

# SLAPSTOCK



4-8 FEB 2026



...BECAUSE LAUGHTER IS A FORM OF RESISTANCE

FESTIVAL GUIDE

REVISED!

# 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**

[SLAPSTICK.ORG.UK](http://SLAPSTICK.ORG.UK)



**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](http://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](http://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

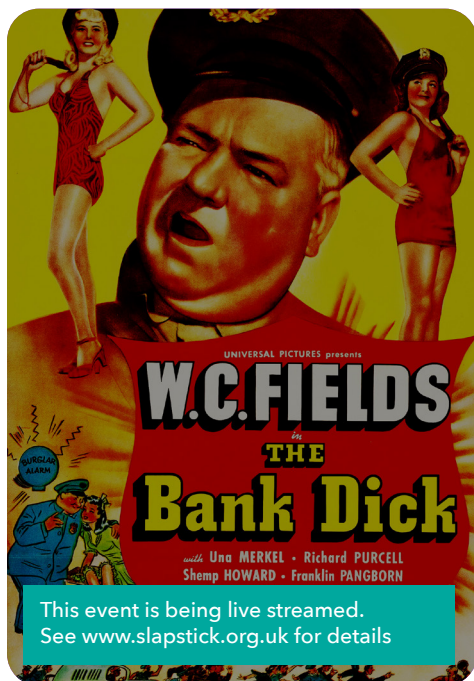


## **BUSTER KEATON: LE ROI DES CHAMPS-ÉLYSÉES (1934)**

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 Godbode. 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 Keatonesque 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  
£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 112 mins



© Roy Export S.A.S. / Courtesy The Chaplin Office



**FEB 4** WEDNESDAY

# **SOUTH PARK**

**BIGGER, LONGER & UNCUT**

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

With Robin Ince and Shazia Mirza and The Revd Canon Dr Simon Taylor Director of Mission and Ministry Support for the Bristol Diocese  
Wednesday 4 February  
Bristol Megascreen  
20:45 - 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)***

Hosted by Andrew Kelly  
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.

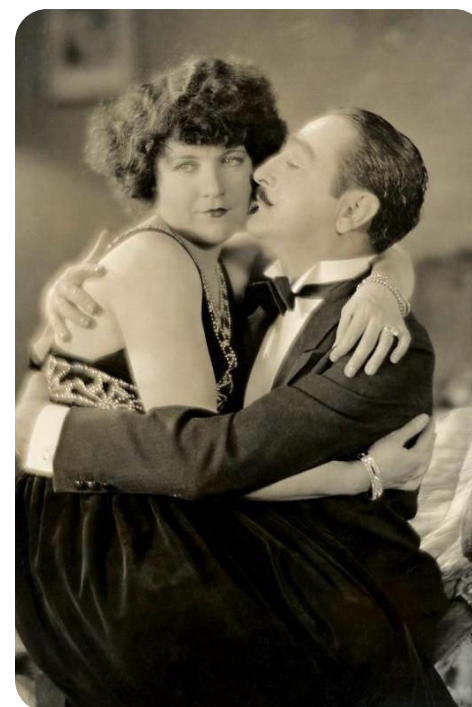
Overall run time: approx 107 mins

## ***ADOLPHE MENJOU, GENTLEMAN OF THE SCREEN - THE MARRIAGE CIRCLE (1924)***

Hosted by Andrew Kelly  
Thursday 5 February

Watershed - 11:30 PG

Dir: Ernst Lubitsch, 1924, USA, 85min  
£ 6.00 -12.00



One of the purest expressions of the legendary "Lubitsch Touch," The Marriage Circle is a sparkling silent comedy of manners. Set among Vienna's elegant middle classes, it follows two marriages unsettled by flirtation, jealousy and suspicion, played out through looks, gestures and perfectly timed visual jokes. At its centre is Adolphe Menjou, immaculate and slyly charming, delivering a defining performance built on raised eyebrows and quiet confidence. A landmark of sophisticated silent cinema, The Marriage Circle shows why Lubitsch became Hollywood's most admired comedy director and why this film still feels playful and daring.



**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'S YORKSHIRE ADVENTURES (2025)**

With Dean Sills and Andrew Kelly  
Thursday 5 February  
Watershed - Waterside 3  
16:00 U  
£6.00 - 12.00

Join filmmaker Dean Sills in conversation with Andrew Kelly for a chat exploring the making of Laurel and Hardy's Yorkshire Adventures. Created by father and daughter filmmaking duo Dean and Rebecca Sills, the film follows them as they embark on a journey inspired by the legendary Laurel and Hardy's visits to Yorkshire. They visit the venues where the iconic duo once performed, engaging with members of the Sons of the Desert in both Bradford and Sheffield. The conversation will be followed by this unique documentary.

