Cinema Unbound: The Creative Worlds of Powell and Pressburger
Film descriptions from the British Film Institute (BFI)

Rynox. 1931. UK. Directed by Michael Powell. With Stewart Rome, John Longden, Dorothy Boyd. 4K DCP courtesy BFI National Archive. US premiere. 48 min.
Saturday, June 22, 2:00, T1; Sunday, July 13, 1:30, T1

Rynox (1931) is the earliest surviving of Michael Powell's films and it benefits enormously from an interesting cast, stylish filming and an ingenious plot. The film was based on a novel by Philip MacDonald, one of the most popular thriller writers of his day (he published seven novels in 1931 alone). He and Powell eventually worked on five films together.

When first released, *Rynox* was greeted with extravagant praise by the British press. C.A. Lejeune in The Observer famously claimed that "Powell's *Rynox* shows what a good movie brain can do... this is the sort of pressure under which a real talent is shot red-hot into the world." John Grierson, writing a review in the *Everyman*, entitled "As Good as Hollywood", boldly stated that "there never was an English film so well made."

Powell's direction already shows his characteristic energy and visual imagination, as well as his debt to the German Expressionist cinema of the 1920s. *Rynox* is full of quick cuts, tracking shots, unusual angles as well as montages, all of which help effectively to draw attention away from Benedik's disguise as Marsh as well as the film's small budget (it all takes place on only six main sets, with few location shots added). Although nowadays one of the film's principal delights is seeing radio announcer Leslie Mitchell in an acting role, the film also boasts an excellent performance by Stewart Rome who totally convinces in the dual roles of Benedik and Marsh.
—Sergio Angelini

***Hotel Splendide*.** 1933. UK. Directed by Michael Powell. Screenplay by Ralph Smart, based on the story by Philip Macdonald. With Jerry Verno, Antony Holles, Edgar Norfolk. 4K DCP courtesy BFI National Archive. US premiere. 53 min.
Sunday, June 23, 2:00, T1; Monday, July 15, 4:30, T1

In *Hotel Splendide*, Jerry Verno plays a character dear to the filmmakers and audiences of the quota/depression years: an impoverished go-getter trying to improve his station in life. Before entering films, Michael Powell (like the Verno character) had worked in a boring desk job, and went on to live and work with his father, who owned a hotel, the Voile d'Or at Cap Ferrat, near Monte Carlo.

One can't help but sympathise with Verno's disappointment when he first lays eyes on the Hotel Splendide, and with the filmmakers too. The makers of this "quota quickie" wanted to make real films, not simply enough celluloid to satisfy the legal requirements of the Quota Act. In this sense the hotel, and Verno's enthusiastic attempts to help revitalise and refurbish it in order to attract as many customers as possible, echo the enthusiasm and ambition of its young director. Powell even appears in a small role as "Marconi", one of the gang of thieves.

The script is often over complicated, with writer Philip MacDonald taking his characteristic interest in disguises and false identities to bewildering extremes. It can be seen in Powell's *Rynox* (1931), in which

the whole plot depends on a disguise, and reached its zenith in *The List of Adrian Messenger* (US, d. John Huston, 1963), with all the guest stars unrecognisable under heavy make-up. Practically every character in *Splendide* is not what they seem (even Verno is seen pretending to be his own boss at the beginning of the film). In addition, an almost camp quality is introduced, with the lead villain, named “Pussy” Saunders for his trademark cat, spending practically the entire film in drag.

The film has a number of nice visual touches, especially in the last part, which is very atmospherically filmed, with an effective use of high angle shots and low-key lighting. This section also features Gounod’s “Funeral March of the Marionettes”, best known today as the theme tune of the American TV series *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*.
—Sergio Angelini

***Riviera Revels Travelaugh No 9: Cold Feats* (original)**. 1927. France/USA. Directed by Harry Lachman. With Michael Powell. 4K DCP courtesy BFI National Archive. Silent. US premiere. 8 min.
His Lordship. 1932. UK. Directed by Michael Powell. Screenplay by Ralph Smart, based on the novel *The Right Honorable* by Oliver Madox Hueffer. With Jerry Verno, Janet McGrew, Polly Ward. 4K DCP courtesy BFI National Archive. US premiere. 74 min.
Monday, June 24, 7:00, T1; Monday, July 15, 7:00, T1

One of Michael Powell’s early “quota quickies” (he made seven in 1932 alone), *His Lordship* is a light and frothy musical comedy that intriguingly anticipates many of Powell’s far greater films. The way the musical numbers are integrated organically into the action anticipates *The Tales of Hoffmann* (1951) and *Oh…Rosalinda!!* (1955), its portrait of the complexities of the English class system as seen through the eyes of foreigners would later find more eloquent expression in *The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp* (1943), and there’s even an alarming hint of *Peeping Tom* (1960) in a close-up of an abandoned photograph of film star Ilya Myona being speared by a park-keeper’s stick.

However, audiences of the time were oblivious to this, and the film’s critical and commercial reception was very poor. *Kinematograph Weekly* complained that it was too ambitious for its own good, saying that “This effort, which starts off as a musical comedy, drifts into burlesque, then finishes up in a rich satirical vein, is neither flesh, fowl, or good red herring.” This is hard to deny, but it also shows that Powell’s ambitions were racing ahead of his budgets even at this very early stage.

The premise promises much: Cockney plumber Bert Gibbs inherits a peerage from his father, which complicates his relationship with his avowedly communist fiancée Leninia, after two trouble-making Bolsheviks (nicknamed “Comrade Curzon” and “Comrade Howard” to disguise foreign origins) spill the beans. But in the meantime, Bert has been embroiled in a scheme concocted by overbearing American publicity agent Washington Lincoln that involves him marrying and divorcing a Russian-born film star in order to raise her profile and give him some much-needed cash.

But in practice, most performances tend towards broad caricature, and only Jerry Verno (in his fourth film for Powell) is particularly convincing as the hapless Bert. In fact, despite budgetary limitations, Powell does better with musical numbers, with their choreographed secretaries, photographers, Beefeaters and ermine-clad peers. The camera is impressively mobile for an early sound film, though this may have been for reasons of efficiency, in order to minimise the need for multiple camera set-ups.

