as self-important and deeply pretentious, which truth be told it is, but art has been and will continue to be self-important and pretentious. Yet that doesn't make it any less than it is. *Inside* is a piece of art, dissecting a chaotic moment in both Burnham's own life and in our collective history. The pandemic affected us all in countless ways, some of us took to banana bread baking, some opted for zoom quizzes. And some, like Burnham, dedicated their isolation to their craft,

experimenting with what this unique set of circumstances could create. In doing so, Burnham has managed to create a piece that speaks to people across the globe, helps them navigate and process the chaos that was 2020, whilst also making us laugh and sing along with each and every banger on the soundtrack.

RIZ AHMED'S GOODBYE TO BRITAIN

Confronting Identity and Self in *The Long Goodbye*

By Shelby Cooke

"They ever ask you 'Where you from?' Like, 'Where you really from?'"

During an intense close up of his eye, allowing us to see directly into his soul, Riz Ahmed speaks these words in the opening moments of the livestream film for his visual album, *The Long Goodbye*. He captures, in only a few lines, the collective experience felt by people of colour in a white world: "Surely, you can't be from *here*... so where are you *really* from?"

Ahmed has always been vocal about his experience as a British-Pakistani person, never shying away from speaking his truth about the discrimination and hatred he has experienced as a brown man in a white society; in 2006, he released the single "Post 9/11 Blues," which satirises how Muslims are seen by society in a world dominated by the fear of terrorism.

In 2016, Ahmed contributed an essay to Nikesh Shukla's anthology *The Good Immigrant* about his discomfort in airports, knowing he'll always be "randomly selected" to receive extra security. In 2017, he gave a speech in the House of Commons on the need for more diverse, introspective inclusion and equality in the media and creative industries.

But it's perhaps *The Long Goodbye* that most effectively and emotionally communicates the cultural experience minorities face in an institutionally prejudiced society.

Article originally published by No Majesty in May 2021. Printed with permission.

The Long Goodbye is Riz Ahmed's breakup letter to Britain in the light of the Brexit vote and the rise of far-right extremist politics. It's delivered through three different mediums: an audio record (an album that consists of 15 tracks, exploring Ahmed's complicated relationship with his nation), a short film (an 11-minute brutal retelling of how it feels to live in a racist society) and the aforementioned livestream (a virtual concert for the album that follows Riz backstage, recounting his heritage and past, reflecting on how he made it to this point in his life).

The album itself is structured as if Ahmed and Britain (also referred to as Brittany) were a married couple with kids. Britain, after having an identity crisis and no longer recognising itself as the person (or country) it wants to be, breaks up with him (and, more broadly, British immigrants as a whole). Their messy and toxic relationship is detailed through the album's musical numbers. Riz's anger and heartbreak over the end of his relationship is intermixed with voicemail messages from other Muslim friends and family (including famous faces such as Mindy Kaling, Mahershala Ali, Asim Chaudhury and Hasan Minhaj), who support Riz during the breakup by giving him advice on how to move on.

The Long Goodbye album feels almost impossible to describe; Ahmed perfectly captures the anxieties, pains, losses and torments felt by his ancestors before him. The brutality of his lyrics cut deep enough that even a stranger to the Muslim plight can feel the suffering felt by those oppressed.

The Long Goodbye, in the richest way possible, is a modern masterpiece. A masterpiece that is so intertwined with our current cultural landscape, in a Britain that is plagued with hate towards immigrants and minorities, a Britain that has allowed its most ugly side to show under the guise of political independence. A Britain that wants its Empire back, without caring for the lives it did and will destroy.

The album alone would have been enough to make a purposeful political statement. Yet, Ahmed opts to tell his story through various mediums, which allows the audience to audibly, visually and emotionally connect with the plight of his people.

Ahmed puts himself centre stage for both the short film and the livestream; understandably, considering that it's his story he's telling... and that he has a background in acting. In both works, he plays fictionalised versions of himself, taking elements from his own life to add authenticity to the images seen on screen.

