

SLAPSTICK

4-8 FEB 2026



...BECAUSE LAUGHTER IS A FORM OF RESISTANCE

FESTIVAL GUIDE

SLAPSTICK 2026

WELCOME



Dear Slapstick supporters,

Slapstick returns with its most ambitious edition yet, five days of celebrating silent, visual, and classic comedy.

This year's festival brings together more than thirty events spanning silent-era masterpieces, rare rediscoveries, live-scored classics, contemporary conversations, tributes, and brand-new strands exploring comedy's cultural impact.

Highlights include newly restored Chaplin, Keaton and Laurel & Hardy screenings; rediscoveries from around the world; anniversaries; and spotlights on early screen pioneers from Keaton to Ozu. We also present themed strands including **Holy Fools**, **Classic and contemporary sitcoms**, and **Silent Comedy**, each offering a fresh way to look at the artistry and disruptive spirit of onscreen comedy.

Special guests from across film, television and performance join us for conversations, introductions and one-off appearances, alongside world-class musicians bringing live accompaniment to silent gems. With family shows, world premieres, and archive premieres and new venues and spaces, Slapstick continues to grow its reach while remaining rooted in what matters to us most: shared laughter, new discoveries and the pure joy of comedy.

Whether you're a lifelong fan or new to the magic of silent and classic comedy, we invite you to dive in and explore this programme bursting with mischief and joy.

Come and join us!

Chris Daniels

Festival Director



SATIRE



LAUREL & HARDY



HOLY FOOLS



SILENT COMEDY



CLASSIC COMEDY



OUR MUSICIANS



Slapstick's magic lies not only in its onscreen classic, but in its brilliant musicians, and this year we're honoured to present an exceptional line-up. Leading our solo accompaniments are celebrated pianists **John Sweeney** and **Daan van den Hurk**, and they are joined at the Gala by the brilliant **European Silent Screen Virtuosi** — with maestro **Günter A. Buchwald** and percussionist **Frank Bockius**. We're delighted to welcome back the legendary **Rick Wakeman** and the superb **Bristol Ensemble**, adding orchestral depth to our annual **Silent Comedy Gala**. 1920s sparkle comes from the **Jack Calloway Jazz Band**, while the **Sing Out choir** brings colour and emotional lift.

Together, they make every performance truly unique.



BOOKING & PASSES

From £150

If you're planning to attend more than a handful of events at Slapstick, consider one of our pass options and make huge savings!

Enjoy a fuller festival experience while getting nearly 50% off regular ticket prices!

See www.slapstick.org.uk for details.



JAN 31 SATURDAY



THE IMPOSTERS!

CiRCOMEDIA

**Saturday 31 January
Circomedia Portland Square
19:30
£12 full price, £8 concession & students.**

Five characters on the run from the authorities escape capture, fall in love, fight their way through hordes of cops to solve the mystery of how they ended up on the wrong side of law. With a live music score, The Imposters brings the charm, daredevil acrobatic stunts, romance, action and thrills of the Silent Movie Era live to the stage. Conceived and directed by Moira Hunt.

Created and performed by Circomedia's BA Contemporary Circus & Physical Theatre students.

This show is presented in an exciting new partnership between Bristol Slapstick Festival and Circomedia. It brings an exhilarating live physical theatre (and circus) experience inspired by the classic silent movies.

Performed in Circomedia's iconic church, it promises to be a compelling night out for film, circus, and theatre lovers alike.

Tickets available at:

slapstick.org.uk

FEB 4 WEDNESDAY

**ADOLPHE MENJOU:
GENTLEMAN OF THE SCREEN
- ARE PARENTS PEOPLE?
(1925)**

With Andrew Kelly
Wednesday 4 February
Watershed
10:00 PG
Dir: Malcolm St. Clair, 1925, USA
73 mins £6.00 - 12.00

A rarely screened Jazz Age comedy following a teen (Betty Bronson) trying to reunite her estranged parents, featuring an early, suave Menjou. Introduced by Andrew Kelly who explores Menjou's rise from silent films to *The Front Page*. With live piano by Daan van den Hurk.

Overall run time: approx 80 mins

**LAUREL & HARDY:
REDISCOVERED IN 4K**

With Chris Daniels and Robin Ince
Wednesday 4 February
Watershed
12:00 PG
Dir: Clyde Bruckman, Edgar Kennedy, USA
70 mins £6.00 - 12.00

A newly restored 4K triple bill of 1928 classics — *Two Tars*, *We Faw Down* and *From Soup to Nuts* — showcasing Laurel & Hardy at their silent comedy peak. Hosted by Chris Daniels and Robin Ince with live piano by Daan van den Hurk.

Overall run time: approx 70 mins



FEB 4 WEDNESDAY



BUSTER KEATON: LE ROI DES CHAMPS-ÉLYSÉES (1934)

With Polly Rose

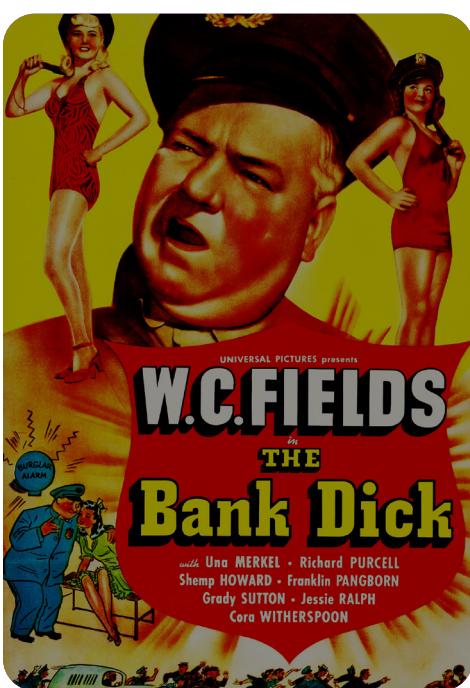
Wednesday 4 February, Watershed, 14:00 PG

Dir: Max Nosseck, 1934, France

70 mins £6.00 - 12.00

A rare chance to see one of Buster Keaton's most charming sound features a 1934 French production co-starring Paulette Dubost. Filmed in Paris, *Le Roi des Champs-Élysées* features Keaton in dual roles in a story of mistaken identity, criminal mix ups and backstage chaos. Made far from Hollywood, it's more Keaton-esque than his MGM sound films and includes his first intentional on-screen smile since *The Saphead* (1920). Presented in French with English subtitles and introduced by Polly Rose on Keaton's European period and the film's mix of silent-style visual comedy and early sound technique.

