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Welcome to a new season which sees BBC Four enter the murky world of politics, embarking on surprising and sometimes dangerous journeys across the globe and tackling life's harsher realities through a mix of compelling documentary, performance and feature film.

The colourful and scandalous world of British politics is vividly and hilariously brought to life in a major six-part adaptation of the infamous Alan Clark diaries – with John Hurt brilliantly capturing the political manoeuvrings and rakish charm of the controversial former Conservative MP. From UK politics to the world stage, BBC Four reveals the terrifying reality of life in one of the world's most dangerous coastlines in *Holidays in the Danger Zone – The Violent Coast* and gains remarkable access to the closed world of North Korea in *A State of Mind*.

The channel continues its support for exceptional international film-making with the first ever BBC Four World Cinema Award, where critics and viewers nominate their favourite international film released in

the UK in the previous year. And our line-up of movie premières is stronger than ever, including the 2002 Academy Award winner *No Man's Land*, starring Simon Callow and the late Katrin Cartlidge.

BBC Four's very own *Soul Weekender* kicks off a typically diverse musical season, which includes fresh documentaries on musical giants from Gram Parsons to Maria Callas. And our mix of great plays includes Kristin Scott Thomas's wonderful performance in *The Three Sisters* and a quick TV transfer for the National Theatre's hit drama *Elmina's Kitchen*.

And, of course, BBC Four's unique mix of talk and debate (including the second series of *Dinner with Portillo*), analysis of world news, performance and award-winning documentaries continues to flourish as the channel approaches its second anniversary this winter.

Roly Keating
Controller, BBC Four

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POLITICS AND POWER

The Alan Clark Diaries

John Hurt plays Alan Clark, the flamboyant, outspoken and controversial Conservative MP, in a new, six-part drama adaptation of the Alan Clark diaries for BBC Four. The series focuses on the infamous diaries during Clark's political career from 1983 to his death in 1999.

Multi award winning actor John Hurt, whose numerous definitive roles have included Quentin Crisp in *The Naked Civil Servant* and John Merrick in *The Elephant Man* says: "My reason for doing *The Alan Clark Diaries* is that I've always enjoyed playing individuals and you can't get more individual than Alan Clark."

With his irreverent wit, aristocratic good looks and rakish charm, Alan Clark was one of the most colourful figures in modern politics. Love him – or love to hate him – his vibrant, unconventional style sent a blast of fresh air through the stuffy corridors of power, adding a dazzling touch of glamour to politics. Forever manoeuvring his way to the top, he never fulfilled his ambition to be in the Cabinet. Yet he was an influential figure on the political landscape and a man who, more often to the Government's despair than to its delight, was never long out of the public eye.

Hailed as a modern-day Pepys, Clark wormed his way into the public's affection through his diaries and their withering, often hilarious observations of high Tories, low morals, political back biting and Cabinet inertia. Set in a pre New Labour world of rural castles and Albany chambers, the diaries are part swansong for a time when Conservatives ruled Britannia and Etonians ran the country, and part insight into the psychology of a man born with a whole silver canteen in his mouth.

A strong supporting cast includes Jenny Agutter (*Spooks*) as Clark's wife Jane, Victoria Smurfit (*Trial And Retribution, About A Boy*) as Clark's secret mistress, 'X', and Julia Davis (*Human Remains*) as Jenny Easterbrook, Clark's frosty secretary.



The Death of Indira Gandhi

Indira Gandhi rose at dawn on 31 October 1984. She had returned to New Delhi late the night before, fearing that a car crash involving her grandchildren had been an attempt on their lives. Indira herself was in grave danger, and she knew it. That morning, she chose a saffron sari – ironically, the colour of martyrdom in Sikhism – and walked down the garden path to her offices. Within minutes she was dead, gunned down by her own bodyguards.

This film is about the assassination of one of the great figures in global politics and provides a forensic account of the last days of Indira, using archive, interviews and reconstruction.



Dinner with Portillo

Michael Portillo hosts another round of his dinner parties at which the hottest topics of national and international importance are dissected over a four-course meal in a new season of six programmes. Asylum, privacy, hospitals, foreign policy and the war on terrorism are all likely topics for debate.

