

**MIKE LEIGH**



**IN FOCUS**

**Week Seven**

## Welcome to *Mike Leigh In Focus*

### Week Seven

It's a tale of two films this week – following our deep dive into *Topsy-Turvy*: one, *All or Nothing* that might be argued to fit into the run of films of life in Modern Britain with which Mike Leigh is most associated and another period film, this time the extraordinary *Vera Drake*, featuring an acclaimed performance by Imelda Staunton.

Both received very positive critical notices on release, but it was the second – with its potentially controversial abortion theme – that seemed to resonate the most with cinema goers on the box office front, not to mention the awards bodies.

Mike Leigh's 21<sup>st</sup> Century career does seem to have achieved an odd cyclical rhythm. By and large, his films will continue to be rated highly, but only certain stories break through to those outside of his core audience.

Period dramas too will continue to be a feature and – considering how he made his name – it is two of these that have been most discussed over the last 20 years, *Vera Drake* and, still to come, *Mr Turner*.

Interestingly, both are driven by acclaimed central performances – despite consistently wonderful ensembles – which might say something more about how films are perceived than the films themselves, but is worth investigating.

So, we will!

FILMS – WEEK SEVEN

*All or Nothing* (2002)

*Vera Drake* (2004)

*Mike Leigh in Conversation (All or Nothing & Vera Drake)* (2023)

*Breakfast with the Arts*

## SUGGESTED READING

*Mike Leigh on Mike Leigh*

Amy Raphael and Mike Leigh

*Mike Leigh: Interviews*

Howie Movshovitz