Overall run time: approx 80 mins



W.C. FIELDS AND THE GOSPEL OF IRREVERENCE: THE BANK DICK (1940)

With Andrew Kelly and Dr Harriet Fields

Wednesday 4 February, Watershed, 16:00 PG

Dir: Edward F. Cline, Ralph Ceder, 1940, USA

72 mins £6.00 - 12.00

Irreverent, subversive and gloriously funny, *The Bank Dick* (1940) is one of W.C. Fields' greatest comedies and a key entry in Slapstick's exploration of faith, morality and rebellion in screen humour. Fields plays Egbert Sousé, a perpetually inebriated dreamer who accidentally becomes a town hero and a bank guard, where his misadventures dismantle respectability from within. Every scene reflects Fields' "gospel of irreverence" - a timely sermon against pomposity and moral pretence. Hosted by Andrew Kelly (Festival of Ideas) with special guest and festival patron Dr Harriet Fields live onscreen.

Overall run time: approx 85 mins

FEB 4 WEDNESDAY

Heavenly Laughs

Charlie Chaplin and Harold Lloyd Double Bill

Hosted by Robin Ince
Wednesday 4 February
Bristol Mega Screen
18:30 PG
70 mins
£12.00 - 15.00

Continuing Slapstick's opening-day look at comedy faith and irreverence, this double bill showcases two silent classics that find humour and humanity in the search for redemption. In **For Heaven's Sake** (1926) Harold Lloyd plays a millionaire playboy whose attempts at evangelism create both chaos and compassion. In **The Pilgrim** (1923) Chaplin's Tramp poses as a minister in a tale where mistaken identity becomes a reflection on grace, guilt and forgiveness. With an introduction and reflections from Robin Ince, the event highlights how Chaplin and Lloyd used laughter to explore kindness, belief and human folly.

Presented with synchronised scores.

Overall run time: approx 125 mins



FEB 4 WEDNESDAY

SOUTH PARK

BIGGER, LONGER & UNCUT

A background image of the South Park characters in a chaotic, war-torn scene. Kyle is in the foreground on the left, looking shocked. Cartman is on the right, also looking shocked. Other characters like Stan and Kenny are visible in the background, some with blood on them. The scene is set against a dark, smoky background with a flag and a tank visible in the distance.

SOUTH PARK – BIGGER, LONGER & UNCUT (1999): 25 YEARS ON + PANEL

With Robin Ince and Shazia Mirza

Wednesday 4 February

Bristol Megascreen

20:30 - 15

Dir: Trey Parker, 1999, UK, 86min

£12.00 - 15.00

Join Slapstick for a 25th-anniversary screening of South Park: Bigger, Longer & Uncut (1999), Trey Parker and Matt Stone's outrageous musical satire exploring the line between humour and heresy. Shown on the giant Bristol Megascreen, this celebration revisits the boundary-pushing cult classic that challenged censors and tackled morality, religion and free speech with an Oscar-nominated soundtrack.

Before the film, a 20-minute panel chaired by Robin Ince (The Infinite Monkey Cage) will discuss satire, blasphemy and free speech, featuring Shazia Mirza plus special guests TBA.

Overall run time: approx 120 mins

FEB 5 THURSDAY

**ADOLPHE MENJOU:
GENTLEMAN OF THE SCREEN
- THE FRONT PAGE (1931)**

Thursday 5 February

Watershed

09:30 PG

Dir: Lewis Milestone, 1931, USA, 101 min

£6.00 - 12.00

In *The Front Page* (1931), Adolphe Menjou shines as sharp-tongued editor Walter Burns in Hecht and MacArthur's landmark newsroom satire, a fast-talking comedy that paved the way for screwball classics. Introduced by Andrew Kelly, this rare big-screen showing highlights Menjou's role in shaping the pace and sophistication of early Hollywood comedy.

Overall run time: approx 107 mins

**ADOLPHE MENJOU,
GENTLEMAN OF THE SCREEN
- A GENTLEMAN OF PARIS
(1927)**

With Andrew Kelly

Thursday 5 February

Watershed - 11:30 PG

Dir: Harry d'Abbadie d'Arrast, 1927, USA, 65min
£ 6.00 - 12.00

Continuing our "Gentleman of the Screen" strand, Andrew Kelly celebrates the elegance and sophistication of Adolphe Menjou, one of Hollywood's most debonair stars. In *A Gentleman of Paris* (1927), Menjou plays a suave boulevardier whose philandering finally catches up with him in a stylish, witty farce filled with sharp visual humour, Parisian detail and his trademark charm. Presented with live piano from John Sweeney, this rare screening showcases Menjou at his peak and proves silent comedy could be as refined as it was funny.

Overall run time: approx. 70 mins



FEB 5 THURSDAY

LOUISE FAZENDA: QUEEN OF SLAPSTICK

With Lucy Porter

Thursday 5 February - Watershed, 14:00 PG

USA, 1917-1919. 70 mins £6.00 - 12.00

One of the unsung heroines of silent comedy is the much-overlooked but utterly brilliant Louise Fazenda. A huge star on Mack Sennett's studio lot, Fazenda's zany energy, expressive face and fearless slapstick made her a standout in dozens of two-reelers and features throughout the 1910s and 20s. Her ability to balance broad farce with finely tuned character comedy paved the way for later greats like Thelma Todd and Lucille Ball. This specially curated programme of short comedies showcases Fazenda at her riotous best, including: Her Torpedoed Love (1917) and Heart and Flowers (1919).

With live piano from Daan van den Hurk.

