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[Suggested title]

**The hills are alive... with event cinema-on-demand**

[Suggested introductory text revision]

**Denzil Monk discusses the opportunities that rural communities now have to see screenings of filmed performances.**

The rapid rise of event cinema with its hybrid new experience of filmed performance has brought opportunities for audiences, cinemas and the producing arts companies. The event cinema market is estimated to be worth \$1B globally by 2019. {LINK; <http://news.ihsmarket.com/press-release/technology/event-cinema-revenues-hit-1-billion-2019-ihs-report-says>}

Many more people across the globe are able to access great arts content – as long as they live close to a connected cinema. What does that look like in the UK? According to IHS {LINK; <http://www.bfi.org.uk/sites/bfi.org.uk/files/downloads/bfi-statistical-yearbook-2017.pdf>} UK screen density was 6.4 screens per 100,000 people in 2016. But what about the 17% of the UK population living in rural areas (ONS 2016) where density is only 1.5 screens? In actual numbers this means just 109 screens (out of a UK total 4,150) serving 9.4 million people. The metro-centric expectation of cultural options for a good night out is not available to all.

At Cinegi Arts&Film we aim to change this.

Using our digital service, promoters choose and book a programme online, download it over standard broadband into the free Windows 10 Cinegi player app, connect their laptop to their projector and it's ready to play. Venues themselves don't need broadband and any village hall, pub, club, church, library or museum, however remote, can be transformed into a cinema.

The pattern of event cinema distribution typically follows a 'One Night Only' live stream followed by an 'encore' release a couple of weeks later. Cinegi Arts&Film offers longer release windows, enabling communities to publicly screen what people want to watch, where and when they want to see it.

Cinegi Arts&Film helps major organisations – Royal Opera House, National Theatre, Royal Shakespeare Company, reach audiences they couldn't otherwise. In November 2017, we worked with Libraries Unlimited in Devon to run a training session for staff and a pilot screening of the Royal Shakespeare Company's Love's Labour's Won (or Much Ado About Nothing - the first ever RSC screening in a library).

Cinegi Arts&Film can also extend the reach of smaller producing organisations like Open Clasp's five star 'Key Change' through 'digital touring' enabling a broader diversity of stories from a greater plurality of voices to reach a multiplicity of audiences in affordable and accessible ways,

Familiar, friendly community venues provide a perfect environment in which to encounter the intimacy of filmed performance, where audiences can become truly "immersed in the

experience” as expressed by this audience member after a screening of Giselle from the Royal Opera House: “Wasn’t sure if I’d enjoy the ballet, but in this format found it spectacular and amazing; you get a real sense of their athleticism; you move with them in a way you could not in the theatre.”

Community screenings are affordable. The standard minimum price for a Cinegi screening is £99. We ask venues to charge a minimum ticket price of £4 (£2 concessions), but they are welcome to charge more if they wish and of course cinemas charge higher ticket prices for alternative content. Some of our venues reflect this pricing approach whilst others prefer to pass the savings digital distribution provides onto their audiences: “We normally charge £5 and did so on this occasion too as we felt it would be seeming to profit from the fact that opera is usually considered expensive (even in live satellite screenings in local cinemas) but it was not costing us any more to present.”

Our venues’ average ticket price is £6.21, with a median price of £5. This is comparable with the average community cinema ticket price of £5.41 compared to commercial cinemas £7.30 (BFI Statistical Yearbook 2017). Our audience sizes range from 9 to 99 with 31 being the average.

Mirroring cinema patterns, theatre and opera are proving to be the most popular titles: NT Live’s ‘The Audience’, and the Royal Opera House’ ‘Giselle’ leading, with ‘The Railway Children’ and Matthew Bourne’s ‘Sleeping Beauty’ close behind.

After screening Matthew Bourne’s ‘Sleeping Beauty’, a rural library film club stated it was: “very well received - the offer of a ballet rather than feature film went down very well. Audiences here do not get the chance often to see theatre, ballet or opera.”

Understandably, some people harbour concerns about the potential negative impact if digital touring steals audiences from rural touring companies, however the AEA’s 2016 report ‘From Live-To-Digital’ found that “data reveal minimal impact on live attendance’ and where there is an impact it tends towards the positive: “those who stream Live-to-Digital work are slightly more likely to attend live cultural performances more frequently than the average theatregoer.”

A characteristic village hall promoter feedback: “Very popular with the audience and much appreciated. Audience members said they looked forward to more arts events screening especially ballet and opera.”

Ultimately – it is a false comparison. AEA’s research goes on to conclude that “audiences do not believe Live-To-Digital is a substitute for live theatre; they believe it is a significant and distinct experience.”

Since the Cinegi Arts&Film digital service launched in January 2016, with screenings stretching over hill and dale, down winding muddy lanes across the UK, from the Outer Hebrides to the far West of Cornwall, the message has consistently been one of growing demand for community event cinema, preferably lots of choice and available as soon after the live release as possible.

An elderly audience member explains after a screening of Macbeth at Hall for Gwinear in West Cornwall: “I can’t get to London and go to the Globe Theatre – you have brought the Globe to me in my village – thank you, thank you so much.”

Cinegi Arts&Film is an action research project supported by Arts Council England in partnership with the BFI, testing how a digital service can engage new audiences for cultural

content. Insights from our audience data research will be shared at the end of project. Find out more at [cinegi.com](http://cinegi.com).

[WORD COUNT: 965 words]

[ADDITIONAL MATERIALS]

- Denzil Monk headshot colour 2018.jpg



- Matthew Bourne's Sleeping Beauty 233 (2500x1635).jpg  
[Caption: 'Matthew Bourne's Sleeping Beauty']

