

# TONY PALMER



**“Palmer is thrilling, controversial, occasionally outrageous, but with profound musical insights”**

David Attenborough

**The Labia** is honoured to host acclaimed director **Tony Palmer**, and to present a selection of seven of his award-winning films over a two week season.

**Tony Palmer** will personally introduce three of his films: *The Beatles and World War II*; *Leonard Cohen: Bird on a Wire*; and *Falls the Shadow... The Life and Times of Athol Fugard*.

**web tickets**

Book online or at Pick n Pay store  
Tickets R50, subject to concessions

EUROPA CINEMAS  
**LABIA**  
THEATRE



*Tony Palmer interviewing Athol Fugard*

**Tony Palmer** is one of the leading directors of documentaries about performers in the world. Among over 40 international prizes for his work are 12 Gold Medals from the New York Film Festival, as well as numerous BAFTAs and Emmy Awards. Palmer is the only director to have won the *Prix Italia* three times.

His vast filmography of over 100 films ranges from early works in the mid-sixties with **The Beatles**, **Cream** and **Jimi Hendrix**, to the famous portraits of **Walton**, **Britten**, **Stravinsky**, **Maria Callas**, **John Osborne**, **Leonard Cohen**, **Margot Fonteyn** and **Menuhin**. His seven hour and forty five minutes film on **Wagner** was described by the the Los Angeles Times as *“one of the most beautiful films ever made”*.

From Cambridge University, he joined the BBC. Following an apprenticeship with Ken Russell and Jonathan Miller, his first major film, **Benjamin Britten and His Festival**, became the first BBC film to be networked in the USA. With his next film, **All My Loving**, an examination of rock 'n roll and politics in the late Sixties, he achieved overnight notoriety.

In 1989, he was awarded a prestigious retrospective of his work at the National Film Theatre in London, the first maker of art films to be so honoured. His film on Liberace, included in this programme, opened South African TV.

In addition, Tony Palmer has won various platinum and gold albums for the best-selling CDs of the soundtracks to his films. He has also written a number of books, and has successfully directed in the theatre and opera house. He became the first Western director ever to work at the Bolshoi in Moscow.

**“Nothing quite prepares us for the ferocity and daring, and intensely subjective rapture of Palmer’s work”**

David Thompson, *The Biographical Dictionary of Film*

**Callas** 2007, 92 min, PG

Winner of the Gold Medal at the New York Film & TV Festival

No other opera singer of the past century has aroused public interest, such adulation, and such controversy as Maria Callas, 'La Divina Assoluta'.

Tony Palmer's award winning film charts her rapid rise to fame and offers a glimpse into the private life of this remarkable woman. The film includes extensive archive footage - from Athens, Rome, Milan, New York and London and many interviews.



*'The Divina' resists portrayal, but Palmer's film makes an immediate, profound impression.* **Financial Times**

*Palmer's superb film brings Callas back to life in an uncannily vivid way. Electrifying. It's marvellous... a deeply moving experience.* **Daily Express**

Thursday, 26 October at 6.15pm; Tuesday, 31 October at 8.30pm

**Holst in the Bleak Midwinter** 2011, 137 min, PG

In this compelling documentary, we discover that Gustav Holst was a progressive socialist and dedicated to bringing the music of English folk traditions to the working classes in the slums of London. He was strongly influenced by William Morris and George Bernard Shaw, and allied himself during the First World War with the left-wing priest, the 'Red Vicar', Conrad Noel. He famously detested the words used to his most well

known tune, *I Vow to Thee My Country*, because they were the opposite of what he believed.



In addition to *St. Paul's Suite* and *The Planets*, there are many musical delights in the film: the *Toccata* for solo piano performed by Antoine

Francoise; the lovely *Lyric Movement for Viola*, performed by Ruth Gibson; and above all, there is the remarkable *Beni Mora*.

Holst was undeniably one of the great composers - but tragically died of cancer before he was sixty, broken and disillusioned.

*Music conducted by Tamas Vasary & Sian Edwards.*

Wednesday 25 October at 6.15pm

Monday 30 October at 8.30pm

**web tickets**

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Tickets R50, subject to concessions

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**The Beatles and World War II** 2016, 97 min, 10-12 PG

*"All we are saying is give peace a chance"* **John Lennon**

All This and World War II, the 1976 film of World War II footage set to a soundtrack of **Beatles** music, gets a re-boot by Tony Palmer. Greatly re-edited with archive footage, it presents a chronological portrayal of important WW II events, and looks and sounds terrific.

With *"the best collection of Beatles covers in a film"* the music is performed



by **Elton John, The Bee Gees, Bryan Ferry, Leo Sayer, Keith Moon, Rod Stewart, David Essex, Tina Turner, Helen Reddy, The Four Seasons, Status Quo, Peter Gabriel, Frankie Valli**, and others.

