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Watershed May 2011 Podcast

Last year Watershed was involved in the development of a new score to Carl Theodore Dreyer's magnificent silent classic film **The Passion of Joan of Arc** (1928). Well, the project actually started 4 or 5 years ago when I screened a copy of the film to musicians Adrian Utley and Will Gregory. Will had just done an orchestral score to Victor Sjöström's rarely screened and very unknown 1924 **He Who Gets Slapped**. I think this fired up Adrian's creative juices and he was interested in the creative challenges involved in doing a live score to a silent film. But which film to work with? I arranged to get some silent films screened, one of which was Dreyer's The Passion of Joan of Arc. They both watched it with no music. It clearly had a serious impact and we plotted how we might go about getting it together. Four years later once schedules and money permitted - thank you Colston Hall, they commissioned it as part of the hall's renovation - the new score was premiered in May 2010.

The plan had always been to get it out wider - we are still in negotiation to release it as a DVD with a documentary on the making of the score. Slowly though it is beginning to ripple and last month it played as part of Holy Week in Krakow Opera House and at the Ether Festival in London. This month it is on at the Brighton International festival which is a celebration of its guest director Aung San Suu Kyi the leader of the National League for Democracy in Burma and Nobel Peace Prize winner - who was spent 15 of the last 21 years under house arrest. The resonance of Joan's persecution and courage with Aung San Suu Kyi's is powerful indeed.

What has been fascinating in these performances is to see how powerfully music and moving image combine to create an intense artistic marriage. Last month I talked about how cinematography was at the heart of the cinematic. To that has to be added music or indeed sound. After all no film from the silent era was shown silent - they had live accompaniment. Scores were even sent out for resident musicians to perform along to the film. It was and is extremely rare for a film to be shown completely silent. If you have ever sat through a film silent you will know what a discomfiting experience it is. With The Passion of Joan of Arc you can feel

from rehearsal through to live performance how nuances and intensities are magnified – meaning powerfully re-rendered - when the music comes together with the moving image.

We will be revisiting this connection next month when we focus on the music of composer/conductor **Bernard Herrmann** whose impact you will know immediately when I say that he famously put the music to the shower scene in **Psycho**. A scene which Hitchcock, equally famously, wanted to be silent!

The Passion of Joan of Arc is on at Brighton International Festival on Sunday 29 May see <http://www.brightonfestival.org/> for more information.

This month we are partnering with the **Festival of Ideas** to explore the idea of the city. Our **Sunday Brunch Cinema and the City** screenings bring together films which somehow define or capture an essence of the city they are set in. These are Jules Dassin's post world war two bombed out London in **Night and the City**, New York's Brooklyn neighbourhood in Spike Lee's **Do the Right Thing**, a divided Berlin in Wim Wenders' magnificent **Wings of Desire**, the vibrant but socially divided city of Mumbai in Danny Boyle's **Slumdog Millionaire** and Michael Winterbottom's futuristic cityscape modelled on contemporary Shanghai in **Code 46**.

The city theme is picked up in talks including **Adam Greenfield** on what the digitally connected city will mean and in performance in Proto-Type Theatre's **Fortnight** which invites you to look again and afresh at Bristol as you navigate journeys through the city. Proto-Type Theatre were participants in Watershed's **Theatre Sandbox** commissions last year, where they explored how theatre artists can use pervasive technology. Fortnight is the fruit of that endeavour and is being performed as part of **Mayfest**.

For more information on Fortnight see <http://fortnightproject.com>

For Festival of Ideas see <http://www.ideasfestival.co.uk/>

For Sunday Brunch Cinema and the City screenings visit <http://watershed.co.uk/programmes/166/>