

# Jane Austen On Screen



**Week One**

## Welcome to *Jane Austen on Screen*

### Week One

Say the name 'Jane Austen' to people and you will usually receive one of two reactions:

- 1) Utter delight
- 2) Utter boredom

These two poles come from the same impulse and despite my oft-repeated saw about the subjectivity of art, only one is actually correct. The other, at best, is misguided.

Because, yes, Jane Austen is – alongside William Shakespeare – responsible for about 80-90 percent of what we have come to think of as the standard romantic comedy form, not to mention occupying much of the space thought of as 'period drama'.

Those who don't respond to Austen's stories tend to be rolling their eyes at the familiar. Those who do are smiling at the same.

Neither really captures Ms Austen's true gift which she shares with all writers of genuine genius:

An understanding of people.

Like Shakespeare, Austen's novels offer a wealth of insight into the human condition, in and out of love. But they are also extremely funny, witty and beautifully written.

On-screen, that requires careful handling, so as not to fall too heavily into chocolate box territory. The writers, directors and actors need to

understand that, above all else, Austen is a modern novelist and that she has as much to tell us about life now as life then.

It's not all frocks and corsets, in other words. Which might explain how often Austen's stories have crossed into the modern day.

Over the next six weeks, we'll be dealing with adaptations of which those responsible ought to be proud. And some which ought to be exterminated with extreme prejudice.

We'll be starting with the perennial favourite, *Sense and Sensibility*, Miss Austen's 1811 debut.

## WEEK ONE FILMS

Sense and Sensibility (1971)

*David Giles*

Sense and Sensibility (1981)

*Rodney Bennett*

Sense and Sensibility (1995)

*Ang Lee*

Kandukondain Kandukondain (I Have Found It) (2000)

*Rajiv Menon*

Crouching Tiger, Hidden Dragon (2000)

*Ang Lee*

Sense and Sensibility (2008)

*John Alexander*

From Prada to Nada (2011)

*Angel Garcia*

Scents and Sensibility (2011)

*Brian Brough*

Sense and Sensibility (2024)

*Roger M. Bobb*