

# LSE Magazine



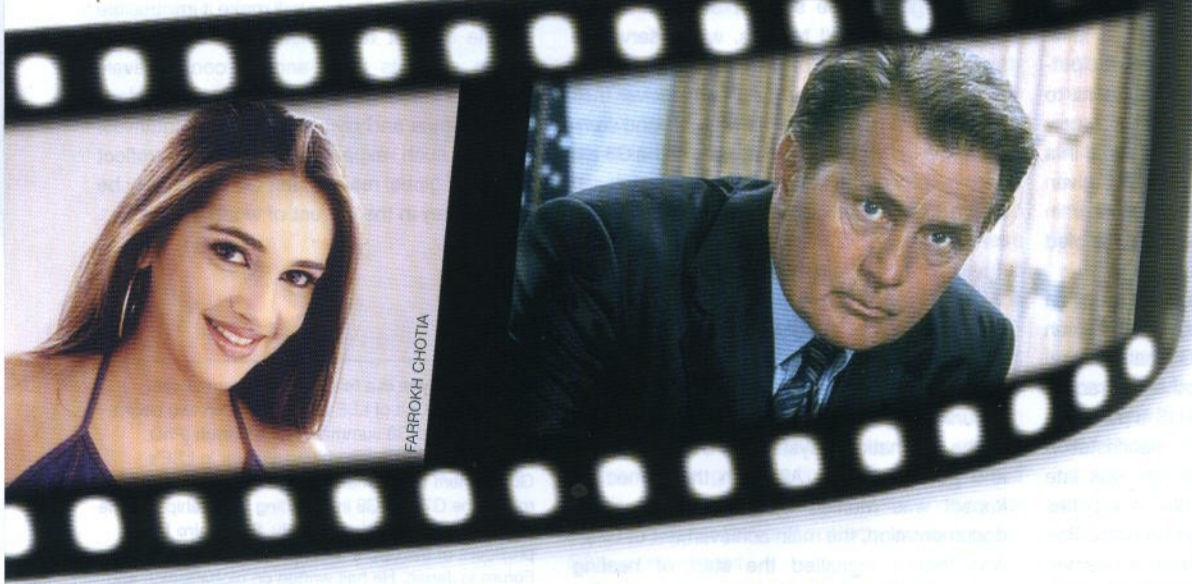
Human rights  
the need to stand strong

All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights... everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person... everyone has the right to recognition before the law... everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers... recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family... human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear... human rights should be protected by the rule of law...

# LSE on screen



Left to right: Tara Sharma, Martin Sheen, the cast of *Yes Minister*, Philippe Ross and stills from *Sons of the Wind*



Last summer the opening sequence of a French action movie called *Sons of the Wind* was filmed at LSE. A 60-strong crew, including members of the famous French urban gymnast group, the Yamakasi, were caught on camera across campus. But it's not the first LSE brush with the big or small screen by any means. As **Judith Higgin** recalls, the School has regularly been pictured on film or cited in storylines, while alumni are definitely players. Sit back, dip into your popcorn and let the credits roll ...





LSE and Hollywood connections, alumni in movies and on TV. Where to start? Perhaps, true to LSE form, we should begin with those fictional alumni who have led their countries and made an impact on the world stage.

So, let's hear it for that other president of the USA – Dr Josiah 'Jed' Bartlett, star of *The West Wing*. According to his official NBC biography, he gained his doctorate in economics at LSE after deciding against the priesthood. The School has been named at least twice in the multi award-winning US TV series and, although Jed wears a Notre Dame university sweatshirt more often than an LSE baseball cap, we would be delighted to welcome him (aka actor Martin Sheen) back for a reunion event any time he can fit a London visit into his busy schedule.

But let's not forget another fictional LSE alum, Jim Hacker (BSc Econ). Jim is fondly remembered as the hapless politician who somehow got into the UK Cabinet in 1980 in the BBC TV comedy series *Yes Minister*. By 1986 he was also in the top job as the UK's fictional prime minister. His choice of university, however, was not well-regarded by his cabinet secretary Sir Humphrey Appleby, a classics graduate from 'Baillie College'. In addition, the real PM at the time, Margaret Thatcher, a fan of the programme, once recorded a four-minute special edition for an award ceremony where she charged Jim to 'abolish economists' on the basis that 'they never agree on anything. They just fill the heads of politicians with all sorts of curious notions, like the more you spend, the richer you get.' The show's writers, however, were well aware of LSE's international reputation. They wrote in three other fictional LSE alumni – an African president, an Israeli ambassador and the PM's chief special adviser.