Following its commercial failure, *His Lordship* vanished for six decades and was long believed lost (as many of Powell's "quota quickies" still are). However, following the BFI's "Missing Believed Lost" campaign, a print was discovered in a private collection and screened at the 1997 London Film Festival.
—Michael Brooke

Riviera Revels Travelaugh No 10: Fauny Business. 1927. France/USA. Directed by Harry Lachman. With Michael Powell. 4K DCP courtesy BFI National Archive. US premiere. Silent. 9 min.
The Fire Raisers. 1932. UK. Directed by Michael Powell. Screenplay by Jerome Jackson. With Leslie Banks, Anne Grey, Carol Goodner. 4K DCP courtesy BFI National Archive. US premiere. 74 min.
Tuesday, June 25, 4:30, T1; Tuesday, July 16, 7:00, T1

The Fire Raisers was the first production in a four-picture deal between Michael Powell and his writing partner Jerome Jackson and Michael Balcon's Gaumont-British studio. Gaumont-British was then one of the two biggest companies in the British film industry (alongside British International Pictures), so this was a considerable step up for Powell and Jackson.

The film cost around £12,000 to produce, a bargain even in those days, and featured West End stage star Leslie Banks in the lead role. "It was the first time that I had worked with a great actor", Powell later wrote. "He was an actor's actor. He had speed and he created magic." Banks appeared in three further Powell films, including Powell's early favourite, *Red Ensign* (1935).

Described by Powell as "a sort of Warner Brothers Newspaper Headline Story" and based on a contemporary scandal about Leopold Harris an insurance assessor convicted of arson, *The Fire Raisers* is a mixed success. The narrative moves at great speed, and Banks' performance is restrained and elegant. But the direction is often crude and lacks the subtlety and genuine insights of Powell's later work.

Two scenes do stand out, however. In the first, Bronton's assistant Bates (Henry Caine) is tied up and interrogated by Stedding (a chilling Francis L Sullivan) and his men, who suspect him of double-crossing them. We don't see Bates being beaten. Instead, Powell cuts from Bates to the faces of each of the interrogators. As the camera gets closer and closer to the men's faces, the editing gets faster, until holding on an extreme close-up of Bates' face, at which point he faints.

In the most atmospheric scene, Bronton (Banks) returns to his office looking for Bates. The office has been wrecked. As Bronton takes this in, he hears a faint tapping sound. Bronton looks around, and sees a window blind cord tapping against the glass. He pauses and realises that there is another noise, coming from inside the large wall safe. He opens it to find Bates inside, bruised and near death. The scene, played without music, convincingly underscores an air of brutality.
—Ann Ogidi (with thanks to Sergio Angelini)

Red Ensign. 1934. UK. Directed by Michael Powell. Screenplay by Powell, Jerome Jackson. With Leslie Banks, Carol Goodner, Frank Vosper. 4K DCP courtesy BFI National Archive. US premiere. 66 min.
Friday, June 28, 4:30, T1; Friday, July 19, 7:00, T1

In his twelfth film in four years, Michael Powell directed his own story of an ambitious shipbuilder, David Barr (Leslie Banks), and his attempt to turn around the fortunes of the British shipping industry during the depression of the 1930s. Visionary and uncompromising—and not afraid to break the rules—Barr

can be seen as the first of a number of Powell's screen alter-egos, who would include Eric Portman's Colpeper in *A Canterbury Tale* (1944) and Roger Livesey's Dr Reeves in *A Matter of Life and Death* (1946), and culminate in his own appearance in *Peeping Tom* (1960). Like Colpeper, Barr is a morally complex hero, who is prepared to commit fraud in order to overcome the opposition of his narrow-minded colleagues.

With a campaigning tone which would become familiar in his wartime dramas such as *49th Parallel* (1941) and *One of Our Aircraft Is Missing* (1942), *Red Ensign* (1934) was one of the director's favourites of his early works. The film's attitude to labour relations—a trade union activist is exposed as a plant representing an unscrupulous rival, and the workers are expected to go without pay for the good of the company—adds some weight to critic Raymond Durgnat's claim that Powell represented "high Tory" values. At the same time, the film draws on the work of the Soviet master Sergei Eisenstein in its romanticism of industry.

Made for Gaumont-British as a "quota quickie", the film has been read as a plea for intervention to develop the British film industry, as well as a kind of manifesto for Powell's kind of cinema, challenging the emerging documentary movement—the film even includes a character called Grierson, in a nod to John Grierson, one of the most prominent British documentarists. As Powell himself put it, "It was the first time that Michael Powell himself realised that there was something special about a Michael Powell film, something going on on the screen, or behind the screen, which you couldn't put your finger on, something intriguing, aloof, but in the long run memorable."
—Mark Duguid

Something Always Happens. 1934. UK. Directed by Michael Powell. Screenplay by Brock Williams. With Ian Hunter, Nancy O'Neil, John Singer, Peter Gawthorne, Muriel George. 4K DCP courtesy BFI National Archive. US premiere. 66 min.
Thursday, June 27, 4:30, T1; Thursday, July 18, 7:00, T1

Something Always Happens, a comedy where authority figures get taken down a peg or two while the poor get rich quick, neatly encompasses many of the recurring themes of Depression-era cinema in 1930s Britain. In fact most of the 23 low budget films Michael Powell directed between 1931 and 1936 focus on money and class in some way. A third element, which obliquely combines the two, is hypergamy, marriage to a person of a class higher than one's own, which appears in *Night of the Party* (1934) and *Her Last Affaire* (1935), but is nicely reversed in *Something Always Happens*.

The film tries to have its cake and eat it, its amiable but lackadaisical hero (Ian Hunter), blissfully unconcerned by his lack of money or prospects, eventually still becoming hugely rich. His seemingly imperturbable character prefigures the one Hunter would play in *Lazybones* (1935), where once again he has to prove himself by getting a steady job and making a success of it. This foregrounds the aspirational tendencies of most moviegoers of the time, showing that even those without money can become a success through perseverance and ingenuity.

The nexus between high and low society had already been ingeniously explored by Powell in *Rynox* (1931), in which the rich Benedik and the working-class ruffian Marsh aren't just two sides of the same coin, but actually turn out to be the same person, part of a complicated scheme to save Benedik's ailing company. Brock Williams' tightly structured screenplay for *Something Always Happens* goes out of its way to draw parallels between rich and poor, young and old, as dialogue and actions are repeated or

developed in adjacent scenes, constantly juxtaposing contrasting situations and characters to draw out the links that tie them together. This is emphasised in the early scene in which the destitute hero pretends to be rich while the fabulously wealthy girl he's just met lets him believe she is a poor shop girl.

