

The Fallen Idol brilliantly evokes the transition from pre-pubescent childhood to adolescence. Graham Greene based his script on 'The Basement Room', his 1935 story of a young boy who inadvertently betrays his best friend to the police. Greene and Carol Reed reshaped the narrative to emphasise the young protagonist's growing pains and the sense of loss that comes from leaving childish things behind.

Felipe (Bobby Henrey), the son of a foreign diplomat, is cared for by Baines (Ralph Richardson), the butler. The boy's mother has been convalescing back home for the last eight months and his only maternal figure is Baines' austere and unsympathetic wife (Sonia Dresdel).

Richardson gives a magnificently understated performance, while Henrey is a revelation in a complex role with strong Oedipal overtones. Felipe has a troubled relationship with his mother substitute and, in a sad yet chilling moment, admits to Baines that he can't even remember his real mother. The Freudian elements of the story are further emphasised in the subplot regarding Mrs Baines' dislike of Felipe's beloved pet snake. He keeps it in a secret hiding place but she eventually finds it and disposes of it in the furnace. These psychological elements climax in a brilliantly photographed game of hide and seek, in which Baines and his mistress (Michèle Morgan) chase Felipe all over the embassy before retiring to spend their first night together.

For its first half, the film rigidly maintains Felipe's point of view. This subtly alters after Mrs Baines, unhinged by the discovery of her husband's love affair, dies in an accident. After Felipe flees the embassy in shock, we begin to have access to scenes to which he does not. This strategy marginalizes the boy who has hitherto been the central focus, emphasising his distance from, and struggle to comprehend, the adult world.

The ambiguous sexual undertones of the story get a humorous outlet in the police station scene in which an unrepentant prostitute (Dora Bryan), trying to comfort Felipe, finds only those ready-made phrases she uses with her customers. An exasperated desk sergeant, unable to complain about the plain meaning of the words, asks if she "can't do it without the smile?"

Preferred by many, including Greene, to *The Third Man* (d. Reed, 1949), the film's rich texture has kept it fresh over the years, allowing for a variety of critical interpretations.

<http://www.screenonline.org.uk/film/id/459908/index.html>



Celebrating Seventy Years of Stafford Film Theatre 1949-2019

Programme for anniversary event reflecting on
world events and cinema in 1949,
and the founding of Stafford Film Theatre

The Mountbatten Suite and Gatehouse Theatre, Stafford

17th September 2019

Mountbatten Suite – screening of *Alliance for Peace*

6.00 - 6.30 Buffet

6.30 Welcome - Graeme Sillitoe (Chair, SFT)

Introduction - Mike Loveless (Committee member, SFT)

Christopher Templeton – An introduction to the film *Alliance for Peace*

Screening of *Alliance for Peace* (28 minutes)

Open discussion..... to be continued after main screening in Gatehouse

Gatehouse Theatre – screening of *The Fallen Idol*

7.45 Welcome and raffle - Graeme Sillitoe (Chair, SFT)

Introduction - Mike Loveless (Committee member, SFT)

Christopher Templeton – An introduction to the film *The Fallen Idol*

Screening of *The Fallen Idol* (94 minutes)

Open discussion..... to be continued at County Staff Club, Eastgate Street.

All welcome.

Christopher Templeton is a Scottish/Hungarian scriptwriter and director whose radio plays and television documentaries highlighted human rights abuses in the US and Europe during the post Cold War era of the 1990s. He was born in Los Angeles, California, the son of the Glasgow playwright and screenwriter, William Templeton.



He graduated from the London International Film School in 1985 but his first writing work was for radio. He scripted and directed several productions on BBC World Service, which broadcast new and politically charged plays on the 'Play for the Week' flagship series. *Mirad, A Boy from Bosnia*, was well-received by critics including Sue Gaisford, of the Observer, who described the production as "...almost unbearably moving". Whilst *Mirad* amplified the human cost of the Bosnian genocide, later productions, like *Rupa Lucian, Child of Romania* exposed the atrocities of the 'Securitatae', Romania's secret police. Templeton continued at the World Service to write and present the first non-religious content for the *Pause for Thought* series with other leading secularists including Nicolas Walter and Dr. Richard Dawkins. In 1996, Templeton coordinated the UK campaign of death row artist, Manuel Salazar. The campaign secured a second trial for Salazar and exoneration with support from Templeton's news documentary '*Trial and Error*' (broadcast on NBC).

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christopher_Templeton

<https://www.imdb.com/name/nm4837252/bio>

William Pettigrew Templeton (1913 – 1973) was a Scottish playwright and screenwriter who made a major contribution to the Golden Age of Television writing a string of episodic dramas for American prime time television during the 1950s and 1960s; a time when many hour-long anthology drama series received wide critical acclaim. Templeton had a long film career both in the UK and the US, his adaptation of *The Fallen Idol* (also known as *The Lost Illusion*) a 1948 film with Ralph Richardson directed by Carol Reed and based on the short story *The Basement Room* by Graham Greene was nominated for an Academy Award for Best Direction and Best Adapted Screenplay, and won a BAFTA Award for Best British Film.



Alliance for Peace – screening of reel 1 of 4. All four reels available to view on https://www.iwm.org.uk/collections/item/object/1060049878?_ga=2.115176516.211614696.9.1566412332-2097512777.1566412332

1949 and the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO)

After the destruction of the WWII, the nations of Europe struggled to rebuild their economies and ensure their security. The former required a massive influx of aid, and the latter required assurances against a resurgent Germany or incursions from the Soviet Union. The US viewed an economically strong, re-armed, and integrated Europe as vital to the prevention of communist expansion across the continent. The Marshall Plan not only facilitated European economic integration but promoted the idea of shared interests and cooperation between the US and Europe.

In 1947–1948, a series of events caused the nations of Western Europe to become concerned about their physical and political security, and the US to become more closely involved with European affairs. The ongoing civil war in Greece, along with tensions in Turkey, led to American concerns and a Soviet-sponsored coup in Czechoslovakia resulted in a communist government coming to power on the borders of Germany and in Italy the communist party had made significant gains.

The occupation and governance of Germany after the war had long been disputed, and in mid-1948, Soviet premier Joseph Stalin chose to test Western resolve by implementing a blockade against West Berlin, which was then under joint U.S., British, and French control - but surrounded by Soviet-controlled East Germany. A massive airlift re-supplied the city for the 11 months of the blockade.

Alliance for Peace is a B feature film which supported main features in the cinema. At a time when audiences wanted entertainment, they also wanted news - and these short films played a major role. William Templeton, as scriptwriter, flew with General Eisenhower, the first Supreme Allied Commander Europe, to the 12 original signatory states and wrote the narrative for the film which is voiced by Edward R Murrow. The film, describing events of 1949, was released in several versions. The final version, dated 1952, will be screened at our event.

The Fallen Idol (1948) 35mm, B&W,

94 mins, London Film Productions
Director Carol Reed; Screenplay/Story Graham Greene;
Additional Dialogue Lesley Storm, William Templeton;
Music William Alwyn; Photography Georges Perinal
Cast: Ralph Richardson (Baines); Bobby Henrey (Felipe);
Michèle Morgan (Julie); Sonia Dresdel (Mrs Baines);
Denis O'Dea (Dr Crowe); Walter Fitzgerald
(Dr Fenton); Dora Bryan (Rose)