After fictional heads of state, we should highlight some real LSE movers and shakers in Hollywood and the film industry generally. As in true Oscar ceremony tradition, the list is too long to name everyone, and apologies for inevitably missing some. We can start by mentioning Peter Bart (MSc Econ 1955), editor in chief of *Variety*, who gave a lecture at LSE last May to launch his new book *Shoot Out: surviving fame and (mis)fortune in Hollywood*. Peter graduated from LSE in 1955 with a master's degree in economics, then worked for 11 years for the *Wall Street Journal* and the *New York Times* before spending 17 years in the motion picture business, serving as vice president, production at Paramount, senior vice president at MGM and president of Lorimar Film

Co. He then became editor of *Weekly Variety* in 1989 and then editor in chief of *Variety Inc*.

Steven Glick (General Course 1977 and MSc Government 1980) is currently executive vice president at Paramount Pictures. Other producers with an LSE background include Ed Pressman (General Course 1966), who in 30 years has produced more than 65 films, including *Badlands*, *The Crow*, *American Psycho*, *Wall Street* and *Reversal of Fortune*; Uberto Pasolini (BSc Econ 1979), the producer of *The Full Monty*, who is now attached to Redwave Films in Soho, London; Barry J Hershey (General Course 1963), writer, producer and director of *The Empty Mirror*; and Oscar-and-Emmy nominated producer Frederick Zollo (1976) who made, among many films, *Mississippi Burning*, *The Paper*, *Quiz Show* and *Hurlyburly*.

Documentary film makers include Danny Schechter (MSc Government 1969) who made *Student Power* [see Back to the 60s, page 37] and Jeannine Ross (MSc Political Philosophy 1988), co-director of *Florida Fights Back! (Resisting the Stolen Election)*. Jon Blair (BSc Econ 1972 and MPhil International Relations 1973) won a Best Documentary Oscar for *Diary of Anne Frank* and went on to make *Anne Frank Remembered*. Another of his documentaries, *Schindler*, was made in 1982 before Spielberg's *Schindler's List*.

We can claim actors and presenters too. While an earlier group of alumni may remember Ron Moody (BSc Sociology 1953) as Fagin in the 1968 musical *Oliver!*, younger Bollywood fans are perhaps more aware of Tara Sharma (BSc Institute of Management 1998). Tara made her film debut in the movie *Om Jai Jagadish*, and this year stars in the thriller *Saaya*. Another actress Kitty Carlisle Hart, who attended Harold Laski's lectures in the 1930s, is probably most famous in the US for her 25 year run as a panellist on the TV game show *To Tell The Truth*. LSE governor Loyd Grossman (MSc Economic History 1977, MPhil 1981) is famous in the UK for presenting, among other TV shows, *Through the Keyhole*. You might also recognise Media and Communications Department PhD researcher Philippe Ross as the lead actor in *A Young Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court* (Filmline International Productions, 1994), starring opposite Michael York and Theresa Russell.

On a more academic note, as film and TV are, of course, big business and an important creative element of society, LSE also studies the industry.

The newly-formed Department of Media and Communications runs a joint programme with the Annenberg School for Communication, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, and a number of students from the programme intern in movie and TV studios while in LA. LSE governor and visiting guest lecturer Jeffrey Berg is chairman and chief executive officer of International Creative Management, Inc, a talent and literary agency representing major clients in publishing, motion pictures, television, music, theatre, and news and public affairs. He also serves on the board of directors of Oracle Corporation and the American Film Institute.

Meanwhile, in the department of Economic History, research fellow Dr Gerben Bakker has written on the decline and fall of the European Film Industry from 1890 to 1927; in Geography and Environment, Professor Paul Cheshire and colleagues have researched the impact which clusters of TV and media companies have on London, while in Social Psychology, Professor Sonia Livingstone and colleagues carry on the pioneering work of Hilde Himmelweit, the first person to study children's TV viewing habits, and thus effectively establish the UK's 9pm watershed for TV programming. This year Professor Livingstone published new research on children's use of the internet, following a major study of children's TV habits outlined in *Children and their Changing Media Environment* (Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2001), co-authored with Moira Bovill.

To name just a few alumni authors, emeritus professor George Wedell (BSc International Relations 1947) and Bryan Luckham (BSc Sociology 1961) published *Television at the Crossroads* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2001) on the UK's TV situation and the implications of digital and cable competition, while spring 2004 sees a book co-authored by David Wienir (MSc Public Administration and Public Policy 1996) called *Making It on Broadway: actors' tales of climbing to the top* (Allworth Press, 2004). With a foreword by Jason Alexander of *Seinfeld* fame, this unravels misconceptions about Broadway through candid interviews with stars of stage and screen.

There must be hundreds more. Please let us know, and keep watching both the big and small screen. Now it only remains for us to thank the set designers, the best boy, the gaffer ... ■

## Judith Higgin

is LSE press officer and editor of *LSE Magazine*. ▶