Overall run time: approx 70 mins



LAUREL & HARDY: THE LAST STAGE

**The true story behind the film "Stan & Ollie",
by the author whose book inspired the film,
A.J. Marriot**

Thursday 5 February

Watershed - Waterside 3

16:00 U

£6.00 - 12.00

A.J Marriot, author of Laurel & Hardy – The British Tours, presents a richly illustrated talk with rare photos and video from Stan and Ollie's 1953-54 tour of Britain and Ireland. He narrates the duo's struggles to earn a living in their post-film years with humour and poignancy, offering an engaging journey through this exhausting, legendary tour. Followed by an in-conversation with Robin Ince and a Q&A.

Overall run time: approx 90 mins





FEB 5 THURSDAY

DESERT ISLAND LAUREL & HARDY: THE SHORTS

With Harry Hill

Thursday 5 February

Bristol Megascreen (Aquarium)

19:00 - £12.00 - 15.00 (£5 off both tickets)

Comedy legend Harry Hill joins writer, broadcaster Sean Folley for a hilarious cinematic trip to Harry's very own Desert Island Stan & Ollie. Harry, who freely admits he loves Laurel & Hardy even more than sausages, will choose two of his all-time favourite comedy shorts, newly restored and screened in pristine condition. Titles revealed on the night! Together, Harry and Robin will explore how the beautifully staged chaos that made Stan & Ollie the greatest screen double act of all time, and an enduring influence on Harry's own comedy. Big laughs and a joyous celebration of two comedy legends on the big screen.

Overall run time: approx 65 mins

DESERT ISLAND LAUREL & HARDY: THE FEATURES

Hosted by Harry Hill

Thursday 5 February

Bristol Megascreen (Aquarium)

20:30 - £12 - 15.00 (£5 off both tickets)

The ultimate Desert Island Stan & Ollie experience as Harry Hill introduces his favourite Laurel & Hardy feature of all time — newly restored and revealed only when the lights go down. Harry will share what makes this film such a personal favourite and why the duo's features represent some of their greatest artistic achievements. These longer stories allowed Stan & Ollie to deepen their characters, stretch their comic rhythms and create some of the most enduring masterpieces in screen comedy.

A rare chance to enjoy a classic Laurel & Hardy feature in stunning quality on the big screen and to find out which one has delighted Harry the most.

Overall run time: approx 70 mins



FEB 6 FRIDAY

OLIVE THOMAS: THE FLAPPER (1920)

With introduction by Pamela Hutchinson

Friday 6 February

Watershed

9:30 - PG

Dir: Alan Crosland, 1920, USA, 90 mins

90 mins - £6.00 - 12.00

Before Clara Bow or Louise Brooks, Olive Thomas helped define the flapper on screen. The Flapper (1920) — the first film to use the term — captures the dawn of the Roaring Twenties as women's fashion, freedoms and roles shifted. Film historian Pamela Hutchinson (Silent London) introduces the screening with an illustrated talk on the rise of the flapper and the film's portrayal of emerging modern femininity. With live piano by John Sweeney, this is a rare chance to see an early celebration of freedom, fashion and female self-expression.

Overall run time: approx 100 mins

BEFORE AND BEYOND LAUREL & HARDY

With Pam Hutchinson & Lucy Porter

Friday 6 February

Watershed

12:00 - PG

£6.00 - 12.00

Laurel & Hardy inspired countless comedy duos, including female partnerships that reinterpreted their perfectly timed chaos. Film historian Pam Hutchinson and comedian Lucy Porter celebrate overlooked acts from US contemporaries Marion Byron & Anita Garvin to Scandinavian duo Ole & Axel/Pat & Patchon and Britain's Tilly Girls, featuring rare shorts. With live piano by Daan van den Hurk.

BSL interpreted

Overall run time: approx 70 mins



FEB 6 FRIDAY

BUSTER KEATON: OUR HOSPITALITY (1923)

Friday 6 February

Watershed

14:00 - PG

Dir. Buster Keaton, John G. Blystone, USA

74 mins - £6.00 - 12.00

Buster Keaton's *Our Hospitality* (1923) stars three generations of Keatons with Melissa Talmadge Cox, Buster's granddaughter, joining live in conversation. This romcom blends action thrills, period costumes, dramatic landscapes, and classic railroad stunts. Co-stars include Natalie Talmadge, baby Buster, Joe Keaton, and the family dog Dewey. Introduction by Polly Rose with live piano by John Sweeney.

BSL interpreted

Overall run time: approx 85 mins



THE LIKELY LADS AT 60

Friday 6 February

Watershed

16:00

£6.00 - 12.00

Celebrate Britain's beloved sitcoms *The Likely Lads* and *Whatever Happened to the Likely Lads?* Starring James Bolam and Rodney Bewes, the series blends character-driven humour, social commentary, and nostalgia. This event reflects on its lasting influence on comedy from Ant & Dec to Caroline Aherne, a timeless portrait of friendship, class, and change.

Overall run time: approx 75 mins

FESTIVAL DIARY

JAN 31 SATURDAY

19:30 THE IMPOSTERS!

● SILENT COMEDY
● CLASSIC
● HOLY FOOLS
● SATIRE!
● LAUREL & HARDY

CIRCOMEDIA

FEB 4 WEDNESDAY

10:00 ADOLPHE MENJOU: GENTLEMAN OF THE SCREEN - ARE PARENTS PEOPLE?