*"Superb production and a stellar list of singers and bands. All singers shine and the arrangements and production is more than excellent."*

**Amazon Reviewer**

Friday 20 October at 6.15pm: Introduced by Tony Palmer

Saturday 28 October at 8.30pm

**Margot** 2006, 163 min, PG

Margot Fonteyn was the greatest dancer of her generation. When Rudolf Nureyev defected to the West in 1961, he and Fonteyn first performed together in *Giselle*. She was 42 and he was 24, and one of the most brilliant and magical partnerships in all of ballet history began.

A performer of incomparable grace, imagination and charm, Fonteyn made the ballet more fashionable and accessible than it had ever been. Yet it was her partnership with Nureyev which caught the public's imagination. After their first performance together in *Giselle* in 1962, which received 23 curtain calls, they made headlines wherever they went. Fonteyn made her last appearance as a dancer, aged 59, in Nureyev's 1979 summer season.



*Margot* is a story of courage, tenacity and of an extraordinary devotion to the art of dance, and includes interviews with Rudolph Nureyev, Sir Frederick Ashton, Roland Petit, Robert Helpman and Lynn Seymour.

*"Margot' is the fascinating, sad story of one of the great artists of the 20th century... her generosity of spirit, loyalty and loves."* **IMDb**

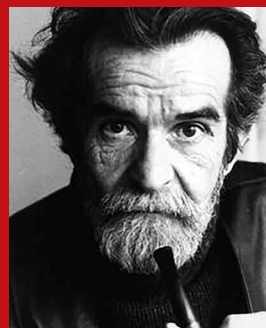
*"A superlative film about a life that no one could invent... wonderful... masterful."* **The Times**

Monday 23 October at 6.15pm; Thursday 2 November at 8.30pm

**Falls the Shadow... The Life and Times of Athol Fugard** 2012, 139 min, PG

This penetrating documentary, produced to mark the 80th birthday of South African playwright **Athol Fugard**, explores the writer's fascinating past and diverse influences.

Hailed by Time Magazine as *"the greatest living playwright in the English-speaking world"*, Fugard's work is the most performed, other than Shakespeare. His work stands as a profound indictment of the Apartheid regime, and his plays have attracted the greatest stage actors. In 2011, Fugard was presented with a *Tony Lifetime Achievement Award*.



This film, set to a Hans Zimmer score, is structured around an in-depth interview with Fugard, and blends performances, archives and observations from **Nelson Mandela** (in his last interview), **Desmond Tutu, Nadine Gordimer** and **FW de Klerk**, as well as **Anthony Sher, Janet Suzman, Yvonne Bryceland, John Kani** and **Ben Kingsley**. It also includes extracts from many of his plays.

Sunday 22 October at 6.15pm: Introduced by Tony Palmer

Wednesday 1 November at 8.30pm

**The World of Liberace** 1972-2012, 75 min, All

**The World of Liberace**, is an intimate look into the life and times of Liberace, one of the world's greatest entertainers, in his own words: his love of music, costumes, jewellery and sense of theatre that earned him the title of 'Mr Showmanship'.



Liberace had a meteoric rise to become America's first television matinée idol, and one of the most successful nightclub performers of all time. He popularised classical music for the general public, and earned a unique devotion and admiration from his fans.

Palmer's compelling film is testament to Liberace's flamboyant

life-style, with deeply felt observations about his image, marriage, children, the press and religion. Liberace was unique, and this remarkable film is a celebration of his extraordinary legacy.

*"It's all here, Liberace's larger than life showmanship with costumes and flair to match!"* **Washington Post**

Tuesday, 24 October at 6.15pm; Sunday, 29 October at 8.30pm

**Leonard Cohen: Bird on a Wire** 1972 - 2010, 106 min, PG

*Bird on a Wire* is the digitally restored re-release of Palmer's documentary of Leonard Cohen's 1972 European tour. Long believed lost, it was restored by Palmer from reels of film discovered in a Hollywood warehouse in 2009.

The brilliant poet, novelist, musician and singer-songwriter plays songs from his best early albums - mostly *Songs from a Room* and *Songs of Leonard Cohen*. There is an intensity to his performances in songs such as, *Story of Isaac, Passing Through, Who By Fire, Famous Blue Raincoat, Seems So Long Ago, Nancy* and *That's No Way to Say Goodbye*.

In addition to the concert footage, Palmer captures Cohen backstage trying to remain generous and grounded during some difficult encounters with bandmates, would-be groupies and interviewers. His struggle to keep an air of cool grace during some of these tense scenes is revealing and fascinating to watch.



*"Up-close and personal portrait of genius."* **The Independent**

*"An essential part of Cohen's legacy. It's that rare concert documentary that isn't for established fans only."* **rogerebert.com**

*"Wonderful... a beautiful and moving documentary."* **The Telegraph**

*"An extraordinary study of an artist at work. A curiously revealing portrait".* **Record Collector**

*"The movie is a must for Cohen devotees."* **The New York Times**

Saturday 21 October at 6.15pm: Introduced by Tony Palmer

Friday 27 October at 8.30pm

**Please Note:**

Tony Palmer will autograph DVDs of the 3 films he is introducing, and copies of all the films in this programme will be for sale.

**The Labia Theatre**  
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