



Screenwriters.
On Screenwriting.

*The BAFTA and BFI Screenwriters' Lecture Series
in association with The JJ Charitable Trust*

09–23 September 2010



BRITISH ACADEMY
OF FILM AND TELEVISION ARTS



THE J J CHARITABLE TRUST



Name a famous film director.

Now name a famous screenwriter.

Not so easy.

The truth is, no great film can exist without a great screenplay, yet screenwriters remain in the shadows – seen, all too often, as adjuncts to the director’s vision, rather than authors in their own right. We wanted to correct this misconception by inviting some of the film industry’s top screenwriters to talk about their art and what inspires them.

These talks allow each speaker to dictate the content and structure of the event, for their ‘voice’ to emerge. With multi-award-winning screenwriters Simon Beaufoy, Aline Brosh McKenna, Christopher Hampton, David Hare, Ronald Harwood and Peter Morgan, this is a truly inspiring series for the industry and film fans alike.

Jeremy Brock

Screenwriter (*The Last King Of Scotland, Mrs. Brown*)



Sir David Hare

Thursday 9 September, BFI Southbank

David Hare has a reputation for elegant and highly intelligent screenplays which inspire extraordinary performances from actors.

He first came to prominence as a playwright in the '70s after his debut play *Slag* (1970) won the Evening Standard Award for Most Promising Playwright. Since then, his work has enjoyed sell-out runs at the National Theatre, and many of his plays have been presented on Broadway.

Among Hare's television work is the acclaimed teleplay *Licking Hitler* (1978), a companion piece to his stage play *Plenty* (1978), both of which explore the effects of the Second World War on the lives of women who'd served in the conflict. The drama, which Hare also directed, won the BAFTA for Best Single Play.

Moving into feature film, Hare wrote and directed *Wetherby* (1985), an award-winning drama about the mysterious death of an enigmatic young man. He also wrote and directed *Paris By Night* (1988), in which

a politician makes a deadly choice when threatened with a scandal, and adapted Josephine Hart's novel *Damage* (1992), about an MP's passionate affair with his son's fiancée.

His most recent work includes two adaptations for Stephen Daldry. *The Hours* (2002) explored the effect of Virginia Woolf's *Mrs Dalloway* on three generations of women, whilst *The Reader* (2008) saw a law student in post-WWII Germany re-encountering his former lover as she defends herself in a war-crime trial. Hare was BAFTA- and Oscar-nominated for both screenplays.

Hare has written a new film, *Page Eight*, which he will direct next year.

STEPHEN DALDRY:

David is a wonderful collaborator and a true friend to the director. He guides, cajoles and suggests with all the care and experience he has built up having been at the centre of Britain's cultural and political life for the past 40 years. An essential artist.



Christopher Hampton CBE

Friday 10 September, BFI Southbank

Hampton's career enjoyed an auspicious start when his debut play, *When Did You Last See Your Mother?* (1966), made him the youngest playwright ever to have a play in the West End, a record which still stands.

His television work includes adaptations of his own plays *The Philanthropist* (1975), *Savages* (1975), and other works including *Hotel du Lac* (1986) and *The Ginger Tree* (1989). He also wrote *Able's Will* (1977), which marked his first screen collaboration with Stephen Frears.

After early film screenplays including *A Doll's House* (1973) and *The Honorary Consul* (1983), Hampton reunited with Frears for perhaps his best-known work to date: *Dangerous Liaisons* (1988). The tale of bored aristocrats indulging in games of passion and betrayal brought both BAFTA and Oscar success to Hampton, who enjoyed two further collaborations with Frears on *Mary Reilly* (1996) and *Cheri* (2009).

His second BAFTA nomination came for *Carrington* (1995), a script which he both

wrote and directed. The biographical drama about the relationship between painter Dora Carrington and author Lytton Strachey earned Hampton a BAFTA nomination for British Film and won him the Special Jury Prize at Cannes.

Hampton's masterly adaptation of Ian McEwan's novel *Atonement* (2007), in which a young girl's lie has life-changing effects, brought two more BAFTA nominations for Adapted Screenplay and British Film, and his second Oscar nomination.

His latest script, *A Dangerous Method* (2011), is being filmed by David Cronenberg, and stars Michael Fassbender and Viggo Mortensen.

STEPHEN FREARS:

I remember Christopher bringing round the script of Dangerous Liaisons on 1 January 1988. I read it and thought I would like to spend the rest of my life watching it. The joy, the wit, the passion, the elegance, the mischievousness leapt off the page.



Simon Beaufoy

Friday 17 September, BFI Southbank

Whether a feel-good comedy or political drama, Beaufoy's diverse range of work is always insightful and full of compassion for his characters.

