



**BBC FOUR
AUTUMN
2006**



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BBC FOUR AUTUMN 2006

Non-Terrestrial Channel
Of The Year

Media Guardian Edinburgh International TV Festival 2006

Best Factual
Channel

Broadcast Digital Channel Awards 2006



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Fear Of Fanny

Television chefs today dominate our screens and have sometimes even changed legislation but, in the Sixties, one name was sure to send chills down the spines of housewives everywhere: Fanny Cradock – arguably Britain’s most terrifying TV chef! This at times hilarious yet poignant drama is about an ostensibly successful career woman who is haunted by the demons of her past. The doyenne of housewives during the Sixties and Seventies, Fanny’s diet-defying dishes, withering put-downs and pancake make-up made her the scourge of traditional British cooking.

Writer and actress Julia Davis stars as Fanny and is joined by *Nighty Night* co-star Mark Gatiss (*League Of Gentlemen*), who plays Fanny’s much-maligned husband, Johnnie. Devised from interviews with Fanny’s colleagues, family and critics, *Fear Of Fanny* is written and adapted by Brian Fillis, making his debut television adaptation from the critically acclaimed stage play of the same name.

A BBC production.





The Secret Life Of Mrs Beeton

Just as Nigella Lawson and Martha Stewart have inspired a generation of domestic goddesses, the Victorians had their own female idol in the shape of Mrs Isabella Beeton.

Defying the wishes of her parents to marry a man of more established means, the strong-willed and forthright Isabella married talented publisher Sam Beeton. Theirs was an extraordinary marriage – the meeting of two creative minds and the creation of one of the most enduring brands of the 19th century: *Mrs Beeton's Book Of Household Management*.

Dead by the age of 28, this cultural icon was not the dumpy, crinolined matron we have been led to believe. Instead, the sassy, feisty and very modern Isabella was not a cook but a young, talented journalist and editor whose personal life was riddled with heartache, sadness and a dark secret that ultimately led to her death.

Anna Madeley (*Stoned*) stars as Isabella, while JJ Feild (*To The Ends Of The Earth*) plays Sam Beeton. *The Secret Life Of Mrs Beeton* is written by Sarah Williams and directed by Jon Jones.

A BBC production.

Wide Sargasso Sea

Rafe Spall (*The Chatterley Affair*), Rebecca Hall (*The Prestige*) and Nina Sosanya (*Casanova*) head up the cast in a one-off adaptation of *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Jean Rhys's steamy prequel to Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*.

Set in the lush landscape of Jamaica after the emancipation of slaves, it tells the story of the arranged marriage between a white Creole heiress and an Englishman. Rhys wanted to offer an alternative to Brontë's depiction of Bertha Mason, Mr Rochester's mad first wife, and her powerful work describes not only the meltdown of lust and passion, but also the atmosphere of paranoia and racial tensions that characterised the Caribbean in the 1830s.

Wide Sargasso Sea is adapted by Stephen Greenhorn, produced by Elwen Rowlands and directed by Brendan Maher.

A Kudos production with BBC Wales.





The Haunted Airman

The Haunted Airman is a tense and suspenseful adaptation of Dennis Wheatley's horror story about the terrifying experiences of a combat veteran who has come home from the war. It has been written for the screen by Chris Durlacher (*Kenneth Tynan – In Praise Of Hardcore* and *George Orwell – A Life In Pictures*), who has also produced and directed the drama.

In 1943, Flight Lieutenant Toby Jugg (Robert Pattinson – *Harry Potter And The Goblet Of Fire*), confined to a wheelchair after being wounded in action, arrives at Llanferdach, a remote mansion in Wales, to recuperate. Owing to what might be post-traumatic stress, Toby suffers nightmares and hallucinations. An unexplained noise or the movement of a shadow makes his flesh creep.

Llanferdach is overseen by psychiatrist Dr Hal Burns (Julian Sands: *Kenneth Tynan – In Praise Of Hardcore*, *24*, *Boxing Helena*), but Toby is a reluctant patient, and instead craves the familiar love of his Aunt Julia (Rachael Stirling: *Tipping The Velvet*, *Riot At The Rite*). However, Julia is not answering Toby's letters.

Suddenly, Julia arrives at Llanferdach, but instead of bringing comfort, we begin to suspect an unsettling love triangle between Toby, his aunt and his doctor. Like many Wheatley novels, the ending is sudden, unexpected and unforgettable.

A BBC production.