Each week, he is joined by seven guests whose special experience and knowledge give rise to informed debate and sometimes vitriolic and outrageous arguments.

Portillo is not averse to chewing the fat with arch-rivals, parliamentary opponents, combative scribes of the national press, political lobbyists and international statesmen and women. In his first series, invitations were accepted by Benazir Bhutto and Garret Fitzgerald, Jonathan Aitken and George Galloway, Rosie Boycott, Frederick Forsyth and Christopher Hitchens.

“The great thing for me was to try and make it feel like a proper dinner party,” says Portillo. “We hold it in a public building in London – not a studio. It’s a round table, so everyone’s looking at each other so they forget they are being filmed. And it becomes extremely natural, and you see it the way it happened.”



FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE

Game Over – Kasparov and the Machine

Game Over – Kasparov and the Machine is a hi-tech thriller set in the fascinating world of chess.

In May 1997, Garry Kasparov, widely regarded as the greatest chess player of all time, played against Deep Blue, a 1.5-ton IBM super-computer, in a chess tournament and scientific experiment. To win the match, the computer did what many thought impossible at the time – it appeared to think like a human.

Directed by multi award winning film-maker Vikram Jayanti, this feature-length *Storyville* documentary leads viewers into the paranoid mindscape of a legendary chess genius, as Kasparov battles to come to terms with the machine from IBM.



The Three Sisters

Kristin Scott Thomas, Robert Bathurst, James Fleet and Douglas Hodge head the cast of Christopher Hampton's acclaimed adaptation of Chekhov's *The Three Sisters*.

Directed by award-winner Michael Blakemore and filmed at the London Playhouse Theatre, *The Three Sisters* is set in a provincial town in Russia and follows the Prozorov sisters, who reflect on their childhood and look forward to their reintroduction into Moscow society.

The play is a funny and moving study of character and relationship. This fascinating drama explores the dynamics between love, hope and fulfilment in the lives of the Prozorovs and their friends.



The Russian Ark

Famously shot in an unprecedented single 90-minute take – the longest Steadicam shot ever committed to film – Aleksandr Sokurov's *The Russian Ark* celebrates the last two centuries of art and history in Russia. An unseen contemporary film-maker wanders through St Petersburg's Hermitage Museum. As he begins his visit, he is transported into the past and meets a 19th-century foreign diplomat. Together, they wander through the museum, which features fantastic works of art, and they see and hear historical figures such as Tsar Nicholas II.

Written by Boris Khaimsky and Anatoli Nikiforov and released in 2002, *The Russian Ark* receives its UK television premiere as part of BBC Four's Saturday Cinema strand.



Tetris – From Russia with Love

Tetris, the fiendishly addictive computer game, took the world by storm in the early nineties.

The story of its development and global success is as gripping as the game itself. *Tetris – From Russia with Love* charts how a deceptively simple puzzle game, devised by a computer programmer at Moscow's Academy of Science in 1985, became one of the biggest-selling computer games ever made.

It is a tale of high stakes, intimidation and legal feuds, with some of the biggest companies in the capitalist West pitted against each other in the fight to secure the rights from Soviet Russia.



OTHER WORLDS

North Korea – A State of Mind

The secretive world of North Korea is opened up in spectacular style in this new film from the team who produced last year's RTS Award winning documentary *The Game of their Lives*. *A State of Mind* follows two young female gymnasts over a six-month period as they prepare to take part in the annual, wildly lavish Mass Games, where they will perform for their leader, North Korea's ruler Kim Jong-il.

A State of Mind provides rare glimpses into this hermit kingdom, a country sealed off from outside influence for over 50 years and wrapped around the cult of the Kim dynasty.

It offers a unique and visually ravishing insight into North Korean culture, its people, their way of life and their total devotion to their 'Dear Leader'.



Holidays in the Danger Zone – Mediterranean Tales The Violent Coast

Last year, Ben Anderson travelled to the six countries labelled 'the Axis of Evil' in a highly successful series that is currently short-listed for several major awards.

Now Ben is going to one of the most violent regions in the world. Liberia, Sierra Leone, the Ivory Coast and Nigeria are synonymous with wars, drugs, diamonds and corruption. It is notoriously dangerous to film there but Ben – along with a director and a cameraman – will make the trip to find out what life is really like for those living along the Violent Coast.

