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BFI National Archive

**Trailerama:**

**Understanding the BFI National Archive s1970s trailer collection.**

The BFI National Archive holds some 500 trailers for films made in the 1970s. Stored to professional archive standards, the collection nevertheless remains an undeveloped research resource. Once acquired, the majority of trailers remain dormant; their contents largely unknown, if easy to guess. As such, the trailer collection represents a potential goldmine for the academic study of British cinema marketing, censorship, distribution and exhibition strategies, from any given period.

As a study resource, however, the collection is idiosyncratic and contains surprising inclusions and disappointing omissions. It has developed through circumstance rather than policy and, as such, reflects the nuances of archival acquisition rather than the chronological history of the trailer. External factors, such as the elusive nationality of trailers and the negligence of various copyright owners to preserve their trailer material, have shaped a collection that is very international in breadth and one that contains distinct peaks and troughs according to acquisition history.

Starting with the 1970s - a decade bracketed with significant developments in film marketing, from the early Anglo-European co-productions to the later high-concept blockbusters - this paper will outline the research methods required to shape the varied trailer collection at the BFI National Archive into one which can assist academia in the study of film and its ephemera.