Lead Balloon

Jack Dee stars as Rick Spleen, a successful but disillusioned and world-weary stand-up comedian and writer who spends too much of his time hosting corporate events. The Heating And Ventilation Awards may not be the most glamorous gig but the money he earns allows him to concentrate on his first love ... TV commercials.

Rick and Marty (Sean Power), his American co-writer, spend their days arguing about every subject under the sun, drinking too much coffee and devising work-avoidance strategies.

Further distractions are provided by Magda (Anna Crilly), Rick's Eastern European daily help. Magda is learning English by watching daytime television but her own tales of woe put to shame anything one might hear on *Trisha*.

Rick's wife, Mel (Raquel Cassidy), is a showbiz agent who looks after C-list celebrities hoping for that big break. She knows that Rick is his own worst enemy, unless you count anyone else he comes into contact with.

Rick and Mel's 17-year-old daughter, Sam (Antonia Campbell-Hughes), could be described as the world's least motivated human being, were it not for her boyfriend, Ben (Rasmus Hardiker) and Michael (Tony Gardner), the local wholefood cafe owner, who appears to be completely unhinged.

Lead Balloon is co-written by Jack Dee and Pete Sinclair.

An Open Mike Production.





Reader, I Married Him

Daisy Goodwin presents a thoughtful and affectionate look at one of the most successful and most denigrated of literary genres. From *Jane Eyre* and Charlotte Brontë to the earliest days of Mills & Boon, and the enormous industry it has become today, this three-part series explores the enduring appeal of romantic fiction and the integral part it plays in its readers' lives.

Daisy investigates the effect of the promise of a happy ending and conducts a scientific experiment to discover if reading romantic fiction can reduce stress levels. She asks why 19th-century heroes such as Mr Darcy and Heathcliff have stood the test of time and traces the rise of the romantic heroine, from Elizabeth Bennett to Bridget Jones, discovering how they have reflected their times and provided strong role models for women.

The series includes contributions from readers, novelists and screenwriters, including Jilly Cooper and Joanna Trollope.

A Silver River production.

SCIENCE FICTION BRITANNIA

Fans of British science fiction are in for a special treat this autumn as BBC Four pays homage to the genre with a season of films and programmes. Covering everything from the cult appeal of *Blake's 7* to the literary genius of John Wyndham, the channel boldly explores all aspects of the subject to get to the heart of its seemingly universal appeal.





The Martians And Us

The Martians And Us, a three-part series of films, traces the history of the literary genre. Each of the three films looks at one of the central driving themes of British science fiction. *Apes And Aliens* explores the fascination with evolution in all its forms. *Through A Glass Darkly* examines the British tradition of Utopias and Dystopias whilst the third film, *Last Man Alive*, reflects the British fascination with catastrophe and the end of the world as we know it.

How To Be Sci-Fi

Examining the lighter side of being in a British science fiction television series, Nigel Planer plays classically trained “actawr” Nicholas Craig in a one-hour special, *How To Be Sci-Fi*, which looks at the perils and pitfalls that lie ahead for anyone brave enough to grapple with that most demanding of mistresses – “outer-space acting”. Nicholas supplements tips for the aspiring thespian with clips from classic British sci-fi series and offers invaluable advice and guidance on, among other topics, how to wear a roll neck, gain motivation for playing green slime and master that all-important look of horror.

Random Quest

At the centre of the season is *Random Quest*, a science fiction romance drama based on a short story by John Wyndham. Adapted for television by Richard Fell, *Random Quest* tells the extraordinary story of Colin Trafford, a research physicist who, knocked unconscious in an experiment which goes wrong, wakes to find himself in a parallel world. In this other world Colin finds he has another life including a beautiful wife, Otilie, who he proceeds to fall in love with. Pulled back into his own world he is told he has been in a coma since the accident but Colin believes the other world and Otilie exist and he goes in search of her.

The Story Of British Sci-Fi

In *The Story Of British Sci-Fi* (working title) Phill Jupitus goes in search of the origins and stories behind the starriest shows in the television universe. He meets actors, writers and others to talk about some of the best-loved British science-fiction series, including *Adam Adamant*, *Doomwatch*, *The Survivors*, *Blake's 7*, *The Tripods* and *Starcoops*.



Timeshift – Parallel Worlds

BBC Four's *Timeshift – Parallel Worlds* takes a look at the belief which pervades so much of British science fiction – that there is another world sitting shoulder to shoulder with Earth but with a difference. The strand examines how the idea unfolded from its origins in religion and mythology, got transformed by the theory of quantum mechanics and multiplied trillions of times into multi-universes by modern science fiction writers.

Other programming in the season includes feature films and television archive.