WATERSHED

12:00 LAUREL & HARDY: REDISCOVERED IN 4K

WATERSHED

14:00 BUSTER KEATON: LE ROI DES CHAMPS-ÉLYSÉES

WATERSHED

16:00 W.C. FIELDS AND THE GOSPEL OF IRREVERENCE: THE BANK DICK

WATERSHED

18:30 HEAVENLY LAUGHS: FOR HEAVEN'S SAKE & THE PILGRIM
CHARLIE CHAPLIN AND HAROLD LLOYD DOUBLE BILL

MEGASCREEN

20:30 SOUTH PARK – BIGGER, LONGER & UNCUT: 25 YEARS ON + PANEL

MEGASCREEN

FEB 5 THURSDAY

09:30 ADOLPHE MENJOU: GENTLEMAN OF THE SCREEN - THE FRONT PAGE

WATERSHED

11:30 ADOLPHE MENJOU, GENTLEMAN OF THE SCREEN - A GENTLEMAN OF PARIS

WATERSHED

14:00 LOUISE FAZENDA: QUEEN OF SLAPSTICK

WATERSHED

16:00 LAUREL & HARDY: THE LAST STAGE

WATERSIDE 3

19:00 DESERT ISLAND LAUREL & HARDY: THE SHORTS

MEGASCREEN

20:30 DESERT ISLAND LAUREL & HARDY: THE FEATURES

MEGASCREEN

FEB 6 FRIDAY

09:30 OLIVE THOMAS: THE FLAPPER

WATERSHED

12:00 BEFORE AND BEYOND LAUREL & HARDY

BSL

WATERSHED

14:00 BUSTER KEATON: OUR HOSPITALITY

BSL

WATERSHED

16:00 THE LIKELY LADS AT 60

WATERSHED

19:30 SILENT COMEDY GALA

BSL

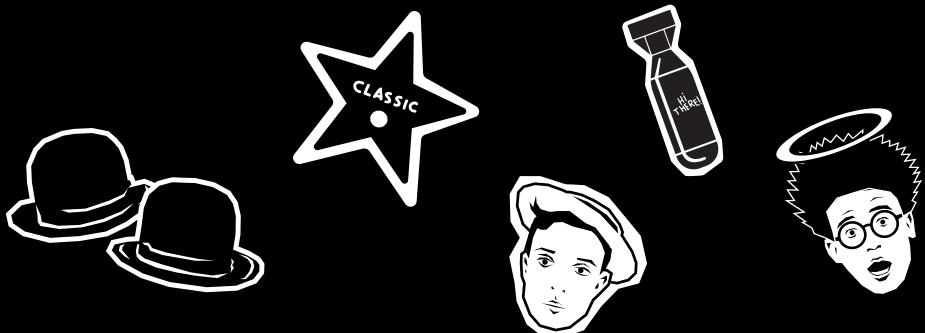
BEACON HALL

FEB 7 SATURDAY

09:30	WHERE NOW ARE THE DREAMS OF YOUTH?	BSL	WATERSHED
11:30	RICK WAKEMAN'S TOP MUSICAL COMEDY MOMENTS		LANTERN HALL
14:00	SLAPSTICK'S BIG BRASS COMEDY FILM SHOW	BSL	LANTERN HALL
14:00	SLAPSTICK CULT CLASSIC: BUT I'M A CHEERLEADER		WATERSIDE 3
16:30	ALEXEI SAYLE'S STUFF – REVISITED		LANTERN HALL
18:30	LEE MACK: 20 YEARS OF NOT GOING OUT	BSL	LANTERN HALL
21:00	SLAPSTICK AFTER DARK: ONE CUT OF THE DEAD		LANTERN HALL

FEB 8 SUNDAY

09:30	LAUREL & HARDY: ATOLL K		WATERSHED
10:00	RELAXED SCREENING: SING!		WATERSHED
12:00	ADAM HILLS: REDISCOVERING LAUREL & HARDY		ST. GEORGE'S
13:30	SERIOUSLY SILLY: A CELEBRATION OF TERRY JONES		GLASS STUDIO, ST. GEORGE'S
15:00	THE THICK OF IT: POLITICS, POWER & PROFANITY		ST. GEORGE'S
17:30	ARMANDO IANNUCCI: SPEAKING TRUTH TO POWER		ST. GEORGE'S
19:00	ADAM HILLS & MIKE McCARTNEY'S SHOW AND TELL		GLASS STUDIO, ST. GEORGE'S
20:30	IN THE LOOP		MEGASCREEN



FEB 6 FRIDAY



SLAPSTICK SILENT COMEDY GALA

*CHARLIE CHAPLIN'S THE KID
(1921) WITH LIVE ORCHESTRA*

With special guest host Stephen Mangan and
legendary musician Rick Wakeman

Friday 6 February
Beacon Hall
19.30
£13.44 - 61.60
BSL interpreted event

Step into the golden age of cinema for an evening of timeless screen comedy, live music, and vintage charm at Bristol's beloved Silent Comedy Gala – the sparkling centrepiece event of Slapstick Festival.

Guiding audiences through the evening is acclaimed actor and comedian **Stephen Mangan**, whose celebrated screen credits include Green Wing, Episodes, The Split, and Postman Pat: The Movie.

FEB 6 FRIDAY

This year's headline feature is **Charlie Chaplin's The Kid (1921)**, a landmark in film history and Chaplin's first full-length masterpiece. Hilarious, heartfelt, and unforgettable, The Kid captures Chaplin at the peak of his creative powers, blending visual comedy with deep emotional resonance.

The film's original score, composed by Chaplin himself, will be performed live by the Bristol Ensemble in a specially arranged 16-player version, conducted by maestro **Guenter A. Buchwald**.

Buster Keaton's The Boat (1921), with an original score performed live by **Rick Wakeman**, whose virtuosic musicianship adds both grandeur and mischief to Keaton's nautical masterpiece.

Laurel & Hardy's Leave 'Em Laughing (1928), performed with live accompaniment by the acclaimed **European Silent Screen Virtuosi**, bringing infectious energy to this side-splitting gem. With additional surprises in store and the vibrant Sing Out Bristol choir joining the lineup, audiences are in for a treat.

Adding to the festive spirit, guests are invited to arrive early and enjoy live 1920s-style entertainment in the Beacon's foyer from the **Jack Calloway Jazz & Dance Band**, performing toe-tapping tunes to transport you straight back to the roaring twenties.

A night of song, laughter, and cinematic magic – all on the big screen, just as it was meant to be.