This slick, fast moving comedy makes good use of its location filming (especially the market scene) and offers, despite a rather insipid leading lady, a variety of incidental pleasures, such as casting George Zucco (shortly before he decamped for Hollywood) as an Italian restaurant owner. Powell himself remembered it affectionately: "We played it all out for laughs; great speed, excellent dialogue and it was about a chap who never paid for anything".
—Sergio Angelini

Lazybones. 1935. UK. Directed by Michael Powell. Screenplay by Gerard Fairlie. With Ian Hunter, Claire Luce, Claire Luce, Bernard Nedell, Denys Blakelock. 4K DCP courtesy BFI National Archive. US premiere. 66 min.
Tuesday, July 2, 4:30, T1; Thursday, July 18, 4:30, T1

Lazybones, a typical depression-era comedy of impoverished aristocracy, was widely dismissed when first released. The *Monthly Film Bulletin* complained that "such an incredible story needs more pace and a lighter touch all round", while *Kine Weekly* wittily commented that "the producer makes the common mistake of thinking that an Englishman's home is a castle." Michael Powell wasn't even credited as the director by Picturegoer, which instead mistakenly gave the honour to Julius Hagen, the film's producer. More recent assessments have not been much kinder. Jeffrey Richards damningly called it "just the sort of film that got the British cinema a bad name", while Raymond Durgnat called it the "runt of the litter", pointing out that it "abounds in continuity bloopers".

Looking at *Lazybones* today, it is worth noting that Powell had to shoot most of the film in 13 nights: common practice at Hagen's studio, which operated 24 hours a day. The schedule was necessitated by the fact that the film's two stars, Ian Hunter and Claire Luce, were appearing in West End plays at the same time.

There is some gold to be mined in this occasionally amiable comedy however, such as Powell's long and ambitious tracking shot that crosses a courtyard and then moves through two separate rooms before reaching its destination; a hilarious cameo by Miles Malleson, in which he is a witness to a wedding, all the time trying to talk the couple out of it; and, for today's audiences, there is the amusing line, "it's about time there was a channel tunnel!"

The film's generally stage-bound nature does, unfortunately, weaken the comic potential of its outrageous conclusion—in which Hunter turns his palatial abode into a recreation home for the wealthy by giving them servile jobs—which mostly occurs offstage and is otherwise dealt with extremely cursorily. In its dottily Marxist presentation of the rich and powerful succumbing to a fantasy of poverty and lowly disenfranchisement, it anticipates the Hollywood classic *My Man Godfrey* (US, 1936) and even such grisly modern-day TV spectacles as *I'm a Celebrity, Get Me Out of Here* (ITV, 2002–).
—Sergio Angelini

The Love Test. 1935. UK. Directed by Michael Powell. Screenplay by Selwyn Jepson. Judy Gunn, Louis Hayward, Googie Withers, Dave Hutcheson, Bernard Miles. 4K DCP courtesy BFI National Archive. US premiere. 64 min.
Monday, July 1, 4:30, T1; Tuesday, July 16, 4:30, T1

Michael Powell sometimes used the very circumstances of the cinema in which he worked for story material. In *The Red Ensign* (1934) for instance, the quota act is the basis for a plot about a shipbuilder determined to stop the beleaguered British shipping industry being run down by ships flying under foreign flags. *The Love Test* (1935) instead revolves around attempts to render celluloid less flammable, the highly combustible properties of nitrate film stock being one of the reasons why so many movies from the period have vanished.

What is impressive about *The Love Test* is not so much the hackneyed story (at a research lab, boy meets girl, boy loses girl, boy gets girl), but rather its sexual subtext and frequently stylish presentation. Powell's visual grace notes (with credit also due to cinematographer Arthur Crabtree) include a complicated opening tracking shot (over a minute long) that snakes all around the central research lab; "framing" the lovers (in a taxi, in the corner of a restaurant, or through a gap in the laboratory equipment) to create more intimate romantic scenes; and giving the climax a small stylistic fillip by having the hero's voice, when suddenly heard in the office through a heating shaft, matched visually by a series of quickly edited shots of the grille to heighten the impact of the scene.

This is the earliest of Powell's films to point to the sensuousness and sexuality which later became so prominent in his work. While using incendiary nitrate dolls for transitions in the stages of the couple's love affair is plain enough, a real surprise is the subtle but clear suggestion of lesbianism in the character of Mary's neighbour, who "feminises" her with new clothes, make-up and hair-do and is then permanently excluded when Hayward arrives. This is contrasted amusingly with scenes in which Googie Withers gives Hayward kissing "lessons", in a role that *Variety* magazine, in its inimitable style, described as "a gum-chewing secretary-vamp who crank-starts Hayward's engine".

These elements reveal the enthusiasm, vigour and humour that mark many of Powell's surviving quota features. In the movie, Hayward finds a commercially viable solution to making nitrate film less flammable; sadly, the film industry itself wasn't able to do so until 1951. *The Love Test*, a film long thought lost, was, fortunately, restored and re-presented at the London Film Festival in 1990.
—Sergio Angelini

The Night of the Party. 1934. UK. Directed by Michael Powell. Screenplay by Ralph Smart. With Leslie Banks, Ian Hunter, Ernest Thesiger. 4K DCP courtesy BFI National Archive. US premiere. 63 min.
Wednesday, June 26, 4:30, T1; Wednesday, July 17 7:00, T1

Cavalcanti and Ernst Lindgren's survey of realism and documentary, *Film and Reality* (1942), uses *Love from a Stranger* (d. Rowland V. Lee, 1937) as an example of films which are overburdened with dialogue, lacking in "realism" and acted and directed in a heavily theatrical manner. In truth, they could have picked many of the dozens of stage adaptations that proliferated in 1930s British cinema. It is certainly true for critics of Michael Powell's *The Night of the Party*, unquestionably the least distinguished of the quartet of films he made at Gaumont-British.

The first of these to be released was *The Fire Raisers* (1933), but *Night of the Party* was actually started first. According to Powell, its release was delayed because it was under-length, and so he shot three days of extra scenes after completing *Fire Raisers*. Based on a play with the prototypical title *Murder Party* (which was used for the American release instead), this is a whodunit in which a party game turns fatal after the lights go out. Needless to say, all of the guests have good reasons for hating the victim.