His debut feature-length script, *The Full Monty* (1997), enjoyed huge critical and commercial success. The comedy followed six unemployed men who turn to stripping as a money-earner, and gave Beaufoy his first BAFTA and Oscar nominations.

Scripts followed for *Among Giants* (1998), a triangular love story about pylon painters in Yorkshire, and *The Darkest Light* (1999). Beaufoy co-directed the latter with occasional collaborator Bille Eltringham – who also directed his script for *This Is Not A Love Song* (2002) in which a criminal duo are stalked across the Scottish moors.

He then wrote two very contrasting stories set in his hometown of Keighley. *Blow Dry* (2001) brought the British Hairdressing Championship to town, whilst *Yasmin* (2004) saw a British Muslim woman caught in a

post-9/11 nightmare when her Pakistani-born husband is falsely imprisoned as a terror suspect. Beaufoy's television work includes the mini-series *Burn Up* (2008), a political thriller that dealt with climate change.

Most recently, he enjoyed international success with his adaptation of *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008). The 'rags to riches' tale earned Beaufoy his first BAFTA, Golden Globe and Oscar wins, among countless others. The film itself won seven BAFTAs and eight Oscars, including Best Film at both.

Beaufoy's next film is a second collaboration with Danny Boyle, *127 Hours* (2010), a real-life drama starring James Franco.

DANNY BOYLE:

I read Simon's Slumdog Millionaire script on a grey London afternoon, and it was literally vibrating in front of me. If ever there was a case for the role of adapter as creator, this screenplay is it. Simon swept through Vikas Swarup's novel, grabbing only what was vital, and shaped a work in its own right.



Peter Morgan

Monday 20 September, BAFTA, 195 Piccadilly

Given his international stature and haul of major awards, it's hard to comprehend that Morgan was virtually unknown only seven years ago.

His breakthrough work came with his BAFTA-winning television drama *The Deal* (2003), about the alleged power-sharing deal struck between Tony Blair and Gordon Brown in 1994. Three years later, Morgan earned his second BAFTA win with another television drama, *Longford* (2006), about Lord Longford's campaign for the parole of Myra Hindley.

On film, Morgan's adaptation of *The Last King Of Scotland* (2006), about the relationship between Idi Amin and his Scottish physician, brought him his third and fourth BAFTA triumphs when it won Adapted Screenplay (shared with Jeremy Brock) and British Film. That same year, his screenplay for *The Queen* (2006), a fictional account of the immediate aftermath of Princess Diana's death, won a Golden Globe and was both BAFTA- and Oscar-nominated.

Frost/Nixon (2008) was Morgan's adaptation of his own play, based around the series of televised interviews by David Frost with former US President Richard Nixon. Morgan's compelling script brought BAFTA and Oscar nominations once again.

After successful adaptations of *The Other Boleyn Girl* (2008) and *The Damned United* (2009), Morgan revisited Tony Blair's career with his Blair/Clinton television drama *The Special Relationship* (2010), for which he received an Emmy nomination.

Morgan's forthcoming projects include supernatural thriller *Hereafter* (2010), directed by Clint Eastwood and starring Matt Damon.

KEVIN MACDONALD:

At the heart of Peter's talent lies his extraordinary empathy. He can see the good side in every character he writes, from Idi Amin to Richard Nixon. He writes people, not preconceptions or 'types'. His second talent is a voice that is entirely distinctive – every film he's worked on sounds like a Morgan film.



Aline Brosh McKenna

Tuesday 21 September, BAFTA, 195 Piccadilly

Relatively new to the industry but with a string of commercial successes to her name already, Aline Brosh McKenna is one of Hollywood's current 'It' writers, with a particular finesse for romantic comedy.

A first feature credit on *Three To Tango* (1999) led to *Laws Of Attraction* (2004), starring Julianne Moore and Pierce Brosnan as high-powered divorce lawyers whose opinions on marriage are tested when, after a night of wild partying, they wake up married.

McKenna's feature script for box-office hit *The Devil Wears Prada* (2006) was adapted from Lauren Weisberger's novel about the hellish experience of a young woman hired as a personal assistant to a powerful fashion magazine editor. McKenna's sharp and sassy screenplay was nominated for a BAFTA and a Writers Guild of America award.

She followed this success with an original script, *27 Dresses* (2008), about a 'perennial bridesmaid' who battles with her feelings for her sister's fiancé.

Her next film, the Roger Michell-directed *Morning Glory* (2010), follows an aspiring television producer who tries to revive a struggling morning show, in spite of its feuding anchors.

