

BAFTA HERITAGE SCREENING

Sunday 11 September 2016

BAFTA 195 Piccadilly

London W1J 9LN

# RYAN'S DAUGHTER

Preceded by a Q&A with SIR SYDNEY SAMUELSON CBE  
and MICHAEL STEVENSON, hosted by MARK SALISBURY.



*Ryan's Daughter* (1970) was one of the last great 'Roadshow' widescreen releases in the UK. This magnificent, rarely screened epic began life as an adaptation of Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* by screenwriter Robert Bolt, Lean's long-term collaborator (*Lawrence of Arabia*; *Dr Zhivago*).

**R**yan's *Daughter* was nominated in a staggering ten British Academy Film Award categories, including Best Film, Director, Leading Actress, Supporting Actor, Cinematography and Production Design.

Cinematographer Freddie Young (filming almost for the last time in sumptuous 70mm Super Panavision) received his third Oscar for the stunning camerawork, and after forty years in film **Sir John Mills** earnt the only Oscar of his career for his moving portrayal of a man with severe learning difficulties.

In an original and inspired move Lean urged Bolt to loosely transpose the plot of *Madame Bovary* onto the storm-swept remoteness of the fictional Kirrarry in pre-revolutionary Ireland. Around this specially-constructed village (built by production designer Stephen Grimes) Lean then weaves a tense love triangle that echoes the political and emotional upheavals of the Great War and Easter Rising, played out against a tempestuous Atlantic coastline.



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The film's eponymous heroine is a restless, feisty young woman called Rosie Ryan, played with innocence and élan by **Sarah Miles**, real life wife of Robert Bolt. Rosie recklessly believes her frustration with isolated village-life can be dispelled through (an inappropriate) marriage to an ageing widower, school-teacher Charles Shaughnessy (**Robert Mitchum**). But when a dashing and damaged young war veteran Major Randolph Doryan (**Christopher Jones**) arrives to take charge of the local British army base, Rosie embarks on a dangerous and clandestine affair that inflames intrigue, moral opprobrium and nationalist sentiment, in the close-knit community. This ultimately leads to a catastrophic denouement.

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RELEASE YEAR: 1970

RUNTIME: 196 mins

DIRECTOR: David Lean

SCREENWRITER: Robert Bolt

PRODUCER: Anthony Havelock-Allan

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER: Roy Stevens

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It took fifty two weeks to shoot *Ryan's Daughter*; the cast and crew had to battle against the most challenging weather conditions that many had ever experienced. Sarah Miles recalled, "Once we did half a scene and I remember waiting in my caravan for three solid weeks before there was enough sun to finish the other half." Indeed, conditions were so unstable key sequences had to be finished on location in South Africa.

Lean had to wait an entire year for a storm sufficiently ferocious to erupt on the Irish coast to complete the film's most famous sequence; Killybegs villagers battling genuinely mountainous waves to haul ashore crates of German weapons destined for Irish rebellion.

The film's tour de force, and in one sense its true star, is that sea-storm, rightfully regarded as one of the most incredible scenes in cinema history. In the days before CGI and with no

stunt-doubles, shooting this sequence almost killed some of the actors and crew. And these images of some of Ireland's most violent weather, contrasted with the quiet beauty of rich sunsets and sweeping shots of golden beaches, has guaranteed the Dingle Peninsula a place in tourists' imaginations the world over.

*Ryan's Daughter* also surprises in other ways; famous for playing brooding anti-heroes and demonic villains, Mitchum wrong-footed audiences, unexpectedly appearing here as the mild-mannered, respectable widower, a passive and ineffectual victim this time rather than an angry and cynical protagonist. And Sarah Miles, four times BAFTA-nominated during her career, (including for *Ryan's Daughter*) played opposite a relatively unknown and troubled actor from the US, Christopher Jones, who was given one of the central roles.

This screening is in digital format due to the immense scarcity of surviving 70mm prints. In 2013, as part of a special widescreen season at the Irish Film Institute in Dublin, the only 70mm print available then was with Swedish subtitles.

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### SIR SYDNEY SAMUELSON CBE

Born in 1925 Sydney's first job was as a rewind boy at his local cinema and later a trainee editor with Gaumont British News. After the war, Sydney trained in the camera department of the government's Colonial Film Unit, rising to documentary cameraman and filming around the world.

In the mid 1950s he started Samuelson's Film Service, providing camera hire services to the industry. The company was to become one of the leading film and television equipment suppliers in the UK. In the 60s and 70s, he felt privileged to be a camera consultant on the technical side lines of Lean's last three films; *Doctor Zhivago*, *Ryan's Daughter* and *A Passage to India*.

In 1973 Sydney became the first

Chairman of BAFTA and went on to receive the Michael Balcon Award for Outstanding British Contribution to Cinema in 1985. In 1991 he was appointed the first British Film Commissioner and awarded with a BAFTA Fellowship in 1993.

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### MICHAEL STEVENSON

Michael Stevenson is one of the most well respected and well loved second assistant directors in the industry. His career has spanned over 50 years working on many of the most successful films in cinema history. Beginning as a production runner in 1956 with 20th Century Fox, it was his move to MGM's studios at Elstree that first brought him into contact with David Lean where he worked on his next three epic films; *Lawrence of Arabia*, *Dr Zhivago* and *Ryan's Daughter*.

Alongside Lean, Michael has worked with some of the greatest directors of our time, including Stanley Kubrick (*Barry Lyndon*, *The Shining*), Richard Attenborough (*Shadowlands*) and Steven Spielberg (*War Horse*). His incredible career has continued throughout the decades and up to the present day, with commercially and critically acclaimed films such as *The Spy Who Loved Me*, *Flash Gordon*, *Highlander*, *Mission: Impossible*, the first three *Harry Potter* films, *Children of Men*, *Clash of the Titans* and *The Social Network*.

In 2003 he was awarded BAFTA's Michael Balcon award for Outstanding Contribution to British Cinema.

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### BAFTA HERITAGE SCREENINGS

BAFTA Heritage Screenings are a series of quarterly screenings and on-stage interviews which celebrate British film and television classics and the professionals who make them.

*With special thanks to the David Lean Foundation.*