Almost completely studio-bound, the majority of the action is confined to only six sets. To offset this, Powell and cinematographer Glen MacWilliams use many compositions privileging mirrors in an effort to make the dialogue scenes more visually varied and dynamic. The crucial party sequence is well-staged and fluidly filmed and the scenes set in darkness for the game are atmospherically photographed. Powell later called it "a bad film from a bad script, from a very poor play and not very successful". It does, however, feature a gleefully impish performance by Ernest Thesiger, who gets all the best dialogue (asked to turn a noisy record off, he bemoans that "these dance tunes want louder needles if one is to taste real misery"). The film also represented several important "firsts" for Powell: the first of four films Leslie Banks made for him and the first of five with Ian Hunter. Most importantly, though, it was here that he had his first contact with art director Alfred Junge, later a crucial member of his Archers team.
—Sergio Angelini

***The Phantom Light*.** 1935. UK. Directed by Michael Powell. With Binnie Hale, Gordon Harker, Donald Calthrop, Milton Rosmer, Ian Hunter. 4K DCP courtesy BFI National Archive. US premiere. 76 min.
Saturday, June 29, 2:00, T1; Monday, July 29, 7:00, T1

Michael Powell's last film in his contract for Gaumont-British/Gainsborough was a fascinating taste of things to come from the young director. *The Phantom Light* (1935) was a comic thriller adapted from the stage play The Haunted Light by Evadne Price and Joan Roy Byford.

It seemed the perfect project to Powell, who later admitted, "I am a sucker for lighthouses. The lonelier and inaccessible, the better. And I love comedy-thrillers. I said 'yes' to this one right away, and never regretted it. I enjoyed every minute. The less said about the plot the better."

It's true that the film was interesting less for its slim plot—which, though entertaining enough, could almost pass for an episode of *Scooby Doo*—than for its effective use of location and atmosphere. Particularly impressive are the night sequences of the lighthouse and bay, and an evocative opening sequence which suggested that Powell had been paying attention to the Universal horror films of the period (e.g., *Dracula*, US, 1931; *Frankenstein*, US, 1933). The effective editing—notably in the sequence in which a ship narrowly escapes disaster on the rocks—also hints at greatness to come, but the film is far from a masterpiece.

Gordon Harker, a favourite of British audiences in the '20s and '30s thanks to his versatile comic skills, is good value as the no-nonsense lighthouse keeper, and Ian Hunter is suitably heroic, if a bit stiff, as a naval officer (a role that Powell had hoped to offer to the inexperienced Roger Livesey, but was overruled by studio head Michael Balcon), while there is a likeable performance from Donald Calthrop as a dour coastguard official. All three actors had been Hitchcock regulars.
—Mark Duguid

Her Last Affaire. 1936. UK. Directed by Michael Powell. Screenplay by Ian Dalrymple. With Hugh Williams, Viola Keats, John Laurie, Googie Withers. 4K DCP courtesy BFI National Archive. US premiere. 68 min.
Wednesday, July 3, 4:30, T1; Monday, July 22, 7:00, T1

In *Her Last Affaire*, Hugh Williams plays the secretary to a powerful man whose daughter he plans to marry, against the father's wishes, and who then gets mixed up in a mysterious death. Although recalling Ian Hunter's predicament in Powell's *The Night of the Party* (1934), the film was actually based on the play *S.O.S.*, produced by Gerald Du Maurier, which had not only provided Gracie Fields with one of her first dramatic roles in 1928, but had already been filmed under that title later the same year.

Williams' character is more interesting than Hunter's, however, because it is treated rather more ambiguously; for the first twenty minutes or so we believe he really is having an affair with his employer's wife (Viola Keats, in the role originally played by Gracie Fields). These scenes are played with surprising directness by Williams and Keats, and it is almost disappointing when we discover that he actually has an ulterior, altogether nobler, motive.

When Keats and Williams meet for their weekend in the country, the film is at its best, with strong support from John Laurie, as the innkeeper, and Googie Withers. She provides the comic relief, constantly at odds with the stern, moralising innkeeper who threatens to dismiss her, but who is really jealous of her popularity with the customers. She ends up being Williams' main ally, covering up for him when he is recalled to the inn after Lady Avril's death. The sequence is at once comical and suspenseful in the best Hitchcock manner, as Williams tries to hide from Laurie so as not to be implicated.

Leslie Rowson's cinematography contains a number of intriguing visual flourishes, such as when Williams awaits the phone call to hear of Avril's death, the tension nicely evoked by shooting with strong horizontal shadows all over the room, contrasting with the light and airy settings that have dominated before. Rowson also gets the most from the low wooden beams and strangely curving staircases of the inn and its bedroom which, all wooden paneling and furniture and dominated by a large four-poster bed, is strikingly similar to the sets and atmosphere of the pub in *A Canterbury Tale* (d. Powell and Pressburger, 1944).

Long thought lost, the film has been available again since the late 1980s, affording new audiences the chance to assess the most prestigious film Powell had directed up to that time.
—Sergio Angelini

Crown v. Stevens. 1936. UK. Directed by Michael Powell. Screenplay by Brock Williams. With Beatrix Thomson, Patric Knowles, Glennis Lorimer, Reginald Purdell, Googie Withers. 4K DCP courtesy BFI National Archive. US premiere. 65 min.
Thursday, July 4, 4:00, T1, Monday, July 22, 4:30, T1

Crown v. Stevens was made by Michael Powell with an eye firmly set on the light at the end of the tunnel. In fact, Crown proved to be his penultimate "quota" film and the last of these that survives intact. His following assignment, *The Man Behind the Mask* (which does exist, but in a much truncated form with a private collector) was released only three weeks after *Crown*, and it importantly served as an introduction to producer Joe Rock, who would fund Powell's first truly "personal" project, *The Edge of the World* (1937).

Crown v. Stevens was one of five Powell films made for producer Irving Asher at Warner Brothers' Teddington studios, and is a crime melodrama that, had it been made a few years later, would probably have been labeled a film noir. Based on a recent novel by the popular and extremely prolific novelist Laurence Meynell (it had been published only a few months before production began), it tells the story of a naïve young man who becomes involved in the machinations of a murderous and ultimately unrepentant femme fatale, played with strength and conviction by Beatrix Thompson, a theatre actress in her only starring role for the cinema.