Overall run time: approx 70 mins



**FEB 5 THURSDAY**

## **DESERT ISLAND LAUREL & HARDY: THE SHORTS**

With Harry Hill and Sean Folley  
Thursday 5 February  
Bristol Megascreeen (Aquarium)  
19:00 - £12.00 - 15.00 (£5 off both tickets)

Our special guest host joins SEAN FOLLEY for a Desert Island Stan & Ollie event, choosing two favourite Laurel & Hardy shorts newly restored and revealed on the night. Together they explore the timeless rhythm, warmth and chaos that define the duo's early work, offering laughter and fresh insight in a big-screen celebration of their funniest shorts.

Overall run time: approx 65 mins



## **DESERT ISLAND LAUREL & HARDY: THE FEATURES**

Hosted by Harry Hill  
Thursday 5 February  
Bristol Megascreeen (Aquarium)  
20:30 - £12 - 15.00 (£5 off both tickets)

Harry Hill returns to the Megascreeen to present his ultimate Desert Island Stan & Ollie choice, a newly restored feature, with the title kept secret until the lights go down. Join him for an affectionate, insightful and laughter-filled exploration of Laurel & Hardy's genius and one of their very best movies adored for generations. A must for comedy lovers and anyone who's ever been charmed by "the boys."

Overall run time: approx 80 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 Pamela 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



## **BUSTER KEATON: OUR HOSPITALITY (1923)**

Introduced by Polly Rose  
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 WITH CREATORS DICK CLEMENT & IAN LE FREN AIS**

Hosted by Andrew Kelly  
With Dick Clement and Ian le Frenais  
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.

The creators of the series Dick Clement and Ian le Frenais will be making a contribution to the event online

Overall run time: approx 90 mins



# FESTIVAL DIARY

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

## JAN 31 SATURDAY

19:30 THE IMPOSTERS!

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

20:45 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 - THE MARRIAGE CIRCLE

WATERSHED

14:00 LOUISE FAZENDA: QUEEN OF SLAPSTICK

WATERSHED

16:00 LAUREL & HARDY'S YORKSHIRE ADVENTURE

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

14:00 BUSTER KEATON: OUR HOSPITALITY

BSL

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 REDISCOVERING LAUREL & HARDY WITH SANJEEV BHASKAR

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

WATERSHED





FEB 6 FRIDAY



# SLAPSTICK SILENT COMEDY GALA

105<sup>TH</sup>  
ANNIVERSARY

## 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.

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**. The evening also features two riotous short comedies: **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.



GUENTER A. BUCHWALD



RICK WAKEMAN



JACK CALLOWAY JAZZ & DANCE BAND

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

## '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: Yasujiro Ozu, Japan, 1932, 91 mins  
£6.00 - 12.00

A rare chance to see Yasujiro 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



**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

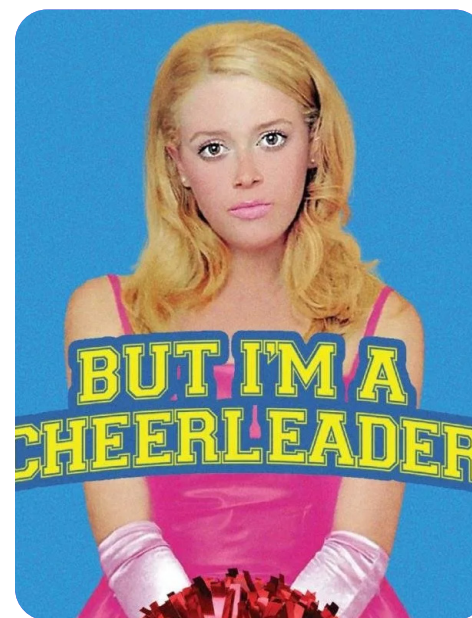


## **RICK WAKEMAN'S TOP MUSICAL COMEDY MOMENTS**

With Robert Ross  
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



## **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**

**SOLD OUT!**

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**

**SOLD OUT!**

With ITV West's Alex Lovell  
Saturday 7 February  
Lantern Hall, Bristol Beacon - 18:30  
£20.00 - 25.00

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.

**LEE  
MACK  
20  
YEARS  
OF  
NOT  
GOING  
OUT**



**FEB 7 SATURDAY**

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



With Adam Murray from Bristol Black Horror Club and Robin Ince

+ screening of the winners film from our 1 minute 1 horror competition

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.

The creators of the series will be making a contribution to the event online.

Overall run time: approx 115 mins





**FEB 8 SUNDAY**



**LAUREL & HARDY: ATOLL K  
(1951)**

Intro from Robert Ross and Chris Daniels  
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 8 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**



**REDISCOVERING  
LAUREL & HARDY WITH  
SANJEEV BHASKAR**

Hosted by Adam Hills  
Sunday 8 February  
St Georges Main Hall  
12:00 - £15.00 - 20.00

Join Last Leg broadcaster and comedian Adam Hills and special guest Sanjeev Bhaskar for a witty, affectionate celebration of the timeless brilliance of Laurel & Hardy. As a proud Slapstick Patron and lifelong fan, Bhaskar reunites with Hills to rediscover the magic of "the boys," sharing personal favourite moments and exploring why their work remains so influential. Whether you are a long-time devotee or a curious newcomer, this joyful dive into cinema's greatest double act promises a warm, funny look at why their comedy still feels astonishingly alive a century later.

