



JOHN BARRY: SOUNDTRACKING BOND AND BEYOND

Four in the Morning

Boy and Bicycle

A film by: Ridley Scott
Presented by: British Film Institute
Experimental Film Fund
Produced by: Ridley Scott
Written by: Ridley Scott
Theme Music: John Barry
Incidental Music: John Baker
Sound Recordist: Brian Hodgson,
Murray Marshall
Cast:
Tony Scott (*the boy*)
UK 1965
27 mins
Digital

Four in the Morning

Direction: Anthony Simmons
©: West One Film Producers
a West One Film production
Presented by: West One Film Producers
With financial support from: NFFC *
Producer: John Morris
Associate Producer: Roy Simpson
Production: Roy Baird, David Bracknell,
David Tringham, Anthony Waye
Technical Associate: Pixie Weir
Assistant Directors: John Wakefield
Continuity: Pat Moon
Screenplay: Anthony Simmons
From a story by: Anthony Simmons
Script Consultants: Josephine Mackay,
Tana Sayers
Director of Photography: Larry Pizer
Camera Assistants: Gavrik Losey,
Terry Winfield, Brian Mitchison
Editor: Fergus McDonell
Assistant Editor: Nicholas Napier-Bell
Art Director: Bernard Sarron
Construction: Clarence Studios
Make-up: Neville Smallwood,
Benny Royston
Music Composed and Conducted by:
John Barry
Sound Recordist: Ted Ball
Dubbing Mixer: Hugh Strain
Sound System:
Westrex Recording System
Sound Editor: Walter Storey
Cast:
Ann Lynn (*girl*)
Judi Dench (*wife*)
Norman Rodway (*husband*)
Brian Phelan (*man*)
Joe Melia (*friend*)
UK 1965©
94 mins

* Uncredited

‘Four in the Morning’: a contemporary review

Until now Anthony Simmons was a little known director of short films and documentaries. With *Four in the Morning*, written and directed by him and produced independently by a group formed expressly to make the film and handle its distribution, Simmons announces himself as a feature director of unusual sensitivity. The film was originally intended as a documentary attempt to capture the atmosphere of Thames-side life, but changed its character in the making and developed into a full-length feature. It still has the feel of a documentary about it, and apparently much of the dialogue was improvised as the scenes were shot.

The film combines a picture of the early morning life of the river with a storyline which has three separate strands. In the opening sequence, as the body of an unknown girl is found washed ashore, Simmons admirably captures the matter-of-fact reaction of the river police to what to them is just another suicide. The clinical austerity of this sequence is echoed in Larry Pizer’s photography, beginning with soft-focus shots of the police boat emerging out of the mist and the dim figure of the girl’s body on the bank, and ending with the antiseptic atmosphere of the mortuary, with its white-washed walls and the white coats of the mortuary officials as they wash down the body and talk of other things.

The strength of the film is the sequence in the flat, the long, bitterly observed quarrel between the husband and wife and the part the husband’s friend plays in it. Here the dialogue is startlingly real, raw and pointed, with a ring of familiarity which must strike an uneasy chord in many people. The acting here is at its best (though the acting of all the characters is unusually good), with Judi Dench contributing an agonised performance as the jaded wife, and Joe Melia revealing that through all his affected banter the unmarried man is really the loneliest of them all. By the end of the film one begins to realise how the three stories are essentially a development from each other. The three women can be seen as different stages of one woman’s response to her emotional surroundings, and Simmons has heightened this effect by never showing the face of the suicide and by having the three women wear a mackintosh which looks the same on each of them. And in the final sequence, as the morning stream of office workers hurries across London Bridge while in the mortuary the dead girl is shut away as an iron door closes behind her body, one can see an echo of the end of Truffaut’s *Jules et Jim*, the sense both of the finality of death and of its nearness to those of us who live. *Four in the Morning* is a nihilistic film, but for the work of an independent British group it is an extraordinary achievement, and one waits to see more from Anthony Simmons.

Monthly Film Bulletin, February 1966

Unlike [Kevin] Brownlow and [Andrew] Mollo, John Morris and Anthony Simmons, producer and director of *Four in the Morning*, are no strangers to the commercial industry. Simmons was making prize-winning shorts such as *Sunday by the Sea* and *Bow Bells* in the early Fifties, and his other work has included co-producing Losey’s *Time without Pity* and directing a feature for Sydney Box. Both he and John Morris also have extensive experience in making commercials and documentaries for Film Contracts and associated companies. After some disappointments in the feature field (including an abortive project for Buster Keaton now published as a novel, *The Optimists of Nine Elms*), Simmons decided that he didn’t want merely to ‘slide into the machine’. An idea for a short film set on the Thames in the early morning grew slowly, until he found himself with the three-part framework of *Four in the Morning*. (The original Thames story about a young suicide being pulled out of the river and taken to a mortuary, interwoven with two other episodes, one concerning a shy young man’s meeting with a nightclub girl, the other tracing the tensions of a married couple.)