The rich cinematography is by Basil Emmott and the screenplay is a typically polished effort by Brock Williams; both also worked in the same capacities on three earlier films Powell had made for Asher: *Something Always Happens* (1933), and two currently "lost" films, *The Girl in the Crowd* (1934) and *Someday* (1935). *The Girl in the Crowd* gave Googie Withers her first film role, and she turns up again in Crown, having great fun in a comic role as a breathless party girl with a lust for money, cigarettes and alcohol. The role of the "good" woman is taken by the perky Glennis Lorrimer, who is rather charming in one of her last roles as Patric Knowles' interior decorator girlfriend; Lorrimer is probably best remembered today as the Lady in the Gainsborough Studios' opening logo. Although admittedly lightweight, in its ambiguous tone and suggestive cinematography, Crown recalls Powell's superior *Her Last Affaire* (1935) and, with the latter, is notable as one of the few comparatively 'dark' films he made in this period.
—Sergio Angelini

The Man Behind the Mask**.** 1936. UK. Directed by Michael Powell. With Hugh Williams, Jane Baxter, Ronald Ward. 4K courtesy BFI National Archive. US premiere. 55 min.
Friday, July 5, 4:30, T1; Tuesday, July 23, 7:00, T1

Crucial for being the film that introduced Powell to *The Edge of the World* producer Joe Rock, Powell's final quota film was this bizarre thriller of masked balls, kidnapping and master criminals. It was long considered lost and listed on the BFI's "Most Wanted" list, but a 16mm print of a truncated version survived at the George Eastman Museum, and it is from that print that this new scan was taken.
—James Bell

The Edge of the World. 1937. UK. Written and directed by Michael Powell. With John Laurie, Belle Chrystall, Finlay Currie. DCP courtesy Milestone Films. 75 min.
Return to the Edge of the World. 1978. Great Britain. Directed by Michael Powell. DCP courtesy BFI. 23 min.
Monday, July 8, 7:00, T1; Tuesday, July 23, 4:30, T1

Having made two dozen low budget pot-boilers over the preceding five years, Michael Powell finally got the chance to make his first really personal film with the ambitious drama *The Edge of the World* (1937). Powell based his script on the true story of the evacuation of 36 people from St. Kilda, an island ten miles off the west coast of Scotland, on 29 August 1930. The film was made over four months during the summer of 1936 on the island of Foula, in the Shetland Isles. Permission was denied to film on St. Kilda, which is in the Hebrides, and where they actually speak Gaelic, while on Foula they speak Norse. Powell was adamant that local people be in the film, and that it all be shot on location (which, except for some

pick-up shots back at the studio, turned out to be the case). Powell himself told the story of the filming in his first book, *200,000 Feet on Foula*.

The mixture of documentary and drama, location footage and studio filming is occasionally awkward, as is the mixture of professional and non-professional actors. However, despite its simple and rather melodramatic story, *The Edge of the World* still stands up today, particularly for its stunning location cinematography, as well as the film's opening scenes in which we see various ghostly apparitions on the now deserted island. Also notable is John Laurie's brooding, yet sympathetic performance as Peter Manson, the film's most complex role, one which is shown to be inextricably linked with the fate of the island itself. Powell's script and direction also give the first real indication of the love of nature and his mystical use of landscape to shape and comment upon human stories, which would be developed further in his celebrated collaborations with Emeric Pressburger.

In 1978 Powell and members of the cast and crew revisited Foula for a BBC documentary, *Return to the Edge of the World*.
—Sergio Angelini

The Spy in Black. 1939. UK. Directed by Michael Powell. Screenplay by Emeric Pressburger. With Conrad Veidt, Valerie Hobson, Sebastian Shaw. 35mm courtesy BFI. 83 min.
Saturday, June 29, 4:00, T1; Wednesday, July 24, 4:30, T1

For his first project at Alexander Korda's London Films, Michael Powell was introduced to young Hungarian screenwriter Emeric Pressburger for this World War I drama. The pairing was a propitious one—*The Spy in Black* was a hit both here and in the US (under the name *U-Boat 29*), and one of the most successful partnerships in British cinema was born.

Released on the eve of World War II in August 1939, *The Spy in Black* makes an interesting contrast with the later *49th Parallel* (1941), made as an unambiguous propaganda film. Although both feature a U-boat commander as a villain, Captain Hardt (Conrad Veidt) is a very different character to his counterpart in *49th Parallel*, Lieut. Hirth (Eric Portman). The film goes to some lengths to humanise him in the early part of the film, showing his easy friendship with his colleague Schuster (Marius Goring), and he is altogether a more honourable German.

Filmed in the Orkneys, *The Spy in Black* marked Powell's second visit to the Scottish islands, following his breakthrough film *The Edge of the World* (1937). He was already completely in love with their bleak beauty, and he was back again a few years later to film *I Know Where I'm Going!* (1945).

By now, Powell was almost a veteran—*Spy* was his 26th film as director—but this was his first major project, and the light touch and confidence he displayed is surprising. Notably, the minor characters are rounded, believable and treated with respect, quite different from the crude caricatures common in British films of the period, and a step forward from the more stereotyped Welsh villagers in Powell's earlier *The Phantom Light* (1935).

In one particularly impressive sequence, in which Hardt makes his way past patrolling guards to establish contact with the "schoolmistress" who he believes to be his ally, Powell showed a rare ability to blend humour and suspense, a gift most commonly associated with Hitchcock, whose position as undisputed master of British cinema was now vacant following his departure for Hollywood.

The starstruck Powell and Pressburger were thrilled to be working with a hero of the German cinema, Conrad Veidt, star of the expressionist classic *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1919). A strong cast also included Valerie Hobson, June Duprez and Marius Goring; all would work with Powell again.
—Mark Duguid

Smith. 1939. UK. Directed by Michael Powell. 35mm courtesy BFI. 10 min.
Long thought lost, this Powell-directed promotional short for a veterans' charity was only rediscovered in 2003.
The Lion Has Wings. 1939. UK. Directed by Adrian Brunel, Brian Desmond Hurst, Michael Powell. With Merle Oberson, Ralph Richardson. 35mm courtesy Park Circus. 76 min.
Sunday, June 30, 2:00, T1; Wednesday, July 24, 7:00, T1

Contraband (Blackout). 1940. UK. Directed by Michael Powell. Screenplay by Emeric Pressburger. With Conrad Veidt, Valerie Hobson, Hay Petrie. 35mm courtesy BFI National Archive. In English and Danish; English subtitles. 92 min.
Monday, June 24, 4:30, T1; Saturday, July 20, 1:30, T1

Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger's second collaboration neatly captures the darkness and disorientation (both literal and metaphorical) of London during the early stages of the war, while also explaining the importance and working methods of the British contraband controls. Although made as a propaganda piece with the support of the Ministry of Information, *Contraband* never sacrifices storytelling to dry and instructional factual detail.

