

Haringey Libraries:

FILM LIST AND REVIEWS

Enjoy a selection of black history & culture themed films and documentaries, or ones made by black filmmakers. Selections and reviews have been made by library staff and readers.

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FILM LIST:

- **Do the Right Thing** (1989) cert.15
- **Guess Who's Coming to Dinner** (1967) cert. U
- **In the Heat of the Night** (1967) cert. A
- **Mississippi Burning** (1988) cert. 18
- **Queen & Slim** (2019) cert. 15
- **The Butler** (2013) cert 12A
- **The Color Purple** (1985) cert.15
- **The Hate U Give** (2018) cert. 12A
- **The Help** (2011) cert. 12A
- **To Sir with Love** (1967) cert. A

FILM REVIEWS:

Blue Story (DVD) cert. 15

Written, directed, and narrated by Rapman (Andrew Onwubolu), Blue Story was last year's success story for British black cinema on the big screen.

'Best friends Timmy (Stephen Odubola) and Marco (Micheal Ward) go to the same high school in Peckham but live in neighbouring London boroughs. When Marco's beaten up by one of Timmy's primary school friends, the two boys wind up on rival sides of a never-ending cycle of postcode gang war in which there are no winners... only victims.'

Farming (DVD) cert. 18

Adewale Akinnuoye-Agbaje tells the story of his own incredibly traumatic experiences as a Nigerian boy being 'farmed out' to a white working-class family in 1980s England. A brutal and uncompromising drama.

'At six weeks old, Enitan (Zephan Amisah) is left in the care of a white working-class family in the dock-town of Tilbury, in Essex. His new surrogate mother, Ingrid (Kate Beckinsale), makes for a complex, but dubious foster parent. Unsure of his place in the world, and lacking a mother's love and desperate to belong, the teenage Enitan (Damson Idris) spirals into self-destruction, falling in with a local skinhead gang led by Levi (John Dagleish). When all seems lost, a sympathetic teacher, Miss Dapo (Gugu Mbatha-Raw), offers him one last shot at redemption. Told with brutal honesty, FARMING is an unflinching autobiographical portrait of a young man who must battle the odds and realise that, in a world of hate, his toughest battle will be learning to love himself.'

Ganja & Hess (Dual format DVD/Blu-ray) cert. 18

Criminally underseen, Bill Gunn's *Ganja & Hess* is a radical collision of black experimental filmmaking and genre cinema (in this case the vampire movie) in 70s America.

'Duane Jones (Night of the Living Dead) stars as anthropologist Hess Green, who is stabbed with an ancient ceremonial dagger by his unstable assistant (director Bill Gunn), endowing him with the blessing of immortality, and the curse of an unquenchable thirst for blood. When the assistant, beautiful and outspoken wife Ganja (Marlene Clark) comes searching for her vanished husband, she and Hess form an unexpected partnership. Together, they explore just how much power there is in the blood.'

Green Book (DVD) cert. 12A

Tony Lip - a bouncer from an Italian American neighbourhood in the Bronx – is hired as a chauffeur working for world class pianist Dr Don Shirley. This heart-warming, film shows the unfairness and discrimination faced by the pianist – being invited to play at such elegant (looking) and prestigious hotels whilst being unable to eat in the places that he performed, apart from when he is accompanied by his chauffeur is he able to eat there! Dr Don Shirley and Tony become great friends, with a friendship lasting for years. It also shows how in true friendships we can grow, learn, and rely on each other - with Tony coming to Dr Don Shirley's rescue in a time of need and Dr Don Shirley helping Tony to learn to read and write. A film you must add to your list as a must-watch!

Harriet (DVD) cert. 12

American abolitionist and political activist Harriet Tubman is the subject of this new biopic helmed by Kassie Lemons and starring Cynthia Erivo as the Harriet.

'Based on the thrilling and inspirational life of an iconic American freedom fighter, Harriet tells the extraordinary tale of Harriet Tubman's escape from slavery and transformation into one of America's greatest heroes. Her courage, ingenuity, and tenacity freed hundreds of slaves and changed the course of history.'

I Am Not Your Negro (DVD) cert. 12A

Raoul Peck's critically lauded 2016 documentary is just as relevant as ever in 2020.

'Academy Award nominated I Am Not Your Negro is a documentary narrated by Samuel L. Jackson based on James Baldwin's book documenting race in America and the death of his close friends Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, and Medgar Evers.'

