Entertainment
King Kong
Yvonne: Hello, I'm Yvonne Archer - and this is Entertainment. Now if you’re an animal lover, this week’s a good time to go to the cinema in London. You can choose from a documentary film about penguins, a family film about a loveable dog called Lassie – or a scary thriller about a giant gorilla and everyone’s queuing up to see him.

Film clip
You’re feeling uneasy, Ann. The feeling’s washing over you…. Scream Ann, scream for your life!

Yvonne: This thriller features King Kong who has the citizens of New York City running for their lives. But “King Kong” is about more than just thrills; he reveals who the true enemy of society may be at a particular time in history. Back in 1933 when King Kong was first seen in black and white, the villain that destroyed the peace was The Great Depression. That was a time when many people across the world suddenly became poor because the global economy collapsed.

Later on in the 1950s, King Kong became the star of a London musical in the 1950s - and when he returned to the screen in 1976 in colour, the villains were oil barons. So who are the villains in the 2005 version of “King Kong” – and is there anything odd about the film’s choice?

Nick James, Editor of “Sight and Sound” magazine
Peculiarly, it’s kind of the media really because the villain in King Kong is the film director – the film producer/director. And it’s a very cruel portrait of a film producer. He’s very definitely the villain of the peace.

Yvonne: That was Nick James, the Editor of “Sight and Sound” magazine who says that the media is the villain in the 2005 version of “King Kong”. Nick thinks that
this is ‘peculiar’ – strange or odd - and I’d have to agree because the film makes very good use of the media, that it criticizes, to get as many people as possible to watch it.

**Nick James, Editor of “Sight and Sound” magazine**

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**Yvonne:** Do you agree that newspapers, radio, television, advertising and other areas of the media are responsible for some of society’s problems? Why not discuss that in English after today’s programme?

As with the 1933 and 1976 versions of the film “King Kong”, the 2005 version includes some rather serious statements about society. But at a time when large cities like London may be attacked, is it possible to simply enjoy all the action, the special effects and the love story featured in “King Kong”? Let’s find out what Dr Jeff King, a lecturer in Film Studies at Brunnel University thinks…

**Dr Jeff King, Lecturer in Film Studies, Brunnel University**

There is a delight in seeing the Metropolis being assaulted by various kinds of beasts or natural disasters. We can kind of sit back and enjoy at a distance what seems a bit of a critique of the decadence of Western metropolitan society and that kind of thing.

**Yvonne:** In Dr King’s opinion, we can be delighted by a film that features a massive assault on a large city because we’re not really involved - we’re watching the attack from a distance and don’t have to take it too seriously. The film also offers a detailed explanation of the problems of society, for example, lowered morals – its ‘decadence’. But again, we’re watching it all from a distance…

**Dr Jeff King, Lecturer in Film Studies, Brunnel University**
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**Yvonne:** Nick James agrees and gives high praise to what is seen on film – as he puts it the way “King Kong” is ‘rendered’…

**Nick James, Editor of “Sight and Sound” magazine**
Particularly the depiction of the beast rampaging in New York is just fantastically rendered here. It’s one of the most exciting things you’ll see.

**Yvonne:** And King Kong certainly does ‘go on the rampage’! Why not listen out for that phrase after today’s programme? Even though King Kong causes major problems in New York, I have a feeling that by the end of the film, we’ll love the beast as much as the beauty he finds! That’s all from Entertainment - Goodbye!