



GLORIOUS 39

UK | 2009 | 129m | 15tbc

Director: Stephen Poliakoff

Screenplay: Stephen Poliakoff

Cinematography: Danny Cohen

Editing: Jason Krasucki

Original Music: Adrian Johnston

Leading Players: Romola Garai, Bill Nighy, Julie Christie, David Tennant, Eddie Redmayne, Juno Temple, Christopher Lee

filmnote

We are delighted that Stephen Poliakoff will be with us to introduce the screening.

Acclaimed writer and director Stephen Poliakoff is well-known for his intelligent BBC dramas of upper class decadence which draw on the recurring themes of buried family secrets (*The Lost Prince*, *Capturing Mary*) or the significance of documents and photographs in shaping one's past (*Shooting the Past*, *Joe's Palace*). It is not surprising then that Poliakoff chooses to return to these familiar themes for his first feature film in over 10 years. In *Glorious 39*, Poliakoff examines a critical moment in British history, a time when the ruling British elite would do almost anything in order to uphold and preserve the traditional class order.

Set during the idyllic pre-war summer of 1939, the film revolves around the aristocratic Keyes family and their adopted daughter Anne (Garai), a budding actress, whose charmed lifestyle quickly begins to unravel when she accidentally stumbles across a batch of secret recordings unveiling a sinister Nazi appeasement plot. When friends begin to die, Anne starts to question the intentions of everyone close to her, determined to get the recording into the right hands, she instead finds herself fearing for her own life.

Poliakoff stated that he always wanted to make a film about "the extraordinary machinations that went on in British society on the eve of the Second World War." Indeed, the ruling establishment's eagerness for an appeasement with Hitler is an often overlooked and unexplored period in British history, "It's Not Always A Good Place to Go, The Past" reads the tagline of the film. One could argue, that the British establishment of 1939 (many of them First World War veterans) had vivid memories of the devastation and hopelessness of the Great War and its threat to class order

TONIGHT'S SCREENING SPONSORED BY THE NORIE TRUST AND AARON EVANS ARCHITECTS



what did you think of the film? please mark or tear your vote ▶

excellent A

please add further comments about the film or the festival here

B

fair C

D

poor E

to be included in our e-mailing list (you'll receive occasional bulletins about film festival activities, special email-only offers and news) **please give your email address** on the other side of your voting slip ▶

which only served to intensify their desire for appeasement. Poliakoff also touched on the subject of appeasement in his TV drama *Joe's Palace* in which Michael Gambon's character slowly came to terms with the knowledge that his father was a Nazi collaborator.

Part conspiracy thriller, part melodrama, *Glorious 39* has invited comparisons with Hitchcock's *The 39 Steps* and *The Lady Vanishes* both of which feature a plucky young (1930s) heroine accidentally caught up in a dangerous web of intrigue determined to expose the truth. Geoffrey Macnab writing for *The Independent* believes that the film "in spite of all the lovingly filmed footage of aristocratic types enjoying country house living in late 30s England...is closer to that of *The Aerodrome*, Rex Warner's allegorical novel about fascism in England, than it is to Evelyn Waugh."

Known for attracting well-respected actors to his TV plays, *Glorious 39* showcases the crème de la crème of British acting talent. Bill Nighy is quietly menacing as Alexander Keyes, "the most charming man in England," Tory grandee and head of the seemingly-attentive Keyes family, David Tennant as Hector, an impassioned young politician, appears positively Churchillian in his condemnation of appeasement and Julie Christie is on fearsome form as formidable, blue-blooded aunt Elizabeth.

Credit must also go to Danny Cohen for his sumptuous cinematography and production designer Mark Leese who exquisitely recapture the summer of 1939 when England was on the verge of losing its innocence (the row of sleeping debutantes reminiscent of a Cecil Beaton photograph is particularly lovely and evocative of a bygone era).

However, *Glorious 39* ultimately belongs to the luminous Romola Garai who drives the film with a compelling performance as the unsuspecting Anne - a testament to her growing leading lady status.

BFF Film Note by Victoria Trachy

Also tonight at Bath Film Festival 2009...

9.30pm | Little Theatre | £8 / £6

The Merry Gentleman

Michael Keaton | USA | 2008 | 99m | 15

Actor Michael Keaton debuts as director in a film about the unlikely friendship between a morose assassin and a kind-hearted woman on the run from an abusive husband. Kate (Kelly Macdonald, *Trainspotting*, *No Country For Old Men*) is struggling to rebuild her life in Chicago. One night after leaving work, she notices a man standing on a ledge about to jump, this is Frank (Keaton) a contract killer with suicidal tendencies. MacDonald shines in the leading role. Keaton delivers just the right level of moody poignancy for a film about two loners trying to make sense of their imperfect lives.

to be added to our mailing list, or to have your entry updated, please give us your **name:**

address:

phone:

email:

we might occasionally have an opportunity to send you details of other arts events which we feel might interest you. Please tick this box if you would prefer **not** to receive these:

I am interested in:

a year-round arts cinema club directors' introductions film with other artforms film / live music festival pass for all films
short / experimental film email film newsletter matinee screenings late-night screenings workshops volunteering
sponsoring an event **something else...**

would you be interested in joining a 'Friends of Bath Film Festival' scheme, which would confer benefits in return for a small joining fee?
yes **no** please detach this slip from your flmnote and hand in following the screening, or return to:

BFF, c/o On The Video Front, 7 Terrace Walk, Bath BA1 1LN telephone / fax: **01225 401149** email: **info@bathfilmfestival.org.uk**