BECOME A BFI MEMBER

Enjoy a great package of film benefits including priority booking at BFI Southbank and BFI Festivals. Join today at bfi.org.uk/join

JOHN BARRY: SOUNDTRACKING BOND AND BEYOND

Never Let Go

Fri 2 Feb 20:10; Sun 11 Feb 15:30

Petulia

Sat 3 Feb 16:00; Thu 15 Feb 20:40

The Ipcress File

Sat 3 Feb 18:30; Sat 10 Feb 20:50

Deadfall

Sat 3 Feb 20:30; Sun 25 Feb 18:15

Goldfinger

Sun 4 Feb 16:10 (+ intro by Eddi Fiegel,

journalist, author and John Barry

biographer); Wed 21 Feb 20:45

You Only Live Twice

Sun 4 Feb 18:40; Tue 6 Feb 20:30 (+ intro)

Four in the Morning

Mon 5 Feb 20:30; Tue 13 Feb 17:45

Spies, Swingers and Shadows: The

Films and Scores of John Barry

Tue 6 Feb 18:10

The Whisperers

Fri 9 Feb 18:00; Sat 24 Feb 20:40

John Barry on TV

Sat 10 Feb 18:00

Boom

Sat 24 Feb 15:10; Wed 28 Feb 18:00

Midnight Cowboy

Sat 24 Feb 17:50; Wed 28 Feb 20:45

SIGHT AND SOUND

Never miss an issue with **Sight and Sound**,

the BFI's internationally renowned film magazine. Subscribe from just £25*

* Price based on a 6-month print subscription (UK only). More info: sightandsounds.ubs.bfi.org.uk



BFI PLAYER

We are always open online on BFI Player where you can watch the best new, cult & classic cinema on demand. Showcasing hand-picked landmark British and independent titles, films are available to watch in three distinct ways: Subscription, Rentals & Free to view.

See something different today on player.bfi.org.uk

BFI SOUTHBANK

Welcome to the home of great film and TV, with three cinemas and a studio, a world-class library, regular exhibitions and a pioneering Mediatheque with 1000s of free titles for you to explore. Browse special-edition merchandise in the BFI Shop.

We're also pleased to offer you a unique new space, the BFI Riverfront – with unrivalled riverside views of Waterloo Bridge and beyond, a delicious seasonal menu, plus a stylish balcony bar for cocktails or special events. Come and enjoy a pre-cinema dinner or a drink on the balcony as the sun goes down.

In late 1963 the project was taken to the NFFC, who offered enough finance for a 60-minute film without synchronised dialogue. Once the film was under way, they finally got backing for a full-length feature with dialogue. The NFFC contribution increased in amount but went down in percentage, the remainder of the money being found by producer and director. After nine months planning, shooting began in March 1964; excluding four weeks of rehearsals and some breaks when actors went off on other jobs, the filming took about 45 days.

Mr Simmons emphasised the support he received from actors and crew. 'They all wanted the same freedom as we did; we agreed on a small basic fee for the artists and a percentage of the film's profits afterwards.' On matters of casting: 'We had a little more difficulty in choosing the actors than the actresses. Ann Lynn (the nightclub girl) had been associated with the project for a long time, and there was no question of anyone but Judi Dench playing the wife. For the men we were lucky to get Brian Phelan, Norman Rodway and Joe Melia, actors with the flexibility of approach we needed.'

Simmons' shooting methods were rather unorthodox: 'I would only have half the script intact for each story at the beginning of shooting. Then on the basis of the scenes so far and the feelings of the actors about their characters, I would complete the rest as we went on. Remember, we "researched" the situations, as it were, in rehearsals and the performances developed accordingly. In the husband and wife scenes, we were working at very close quarters; we deliberately shot long takes to allow the performances to flow. There are two eight-minute scenes broken only with inserts for camera re-loading. Larry Pizer, our cameraman, was creatively involved in developing the story, guaranteeing us the visual quality and style of operating we wanted. Our editor, Fergus McDonell, is a man of enormous experience. The way he knitted the three stories together is remarkable and the end result came only after we had tried several different ways of intercutting. He started in March, got thoroughly caught up in it and stayed on for nine months.'

John Gillett, *Sight and Sound*, Summer 1965

Boy and Bicycle

Boy and Bicycle was Ridley Scott's first foray into filmmaking, made initially on a budget of £65 using a Bolex 16mm cine-camera, borrowed from the Royal College of Art in London, where he was a student. Shot over a period of six weeks in the early 1960s, the film was eventually completed in 1965 when Scott finished the post-production sound with a grant provided by the BFI's Experimental Film Fund.

Opening in Scott's own teenage bedroom, *Boy and Bicycle* begins with the camera representing the point of view of the boy (played by Scott's younger brother Tony, who would also become a filmmaker) as he wakes up and looks around his room, thinking about the day ahead. The film then follows the boy as he decides instead to play truant and visits various locations around the seaside town on his bicycle. All the while we listen to his thoughts in a stream of consciousness voice-over that Scott has said was partly inspired by reading James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922).

The voice-over reveals the frustrations of a growing teenager and mocks the authority figures in his life such as his teachers and parents. Scott storyboarded in detail before shooting, and he includes many visual elements that add texture to the film: a dead dog, the sun darkened by ominous storm clouds, and the eerie barrenness of the beach, which Scott has said was an homage to Ingmar Bergman's *The Seventh Seal* (1956).

During post-production, Scott was lucky to acquire the services of the composer John Barry. Although Scott could not afford the rights to the recording he wanted, Barry generously agreed to record a new version of the piece, and his music adds a lyrical, life-affirming quality to the film.

David Morrison, BFI Screenonline, screenonline.org.uk