

Media Release



Chauvel classic returns to the big screen thanks to **NFSA Restores!**

The National Film and Sound Archive of Australia (NFSA) presents the premiere of its digital restoration of acclaimed director Charles Chauvel's 1949 film *Sons of Matthew*, on next Friday 17 March at Arc cinema.

Sons of Matthew is the latest title to be released from the exciting *NFSA Restores* program, which digitises, restores and preserves, at the highest archival standards, classic and cult films from Australia's cinema history.

NFSA Senior Curator for Film, Documents and Artefacts, Gayle Lake said: '*Sons of Matthew* was a huge production that faced many challenges, and found great success at the Australian box office.'

'We're proud to announce that this classic Charles Chauvel film has received the *NFSA Restores* digital treatment, and is ready to be discovered by new generations, 68 years after its initial release.'

This western, set over several generations, depicts the story of Australian pioneer life across the decades. Battling the elements and the land, the film is a charming and exciting story, holding up well 70 years after it was made.

The film has a legendary reputation in Australia's cinema history, partly due to its challenging production. From bad weather (including floods that stranded cast and crew in Queensland!) to long location shoots of up to five months (a previously unheard of length of time for Australian features), the film took 18 months to complete.

It was eventually released in December 1949 to great success in Australia, with some critics believing it to be Chauvel's best film.

NFSA Restores: *Sons of Matthew*

When: 7pm, Friday 17 March

Where: Arc Cinema

Tickets: \$14/\$12; [available online now](#).

Interviews available. Images and clips from the film are also available for media use. Please contact Jemma Pietrus, (02) 6248 2248 or Jemma.Pietrus@nfsa.gov.au

Son's of Matthew synopsis

By Paul Byrnes

Irishman Matthew O'Riordan (John O'Malley) and his English wife Jane (Thelma Scott) have carved a farm from fickle acres at Deep Creek, in northern New South Wales. They battle drought, flood and fire to raise five boys and two girls. When illness claims the life of a neighbouring woman, Jane takes in young Cathie McAllister.

The O'Riordan boys grow up to be strong and ambitious young men. The eldest, Shane (Michael Pate), decides to take the advice of his uncle, Jack (John Fegan), and move into the virgin country to the north, where there is good land for those who can clear it. Shane leads his brothers and the now grown-up Cathie McAllister (Wendy Gibb) on the arduous journey into the mountainous south-east Queensland rainforest.

More information can be found on the NFSA's website australian screen online:

<http://aso.gov.au/titles/features/sons-of-matthew/>