

BERGAMO FILM MEETING

International Film Festival

38th edition, March 7 - 15, 2020

Tribute to Malcolm McDowell

The section is composed by **7 films** and will bring some of McDowell's most significant performances on the screen. **The actor will be a guest of the Festival.**

«It's easy to be good in a Robert Altman film. You try being good in *Cyborg 3*»
Malcolm McDowell, *The Guardian*, 2004

Born Malcolm Taylor in Leeds on 13 June 1943, he was educated at Cannock public school before turning down a university place in favour of working in his father's Liverpool pub, followed by a stint as a travelling salesman. The acting bug bit shortly afterwards, and he joined a touring repertory company, taking on his mother's maiden name in the process.

Moving to London, he worked briefly with the Royal Shakespeare Company, secured a few minor television roles, and then joined the Royal Court Theatre just in time to be asked to audition for *If...* Despite his lack of big-screen experience (the previous year, a brief appearance in Ken Loach's *Poor Cow* didn't make the final cut), McDowell secured the lead role of public schoolboy-turned-firebrand revolutionary Mick Travis, beginning a creative partnership with director Lindsay Anderson that he always regarded as his closest. Shown at the Cannes Film Festival, *If...* brilliantly captured the mood of the times, won the Palme d'Or and established McDowell as the poster child for several generations of student radicals.

Three years later (with Joseph Losey's *Figures in a Landscape* intervening in 1970), McDowell was cast in the lead role of *A Clockwork Orange*, Stanley Kubrick's adaptation of Anthony Burgess' pessimistic tale of violence and (lack of) redemption. Not only was Alex, a vandal, thug, rapist and murderer, about as anti-heroic as it's possible to imagine (his veneration of the music of Ludwig van Beethoven notwithstanding), all his dialogue was scripted in Nadsat, invented post-Cold War teenage slang that fused American and Russian.

He then reunited with Lindsay Anderson, writer David Sherwin and the character of Mick Travis for *O Lucky Man!* (1973), a film directly inspired by McDowell's own early career as a coffee salesman. The third and final Mick Travis film is *Britannia Hospital* (1982).

After playing leads in assorted British films (George Macdonald Fraser's Victorian rogue Harry Flashman in *Royal Flash*, d. Richard Lester, 1975; a cynical, embittered WWI airman in *Aces High*, d. Jack Gold, 1976), he was cast in the title role of *Caligula* (1979) by Tinto Brass.

When making what he envisaged as a brief trip to Hollywood to star as H.G.Wells in *Time After Time* (1979), he met and married his American co-star Mary Steenburgen (his second wife of three) and relocated to California, where he lives to this day. His early years in the US were beset by personal problems, but his workrate then soared, and it's been a rare year since the late 1980s that he hasn't notched up at least half a

dozen credits, usually in villainous character roles.

Among the most important roles, the artistic director of a ballet in *The Company* (2003) by Robert Altman. He still occasionally filmed in Britain. On television, he dominated the four middle episodes of Peter Flannery's masterly *Our Friends in the North* (BBC, 1996) as Sixties gangland kingpin Bennie Barratt, and then played an older version of Paul Bettany in the underrated *Gangster No.1* (d. Paul McGuigan, 2000). He then worked with Get Carter director Mike Hodges in *I'll Sleep When I'm Dead* (2003), playing yet another swaggering gangster ultimately reduced to a broken shell.

Last summer he played Colonel Saville, alongside Harvey Keitel, in Davide Ferrario's *Just Noise*, a film that tells the little-known June 1919 uprising of the citizens of Malta against the British. The film is slated for release in the second half of 2020.

Film List

If... by Lindsay Anderson (Uk 1968, 111')

A Clockwork Orange by Stanley Kubrick (Uk 1971, 137')

O Lucky Man by Lindsay Anderson (Uk 1973, 173')

Time After Time by Nicholas Meyer (USA 1979, 112')

Cat People by Paul Schrader (USA 1982, 73')

Evilenko by David Grieco (Italy 2004, 106')

The Company by Robert Altman (USA 2003, 112')

Bergamo Film Meeting 38th edition

Scheduled to take place from 7 to 15 March, the Festival will also present 7 feature films in first Italian showings in the **Competition-Exhibition** section; 15 documentaries in the **Close-Up** section; the exploration of contemporary European cinema, which will focus on the works of **João Nicolau** (Portugal), **Rúnar Rúnarsson** (Iceland) and **Danis Tanović** (Bosnia and Herzegovina), and will be complemented by **Boys & Girls. The best of Cilect Prize** and by **Europe, Now! Film Industry Meetings**, a brand new and all-European industry section (March 13th and 14th 2020); a retrospective dedicated to Polish director, screenwriter and actor **Jerzy Skolimowski**, one of the world's most prominent and original figures in contemporary cinema; a tribute, accompanied by the exhibition *Gwen, le livre de sable*, to master animator **Jean-François Laguionie**; the passing of the torch between BFM and **Bergamo Jazz**; the **Kino Club** section, for young viewers; along with a diverse array of previews and events made possible thanks to a network of collaborations with the most active local cultural institutions and enterprises of the territory.

Bergamo Film Meeting will officially open its 38th edition on **Friday, March 6, 9:00 pm** at the **Teatro Sociale** in Bergamo, with the film **THX 1138** by **George Lucas** live-scored by the **Asian Dub Foundation**, in first European showing.

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International Press Office

Gloria Zerbinati | +39 338 1200517

gloria.zerbinati@gmail.com

Bergamo Film Meeting Onlus Press Office

Ada Tullo | +39 349 2674900

press@bergamofilmmeeting.it | adatullo33@gmail.com

National Press Office

Lorena Borghi | Studio Sottocorno | +39 348 5834403

lorenab@sottocorno.it | lorena.borghi@gmail.com