



Media Release
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For immediate release

Hollywood cast star in new Welsh film about Saving Cinema this January

Samantha Morton (*Walking Dead*) and Tom Felton (*Harry Potter*) star in a new independent Welsh film, 'Save the Cinema', which tells the true story of the fight to save Carmarthenshire's Lyric Theatre.

The Sky Original film is set to release on January 14th 2022, at a crucial time for Welsh cinemas. Many have reported a reduction of 50-70% in audiences since the introduction of the COVID pass in Wales, with some even considering temporary closure. Directed by Rhyl born, Sara Sugarman, the film is inspired by extraordinary real-life events sparked by tenacious hairdresser Liz Evans (Samantha Morton). Set in Carmarthen in 1993, the town council made the unwelcome announcement that the much-loved Lyric Theatre would be demolished and a shopping centre built in its place. With the help of postman turned town councillor Richard (Tom Felton) they write to Hollywood to ask for a helping hand. One late night phone call later and one of Hollywood's most legendary filmmakers throws The Lyric a monster-sized lifeline and a premiere Carmarthen will never forget. *Save the Cinema* illustrates how the resolve of a small Welsh town, inspired by the magic of cinema, was able to bring Tinseltown to their doorstep.

Hana Lewis, Film Hub Wales' Strategic Manager, said:

*"Having this message about the value of cinema to our communities, wrapped up in a Welsh film at this moment in time, feels like a gift. Cinemas have fought tirelessly to remain open for their audiences throughout COVID, offering crucial services that have tackled isolation during the pandemic. To avoid closures, cinemas need us to turn up for them now and show our support. With a feel good film like *Save the Cinema*, that reflects our Welsh community spirit, it feels like a great opportunity to do just that."*

Film Hub Wales are promoting the film in partnership with Sky Cinema, as part of their Made in Wales strategy, which celebrates films with Welsh connections. Audiences will be able to access specially created interviews and reviews via ['The Whole Story'](#) series. FHW believe that watching diverse Welsh stories on screen can help to shape our sense of national and cultural identity, challenging not only how we see ourselves but how the world around us sees Wales.

Gareth Bailey, Aberystwyth Arts Centre, explains:

"Cinema is our heritage, it's the past and the future. It can bring to life any moment of time or place, whether real or imagined. The cinema is the place where filmmakers can share their dreams with audiences all across the world, and where audiences can come together to share the communal experience of enjoying a film together. Cinema shares an equally important role in our heritage as theatre or literature, and can capture a magical moment on film that will be with us forever."

Pauline Burt, CEO of Ffilm Cymru Wales, who invested into the production of *Save the Cinema* said:

*"As proud funders of Sara Sugarman's *Save the Cinema*, we're excited to see people across Wales enjoy this heart-warming, homegrown story in the perfect place - their local cinemas. The*

cast and crew worked with the local community to bring some Hollywood wonder to Wales during these tough times, and now we can't wait to Save the Cinema with you!"

Made in Wales offers a host of year-round activities in partnership with Welsh exhibitors, which aim to promote Welsh films to audiences, including a [film catalogue](#) which hosts over 1000 shorts and features with Welsh connections.

Made in Wales is made possible thanks to funding from Creative Wales along with National Lottery funding from the BFI (British Film Institute), via its Film Audience Network (FAN). Film Hub Wales develop audiences for British independent and international film year-round, funds in Wales are administered by FHW via Chapter as the Film Hub Lead Organisation.

More than £30M is raised each week for good causes across the UK by the National Lottery.

Save the Cinema will be in cinemas and on Sky from 14th January 2022 (dates subject to change - see please cinema websites). Further venues and dates to be announced:

- [Aberystwyth Arts Centre](#) (14th - 21st January)
- [Brynamman Public Hall](#) (14th - 21st January)
- [Cellb, Blaenau Ffestiniog](#) (14th - 17th January)
- [Gwyn Hall, Neath](#) (14th - 21st January)
- [Kinokulture, Oswestry](#) (14th - 17th January)
- [Lyric Theatre, Camarthen](#) (14th - 28th January)
- [Pontio, Bangor](#) (14th - 20th January)
- [Premiere Cinemas, Cardiff](#) (14th - 21st January)
- [Reel Cinema, Port Talbot](#) (14th - 20th January)
- [Showcase Cinema, Cardiff \(Nantgarw\)](#) (14th January)
- [The Savoy Theatre, Monmouth](#) (14th - 20th January)
- [Theatr Gwaun, Fishguard](#) (14th - 16th January)
- [Theatr Mwldan](#) (14th - 18th January)
- [Wyeside Arts Centre, Builth Wells](#) (14th - 18th January)

