

MIKE LEIGH



IN FOCUS

Week Four

Welcome to *Mike Leigh In Focus*

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Welcome to Week Four of *Mike Leigh in Focus*; it's finally time to take our first look at the incredible run of feature films that began with 1988's *High Hopes*. (With a short hop back to one last TV play that introduced the mighty Timothy Spall to the Leigh repertory company.)

It is easy – and necessary – to view these first features as the natural extension of Leigh's work for television. It's not as if the director, in heading back to the silver screen, began writing blockbuster epics or special effects extravaganzas. These are still stories about people and relationships – both often under duress.

And many of the actors who had populated Leigh's television plays will be seen again.

But there is a shift to be considered. In working on a broader canvas, Mike Leigh, the filmmaker continues to develop. Both visually and in terms of the precision with which he populates his story worlds.

We've already talked a little bit about the 'right director for the right times' – Mike Leigh's concerns correlating with the societal changes around him.

That continues out of the 80s into the 90s and it's difficult to think of a creator who examined those times with such an eye for detail or such a sly sense of humour.

FILMS – WEEK FOUR

Home Sweet Home (1982)

High Hopes (1988)

Mike Leigh in Conversation (2023)

Life is Sweet (1990)

A Sense of History (1992)

SUGGESTED READING

Mike Leigh on Mike Leigh

Amy Raphael and Mike Leigh

Mike Leigh: Interviews

Howie Movshovitz