Instead, the film falls more obviously into the genre of the comedy spy-thriller, of which Alfred Hitchcock's *The 39 Steps* (1935) and *The Lady Vanishes* (1938) are prime examples. The attraction between the stubborn but charming Captain Andersen (Conrad Veidt) and the feisty Mrs. Sorensen (Valerie Hobson) is sophisticatedly handled as the pair fall into various tricky situations throughout the course of the film. Touches such as Hobson's cigarettes, which carry a coded message, and the "Patriotic Plaster Products" busts of Chamberlain ("They always said he was tough," comments Veidt as he uses one to knock out the German spy) all add a sense of playfulness despite the film's serious purpose.

Although the distinctive joint credit, "Written, Produced and Directed by Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger", was yet to be created (this would happen with 1943's *The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp*), *Contraband* features several members of the Archers production team that Powell and Pressburger would form in 1942. John Seabourne would edit four more Powell and Pressburger pictures before the end of the war, and production designer Alfred Jünge relished the opportunity to create dazzling cabaret club sets on a fraction of the budget he was given for E. A. Dupont's classic silent films *Moulin Rouge* (1928) and *Piccadilly* (1929). Actors Esmond Knight, Raymond Lovell and Hay Petrie provide sturdy and memorable support and would all go on to work with Powell and Pressburger again.

Contraband also sees a reprisal of the sparkling chemistry between Conrad Veidt and Valerie Hobson, following their successful pairing in 1939's *The Spy in Black*. In both films, Pressburger created roles for Veidt that allowed him to escape the stereotyping that often plagued German actors in British films, particularly during this period. Veidt was grateful for the opportunity to move away from the image of

the dour and menacing German, and is as appealing as *Contraband*'s Danish captain as he was as an honourable U-boat commander in *The Spy in Black*.
—Nathalie Morris

The Thief of Bagdad. 1940. UK. Directed by Ludwig Berger, Michael Powell, Tim Whelan. Screenplay by Miles Malleson, Lajos Bíró. With Conrad Veidt, Sabu, June Duprez, John Justin. 35mm courtesy BFI National Archive. 106 min.
Friday, July 5, 7:00, T1; Friday, July 26, 7:00, T1

Producer Alexander Korda originally assigned this Arabian Nights–style adventure—which had been a hit in its 1924 Hollywood version starring Douglas Fairbanks Sr.—to the German director Ludwig Berger, but brought in Michael Powell when he was unhappy with Berger's vision for the film. When Berger refused to resign, Korda, in the most extreme example of his interfering tendencies, insisted on co-directing all of Berger's scenes, to the confusion of cast and crew and the disgust of Berger himself, who finally walked off the film. Korda strongly disapproved of Berger's style which, with its concentration on actors at the expense of the lavish sets, was almost the exact opposite to Korda's own approach as a director.

In the end, no fewer than six directors were involved in the picture. Powell handled many of the most spectacular sequences, including the celebrated scene in which the djinni (Rex Ingram) is released from the bottle. American Tim Whelan shot the battle scenes, and Berger was left with a few love scenes, most or all of which were later re-shot by Korda himself. When the production moved to America after the start of the war, Zoltan Korda and William Cameron Menzies shot additional footage there.

Despite its troubled production, *The Thief of Bagdad* was a great success when it was released in December 1940, its colourful fantasy offering audiences a welcome escape from the grim daily reality of war, at a time when both colour film stock and genuine fantasy were a rarity in Britain. As well as the spectacular effects, for which Laurence Butler won one of the film's three Academy Awards (the others were for cinematography and art direction), the film featured spirited performances, particularly from Sabu, already a star thanks to Korda's *The Elephant Boy* (d. Robert Flaherty/Zoltan Korda, 1937) and *The Drum* (d. Zoltan Korda, 1938) and the German star Conrad Veidt, whose sojourn in Britain had already included appearances in Powell and Pressburger's *The Spy in Black* (1939) and *Contraband* (1940).
—Mark Duguid

An Airman's Letter to His Mother. 1941. UK. Directed by Michael Powell. 35mm courtesy Milestone Films. 5 min.
A poignant, stirring letter from a recently deceased pilot to his mother is read by John Gielgud.
One of Our Aircraft Is Missing. 1942. UK. The Archers. British National. Screenplay by Emeric Pressburger. With Godfrey Tearle.
Tuesday, June 25, 7:00, T1; Saturday, July 13, 7:00, T1

Made quickly and relatively cheaply (for £700,000) at the height of the war, *One of Our Aircraft Is Missing* was one of Powell and Pressburger's early successes both critically and financially. Although the script is a little shapeless and the story tends to wander from one episode to another, the direction is taut and scenes are well handled by Powell. On the strength of its box-office, Powell and Pressburger were offered an unprecedented film-by-film deal with J. Arthur Rank, allowing them to choose their own projects.

Aircraft was one of the first major film roles for Googie Withers—who had previously appeared in four Powell "quota quickies"—as the Dutch resistance leader who comes to the airmen's aid, and whose mixture of charm and determination baffles them. The character provides further evidence of the way the war was beginning to change society and the role of women, as does a similarly strong role for Pamela Brown. Both actresses attracted the attention of critic C.A. Lejeune in the *Observer*.

The gripping story of the airmen also impressed the *New Statesman*. Particularly striking is the opening sequence, in which Powell shoots each airman in close-up, creating intimacy and giving the audience a sense of the bomber's cramped conditions and the dangers its crew face. The low position of the camera, looking admiringly up at the airmen, reinforces their heroism.

For the flying scenes, art director David Rawnsley covered the entire studio floor with a model of Stuttgart in miniature; cameraman Freddy Ford completed the aerial camera shots by lying flat on his stomach for ten hours a day high in the roof of the studio. The painstaking work paid off: the viewer feels the terrifying danger the airmen confront as they fly over enemy lines under fire from anti-aircraft guns.

The creation of such imaginary worlds was to become a hallmark of Powell and Pressburger's films. *Aircraft* signalled the end of the first phase of their partnership; with the freedom its success brought them, their work together now took an increasingly ambitious direction.
—Nigel Arthur

49th Parallel (The Invaders). 1941. UK. Directed by Michael Powell. Screenplay by Emeric Pressburger, Rodney Ackland. With Eric Portman, Laurence Olivier, Anton Walbrook, Leslie Howard. 35mm courtesy Park Circus. In English, French, German; English subtitles. 123 min.
Saturday, June 22, 7:00, T1; Friday, July 12, 7:00, T1

For their third collaboration, Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger were engaged by the Ministry of Information to make a propaganda film. *49th Parallel* (1941; *The Invaders* in the US), was a concerted attempt to influence opinion in neutral America into supporting their government's entry into the war.