The Martians And Us is a Blast films production.
The Story Of British Sci-Fi, *Timeshift – Parallel Worlds*, *How To Be Sci-Fi* and *Random Quest* are BBC productions.

ANTHROPOLOGY SEASON

In the 18th and 19th centuries, as Europeans penetrated further and further into some of the most inaccessible parts of the globe, they encountered peoples who seemed to turn everything they thought they knew about human behaviour upside down. Here were communities who loved and married, fed and fought, lived and died in ways very different to anything that European explorers had ever seen before. From their attempts to make sense of what they'd seen – and to help them understand the nature of what it means to be human – the idea of anthropology was born. “The science of man” as anthropology was dubbed, had its heyday in the first 50 years of the 20th century. It was hugely influential, as new information about how other communities organised themselves was translated back into the West, where it provided a blueprint for changing traditional behaviour, under the argument of returning to a more “natural” or “free” way of doing things.

But in recent years, many of the assumptions that underpinned the work of key anthropologists have been questioned by new research. Wider questions have been asked about whether it is possible – or indeed morally desirable – for the observation of one group of humans by another to ever be anything other than subjective; whether indeed a “science of mankind” can ever be possible...

BBC Four's season tells the story of some of the great names of anthropology's past, and raises some penetrating questions about its future.





Tales From The Jungle – Carlos Castaneda And The Shaman

Carlos Castaneda rose to fame after the publication of his book, *The Teachings Of Don Juan*. The book is based on his anthropological fieldwork in the Mexican desert in the Sixties with a Yaqui Indian shaman, whom he called Don Juan.

The Teachings Of Don Juan was an instant success for Castaneda, persuading thousands of Americans to set off for Mexico in search of drugs, Nirvana and enlightenment. Castaneda was dubbed the “grandfather of the New Age movement” by *Time* magazine and awarded a doctorate in anthropology from UCLA. But an investigative journalist claimed Castaneda had faked his fieldwork and that Don Juan was merely a figment of his imagination.

This film investigates the controversy that surrounded Castaneda’s book and explores the practices of today’s Yaqui Indians with Dr David Shorter, who has spent the last decade working among them in Mexico.

A BBC production.

Tom Harrisson – The Barefoot Anthropologist

Anthropology has always attracted more than its fair share of larger-than-life characters, and Tom Harrisson was one of the very largest. Best known as the man who invented Mass Observation, he was also a guerilla fighter, a pioneering documentary-maker, and the man credited with re-introducing head-hunting back into Borneo. Sir David Attenborough, who knew Harrisson well, narrates this film about a great British eccentric, public school rebel and university drop-out who changed the way we thought about other peoples and ourselves.

A BBC production.



Tales From The Jungle – Margaret Mead And The Samoans

Exploring the work of Margaret Mead, this film investigates the 12 months Mead spent with the Samoans in the Twenties.

Her resulting book, *Coming Of Age In Samoa*, had a huge impact on Western culture. Mead believed cultures like the Samoans could teach people how to live in harmony. Her book depicts a society of free love – devoid of jealousy and teenage turmoil.

But, decades later, her work was criticised as being tainted by her romantic views and strong belief in liberal values. *Tales From The Jungle* examines whether Mead's study was merely misinterpretation and romantic wishful thinking.

A BBC production.





First Contact

Adventurous and high-paying tourists are being offered the chance to make “First Contact” with some of the world’s last remaining uncontacted tribes.

First contact with the outside world usually spells disaster for genuine uncontacted tribes. Presented by Mark Anstice, an experienced expedition leader and author of a book also called *First Contact*, this film looks at the complex issues surrounding the ethics of First Contact and meets the people involved.

An Indus Films production.



Tales From The Jungle – Malinowski And The Trobriand Islanders

This film examines the work of Bronislaw Malinowski, often revered as the founding father of modern anthropology. Malinowski famously “went native”, intending to live among the mysterious tribes of the Trobriand Islands in the Pacific Ocean for 12 months. However, the outbreak of the First World War forced him to stay for four years and the resulting work he produced was seen as pioneering.

Some 25 years after his death, his newly published diaries revealed that he actually reviled the islanders and dismissed them as backward savages. The revelation rocked the reputation of both Malinowski and anthropology itself. This film returns to the islands to explore Malinowski’s story and its legacy.

A BBC production.



Abdication

To mark the 70th anniversary of the shocking abdication of King Edward VIII in December 1936, this fascinating and revealing documentary uncovers the truth behind the constitutional crisis that rocked both the British establishment and the world.

