

Clint Mansell: Moon (15)

with the London Contemporary Orchestra

Start time: 7.30pm

Running time: 1 hour 50 minutes no interval

Please note all timings are approximate and subject to change

Brit Seaton discusses the history behind the iconic film and Clint Mansell's score ahead of the performance.

While it may be true that sound can't be heard in space, the soundtrack to Duncan Jones's *Moon*, composed by the inimitable Clint Mansell, resonates with a lucid, unearthly atmosphere.

For the first time, the London Contemporary Orchestra perform Mansell's original score side-by-side with a screening of the cult sci-fi film. This special performance celebrates the 50th anniversary of Apollo 11, the first landing on the moon, as well as ten years since the release of Jones's acclaimed directorial debut.

On the far side of the moon, lone astronaut Sam Bell (actor Sam Rockwell) nears the end of his three-year contract at a lunar base mining Helium-3, a substance aiding the Earth's diminishing energy resources. His robot assistant Gerty being his only company, Sam longs to return home to his family, until a shocking discovery reveals that getting there might be harder than he thought.

Moon is an homage to the classic sci-fi genre with a heartfelt, personal story. Mansell recalls receiving Jones's script 'out of the blue' and being immediately struck by its exploration of celestial isolation and loneliness, and the questions it raises about what it means to be human. 'I still think it's one of the best — if not the best script I've ever read,' he says.

With soundtracks previously written for such cinematic heavyweights as Darren Aronofsky's *Requiem for a Dream*, *Black Swan* and *Noah*, as well as Ben Wheatley's *High-Rise* and Rupert Sanders's *Ghost in the Shell*, Mansell is renowned for his ability to cultivate a deeply affective musical landscape.

For *Moon*, Mansell's ambient score encircles the routine and revelations of a solitary human working at an automated space facility, finding expression through twinkling yet plaintive piano lines, simmering percussion and ethereal cries of string. Beautifully melancholic, the *Welcome to Lunar Industries* theme is like a piano key soliloquy for protagonist Sam. 'Hopefully it captures the repetition of his life,' Mansell says. 'While it develops and changes, it's still somewhat stoic.'

When asked to define his process as a composer, Mansell makes it clear that he trusts his intuition. 'The score's there, you've gotta get it out,' he muses. 'The film will tell you where it needs you to go — whether it can handle emotion, whether it needs to be more austere, whether it needs to be faster or slower.'

'Writing a film score is a pretty solitary pastime, most of the time, but it's also very collaborative. Not just with the director, but also with the film itself. You can't just slap anything you want on there — the film will tell you whether it's responding to it or not. I suppose it's a case of whether you're in tune with it.' Ultimately, he shares, 'it's all influenced by what's coming from the screen.'

And considering *Moon*'s striking visual elements, it's difficult to imagine that Mansell was short of inspiration. The film's awe-inspiring moonscapes reference the lunar photography of Michael Light's photo book *Full Moon*, which compiles archival images of the moon taken by the Apollo astronauts. Mansell also credits the stellar performance of Sam Rockwell, for whom the script was written, as the 'framework' for his score.

'From my point of view, he's built the structure, the foundations, the roof, and I've got to embellish it,' Mansell explains. 'You're inspired by what the actors do and what the words are saying, and the pacing, direction and lighting, which helps you come up with these melodic and thematic ideas. But it's working them around the performances and the atmosphere of the film where it all comes together.'

barbican

Cascading through the architecture of the film, Mansell's otherworldly score gives Moon a heartbeat, carrying with it the story's humanity and hope. The composer casts light on the ambition for his music to 'enhance the environment and the world you're spending time in,' and also adds, 'but by the same token, I like the music — if you should listen to it alone — to still bring you the feeling of what you got from the film.'

Performed live by the London Contemporary Orchestra, the soundtrack to Moon is presented as a captivating musical experience in its own right.

Conducting the LCO tonight is Matt Dunkley, leading international conductor, orchestrator and composer who has worked on over 190 films, including The Great Gatsby, Inception, Loving Vincent and Batman: The Dark Knight and The Dark Knight Rises, and has conducted top orchestras in London, New York and Los Angeles.

The LCO is also joined on stage by Carly Paradis on piano, who played on the original score for Moon ten years ago. Paradis has gone on to compose for the BBC's Line of Duty and Netflix's The Supernaturals, also writing the original score for the BBC adaptation of Lady Chatterley's Lover.

Clint Mansell would like to thank:

Liberty Films, Park Circus and Sony Pictures for their kind permission to show the film, Duncan Jones, Stuart Fenegan & Pollyanna Cheung, Bryn Ormrod, Julia Baker, Mette Skriver, Isobel Lee-Poulton, Amy Wilkes, Sabine Kindel, Mark Bloxidge & the whole team at The Barbican, Robert Ames, Amy Hinds, Faye Merralls and Simon Hardy at The London Contemporary Orchestra and all the amazing musicians, Black Records & Decca Publishing, Oscar Harris, Tony Arthy, Mike Palmer, Robert Messinger & Jane Arthy.

"We came in peace for all mankind" Neil Armstrong, July 1969

Produced by the Barbican

Performers

Clint Mansell score

Matt Dunkley conductor and orchestration

Geoff Foster pre production & front of house mixer

Simon Hendry LCO sound engineer

Jill Streater music preparation services

Performed by The London Contemporary Orchestra & Carly Paradis

Anna De Bruin violin I

Venetia Jollands violin I

Laura Virtanen violin I

Kirsty Mangan violin I

Harri Allen violin I

Willemijn Steenbakkers violin I

Nicole Crespo O'Donoghue violin II

Edward McCullagh violin II

Gillon Cameron violin II

Cara Laskaris violin II

Kalliopi Mitropoulou violin II

James Heron violin II

Clifton Harrison viola

Matthew Kettle viola

Amy Swain viola

Alison D'Souza viola

Jonny Byers cello

Serge Serra cello

Laura Moody cello

Clare Graham cello

Dave Brown double bass

Nicola Davenport double bass

Rob Barron piano/keys

Phil Donnelly electric bass

Jack Ross electric guitar

Sam Wilson drums

George Barton percussion

Eloisa-Fleur Thom violin I

Hannah Dawson violin II

Zoe Matthews viola

Oliver Coates cello



The City of London Corporation is the founder and principal funder of the Barbican Centre