From the 17th January 2022

- [Taliesin, Swansea](#) (17th January)

From the 21st January 2022

- [Chapter, Cardiff](#) (21st - 28th January)

From the 28th January 2022

- [The Torch, Milford Haven](#) (28th January – 1st February)

-ENDS-

The following Save the Cinema assets are available:

- *Film stills,*
- *Videos and quotes from exhibitors talking about the importance of Welsh cinema,*
- *Video blog from an Into Film Cymru Graduate about their local cinema visit (Maxime Blackwood).*

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About Film Hub Wales

Film Hub Wales (FHW) celebrates cinema. We support organisations that screen film, from film festivals, to societies and mixed arts centres. Working with over [315 Welsh exhibitors](#), we aim to bring the best British and international film to all audiences across Wales and the UK. Since Film Hub Wales set up in 2013, we've supported over 250 exciting cinema projects, reaching over 480,000 audience members.

We're part of a UK wide network of eight hubs funded by the BFI (British Film Institute) which form the [Film Audience Network \(FAN\)](#), with [Chapter](#) appointed as the 'Film Hub Lead Organisation' (FHLO) in Wales.

We are also proud to lead on the UK [inclusive cinema](#) strategy on behalf of BFI FAN.

[Website](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#)

About the BFI Film Audience Network

Supported by National Lottery funding, the BFI Film Audience Network (FAN), is central to the BFI's aim to ensure the greatest choice of film is available for everyone. Established in 2012 to build wider and more diverse UK cinema audiences for British and international film, FAN is a unique, UK-wide collaboration made up of eight Hubs managed by leading film organisations and venues strategically placed around the country. FAN also supports talent development with BFI NETWORK Talent Executives in each of the English Hubs, with a mission to discover and support talented writers, directors and producers at the start of their careers.

BFI FAN Film Hubs are:

- Film Hub Midlands is led by Broadway, Nottingham working in partnership with the Birmingham-based Flatpack
- Film Hub North is led collectively by Showroom Workstation, Sheffield and HOME Manchester
- Film Hub South East is led by the Independent Cinema Office
- Film Hub South West is led by Watershed in Bristol
- Film Hub Scotland is led by Glasgow Film Theatre
- Film Hub Northern Ireland is led by Queen's University Belfast
- Film Hub Wales is led by Chapter in Cardiff
- Film Hub London is led by Film London

[BFI FAN website](#)

About the BFI

We are a cultural charity, a National Lottery distributor, and the UK's lead organisation for film and the moving image. Our mission is:

- To support creativity and actively seek out the next generation of UK storytellers
- To grow and care for the BFI National Archive, the world's largest film and television archive
- To offer the widest range of UK and international moving image culture through our programmes and festivals - delivered online and in venue
- To use our knowledge to educate and deepen public appreciation and understanding
- To work with Government and industry to ensure the continued growth of the UK's screen industries

Founded in 1933, the BFI is a registered charity governed by Royal Charter. The BFI Board of Governors is chaired by Tim Richards.

About Chapter

Chapter is one of Europe's largest and most dynamic arts centres with cinemas, theatres, exhibition spaces, studios, a café, award-winning bars, over 60 cultural workspaces and more. Chapter has an international reputation for excellence, innovation and collaboration. It offers an ever-changing programme of the best performance, films and exhibitions from Wales and from around the world.

[Website](#), [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#)

About Save the Cinema

Save the Cinema features an all-star cast including Samantha Morton (Fantastic Beasts and Where To Find Them), Tom Felton (Harry Potter), Jonathan Pryce (The Two Popes), Adeel Akhtar (Enola Holmes), Erin Richards (Gotham), Owain Yeoman (Emergence), Susan Wokoma (Enola Holmes), Colm Meaney (Gangs Of London), Rhod Gilbert (Have I Got News For You) and Keith Allen (Kingsman: The Golden Circle). The film is directed by Sara Sugarman (Confessions of a Teenage Drama Queen) and co-produced by Sky and Future Artists Entertainment in association with Head Gear Films, LipSync and Ffilm Cymru.

[Watch the Trailer](#)