In 1867, Mark Twain set out by boat to discover the rich tapestry of the Mediterranean "with his own eyes". His chronicles, later published as *The Innocents Abroad*, heralded a new era for the whole genre of travel writing.

Over a century later, fellow American writer and passionate traveller Irma Kurtz sets out in Twain's footsteps on a literary odyssey around the shores of the Mediterranean to discover how these magical lands have inspired a wealth of writers, from Twain to Dickens, and from DH Lawrence to Lawrence Durrell. *Mediterranean Tales* accompanies Irma as she feasts on the beauty of Venice and bathes in the waters of Istanbul, and features literature from across the globe, from travel writing to poetry and cookery, to illustrate her journey.

BBC Four World Cinema Award

To celebrate the wealth of contemporary, international film-making and BBC Four's commitment to international cinema, the channel presents the first annual BBC Four World Cinema Award.

In a programme presented by Jonathan Ross, a jury of directors and stars from the film world select the best foreign-language film released in the UK in the preceding year (between 1 November 2002 and 31 October 2003). From a wide variety of films, the jury and viewers have narrowed the field down to a short-list of six: *Belleville Rendez-Vous*, *City of God*, *Etre et Avoir*, *Good Bye Lenin!*, *Spirited Away* and *The Man Without a Past*.

There will also be an Audience Award voted by the viewers at home.



RELUCTANT GANGSTERS

Elmina's Kitchen

BBC Four's commitment to bringing the best UK theatre to television continues with the National Theatre's acclaimed stage play by writer and *Casualty* star Kwame Kwei-Armah. *Elmina's Kitchen* is the story of a father trying to prevent his son getting involved in London's gun culture.

Deli runs a shabby West Indian café on Hackney's 'murder mile' in an area controlled by yardies. His life is a daily struggle to hold on to his honest living and provide a stable life for his troublesome son, Ashley. After the murder of his brother and the arrival of his estranged father, Deli's life starts to fall apart.

Directed by Angus Jackson, *Elmina's Kitchen* stars the original cast from the stage play: Paterson Joseph, Shaun Parkes, George Harris, Oscar James, Dona Croll and Emmanuel Idowu.

This production is made especially for television and shot on location in north London's Finsbury Park.



Ali Zaoua

Ali Zaoua is one of many boys left to wander the streets of Casablanca, sniffing glue and getting into scrapes, until one day he and his friends are set upon by another gang of boys and Ali is killed. Kwita, Omar and Boubker are devastated and decide to give Ali a burial fit for a prince. The film shows the grim life of these young boys.

Ali Zaoua sharply contrasts the harshness of the brutal world in which the boys live with the innocence of childhood hopes they are unlikely to fulfil.

Nabil Ayouch directed the film, released in 2000, which he co-wrote with Nathalie Saugeon. *Ali Zaoua* receives its UK television première as part of BBC Four's Saturday Cinema strand.



The Trespasser

The Trespasser is a blistering thriller that shows the new Brazilian cinema at its sharpest and most uncompromising. When Giba and Ivan have their business partner murdered, they discover that the hit man proves far more difficult to remove from their lives.

The film shows the grim reality of a gangster world, the imagined differences between the middle class and the slums, and the reality of the businessmen's and the hit man's ambitions to fulfil their desires.

Released in 2002, *The Trespasser* is directed by Beto Brant and based on the novel written by Marçal Aquino. It receives its UK television première as part of BBC Four's Saturday Cinema strand.



IN THE LINE OF FIRE

No Man's Land

During the Bosnian War in 1993, a patrol of Bosnian soldiers becomes lost in heavy fog. The soldiers awake in the direct line of Serbian soldiers. Ciki is the only soldier to survive as he falls into a trench in no man's land. When the Serbians send Nino out to find Ciki, the pair start bickering about the conflict and who actually started the war. It is only when Ciki's colleague – who was presumed dead – regains consciousness that the two forget their differences and try to escape the grim situation they are in.

No Man's Land, directed by Danis Tanovic and starring Simon Callow and Katrin Cartlidge, was released in 2001. It won the Best Foreign Film award at the Academy Awards 2002.