BSL interpreted event

Overall run time: approx 170 mins



RICK WAKEMAN



GUENTER A. BUCHWALD



JACK CALLOWAY JAZZ & DANCE BAND

'A BRISTOL INSTITUTION'

BRISTOL POST

FEB 7 SATURDAY



WHERE NOW ARE THE DREAMS OF YOUTH? (1932)

Hosted by Pamela Hutchinson

Saturday 7 February

Watershed

09:30 - PG

Dir: Yasujirō Ozu, Japan, 1932, 91 mins

£6.00 - 12.00

A rare chance to see Yasujirō Ozu's early silent comedy *Where Now Are the Dreams of Youth?* (1932) on the big screen. The film follows a student who inherits his father's business, blending humour with Ozu's emerging humanist touch to explore friendship, privilege, and growing up. Introduced by film historian Pamela Hutchinson with live accompaniment by Günter A. Buchwald and Frank Bockius.

BSL interpreted

Overall run time: approx 96 mins



RICK WAKEMAN'S TOP MUSICAL COMEDY MOMENTS

Saturday 7 February

The Lantern, Bristol Beacon

11:30

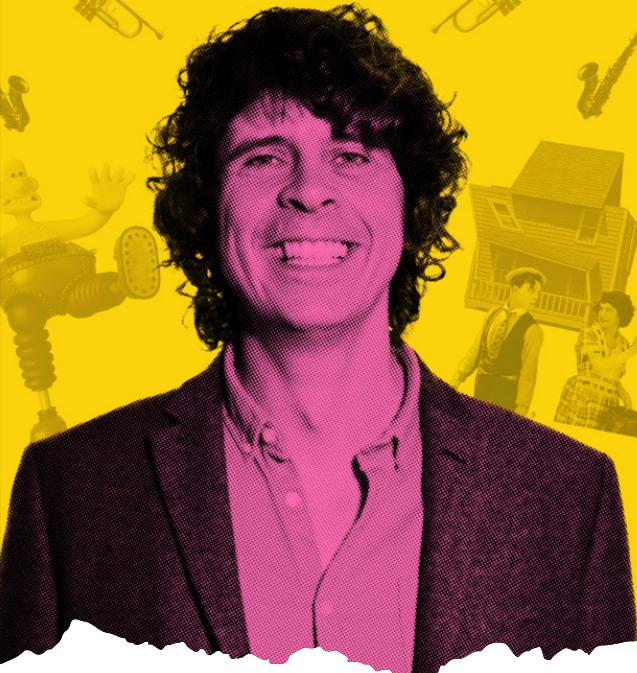
£15.00 - 20.00

From André Previn's "all the right notes" to Bill Bailey's Bach mash-ups, join musical legend Rick Wakeman for a countdown of the funniest and most ingenious onscreen moments where music meets comedy. Precious anecdotes, and Rick's trademark storytelling as he revisits his favourite sketches, songs and symphonic silliness from Morecambe & Wise, Monty Python and beyond.

Overall run time: approx 75 mins



*AARDMAN



FEB 7 SATURDAY

SLAPSTICK'S BIG BRASS COMEDY FILM SHOW

With Andy Day

Saturday 7 February

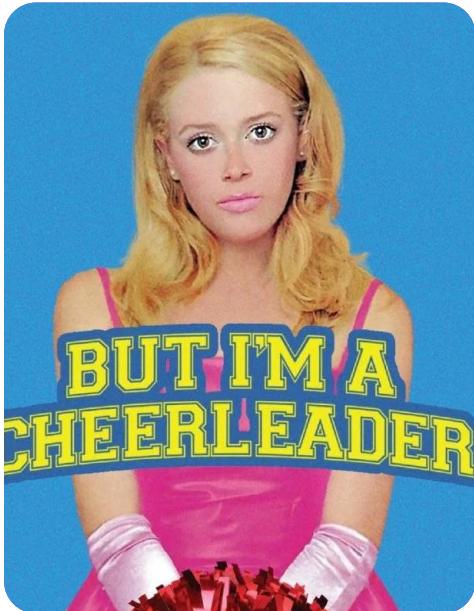
Lantern Hall, Bristol Beacon

14:00 - £15.00 - 20.00

A family-friendly afternoon of film, music, and laughter with Andy Day and the 30-piece City of Bristol Brass Band. Featuring Buster Keaton's *One Week* (1920) and Aardman's Oscar-winning *Wallace & Gromit: The Wrong Trousers* (1993), both screened on the big screen with full live brass accompaniment. Expect brilliant brass and onscreen laughs in Slapstick family film show. Andy introduces each film and leads the audiences through a joyous, family-friendly event for all ages celebrating two timeless icons of screen comedy.

BSL interpreted

Overall run time: approx 75 mins



SLAPSTICK CULT CLASSIC: BUT I'M A CHEERLEADER (1999)

With Harriet Taylor and Robin Ince

Saturday 7 February

Watershed, Waterside 3

14:00 - 15 - Dir: Jamie Babbit, USA, 1999,

85 mins- £6.00 - 12.00

Slapstick 2026 continues its exploration of subversive comedy with *But I'm a Cheerleader*. Natasha Lyonne stars as Megan, sent to a pastel-coloured conversion camp when her parents suspect she's gay, with Cathy Moriarty and RuPaul in comic supporting roles. Gloriously camp and defiantly funny, Jamie Babbit's film turns moralism and societal constraint on its head.

Harriet Taylor (Queer Vision/SWITCH) joins Robin Ince for a discussion on humour as resistance, the film's legacy, and laughter as liberation.

Overall run time: approx 100 mins

FEB 7 SATURDAY

ALEXEI SAYLE'S STUFF - REVISITED

Saturday 7 February
Lantern Hall, Bristol Beacon
16:30 - £15.00 - 20.00

Join **Alexei Sayle** - comedian, writer, actor and one of the true architects of British alternative comedy - for a rare live discussion revisiting his groundbreaking 1980s television series **Alexei Sayle's Stuff**. In conversation with **Robin Ince**, Alexei reflects on the chaotic creativity behind a show that redefined British TV comedy with its fearless mix of surreal sketches, biting satire and political edge. Nearly forty years since it first exploded onto BBC2, Stuff remains as bold, subversive and brilliantly funny as ever. Alexei will discuss behind-the-scenes stories, reflections on its anarchic influence, and plenty of Alexei's trademark live and uncensored at the Bristol Beacon Lantern.