Pressburger proved an enthusiastic propagandist. As he later said, "Goebbels considered himself an expert on propaganda, but I thought I'd show him a thing or two." This is despite the fact that Pressburger's own status in Britain at the time was as an "enemy alien". On returning from Canada he found himself imprisoned and threatened with deportation, until Powell and the MOI intervened.

Pressburger's script, which won him an Academy Award for Best Original Story, charts the progress of a German U-boat crew stranded in Canada after the sinking of their craft off Hudson Bay. As the six crew members, led by the unflappable Corporal Hirth (Eric Portman), struggle to reach the neutral territory of the United States, they encounter a series of opponents, who serve to contrast Canada's democracy and ethnic diversity with the Nazis' moral bankruptcy.

The ruthless Hirth is a far cry from the more sympathetically portrayed German officer played by Conrad Veidt in Powell and Pressburger's earlier *The Spy in Black* (1939). Unburdened by doubts in himself or in his philosophy, he has no patience with weakness or sensitivity. But his arrogance is his undoing, for he

repeatedly underestimates his opponents. The other Nazis each have their own distinct characters, and there is even a “good Nazi”, which attracted some criticism at the time.

German actress Elisabeth Bergner, the only woman in a leading role, jumped ship after shooting a few scenes in Canada; it became clear she had only signed on to get to America. Fortunately, she was very effectively replaced by the unknown Glynis Johns. Two other stars, Laurence Olivier and Raymond Massey, almost pulled out, and the MOI threatened to pull the plug due to budget overspend. When Hollywood giants David O. Selznick and Samuel Goldwyn showed an interest, however, J. Arthur Rank stepped in and provided the rest of the money. He—and the Treasury—made their money back comfortably: a success at home, the film became the biggest British hit to date in American cinemas.

49th Parallel was the first of two collaborations between Powell and Pressburger and the already highly regarded editor David Lean.
—Mark Duguid

The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp. 1943. UK. Written and directed by Michael Powell, Emeric Pressburger. With Roger Livesey, Deborah Kerr, Anton Walbrook. Restoration by Academy Film Archive in association with the BFI National Archive, The Film Foundation and ITV Studios Global Entertainment Ltd. Restoration funding provided by The Material World Foundation, the Louis B. Mayer Foundation, Cinema per Roma Foundation, and The Film Foundation. DCP courtesy Park Circus. 163 min.
Sunday, June 23, 4:00, T1; Saturday, July 13, 3:30, T1

The tide of war was just beginning to turn in the Allies’ favor when, in June of 1943, Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger released *The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp*. But the English home front was still in jeopardy, and spirits were low. Just what was it that made England and its inhabitants special—and was it something that could be called upon to beat back the Nazis after nearly four years of bombardment and privation? Powell and Pressburger, equal partners in a company called the Archers, looked for answers to these questions in the person of Clive Wynne Candy, a fictional officer in the British army whose military career and personal life are traced over the course of half a century. Roger Livesey perfectly captures the bluster and naïveté of Candy as he ages from a dashing young officer to a bloated and blinkered old veteran. Throughout, the basic decency and integrity of England are contrasted with the ruthless militarism of Germany, leaving little doubt as to which nation was deserving of ultimate victory.
—Publication excerpt from *Still Moving: The Film and Media Collections of The Museum of Modern Art*, by Steven Higgins (New York: The Museum of Modern Art, 2006, p. 195.

Michael Powell on *The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp*
There was one nice scene in *One of Our Aircraft Is Missing* which I shot but later had to cut out; it’s between Godfrey Tearle and Hugh Burden as the elderly rear gunner and the young pilot. They are talking about the girl (played by Pamela Brown) and suddenly the older man makes an observation which startles the young man. He says, “You know, you are like what I was when I was young and I’m like what you will be like when you’re old.” In other words, they were both typically British. Then the young fellow looks at him and says, “Are you right in the head, George?” At first nobody understood the old boy and they didn’t bother to, they just thought he was a bit of a nuisance. Later he proved that his experience in everything really meant something. What was really interesting about this was that out of this story Emeric said, “Why don’t we make a film about this theme that young men can’t understand

the old men and old men can't explain what it is to be experienced?" And that started the idea of making a film called *The Life and Death of Sugar Candy*.

As it progressed and became more and more an epic, a saga of a wonderful, half-lovable, half-infuriating character, it occurred to one of us, I don't know which, to lug in Colonel Blimp. It was probably because the whole idea seemed to chime together and the thought of dramatising the life of Colonel Blimp appealed enormously, because at that time Blimp was a household word. That was how *The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp* evolved. And that was when all the trouble started which everybody now knows about.

Some time before this, Jack Beddington, who had been Head of Publicity for Shell, had been appointed in charge of the MOl's films division in the place of Kenneth Clark. We began to have very lively contacts with him. He had a very good mind himself, and as well as understanding publicity, he understood artists and creative people and he took great pains, he and the Ministry, to put us all in touch with the people who were doing documentaries and training films. I remember going there to see films smuggled out of Europe, two or three times a week sometimes, to see films on blood transfusion, on plastic surgery for pilots who were burned…. He took great trouble that feature filmmakers should be well-informed, much better informed than the average person about what was going on in the war. It was very good, don't you think?

I'm sure it was with Jack that we had most of the rows about *Colonel Blimp*. They weren't really rows: simply that we were determined to make it and they were determined that we shouldn't. Reddington and Brendan Bracken were probably laughing like hell in their offices, but they had to do what they were told and follow the policy of the War Office and the Cabinet. James Grigg was the one who started the alarm but afterwards he withdrew the whole thing. The thing that affected us was that not only could we not have Laurence Olivier to play Blimp, we couldn't have one gun, one rifle, one uniform or one truck. So everything we have on the screen in the form of khaki uniforms and trucks is stolen. We could have been shot for it, I suppose, but then nobody minded about a little thing like that then! It shows how well film prop men had been trained by Korda, you know, how do you make a Hungarian omelette…first steal three eggs. Alfred Junge was wonderful, he hadn't been on *One of Our Aircraft* because at first all enemy aliens were interned. There was a story: he was interned at Liverpool in a big camp where a lot of very good art directors were interned who'd worked for Korda. They were all put to work at camouflaging the camp and they did it so well nobody could find it! Alfred was always known as Uncle Alfred to the entire unit.