No Man's Land receives its UK television première as part of BBC Four's Saturday Cinema strand.



The Guinea Pig Club

When the first badly burned pilots returned from the Battle of Britain in 1940, reconstructive surgery was in its infancy. Some patients were sent to East Grinstead where they became guinea pigs for pioneering surgeon Archibald MacIndoe.

The patients, with typical wartime bravado, formed a drinking group called the Guinea Pig Club. Though due to disband when the patients left hospital, the club is still going strong six decades on and meets every year for an emotional reunion.

This programme tells the powerful human stories of these brave men and their triumph over their disfiguring injuries, and shows how the techniques MacIndoe pioneered have brought hope to burns victims today and shaped modern plastic surgery practices.

The Myth of Dunkirk

To complement the drama-documentary on BBC Two, this documentary takes a sideways look, from the point of view of Britain's enemies and allies, at an event that has been considered one of the finest feats in Britain's wartime history.

It was the first mistake in a previously faultless war for Germany. Its generals feared their enemies were set to counter-attack at any minute and, as a result, Hitler stopped the Panzer tanks 15 miles from Dunkirk. This gave the British two days to organise the miracle retreat.

The French viewed Dunkirk as a betrayal and the country surrendered just two weeks after the evacuation. As for Churchill, it was a massive turnaround in strategy.



CLASSICS REVISITED

Maria Callas – Living and Dying for Art and Love

Arguably the most loved and admired diva ever to grace the opera stage, Maria Callas is still the biggest-selling opera singer of all time. This programme tells the story of the famous staging of Franco Zeffirelli's *Tosca* at Covent Garden in 1964 and brings to life the story of the most tragic and dramatic of divas.

It features rare footage never before seen in the UK, including stills, archive cast interviews and pirated audio from Callas's final opera performance. For the first time, TV audiences can also see a piece of the opera restored to all its colourful glory.

Great names talk on camera about Callas for the first time. They include actress Dame Judi Dench, opera singer Grace Bumbry, Plácido Domingo and Antonio Pappano, Musical Director of the Royal Opera House.



Historians of Genius – In Their Own Words

If the great historians of the past were alive today, how would they compare to the Simon Schamas and David Starkeys of the TV celebrity age? That is the question posed by this fascinating series, which uses the techniques of contemporary television history to bring to life the work of three of the UK's greatest ever historical writers.

Edward Gibbon's *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (1776–88) is performed by Simon Russell Beale; Bill Paterson takes on the mantle of Thomas Carlyle to tell the story of *The French Revolution* (1837); and Samuel West delivers Thomas Macaulay's *History of England* (1849).

The text for the films is taken entirely from the books themselves, filmed on location and in modern dress.



Early Music

Presented by Charles Hazlewood, this innovative and entertaining three-part series examines early music as an important part of today's music scene and not just as a historical relic. Presented in a lively and informal setting, the series has an intimate feel and combines interviews and discussion with performances from top musicians across the spectrum of early music, encompassing everything from chant to opera, and viol consorts to troubadours and harpsichordists.

Each show introduces an exclusive selection of different leading artists and groups, presenting a broad and exuberant definition of the fascinating early music genre.



MUSIC IN THE SOUL

Soul Weekender

Sexy, empowering and the most influential music the world has ever known – soul animates the charts on both sides of the Atlantic. Its fresh, funky, eternal appeal lies in its constant ability to evolve and blend into new musical forms – R&B, house, garage, hip hop, rock and pop – getting generation after generation up on their feet and down on the dance floor.

Soul breaks through racial, cultural, geographical and musical boundaries and, this winter, BBC Four celebrates the music's massive international popularity with a weekend devoted to soul which includes two major new documentaries exploring aspects of its rich history: *Urban Soul* and *The Story of Soul to Soul*.



Urban Soul

From award-winning film-maker John Akomfrah, this is the definitive story of modern R&B and its meteoric rise in global popularity.

Looking at superstars such as Missy Elliot, Beyoncé Knowles, R Kelly and Boyz II Men, the programme traces the way in which R&B crossed over into rap and pop to become a multi-billion-dollar industry with an unprecedented impact on mainstream music.