Based on recently released information such as Cabinet minutes, Prime Minister's correspondence and Special Branch monitoring, in addition to archive media reports and actual Royal correspondence, *Abdication* illustrates the intricate series of events that led to Edward VIII's painful decision to renounce the throne.

The film also exposes the secret roles many politicians, diarists and certain members of the Royal Family played in blackening Wallace Simpson's name and tarnishing Edward VIII's reputation, uncovering just how the British public were manipulated into turning against their once loved Monarch-to-be.

A Blakeway production.

Voyages Of Discovery

Intrepid explorer Paul Rose travels the world to tell five gripping tales of adventure on the high seas. This visually stunning series reveals the true stories of the men who set sail into the unknown and made scientific discoveries that changed the world. Paul follows in the wake of great adventurers such as Ferdinand Magellan and Captain James Cook. His journey also takes him from the heat of the Ecuadorian jungle to the frozen wastes of the north as he shows how the discoveries of lesser-known explorers have also impacted on our lives and shaped the world in which we live today.

A BBC production.



The People's Chorus

A thousand voices come together to perform a gargantuan, extremely difficult and rarely performed musical masterpiece by English Tudor composer Thomas Tallis.

A sublime musical meditation written for 40 interweaving vocal lines, *Spem in Alium* is a breathtakingly beautiful 10-minute wall of sound.

Spem in Alium is seldom performed because of the complex vocal forces needed, but these singers – members of the public – bravely come together to rehearse the piece from scratch in a single day, culminating in a live concert in Manchester's Bridgewater Hall.

The People's Chorus is part of a larger celebration of choral music on BBC Four, which also includes the *Radio 3 Choir Of The Year*, the UK's largest singing competition. In December 2006, choirs and vocal groups of all ages from across the country will compete for the coveted title at the Wales Millennium Centre, Cardiff.

An Iambic production.



CALIFORNIA DREAMING

In the mid-Seventies, California seemed as close to paradise as almost any place on Earth. It was sunny, it was rich, it was relaxed. For a moment, before it all went wrong, and recession cast a shadow across the sun, the “West Coast way” seemed to offer the world a glimpse of just how good life could be ... if you were lucky enough to have the money, the looks or the attitude to fit in. In a short season of programmes, BBC Four casts a long look back to a decade that still seems drenched in hazy sun to explore the culture it produced, in music, movies, art, design and politics.



Ranch And Raunch

The Seventies was the decade in which the new rich of America's wealthiest state built extravagant and wonderful houses for themselves. In the canyons of LA, on the ocean shore and across the deserts, a whole new style of architecture emerged, ebullient and outrageous, full of light and air – the "ranch style", as it was known. At the top end of the style curve, architects such as Frank Gehry created their own take on the California style, leaving behind the austerity of minimalism, building houses that still delight and amaze today. But the lasting legacy of Seventies California design didn't come from any big-name architect. If any two creations sum up the hedonism of the times and deserve a place in the pantheon of West Coast Wonderfulness, they are the waterbed and the Jacuzzi. This film celebrates both in the way in which they deserve to be celebrated.

A World Of Wonder production.

California Dreaming

It was the distinctive sound of West Coast rock that provided the soundtrack to the Seventies and placed LA at the epicentre of the musical world. This film tells the story of how the cool, sophisticated smooth sound that characterised the work of The Eagles, Jackson Browne, David Crosby and Graham Nash evolved from the socially conscious songs of boys and girls with acoustic guitars, and turned into the unique "easy listening" rock that conquered the world. Musicians and performers, industry heavyweights, fans and LA scenesters tell their stories and describe how it all ended in coked-out stadium superstardom at the end of the decade. This is an epic tale of smooth guitar sound, inspired genius, denim, drugs and greed.

A BBC production.



The Man In The Mansion – California Governors

Running the most populous state in the union, with a GDP bigger than that of many sovereign nations, is never going to be an easy job. But for a large part of the last 50 years, Californians have made some distinctively LA-style choices about the person best qualified to undertake it. In Ronald Reagan, Jerry Brown and, most recently, in Arnold Schwarzenegger, they've voted for men who, in their very different ways, represent a particularly Californian vision of what a politician should be. He can be liberal or traditionalist, peacenik or warmonger, moralist or philanderer – but the one thing he must be is a celebrity.

Presented by PJ O'Rourke, *The Man In The Mansion – California Governors* considers the unique role of the Californian Governor, where fame and politics are one and the same. Politicians are expected to be larger than life, and the California Governors have been happy to oblige, producing some of the strangest, most colourful and extraordinary politicians in America.

A BBC production.

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