McKenna's other forthcoming projects include an adaptation of Benjamin Mee's memoir *We Bought A Zoo*, which Cameron Crowe is attached to direct. She's also adapted Allison Pearson's bestselling novel *I Don't Know How She Does It*.

She's currently working on a new version of *Cinderella* for Disney and an action-comedy with *Mr & Mrs Smith* writer Simon Kinberg, produced by JJ Abrams.

ROGER MICHELL:

Aline writes films about women that men want to watch too. She has that great gift of making us laugh at things that are both hilarious and recognisably true. Her wit and lightness of touch make the writing look easy, but to write with such grace and charm is really hard. I am lucky to have found her.



Sir Ronald Harwood CBE

Thursday 23 September, BFI Southbank

Hugely admired and respected, Ronald Harwood has an award-winning body of work as a playwright, screenwriter and author that spans five decades.

Throughout the '60s and '70s Harwood wrote many dramas for television, including *The Barber Of Stamford Hill* (1962) and *The Long Lease Of Summer* (1972), as well as a three-year stint on ITV's *Tales Of The Unexpected*.

Harwood's breakthrough film screenplay *The Dresser* (1983) was adapted from his earlier stage play, based on his experiences as Sir Donald Wolfit's personal dresser at Wolfit's Shakespeare Company in the '50s. It earned Harwood his first BAFTA, Golden Globe and Oscar nominations.

His adaptation of Terence Rattigan's *The Browning Version* (1994), about an embittered teacher's attempts to regain his self-respect, led to a second BAFTA nomination.

His first collaboration with Roman Polanski was his BAFTA-nominated script

for *The Pianist* (2002). The WWII drama about a Polish-Jewish musician eluding capture in the ruins of Warsaw garnered great critical acclaim and Harwood's first Oscar win. He later collaborated with Polanski on *Oliver Twist* (2005).

Harwood enjoyed international acclaim once again after adapting Jean-Dominique Bauby's memoir *The Diving Bell And The Butterfly* (2007). The moving story of a paralyzed man who can only communicate through his left eye gave Harwood his first BAFTA win and third Oscar nomination.

Harwood's latest project *Quartet* (2011) is an adaptation of his 1999 play about ageing opera singers, directed by Dustin Hoffman.

ROMAN POLANSKI:

I greatly admired Ronald's play Taking Sides, about Furtwängler, the German conductor accused of collaborating with the Nazis. After seeing this play I was convinced that Ronnie was the man to adapt The Pianist.

THANKS:

Simon Beaufoy
Aline Brosh McKenna
Christopher Hampton CBE
Sir David Hare
Sir Ronald Harwood CBE
Peter Morgan

Danny Boyle
Stuart Brown
Timothy Burrill
Stephen Daldry
Finola Dwyer
Stephen Frears
Lucy Guard
Pippa Harris
Tim Hunter
Neris Johnson
Kate Lee
Kevin Macdonald
Roger Michell
Yolanda Neri
Roman Polanski
Tanya Seghatchian
Francine Stock
Nick Walters

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Simon Beaufoy, Christopher Hampton, David Hare,
Ronald Harwood and Peter Morgan portraits by Jay Brooks.
Aline Brosh McKenna portrait by Barry J Holmes.



SCHEDULE AND BOOKING:

Sir David Hare (*The Reader, The Hours*)

Thursday 9 September, 18:30

BFI Southbank, Belvedere Road, London SE1 8XT

Christopher Hampton CBE (*Dangerous Liaisons, Atonement*)

Friday 10 September, 18:30

BFI Southbank, Belvedere Road, London SE1 8XT

Simon Beaufoy (*The Full Monty, Slumdog Millionaire*)

Friday 17 September, 18:30

BFI Southbank, Belvedere Road, London SE1 8XT

Peter Morgan (*The Last King Of Scotland, Frost/Nixon*)

Monday 20 September, 18:15

BAFTA, 195 Piccadilly, London W1J 9LN

Aline Brosh McKenna (*The Devil Wears Prada, 27 Dresses*)

Tuesday 21 September, 18:30

BAFTA, 195 Piccadilly, London W1J 9LN

Sir Ronald Harwood CBE (*The Pianist, The Diving Bell And The Butterfly*)

Thursday 23 September, 18:30

BFI Southbank, Belvedere Road, London SE1 8XT

HOW TO BOOK:

All tickets are £9

Tickets for David Hare, Christopher Hampton, Simon Beaufoy and Ronald Harwood can be booked at the BFI Southbank Box Office on 020 7928 3232 or via www.bfi.org.uk/southbank.

Tickets for Peter Morgan and Aline Brosh McKenna can be booked via the BAFTA website at www.bafta.org/screenwriters.