Urban Soul follows the architects of modern R&B – uber-producers such as P Diddy, Teddy Riley, LA Reid and Andre Harrell – who took the music scene by storm and revolutionised the fashions, attitudes and aspirations of an entire generation.



The Story of Soul to Soul

This sparkling documentary revisits one of the most important cultural moments in the history of black America and Africa. In 1971, America's top soul music performers – including Wilson "The Wicked" Pickett, Ike and Tina Turner and Santana – travelled to Ghana for its 14th independence anniversary celebrations.

The climax was a super-powered soul music concert where over 200,000 Ghanaians went wild in Accra's packed Black Star Square. What started off as the 'Black Woodstock' became a pilgrimage for these soul stars to find their musical and ancestral roots. Thirty years on, Ike Turner, Wilson Pickett and some of the key people who made the trip vividly describe what it was really like to touch African soil for the first time.



Gram Parsons – Fallen Angel

Thirty years after the untimely death of Gram Parsons, this documentary assesses the life and career of a musical legend. In 1973, the musician and heir to a fortune died, under the influence of drugs and alcohol, near his favourite place – the Joshua Tree National Monument in the Californian desert.

Founder of the Flying Burrito Brothers, member of the legendary Byrds, an influence on the Rolling Stones and the man who discovered Emmylou Harris, Gram Parsons wrote music history in only a few years. Shot on location, the film features interviews with his friends and contemporaries and those who followed in his footsteps, combined with rare footage of his performances.

American music journalist and biographer Sid Griffin presents.



John Martyn

John Martyn is the consummate musician's musician. Never having quite crossed over into the mainstream, Martyn has gained a cult following. This film looks at his genius and his traumatic and often dramatic life. When filming began, John was facing one of those life-changing moments that seems to have pervaded his career. A leg injury had led to an infection and the only prognosis was to have his leg amputated below the knee. The film follows him pre- and post-operation.

Contributors include the late Robert Palmer and Phil Collins, as well as close musician friends. Also featured is classic *Old Grey Whistle Test* archive and other performances caught over the years.



TROUBLED MINDS

Blue/Orange

Joe Penhall's powerful and award-winning play was one of the surprise West End hits of the late nineties and now comes to BBC Four in a new adaptation. It is a remarkable three-hander which examines issues of race and mental illness at the heart of the National Health Service.

In a psychiatric hospital, a consultant and his young registrar argue over the troubled mind of a young black patient. Christopher, who believes he is the son of an African dictator, is due for imminent release. Bruce, his doctor, is anxious to keep him in for further observation. But Bruce's superior, Robert, believes that Christopher should be released the following day, in accordance with his 28-day confinement notice.

Cast to be confirmed.



The Son's Room

Nanni Moretti's heartbreaking film is an astonishing study of what happens when a family is hit by sudden tragedy. Giovanni (played by Moretti himself) spends his days listening to his clients' tales of despair and trauma. As a psychologist, he has a duty to support his patients and to be there whenever they need him.

In contrast, Giovanni's home life is very simple and happy. He lives in a small town in Italy with his wife, Paola, and their teenage children, Irene and Andrea. The close-knit family happily spend their time together reading at home or going for walks.

One morning, however, disaster strikes, and Giovanni and his family are plunged into unknown emotional territory.

The Son's Room was released in 2001 and receives its UK television première as part of BBC Four's Saturday Cinema strand.



Universities Challenged

It is a testing time for universities. As custodians of the intellectual life of the nation, universities now face intense public scrutiny, unprecedented political imperatives and strong market pressures. Hampered by inadequate public funding, they somehow have to keep up with rapidly changing social expectations.

Universities Challenged peers beneath the skin of one of Britain's most respected universities. Often thought of as an alternative to Oxbridge, Bristol has a reputation for exacting academic standards. The focus of greater media interest than other universities, Bristol is still smarting from accusations that its efforts to recruit students from a broader cross-section of society amounted to social engineering.

During what promises to be a stormy autumn term, the programme focuses on students surviving despite mounting debts, lecturers involved in world-class research despite ever-diminishing funding grants, and the policy-makers – the Vice Chancellor and his administration – formalising admissions policies and setting new and unpopular 'top-up' tuition fees.