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**

Hosted by Samira Ahmed  
Sunday 8 February  
St George's Bristol - 17:30 - 15 - £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 *Strong Message Here*. 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-mischievous 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 and Chris Addison  
Sunday 8 February  
Watershed - 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

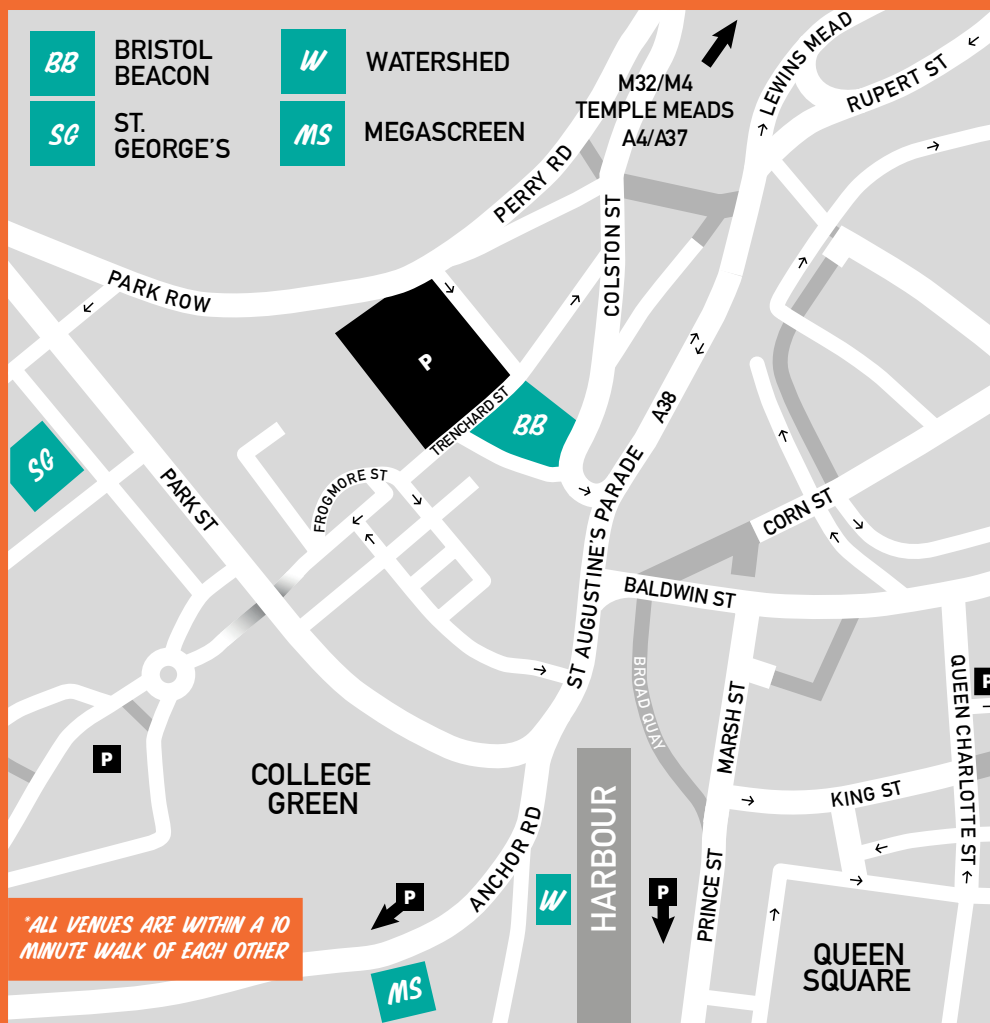
**Patrons:** Marcus Brigstocke, Kevin Brownlow, Rob Brydon MBE, Bernie Clifton, Dr Harriet Fields, Graeme Garden OBE, Peter Lord CBE, Matt Lucas, Paul McGann, Bill Oddie OBE, Sir Michael Palin, Nick Park CBE, David Robinson, David Sproxton CBE, Suzanne Lloyd, Mike McCartney, Sanjeev Bhaskar, Rick Wakeman.

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Machine Room **Ident:** Bram Twheam (Aardman Animations) **YouTube Manager:** Josh Daniels  
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## VENUES: TICKET INFORMATION

Bristol Beacon, Trenchard St, Bristol BS1 5AR  
0117 203 4040 | [bristolbeacon.org](http://bristolbeacon.org)

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

Watershed, 1 Canons Road, Bristol BS1 5TX  
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