



# DRAMA



## BYRON

Jonny Lee Miller stars as the charismatic, hedonistic, wildly rebellious and gifted poet Lord Byron, the “mad, bad and dangerous to know” sex god aristocrat who lived fast and died young.

Byron flouted society’s moral code and this drama explores contemporary themes such as the cult of celebrity, media manipulation and the bad-boy image of an outsider who wins – yet despises – society’s praise.

The first superstar, Byron became the toast of London society literally overnight. He was also a heartbreaker, and his many jilted lovers included the infamous Lady Caroline Lamb, who exacted her revenge in collusion with his betrayed wife, Annabella.

But Byron’s true love was his half-sister, Augusta, and their scandalously illicit incestuous affair led to his self-imposed exile in Italy, where he continued to indulge in hedonistic pleasures. His short life eventually came to an end when he took up the Greek struggle for independence from the Turks.

*Byron* also features Natasha Little (Augusta), Camilla Power (Lady Caroline Lamb) and Julie Cox (Annabella), with Vanessa Redgrave co-starring as Lady Melbourne. Julian Farino is the director and Ruth Baumgarten is the producer.

Also in the BBC Two autumn schedule, Byron’s poetry lives on in *Essential Byron*, a documentary in contemporary settings with poems read by Jim Carter, Toby Stephens, Rosamund Pike, Richard Coyle, Francesca Annis, Jack Davenport and Hugh Dancy.



## PEPYS

Steve Coogan is set to play Samuel Pepys, naval strategist and serial adulterer, in a new film by Guy Jenkin which charts the rise to power of the most charismatic and contradictory of civil servants.

Without Pepys there could have been no British Empire. As the creator of the King's Navy, Pepys is best remembered for the diaries he kept from 1660 to 1669, which included a record of his professional brilliance and political astuteness as he climbed the slippery pole at the Admiralty. They also meticulously recorded explicit details of his life, containing his most intimate thoughts about his sexual exploits, written in a private shorthand.



## THE KEY

Dawn Steele and Ronni Ancona, in her first serious role, star with Frances Grey, Ann Louise Ross, Ken Stott, Kevin McKidd, John Sessions and June Watson in *The Key*.

Encompassing three generations of a passionate Clydeside clan, *The Key* brings to life the epic struggle of the Scottish labour movement and an extraordinary family tale. Dawn Steele plays firebrand Mary Corrigan, who is drawn into early 20th-century politics by a doomed love affair. Three generations on, Mary's granddaughter, played by Ronni Ancona, struggles with a different heartache. It seems she must compromise her family's political beliefs to ascend the political ladder.

## BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER (final series)

After struggling to raise her sister by day and battle demons by night, Buffy and her friends' lives took many tumultuous turns in the previous series. Romances flourished and waned as the gang grew up, and Buffy (played by Sarah Michelle Gellar) is now a single, working woman.

In the seventh and final series, *Buffy The Vampire Slayer* takes a surprising and innovative turn as their high school, obliterated at the end of the third series, reopens. This startling development foretells new challenges and threats, signifying that the battle against evil is far from over.

## EROICA

BBC Two broadcasts *Eroica*, a drama which focuses on the day in June 1804 when Ludwig Van Beethoven's Third Symphony, *Eroica*, was first played through in a private rehearsal at the palace of the composer's patron in Vienna.

*Eroica* explores the story behind the symphony: Beethoven's passion for his work, his unrequited love for an unattainable woman and the reactions and observations of those who are present for this first performance. *Eroica* features a complete performance of the Symphony by one of the world's foremost period instrument groups – the Orchestre Revolutionnaire et Romantique – conducted by John Elliot Gardiner. The performance is the first in modern times to replicate exactly the number of players and the size of the venue experienced by the invited audience, on that historic day.

The drama is set against the revolutionary climate of the early 1800s, and Beethoven confounds his audience by producing a score, originally dedicated to Napoleon Bonaparte, which surpasses the old "classical" style of his contemporaries and introduces the new concept of a romantic style. Witnessing the première of one of the finest and most groundbreaking works produced by Beethoven (played by Ian Hart) is an audience that includes his patron, Prince Lobokowitz (Jack Davenport), Count Dietrichstein (Tim Piggott-Smith), Sukowaty the copyist (Anton Lesser) and the Brunsvik sisters (Claire Skinner and Lucy Akhurst).