Overall run time: approx 70 mins



LEE MACK 20 YEARS OF NOT GOING OUT



LEE MACK - 20 YEARS OF NOT GOING OUT

Saturday 7 February
Lantern Hall, Bristol Beacon - 18:30
£20.00 - 25.00

SOLD OUT!

Celebrate twenty years of Not Going Out with its creator, writer and star, **Lee Mack**, as he looks back on the sitcom's journey from its pilot to becoming the BBC's longest-running comedy.

This exclusive anniversary event features a lively on-stage conversation full of Lee's quickfire humour, classic clips, outtakes and behind-the-scenes stories, offering rare insight into how the show grew from stand-up roots to a multi-award-winning favourite. A must-see celebration of a modern sitcom classic.

BSL interpreted.



Overall run time: approx. 80 mins
including audience Q&A.

FEB 7 SATURDAY

SLAPSTICK AFTER DARK: ONE CUT OF THE DEAD (2017)



With Adam Murray from Bristol Black Horror Club

Saturday 7 February

Lantern Hall, Bristol Beacon 21:00 - 15

Dir: Shinichirō Ueda, 2017, Japan, 96 mins

£10.00

One Cut of the Dead (2017) is a wildly inventive comedy-horror about a low-budget zombie film interrupted by a real outbreak. Full of twists, sharp comic timing, and love for filmmaking, Shinichirō Ueda's cult hit is both parody and celebration of creative collaboration.

Introduced by Adam Murray (Bristol Black Horror Club) on the film's influence and global impact.

Overall run time: approx 115 mins



FEB 8 SUNDAY



LAUREL & HARDY: ATOLL K (1951)

Sunday 8 February

9:30

Watershed

**Dir: Léo Joannon France/Italy (1951) 98 mins
£6.00 -12.00**

Join us for Atoll K (Utopia), Laurel & Hardy's final feature, in a new BFI restoration. Festival director Chris Daniels and historian Robert Ross introduce the film, exploring its troubled production, multiple language versions, and place in the duo's legacy. The boys inherit a yacht and a remote island, sparking high-seas chaos and a hilariously anarchic utopian experiment.

Overall run time: approx 108 mins



RELAXED SCREENING: SING! (2016)

**With introduction by Angie Belcher
and Ulysses Angelson Farrell**

Sunday 7 February

Watershed Cinema

10:00 - U

**Dir: Garth Jennings, 2016, USA, 108 mins
£5.00 (all tickets)**

A family-friendly big-screen treat!

Sing (Garth Jennings, Illumination) follows Buster Moon, an optimistic koala who stages a singing contest to save his theatre. Packed with humour, heart, and toe-tapping songs, the film features voices from Matthew McConaughey, Reese Witherspoon, Scarlett Johansson, and Taron Egerton, with nods to Buster Keaton. Introduced by Comedian in Academic Residence at the University of Bristol, Angie Belcher and Ulysses Angelson Farrell.

Overall run time: approx 115 mins

FEB 8 SUNDAY



ADAM HILLS: REDISCOVERING LAUREL & HARDY

With special guest

Saturday 7 February
St Georges Main Hall
12:00 - £15.00 - 20.00

Join much-loved comedian and broadcaster Adam Hills for a witty and deeply affectionate exploration of the timeless artistry of Laurel & Hardy. In this Slapstick conversation, Adam is joined by a very special guest (to be revealed - see www.slapstick.org.uk for latest) for an exploration of favourite moments, personal rediscoveries and the joy of returning to "the boys" with fresh eyes. Together they'll look at what makes Stan and Ollie's comedy so enduring, how their performances continue to inspire modern actors and comedians, and why their films still feel alive with heart, silliness and genius a century on.

Overall run time: approx 70 mins

SERIOUSLY SILLY: A CELEBRATION OF TERRY JONES

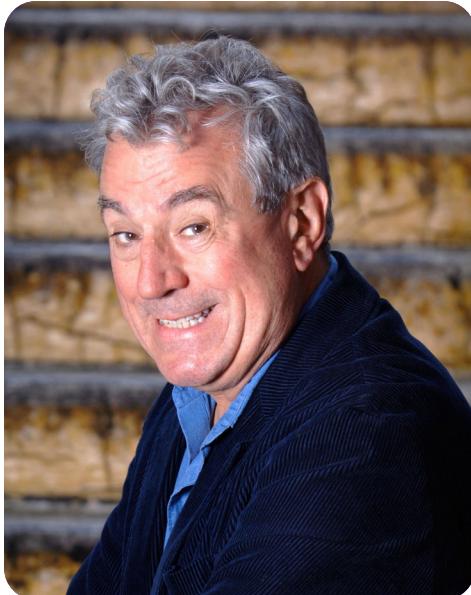
With Robert Ross

Sunday 8 February
The Glass Studio, St George's Bristol
13:30 - £9.00 - 12.00

In this affectionate salute, Robert Ross: Terry's authorised biographer and the man who Barry Cryer, another much-missed friend of Slapstick, dubbed 'Britain's Comedy Historian', will be in conversation with a special guest host. Expect surreal laughter and fond memories of a Comic Genius... but never, ever expect the Spanish Inquisition. Nobody does!

Followed by book signing.

