

“Amazing Grace” Opens This Weekend

The film tells the story of William Wilberforce, who not only led efforts to end the slave trade in Britain but also worked to establish the first animal welfare society.

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“Amazing Grace” profiles the life of anti-cruelty activist William Wilberforce. (Photo courtesy of Samuel Goldwyn Films) “Amazing Grace,” which opens this weekend in theaters, follows the political actions of William Wilberforce, who worked to abolish slavery and the British slave trade in the 18th century. Produced by Bristol Bay Productions and starring Ioan Gruffudd as Wilberforce, the film recounts Wilberforce’s 20-year struggle against the majority of the English Parliament to eventually pass the Foreign Slave Trade Act in 1807.

Wilberforce was a major figure in addressing animal cruelty, although “Amazing Grace” focuses on his fight against slavery. He participated in every Parliamentary debate on the topic and was involved in efforts to pass legislation, including the passage of Martin’s Act in 1822. This act made it a crime to inflict “cruel and improper treatment” on livestock, including horses, cows and sheep. Two years later, Wilberforce, Richard Martin and Fowell Buxton formed the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.

“Amazing Grace” also stars Albert Finney as John Newton and Michael Gambon as Lord Charles Fox, and introduces Youssou N’Dour as Olaudah Equiano. Directed by Michael Apted, the movie is distributed by Samuel Goldwyn Films.

For more information about “Amazing Grace,” visit the film’s website.