



**BFI Flipside presents
You're Human Like the Rest of Them
The films of B S Johnson**

Although best known as the ground-breaking author of *Albert Angelo*, *The Unfortunates* and *Christy Malry's Own Double-Entry*, B S Johnson (Feb 1933 – Nov 1973) was also the director of a number of extraordinary and daring films. This extensive collection, released on 15 April 2013 in a BFI Flipside Dual Format Edition (including a DVD and a Blu-ray disc) brings his experimental shorts, humorous animation, provocative agitprop and uniquely personal documentary films together for the very first time.

From his award-winning 1967 experimental film *You're Human Like the Rest of Them*, which was based on his own poem, written in decasyllabics, to his ground-breaking TV films, including *The Unfortunates* (BBC) and the extraordinary *Fat Man on a Beach* (HTV), Johnson's work is fuelled by his passionate belief in the power of words and images to convey the truth of our existence, and is filled with his infectious sense of humour.

Amongst the ten premiere presentations in this unique collection is *Not Counting the Savages*, Johnson's uncompromising 1972 TV play, directed by Mike Newell. Considered lost for decades, it is presented from the only surviving material – a black and white video recording discovered only a few months ago in the Johnson family home – affording us the incredible opportunity to see this extraordinary and powerful work 41 years after it was first broadcast.

Extra features include a documentary on the British Library's B S Johnson Archive and an extensive booklet with new writings by contributors including directors Bruce Beresford and Michael Bakewell, Johnson biographer Jonathan Coe, and acclaimed comedy writer David Quantick (*The Day Today*, *Brass Eye*).

The release will feature the following films:

- **You're Human Like the Rest of Them** (1967, 17 mins): multi-award-winning tale of a teacher confronting his own mortality
- **Paradigm** (1968, 9 mins): William Hoyland gives a performance of supreme virtuosity in this arresting experimental film
- **The Unfortunates** (1969, 15 mins, DVD only): Johnson brings aspects of his book to life in this short BBC TV film
- **Up Yours Too Guillaume Apollinaire!** (1969, 2 mins): humorous animated take on the calligrams of the famous poet and eroticist
- **Unfair!** (1970, 8 mins): provocative agitprop piece with Bill Owen
- **March!** (1970, 13 mins): documentary made for the ACTT union
- **Poem** (1971, 1 min): poignant short set to the words of Samuel Beckett
- **B. S. Johnson on Dr. Samuel Johnson** (1972, 26 mins): a learned and full-bodied appreciation of the great writer
- **Not Counting the Savages** (1972, 29 mins, DVD only): Mike Newell's adaptation of Johnson's intense play, made for BBC TV's *Thirty Minute Theatre*
- **Fat Man on a Beach** (1974, 39 mins): part documentary, part creative exploration, this was a highlight of 1970s TV programming

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Special features

- *The Johnson Papers* (2013): inside the British Library's B S Johnson archive
- Extensive booklet with new writing by Steve Johnson, Bruce Beresford, Michael Bakewell, Jonathan Coe, David Quantick, Dr Julia Jordan, Carman Callil, Dan Fox, and the BFI's Vic Pratt and Jim Dempster

Product details

RRP: £19.99 / cat. no. BFIB1145 / Cert 15

UK / 1967-1974 / colour, and black and white / English language, with optional hard-of-hearing subtitles / 160 mins + extras / Original aspect ratio 1.33:1 // Disc 1: BD25 | 1080p | PCM mono audio (48k/16-bit) // Disc 2: DVD9 / PAL / Dolby Digital mono audio (320 kbps)

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Images will be available soon at www.image.net under BFI DVD 2013

BFI DVDs are available from all good DVD retailers; by mail order from the BFI Shop Tel: 020 7815 1350 or online at www.bfi.org.uk/shop

B S Johnson – out in print this month

On 14 February 2013, to mark the 80th anniversary of B S Johnson's birth, Picador will publish a new collection, **Well Done God!: Selected Prose and Drama of B.S. Johnson**, co-edited by Professor Philip Tew, Dr. Julia Jordan and Jonathan Coe, and re-issue his novels **Albert Angelo**, **Trawl**, **House Mother Normal** and **Christie Malry's Own Double-Entry** with new introductions by writers including Andrew Motion and Toby Litt.

British Library Event: B S Johnson – His Life and Legacy – Fri 15 Feb at 6.30pm

To celebrate the 80th anniversary of the birth of BS Johnson and the publication of the new anthology of his prose writing by Picador, a panel discuss the life and legacy of one of post-war Britain's most experimental writers. Speakers include Jonathan Coe, author of *Like a Fiery Elephant – The Story of BS Johnson*, Philip Tew and Julia Jordan, joint editors of the forthcoming *Well Done God! Selected Prose and Drama of BS Johnson*.

More details at: <http://www.bl.uk/whatson/events/event140205.html>

About B S Johnson

Bryan Stanley Johnson was born in 1933 in Hammersmith, West London and lived mainly in London until he took his own life, aged 40, in November 1973. He was a gifted and prolific novelist, poet, playwright and film-maker who died at the height of his creative powers. Best known for his novels, he also made three short films and various works for television.

Described by author Anthony Burgess as "the only British writer with the guts to re-assess the novel form", the formal experimentation and anarchic playfulness that characterised Johnson's fiction is equally present in his film work. Just as playwright Samuel Beckett (an admirer of Johnson's writing) started to make short pieces for television later in his life, so Johnson worked increasingly with the moving image; from his TV documentary work to a more personal brand of cinema.

You're Human Like the Rest of Them (1967), Johnson's first film (made for the BFI Production Board for a budget of £1,250), is a very black comedy about a teacher struggling to convey his feelings on mortality to his bewildered class and colleagues.

As with Johnson's work across all media, there is a strong autobiographical element. He had himself worked as a supply teacher, an experience that also provided the source material for his novel *Albert Angelo*. Johnson was working on a screenplay adaptation of this at the time of his death.

Tim Brown, BFI Screenonline

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About BFI Flipside

Developed from its popular monthly screening slot at BFI Southbank, the BFI's Flipside series is designed to revisit and reappraise British films that have slipped through the cracks of cinema history – films that were overlooked, marginalised, or undervalued at the original time of release, or which sit outside the established canon of recognised classics.

BFI Flipside titles are all newly mastered to High Definition from original film elements, and are presented with rare and fascinating special features, including previously unavailable short films, documentaries and archival interviews, many of which are preserved in the BFI National Archive. Each title comes in collectable numbered packaging and is accompanied by an extensive illustrated booklet with insightful contributions from special guest writers, often including the filmmakers themselves.

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