Overall run time: approx 96 mins



FEB 8 SUNDAY

THE THICK OF IT: POLITICS, POWER & PROFANITY

With Armando Iannucci, Chris Addison,
and Rebecca Front

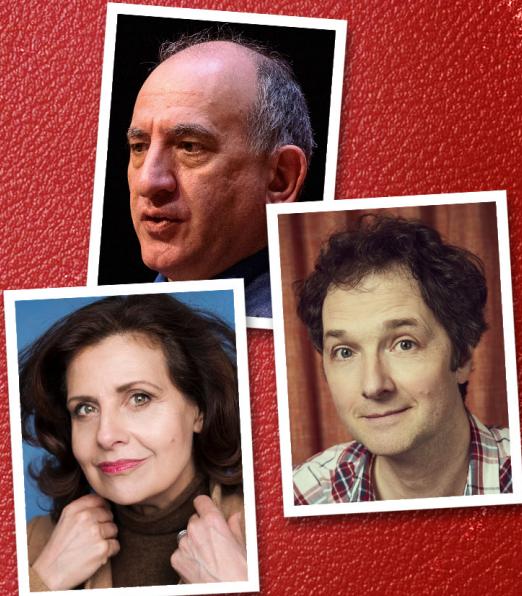
Sunday 8 February - St George's Bristol

15:00 - 18+ - £10.00 - 32.00

Step back into the chaotic corridors of Whitehall as creator Armando Iannucci reunites with key members of his award-winning ensemble for a celebration of one of television's sharpest, funniest and most influential political comedies. Two decades on, *The Thick Of It* still skewers spin culture, media distortion and moral freefall with unnerving accuracy.

This in-depth on-stage conversation revisits the show's origins, the real-world absurdities that shaped its storylines, and the sheer comic craft behind Malcolm Tucker's legendary tirades. Expect reflections, revelations and behind-the-scenes memories from Armando and original cast members Chris Addison and Rebecca Front.

Overall run time: approx 80 mins



ARMANDO IANNUCCI: SPEAKING TRUTH TO POWER

Sunday 8 February

St George's Bristol - 17:30 - 14+ - £10 - 32

Few writers have shaped modern comedy like Armando Iannucci, whose fearless, inventive work spans *On the Hour*, *Alan Partridge*, *The Thick of It*, *Veep*, *In the Loop* and *The Death of Stalin*. In this special event, he reflects on his career as a writer, director and broadcaster, sharing insights into his inspirations and creative process through clips, anecdotes and discussion, including his recent BBC Radio 4 series *Parody or Die*. Armando will also receive the inaugural Golden Baz Writers Award, celebrating comedy writers who embody the wit, warmth and originality of Barry Cryer. A joyous celebration of one of Britain's most brilliant comedy storytellers.

Overall run time: approx. 85 mins.

FEB 8 SUNDAY

SHOW & TELL WITH ADAM HILLS & MIKE MCCARTNEY

Sunday 8 February

The Glass Studio, St George's Bristol

20:00 - £9.00 - 12.00

A Slapstick Exclusive – A Brand-New Double Act, Back by popular demand.

Adam Hills returns to Slapstick with his trademark wit, joined by the ever-mischiefous Mike McCartney for SHOW & TELL, a one-off experiment in unscripted comedy. Each brings three mystery objects hidden in a sack, sparking stories, memories and unexpected laughs as they interview and riff off each other. What's in the bags—and where will the stories go? Join us for a unique hour of surprise, humour and genuine connection.

Overall run time: approx 55 mins
including audience Q&A

IN THE LOOP (2009)

Introduced by Armando Iannucci

Sunday 8 February

Megascreen - 20:30 - 15

Dir: Armando Iannucci, UK, 2009, 106 mins

£12.00 -15.00

Slapstick 2026 closes with a big-screen return of one of the sharpest political comedies ever made.

A feature-length spin-off of The Thick of It, In The Loop follows ministers, spin doctors, and aides as an offhand remark escalates into an international crisis. With standout performances from Peter Capaldi, Tom Hollander, and Gina McKee, Armando Iannucci's BAFTA-winning satire remains razor-sharp, blending farce, fury, and four-letter politics.

Introduced live by Armando Iannucci and with Chris Addison this screening is the perfect finale to five days celebrating fearless, intelligent comedy.

Overall run time: approx 120 mins

A BIT ABOUT THE PROGRAMME

Holy Fools: Challenging Conformity Through Comedy

As Festival Director, one of my greatest joys is discovering how timelessly comedy can speak directly to the anxieties and absurdities of our own age. The films in this strand (For Heaven's Sake, 1926; The Pilgrim, 1923; The Bank Dick, 1940; But I'm a Cheerleader, 1999; South Park: Bigger, Longer & Uncut, 1999) may span almost a century, yet each uses laughter to challenge moral hypocrisy and the social constraints that shape behaviour. Together, they form a lineage of satire, from silent-era slapstick to animated anarchy, that reminds us that humour is not just entertainment; it is also a form of resistance.

Chaplin, Lloyd and W.C. Fields understood that comedy could smuggle radical ideas past the gatekeepers of decency. In The Pilgrim, Chaplin's escaped convict masquerades as a minister, performing holy duties, while barely containing comic chaos. His sermon of gestures exposes the gap between piety and compassion. Lloyd's For Heaven's Sake turns a millionaire's accidental fall into charity into a well-natured critique of class and privilege. And The Bank Dick, with Fields at his most subversive and brilliant, dismantles America's moral pretensions through a character who drinks, lies and still somehow triumphs.

All three films from this period of early cinema find comedy in the tension between appearance and truth. This is a theme that still resonates in a world obsessed with signalling virtue and curating perfection. They remind us that laughter is often the most honest and vicariously cathartic response to hypocrisy.

Half a century later, Jamie Babbit's But I'm a Cheerleader brought that same irreverent spirit into the culture wars of the late twentieth century. Its candy-coloured world of "conversion therapy" and moral correction may look exaggerated, but the cruelty it mocks remains painfully real. By embracing camp and satire, Babbit reclaims the language of shame and turns it into self-acceptance and joy. It's a film that makes you laugh even while you wince, proving that humour can relieve and heal as well as provoke.

Then there's South Park: Bigger, Longer & Uncut, a loud, fearless, gleefully obscene film. Beneath the chaos and profanity lies a sharp critique of censorship, nationalism and moral panic. Its outrage is deliberate: an animated mirror held up to the hypocrisy of a society that claims to protect innocence while suppressing dissent.

In its own way, South Park: Bigger, Longer & Uncut continues the same argument Chaplin began a century earlier, demonstrating that laughter, when used boldly in art, can be a moral and transgressive act.