Marshall (DVD) cert. 15

Chadwick Boseman stars as Thurgood Marshall, a black defence attorney who went on to become the first African American Supreme Court Justice. A lesser known role than Boseman's iconic turn as the Black Panther, but one that the recently departed actor will also be remembered for.

'Marshall is based on a pinnacle moment in the life of Thurgood Marshall, which paved his way to becoming the first African-American Supreme Court Justice. As the nation teeters on the brink of WWII, a nearly bankrupt NAACP sends Marshall to conservative Connecticut to defend a black chauffeur against his wealthy socialite employer in a highly publicised sexual assault and attempted murder trial. In need of a high-profile victory, but muzzled by a segregationist court, Marshall is partnered with Samuel Friedman, a young Jewish lawyer who has

never tried a case. Marshall and Friedman struggle against a hostile storm of fear and prejudice and are driven to discover the truth in the sensationalized trial which helped set the groundwork for the Civil Rights Movement to come.'

The Story of Lovers Rock (DVD) cert. 12A

A documentary exploration of the uniquely British Lovers Rock reggae movement that came to prominence during the 70s and 80s. More than just a story about the music, Menelik Shabazz brings together a range of voices and archive footage that wonderfully evoke a sense of time and place within the British black community of the period.

'The Story of LOVERS ROCK is a feature length documentary that tells the story of a genre of reggae that was created in the UK. It was influential and very successful in the 70s and 80s and still lives on today. Along with the music came the dancing and fashion that created a unique brand of lifestyle. Inspired by female artists Lovers Rock was the first girl power music in the UK at a time of heightened political tension and racial unrest. Menelik Shabazz, (director of Burning an Illusion) charts the rise of Lover s Rock, often dubbed romantic reggae. Through live performances from the leading exponents of the genre along with humorous reflections and interviews the film brings back to life the era when the music was at a highpoint. Lovers Rock gave a voice to many first-generation black British young people, but not exclusively. Along with the music, came a unique fashion style and scrubbing - an intimate dance between male and female - that defined the Lovers Rock brand. The film consists of memorable live performances, interviews and light-hearted comedic memories that provides an untold portrait of the post Windrush generation. Artists include: Janet Kay, Carroll Thompson, UB40, Jean Adebambo, Maxi Priest, Michael Gordon, Sandra Cross. Also featured are comedians; Angie Le Mar, Eddie Nestor, Robbie Gee, Wayne Rollins & Glenda Jaxson.'

Us (DVD) cert. 15

If Jordan Peele's *Get Out* signalled the arrival of an important black voice in the world of horror cinema, *Us* feels like a statement of intent for how he intends to proceed. It may be less thematically concerned with race than *Get Out*, but Peele instead succeeds in putting an African-American family of protagonists and their malevolent doppelganger antagonists at centre stage in what was one of 2019's best horror films.

'After sending shockwaves across contemporary culture and setting a new standard for provocative, socially conscious horror films with his directorial debut, Get Out, Academy Award winning visionary Jordan Peele returns with another original nightmare that he has written, directed and produced. After spending a tense beach day with their friends, the Tylers (Emmy winner Elizabeth Moss, Tim Heidecker, Cali Sheldon, Noelle Sheldon), Adelaide and her family return to their vacation home. When darkness falls, the Wilsons discover the silhouette of four figures holding hands as they stand in the driveway. Us pits an endearing American family against a terrifying and uncanny opponent: doppelgängers of themselves.'

Watermelon Man (Blu-ray) cert. 15

Black American film-making trailblazer Melvin Van Peebles' second feature film outing was this irreverent race themed comedy from 1970.

'A bigoted, white salesman (played by stand-up comedian Godfrey Cambridge) wakes up one morning to find he has become black. Although it has been somewhat overshadowed by Melvin Van Peebles' next film, Sweet Sweetback's Baadasssss Song, Watermelon Man has never felt more relevant than it does today.'

Yardie (DVD) cert.15

While not as cold blooded or hard hitting as the Victor Headley crime novel it was adapted from, Idris Elba's film effectively explores one young black man's arrival on British soil in the 1970s, even if this does serve as just the backdrop to a uniquely Jamaica take on the London underworld crime drama.

'D (Aml Ameen, Kidulthood), is growing up in 70's Kingston when his older brother, Jerry Dread, is murdered before his eyes. Distraught, D is taken under the wing of a Kingston Don and music producer: King Fox. When Fox dispatches him to Hackney, D finds himself in direct conflict with vicious London gangster Rico (Stephen Graham, This Is England) and is forced to choose between "the righteous path" and retribution for his brother's death.'