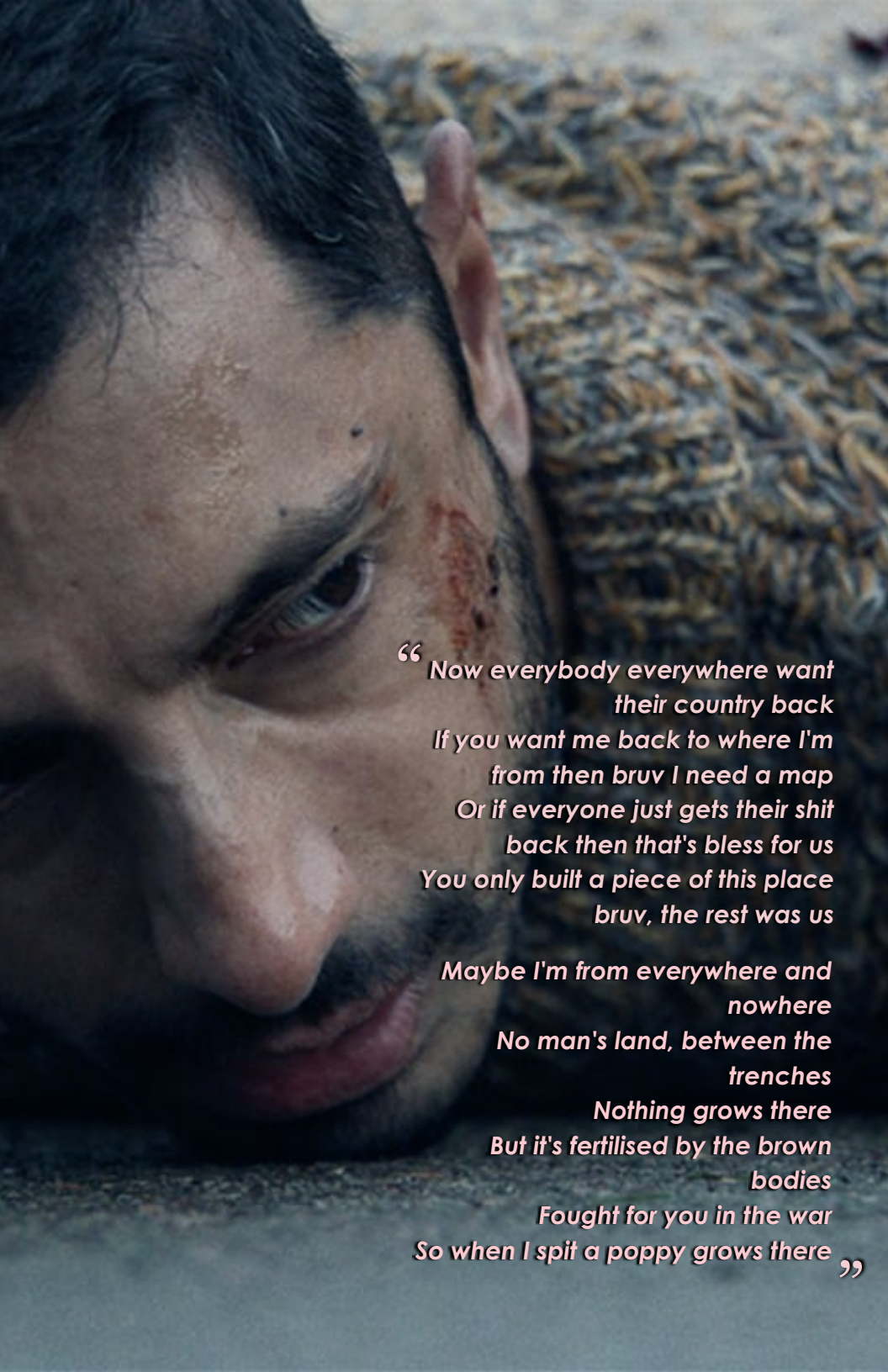
In the short (directed by Aneil Karia), we watch a British-Pakistani family prepare for the wedding of one of their family members. Like most families, they engage in petty arguments, have playful moments with each other and share their love in ways only they can understand. But, what was once just another day, turns violent when the family become victims of a racially charged hate crime carried out by members of a nationalist gang. The family is dragged from their home; the women are shoved into the back of

unmarked vans and the men are put in a lineup, with each one shot dead in the street.

Although the events of the film are overly dramatised (we hope mass execution like this wouldn't happen in 2020's Britain), it reflects the feeling of fear and dread that has been quietly suffocating migrant communities in Britain for years. It reminds us that, with the turn in modern politics, the once repressed, racial hatred from extremist minorities has been awoken, threatening the wellbeing and safety of those with just as much right to call Britain their home.

Less violent and more palatable than the short, *The Long Goodbye* livestream (created in lieu of not being able to have a tour for the album) is a one-on-one conversation between the viewer and Ahmed. He recounts his family's history, from their mass exodus from Pakistan to India to their migration to Britain on the encouragement of the country itself. He plainly and blatantly recounts Britain's involvement with racial hatred in Pakistan and India, and the Empire's seizure of Muslim textiles, resources, economy and culture. He reflects on his own experience in a brown body in post-9/11 Britain, remarking how the West's mistreatment and disrespect have turned him into just another angry Muslim.