In curating this programme, my aim has been to remind us why comedy, and laughter, matter. At a time when public discourse can feel increasingly brittle and polarised, satire allows us to explore difficult questions without retreating into anger or fear. Laughter disarms. It connects us. It opens a space for empathy and self-reflection where accusation and defensiveness might otherwise reign.

These films, old and new, celebrate the "holy fool", the one who dares to trip over conventional norms and make us see ourselves afresh. In watching them together, we are revisiting the history of comedy while also reclaiming its most radical promise. That laughter, freely shared, can still be one of the most human and humane responses to the increasing absurdities of our times.

Chris Daniels,
Ed. Norman Taylor



A BIG THANK YOU TO ALL OUR SUPPORTERS!

Who give their time and share their passion for silent, visual and classic comedy.

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THE FESTIVAL TEAM

Patrons: Marcus Brigstocke, Kevin Brownlow, Rob Brydon MBE, Bernie Clifton, Dr Harriet Fields, Graeme Garden OBE, Peter Lord CBE, Matt Lucas, Paul McGann, Bill Oddie OBE, Sir Michael Palin, Nick Park CBE, David Robinson, David Sproxton CBE, Suzanne Lloyd, Mike McCartney, Sanjeev Bhaskar, Rick Wakeman.

ADVISORY BOARD

Steven Coombe, Chris Daniels, Jo Daniels, Graeme Garden, Chris Kidd, Robin Ince, Sue Lion, Lucy Porter, David Robinson, David Sproxton

Director: Chris Daniels **Producer:** Jacqui Ham **Assistant Director/PA:** Hannah Stratford

Social Media/Digital Content: Nathan Hardie **Technical Manager:** Ewan Dunford

Operations Manager: Sue Lion **Finance:** Steven Coombe/Burnside **Guest Liaison:** Chris Kidd,

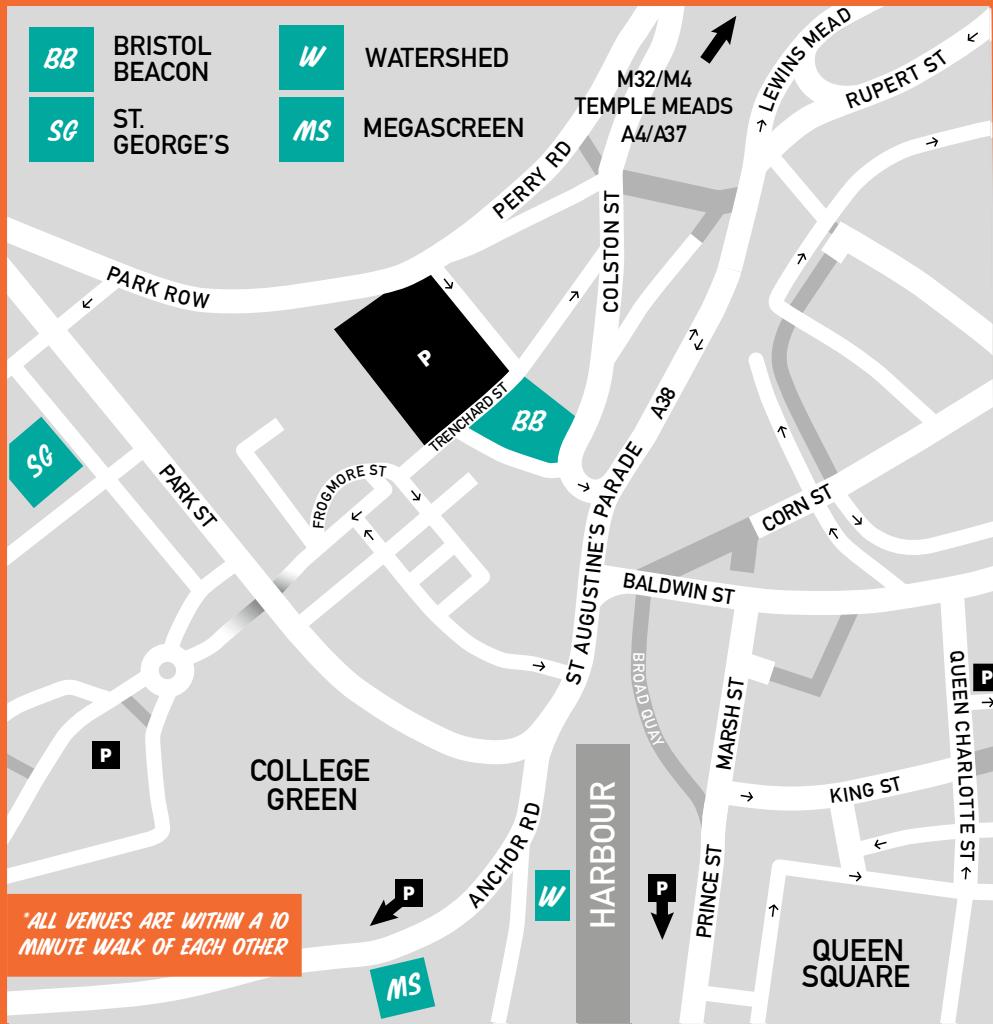
Stage Manager: Gemma Brooks **Musical Director:** Günter A. Buchwald

Photographer: David Betteridge **Website:** Web Design City **Press & PR:** Michelle Thomas

Design/Branding and digital: Josh McCartney **PB Edits/DJ Filming/Editing:** UWE, Aardman

Machine Room Ident: Bram Twheam (Aardman Animations)

Curators: Chris Daniels, Polly Rose, Michael Daniels, Andrew Kelly, Harriet Taylor and Adam Murray.



VENUES: TICKET INFORMATION

Bristol Beacon, Trenchard St, Bristol BS1 5AR
0117 203 4040 | bristolbeacon.org

St George's Bristol, Great George Street (Off Park Street), Bristol BS1 5RR
0117 929 4929 | stgeorgesbristol.co.uk

Watershed, 1 Canons Road, Bristol BS1 5TX
0117 927 5100 | watershed.co.uk

Bristol Megascreen, Anchor Rd, Bristol BS1 5TT
0117 929 8929 | www.bristolaquarium.co.uk/megascreen



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