



Love, Sex, Religion, Death: The Complete Films of Terence Davies

The Terence Davies Trilogy

Children

Directed by: Terence Davies

©/Production:

British Film Institute Production Board

Executive Production Supervisor: Geoffrey Evans

Production: Peter Shannon

Production Assistant: Rick Thomas

Assistant Director: Dave Wheeler

Continuity: Anna Maysoon Pachachi

Written by: Terence Davies

Cameraman: William Diver

Assistant Cameraman: Chris Evans

Editors: Digby Rumsey, Sarah Ellis

Cor Anglais Soloist: Stella Dickinson

Sound Recordist: Digby Rumsey

With special thanks to:

Alan Dosser and The Everyman Theatre Co.,

Notre Dame School, The McKee School

Cast:

Phillip Mawdsley

Nick Stringer

Val Lilley

Robin Hooper (*Robert, aged 23*)

Colin Hignett

Robin Bowen

Harry Wright

Phillip Joseph

Trevor Eve

Linda Beckett

Bill Maxwell

Elizabeth Estensen

Malcolm Hughes

Katherine Fahey

Marjorie Rowlandson

Ann Kiesler

UK 1976©

46 mins

Digital

Madonna and Child

Directed by: Terence Davies

©/Production Company: National Film School

Production: Mike Maloney

Assistant Director: Kees Ryninks

Continuity: Victoria McBain

Written by: Terence Davies

Cameraman: William Diver

Assistant Cameraman: Sergio Leon

Grip: Tim Rolt

Editor: Mick Audsley

Sound Recordist: Antoinette de Bromhead

Dubbing Editor: Geoff Hogg

With special thanks to: Sacred Heart Parish Church,

H.A. Harben & Co., The Harold Ackerley Studio,

Canon Kennedy Primary School

Cast:

Terry O'Sullivan (*Robert Tucker*)

Sheila Raynor (*Robert's mother*)

Paul Barber

John Meynell

Brian Ward

Dave Cooper

Mark Walton

Mal Jefferson

Lovette Edwards

Rita Thatcher

Eddie Ross

UK 1980©

30 mins

Digital

The screening on Tuesday 21 October will be introduced by season curator Ben Roberts

In 1977, as new students at the National Film School, the first thing we had to do was watch one another's films. The slight, diffident and very polite man sitting next to me appeared to be doubled-up with shyness and apprehension. Oh dear, I thought, I bet he has made a tentative film. A few moments later **Children** (for my fellow student was Terence Davies) slammed out of the screen with such power, intensity and passion that no one at the school could see Terence in the same way again.

Shot in stark black and white, with uncompromising honesty, the only films I had seen that were at all similar were Bill Douglas' trilogy *My Childhood*, *My Ain Folk* and *My Way Home*. *Children* – like the two earlier Douglas films – conveyed the pain and bewilderment of a powerless childhood and, as with Douglas, Davies had been discovered by the then head of the BFI Production Board, Mamoun Hassan. Terence wrote *Children* while a mature student at drama school in Coventry, and sent the script off into the blue. Mamoun summoned Terence to London: 'I shall give you £8,500 to make this film and not a penny more.' 'Who's going to direct it?' Terry asked. 'You are,' was the reply. Mamoun (who became one of our mentors at the school, and with whom we laughed so much at a screening of *Kind Hearts and Coronets* that Terence fell off his stool) had recognised that the precision and intensity of the images in Terence's writing revealed a potential film director of distinction.

A novice behind the camera (the eye-line match rule was a mystery to him), Terence wanted *Children* to look like a Vermeer, and with this in mind he embarked on a collaboration with Bill Diver as lighting cameraman – a partnership which continued for the next five films, with Bill sometimes cutting, sometimes lighting and on *Distant Voices* (with special union dispensation) doing both. Even then it was obvious that *Children* was the work of a mature filmmaker and that his role at the film school was one of consolidating and refining his talent. While the rest of us were playing around trying to find our voice and talent, Terence moved immediately on to **Madonna and Child**. He was always clear that this film would form the second part of a trilogy. Thus, remarkably, *Madonna and Child* was made as a student film. After watching a cut of *Madonna* with visiting tutor Alexander Mackendrick I remember somebody asking him, 'Is it a gay film?' 'It's the least gay "gay" film I've ever seen,' was the reply.