The stream is a very intimate experience; it's just you and him. No one else ever appears. He's bearing his heart to you, sharing with you special memories from his past, fears he has and wounds that still need healing. Although you know that a large production crew is just behind the


“Now everybody everywhere want
their country back
If you want me back to where I'm
from then bruv I need a map
Or if everyone just gets their shit
back then that's bless for us
You only built a piece of this place
bruv, the rest was us
Maybe I'm from everywhere and
nowhere
No man's land, between the
trenches
Nothing grows there
But it's fertilised by the brown
bodies
Fought for you in the war
So when I spit a poppy grows there”

cameras (or in the next room to adhere to Covid protocol), you still feel as if this is a private performance, a confidential interaction, where he trusts you enough to share his trauma. Regardless of whether you are an outsider looking in or if you share this cultural experience with him, you can't help but be moved by Ahmed's words, allowing his self-reflection to force reflection back on yourself.

In both the livestream and the short, Ahmed's performance adds another element to his narrative. The simple act of putting himself into the story, delivering these lines with the passion and hurt felt by a community of brown bodies, gives power to his statements. The performances, even when he's just playing himself, express so much with so little: a lump in his voice, a tear in an eye, an exhale too powerful to just be a sigh, are all shared by his colonised people. You can feel the ghosts of his community exuding from him, using his body to tell their stories.

Riz Ahmed's *The Long Goodbye* is something we desperately need right now. It allows a generation that reads the world through an overabundance of imagery and the instant gratification of constantly changing visuals to viscerally comprehend the trauma of the modern immigrant. It gives a face and a name to events that most Westerners only experience in history books. In a world where we should all be seeking to recognise the heritage of hate experienced by minorities, *The Long Goodbye* provides us with a complete sensory depiction of those who have, who are and who will suffer at the hands of nationalistic and racist ideologies.

CREDITS

EDITOR

Shelby Cooke is a founding member of Film East and the Editor-in-Chief of Film East Online. Her work for the group has been recognised around the world and has been nominated for three British Film Society Awards.

Shelby has an MA in Film Studies from the University of East Anglia, where she completed her thesis on David Bowie's representation of Englishness through his acting performances. The complete dissertation is archived in the British Film Institute's Reuben Library. She has also researched other musical acts in Britain during the 1970s and '80s, including Joy Division and the Manchester soundscape.

She is a freelance culture and media writer for various online and print publications. She writes mainly about British cinema and society, with a special interest in the representation of national identity on screen. Shelby's complete portfolio is available to view at uppergroundproduction.com

CONTRIBUTORS

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James Davies is a graduate of Film, Television and English Literature from Aberystwyth University. He currently works as a freelance journalist, producing content around film and television, as well as British politics and culture.

Music is also a big passion for James, be it within or outside of cinema. He is always looking to broaden his musical catalogue and prides himself on his ability to recommend new music to friends and family. Whether you are looking for a movie or music recommendation, don't hesitate to contact him on his social media platforms @ThatJamesDavies. His journalistic work can be found on his website thatjamesdavies.com

Jessica Ann Evangelista is a 3rd-year Journalism student from the Philippines. She is a campus journalist by day and a freelance writer by night. If not writing, she is most likely tweeting about her favourite middle-aged actresses. Aside from movies and books, she is a big fan of country music and jazz.

Ella Gorman is an A-Level Film Studies student with hopes to continue with the subject at university. When she's not watching films, you can find her with a paintbrush in hand, her nose buried in a book or learning to play guitar. With a love for the creative arts, Ella aims to pursue a career in the film industry.

William Schofield is a History and Film Studies graduate currently looking at a career in archival work. When the mood strikes, he has been known to make short film-based YouTube videos under the name 'Dibbo Bibbo'. Yes, he does wish he could change it.

Film East is a multi-award-nominated film programming group based in Norwich, UK. Since its inception in 2019, the group has provided a platform for young audiences to experience and interact with film. Run by a group of young people, Film East aims to educate and inspire the next generation of film enthusiasts by offering unique opportunities to connect through thought-provoking cinema. Some of the ways we achieve this is via our online film and television blog — which is open to up-and-coming film journalists and critics — our podcast "Film East Chats" — which is broadcast monthly on BBC Radio Norfolk — and our in-person events — which aim to encourage young audiences to attend the cinema and experience the community of public screenings.

Our various activities are specially curated to enhance our audience's learning and understanding about the world around them, all while encouraging them to engage with film, art and their community.

Our goal is to see an increase in young people watching more challenging and enlightening films and experiencing the community atmosphere of in-person screenings. To learn more about Film East, visit our website, film-east.com.

From glam rock to punk, modern musicals and visual albums, SCREEN DREAMS explores the many ways music can manifest on screen and how it impacts our viewing experience.

SCREEN DREAMS features 10 original articles on the use of music in film. From Spike Lee's DO THE RIGHT THING to Anton Corbijn's CONTROL and Bo Burnham's INSIDE, this zine is a must-read for anyone interested in the artistry of film music.

Contributions from: Niamh Brook, Shelby Cooke, James Davies, Jessica Ann Evangelista, Ella Gorman, William Schofield

A book from Film East, a Norwich-based film programming group.