



**Thursday 27
March, 7pm**
(58mins 16s)

David Blandy presents *International Philosophy (after Python)*, or
Here We Are, Now Entertain Us: The David Blandy Special.

Screening Notes

Andy Kaufman
Excerpts from
Andy's Funhouse
57mins | performance
on national
television | 1977

Andy Kaufman, who began his career on the stand-up circuit on the East coast of America, came to prominence when he gained the part of Latka on the ABC network sitcom *Taxi*. The deal with ABC for that show included giving Kaufman a television "special". He came up with *Andy's Funhouse*, based on an old routine he had developed while in college. The special was taped in 1977 but did not air on ABC until August 1979; it featured most of Andy's famous gags, including Foreign Man/Latka and his Elvis Presley impersonation, as well as a host of unique segments (including a special appearance by children's television character Howdy Doody and the "Has-been Corner"). There also was a segment that included fake television screen static as part of the gag, which ABC executives were not comfortable with due to the fear that viewers would mistake the static with broadcast problems and change the channel.

John Cage
Excerpts from
Water Walk
8mins | performance
on national
television | 1960

A 1960 video of avant-garde music pioneer John Cage performing *Water Walk* on "I've Got A Secret", a game show hosted by Garry Moore. At the time, Cage was teaching Experimental Composition at New York City's New School. His first performance on national television was originally scored to include five radios, but a union dispute on the CBS set prevented any of the radios from being plugged in to the wall. Cage hits the radios instead of turning them on and off.

Moore: Mr. Cage, these are nice people but some of them are going to laugh. Is that alright?

Cage: Of course. I consider laughter preferable to tears.

Jesse Rae
Excerpts from
*Over the Sea, and
The Thistle*
4mins | 1981 – 2

Jesse Rae self-produced these two videos for his songs in the early Eighties, directing and editing them to produce a quite unique vision of Scotland: with funk. In 1981 he wrote "Inside Out" for the American disco group, Odyssey. It was an international hit which still gets radio play today, which explains how he managed to fund the videos. And yes, that is of Bernie Worrell of Funkadelic and Parliament.

S.Mark Gubb

Excerpts from
UK The Scooby Dead
11mins | 2003
www.smarkgubb.com

The Scooby Dead came from an idea that the nasty video classic, "Evil Dead" would work very well as a "Scooby Doo" cartoon; both have the same number of characters and have the misfortune to be battling the undead. Armed with a computer and a pile of Scooby Doo DVDs Gubb has created a Scooby Doo version of the Evil Dead.

Harold Offeh

Excerpts from
Haroldinho
2003

Haroldinho charts Offeh's site-specific performances in Rio de Janeiro during a two-month residency in the city in 2003. Haroldinho ('little Harold') is a persona created and performed by Offeh. Dressed in a blue utilitarian uniform decorated with sequins and glitter, Haroldinho dances the samba in the city's famous tourist attractions. Soliciting and activating the spectator's preconceived notions of Brazil through his use of dance, samba music and the site specificity of his performances, Offeh acts to question the validity of these things as national signifiers.

Damon Packard

Excerpts from
Reflections of Evil
2hours' 18mins | 2002
<http://www.awayteamfanclub.com/reflectionsofevil/>

After struggling for years to complete films with no money, living in cars and tents, Packard received a large inheritance from his grandmother. He spent it on *Reflections of Evil*, a long treatise on contemporary American paranoia. The film is intercut with B movie footage and television promos from the early 1970s. The film featured Packard himself as an obese, overwrought watch salesman growing larger with each reel. Packard pressed 23,000 DVD copies of the film and made them available for free. He also sent thousands of them to celebrities, whose reactions were hilariously recorded on his website.

Chris Morris

Excerpts from
The Day Today
1994

The Day Today was a surreal British parody of television current affairs news programmes. Only six half hour episodes were made, and were originally broadcast in January and February 1994 on BBC2. In the fifth episode, Morris provokes a war between Hong Kong and Australia so that he can report on it, and much of the episode revolves around the resulting conflict. At the end of the episode, a false advertisement features a three-tape VHS set of the war produced by *The Day Today*, featuring footage of the war and its origins, set against a wholly inappropriate backdrop of pop music.

Kurt Cobain

An alternative version
of "Smells Like Teen
Spirit"
4mins | as performed
on Top of the Pops |
1991

A notable alternate performance of *Smells Like Teen Spirit* on BBC's Top of the Pops in 1991; the band refused to mime to the pre-recorded backing track and Cobain sang in a deliberately low voice and altered numerous lyrics in the song (for example, "Load up on guns, bring your friends" became "Load up on drugs, kill your friends"). Cobain would later claim he was trying to sound like former Smiths frontman Morrissey. This performance can be found on the 1994 home video *Live! Tonight! Sold Out!!* and on the bootleg *Outcesticide IV: Rape of the Vaults*.



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**Doug Fishbone with
Catherine Patha**

It's Not You, It's Me
(promo)
2mins 15s | DV | 2006

Doug invites us to contribute to his next artwork - with cash. Using the form of the film-pitch as an analogy for the position of the artist trying to fund the next work, Doug uses salesman's rhetoric and non-sequiturs to baffle us into submission.

Harold Offeh

Excerpts from
Being Mammy
2004

Being Mammy is a video and performance work that attempts to explore the world of the 'Mammy' caricature and evoke the tragedy of the type-cast actor doomed to recreate and replay the same role. Offeh worked with resources from the Bill Douglas Centre at the University of Exeter, where he examined the life and career of actress Hattie McDaniel, who famously played and won an Oscar for her role as 'Mammy' in *Gone With the Wind*.

**Andy Kaufman and
Jerry Lawler**

Excerpts from
Professional Wrestling
(excerpts from
national television)
1982

In the early eighties Kaufman began wrestling women during his act and was the self-proclaimed "Inter-Gender Wrestling Champion of the World," taking on an aggressive and ridiculous personality based upon the characters invented by professional wrestlers. He offered a \$1,000 reward to any woman who could pin him.

Later, after a challenge from professional wrestler Jerry "The King" Lawler, Kaufman would step into the ring (in the Memphis wrestling circuit) with a man - Lawler himself. Their ongoing feud, often featuring Jimmy Hart and other heels in Kaufman's corner, included an apparent broken neck for Kaufman as a result of Lawler's piledriver and a famous on-air fight on a 1982 episode of *Late Night with David Letterman*. For some time after that, Kaufman appeared everywhere wearing a neck brace, insisting that his injuries were real. Kaufman would continue to defend the Inter-Gender Championship in the Mid-South Coliseum, and offered an extra prize, other than the \$1,000: that if he was pinned, the woman would get to marry him and that he (Kaufman) would shave his head.

Kaufman and Lawler's famous feud and wrestling matches were later revealed to have been staged, or a "work," as the two were actually friends. The truth about it being a work was kept secret for more than 10 years after Kaufman's death, until the Emmy nominated documentary, *A Comedy Salute to Andy Kaufman*, aired on NBC in 1995.



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David Blandy was born in London in 1976 and graduated with an MA in Fine Art Media from Slade School of Art in 2003.

He works with video, performance and comics, often using comedy to deal with the question of how much influence the mass-media has on our notions of 'self'; dealing with the relationship between popular culture and its audience, highlighting the fragility of what we understand as real or fictional.



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