Certain moments in *Madonna and Child* are possibly the bravest and most exceptional sequences to have been made at the film school. In particular the scenes set in a men's lavatory, and the track across the church and around the stations of the cross which are accompanied by the voiceover of the tattooist, have immense power to shock, disturb and arouse compassion. The acting is exquisite and I cannot write of Terry Sullivan's performance without my eyes filling with tears.

Death and Transfiguration

Directed by: Terence Davies

This film was financially assisted by:

The Greater London Arts Association,
The British Film Institute

Executive Producer: Maureen McCue

Production: Claire Barwell

Assistant Director: Aisling Walsh

Continuity: Helena Barrett, Carine Adler

Written by: Terence Davies

Cameraman: William Diver

Assistant Cameramen: Gil Aufray, Phillipe Baylaucq

Editor: William Diver

Assistant Editors: Michael Pike, Toby Benton

Art Director: Miki van Zwanenberg

Assistant Art Director: Rachel Taite

Make-up Adviser: Fae Hammond

Performing 'It All Depends on You': Doris Day

Sound Recording: Mohammed Hassini,

Charles Patey, Mark Frith

With special thanks to:

Michael Samuelson (Samuelson Films Service),

The National Film and Television School,

The City of Liverpool, Bethnal Green Hospital,

St Mary Abbotts Hospital

Cast:

Wilfrid Brambell (*Robert Tucker*)

Terry O'Sullivan

Iain Munro

Jeanne Doree

Chrissy Roberts

Virginia Donovan

Carol Christmas

Angela Rooks

Brian Gilbert

Katharine Schofield

Ron Metcalfe

Lisa Parker

James Wilde

Ron Jones

James Culshaw

Marie Smith

Jim Penman

Gerry Shaw

Mandy Walsh

Paul Oakley

children from the McKee School

UK 1983©

26 mins

Digital

When Terence left the school, like most of us he had very little money, but he persevered in trying to make the third part of his trilogy. I think this final film, **Death and Transfiguration**, is the most remarkable achievement. The finance for the project was raised in dribs and drabs – Maureen McCue of Greater London Arts gave her entire minuscule film budget, and people worked on the project for the love of it. Wilfrid Brambell was persuaded to play the dying Robert Tucker, giving a moving, dignified performance. 'Take your teeth out, Wilfrid,' Terry asked, and, surprisingly and appropriately, Brambell did. With admirable tenacity and self-sacrifice Terence managed to shoot the film, with the BFI stepping in at the end like a good fairy to provide finishing costs and to distribute it.

I remember seeing a cut of *Death and Transfiguration* and being stunned by the opening sequence – a wide-shot of the Liverpool sky, the radiator of Tucker's mother's hearse, Tucker's hands folded quietly, the wheels of the funeral cars with their shining hub caps, Tucker's grief-stricken face, the crematorium gates as the cortege drives in, the furnace doors closing on the coffin and its lonely wreath – the images cut to Doris Day singing 'It All Depends on You'.

The trilogy did the rounds of the international festival circuits and was often seen – in the States in particular – as an unnecessarily pessimistic piece, receiving limited arthouse distribution as a result. In a 'glad to be gay' climate, the insecurity, guilt and downright loneliness so astutely expressed in these films was an unfashionable stance. Because Terence dared to show the pain of growing up Catholic and homosexual in working-class Liverpool in the '50s and early '60s, the films were not celebrated enough. Terence once told me that when he recognised his homosexuality he knelt in prayer for so long that his knees bled – this pain is conveyed in the spirit of his films.

Jennifer Howarth, *Sight and Sound*, September 1994

Restoration supported by Simon and Harley Hessel

With thanks to

James Dowling, John Taylor, Dan Copley,
Sophie Smith, Edge Hill University

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AND
SOUND**

The Terence Davies Estate



Dear Bud: The Creative Mind of Terence Davies

Edge Hill University, the repository of the Terence Davies Archive, curates a free exhibition of previously unseen materials from Davies' personal archive and the archive of production company Hurricane Films. The exhibition will include materials from both Terence's personal life and film career such as family letters and belongings, behind-the-scenes photos, props and draft scripts, highlighting his career long connection to the BFI, his deep love of music and a glimpse of his creative space with an interactive recreation of his working desk.

1-30 Nov BFI Southbank Mezzanine