I don't really know whether *Blimp* was ever shown in its complete version because, at the time of its premiere, I was already in the Mediterranean shooting material for *The Volunteer* (1943). I was on the beach in Oran, Algeria, wondering how to get off it. Of course, I got off with the Americans, that's the answer always. More or less right away, the Rank people, they loved the picture but decided it was too long for commercial release in wartime and asked us to cut it. I've got a feeling that all the opening sequences with the young soldier bursting into the Turkish bath were lopped and the film made into a straightforward narrative story instead of being mostly in flashback. That may have been partly because of opposition from Churchill and the War Office, because it is a much less abrasive way of telling the story. But we had quite consciously set out to make a big epic because we didn't think we could tell the three episodes of Blimp's life in much less than two hours and a half.

The cast of *Blimp* was marvellous. Deborah Kerr is enormously sensitive and responds to a director particularly. I think she could have gone on to become a very great actress, but she went on as a

contract artist with MGM for just too long. Her performance, performances really, were clever too—with help from me, she makes the three girls absolutely different. And I had always wanted to work with Roger Livesey; he was going to be in *The Phantom Light* (1935) but Michael Balcon didn't like his voice, that lovely hoarse voice of Roger's. Mickey Balcon was very suburban in his tastes. I hadn't the slightest doubt; when C. M. Woolf and Arthur Rank said to me if you can't get Olivier who will you get, I said Roger Livesey. "Is he available?" "Yes, he's working in an aircraft factory"—I'd already found that out.
—Michael Powell interviewed by David Badder, *Sight and Sound*, Winter 1978–79

The Volunteer. 1944. UK. Written and directed by Michael Powell, Emeric Pressburger. 35mm courtesy BFI. 45 min.
The Sorcerer's Apprentice. 1955. Germany. Directed by Michael Powell. With Sonia Arova and the Ballet of the State Opera Hamburg. DCP courtesy BFI. 13 min.
Saturday, July 6, 2:00, T1; Thursday, July 25, 4:30, T1

The first ballet film to be shot in CinemaScope, Powell's dance short saw him teaming up once again with designer Hein Heckroth, cinematographer Christopher Challis, camera operator Freddie Francis and editor Reginald Mills to bring some of the Archers' magic to Goethe's 18th-century tale. An ageing sorcerer leaves his workshop, and chaos ensues as his apprentice brings inanimate objects to life.
—Claire Smith

A Canterbury Tale. 1944. UK. Written and directed by Michael Powell, Emeric Pressburger. With Eric Portman, Sheila Sim, Dennis Price, John Sweet. DCP courtesy Park Circus. 125 min.
Wednesday, June 26, 7:00, T1; Sunday, July 14, 4:00, T1

Probably Powell and Pressburger's most personal and unusual film, *A Canterbury Tale* bewildered critics and audiences on its release, but has since come to be seen as one of their very best; Pressburger himself later declared it his favourite.

The film is structured as a mystery story, but its real purpose is to add a spiritual dimension to the propaganda message of earlier films like *49th Parallel* (1941) and *One of Our Aircraft Is Missing* (1942). There are no Nazis in *A Canterbury Tale* and, although the war provides its backdrop, the focus is on identifying a distinctively moral and spiritual English identity, in direct opposition to the harsh material objectives of fascism.

The film offers a vision of an England with its spiritual roots in the countryside exemplified by the beauty of Kent—the county of Powell's birth—an England which its increasingly urban population have neglected for too long. Evoking Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, the film charts the progress of a select band of modern pilgrims. As the trio of land girl Alison (Sheila Sim), American officer Bob (John Sweet) and British officer Peter (Dennis Price) converge on Canterbury Cathedral, each receives a "blessing", bringing his or her most fervent wish to life. The film's peculiar power owes much to Eric Portman who, as the enigmatic Thomas Colpeper—local Justice of the Peace, prophet and one of Powell's many screen alter-egos—delivers an intense and complex performance, just as he had in *49th Parallel* three years earlier.

Despite the trappings of Christianity, particularly the grand finale in the cathedral, the film's strange atmosphere seems at times closer to paganism than Anglicanism, and the most memorable character, a

mysterious man who pours glue in the hair of local women who fraternise with soldiers, resembles a fairytale bogeyman. Critics were particularly uncomfortable with the morally ambiguous figure of the glue man, and many remembered this in their outrage at Powell's "unsavoury" solo work *Peeping Tom* (1960) 16 years later.

Eerie and resonant, *A Canterbury Tale* is perhaps the most complete expression of Powell's fascination with the mystical power of landscape, which is also visible in works like *The Edge of the World* (1937), *I Know Where I'm Going!* (1945), *Black Narcissus* (1947) and *Gone to Earth* (1950).
—Mark Duguid

I Know Where I'm Going! 1945. UK. Written and directed by Michael Powell, Emeric Pressburger. With Wendy Hiller, Roger Livesey, Pamela Brown. 4K restoration the BFI National Archive and the Film Foundation in association with ITV and Park Circus. Restoration funding provided by the Hobson/Lucas Family Foundation, additional support provided by Matt Spick. 93 min.
Thursday, June 27, 7:00, T1; Sunday, July 14, 1:30, T1

I Know Where I'm Going! is a film of extraordinary beauty and emotional power. It means so much to many people—to those members of Powell and Pressburger's company the Archers who participated in its making in 1944, and to others, like myself, who have fallen under its spell more recently. Magically, it changes lives, inspires new directions in those who see it; a simple love story, it draws us into the dark, dangerous waters of sexual desire and death; like myth, it works on unconscious levels difficult to contain through rational analysis. To someone like me, who grew up in post-war Britain, with its egalitarian rhetoric and idealistic vision of a new, modern nation, *I Know Where I'm Going!* (affectionately known as *IKWIG*) carries additional resonances. The very title, with its tease in the tail, the emphatic exclamation mark that warns against taking such a confident assertion at face value, is tinged with irony.

This is a film about an interrupted journey, during which travelers are compelled to change direction and revise priorities. One can imagine the wry glint in the filmmakers' eyes: "Ah, yes, you think you know, but…." Several of those involved in the production were European émigrés who had experienced enforced, and in some cases traumatic, digressions and delays in life's journey. For Emeric Pressburger, who wrote the script of *IKWIG* in a matter of days from an idea he had long cherished, the concept of life-shattering diversions from a planned route must have seemed particularly poignant. The film itself was a detour in the Archers' itinerary, an unscheduled stop between *A Canterbury Tale* (1944) and *A Matter of Life and Death* (1946). Its anti-materialist message—in effect, a critique of profiteering—partly reflected the context of wartime restrictions in which it was made: the unavailability of Technicolor stock had delayed the production of the ambitious propaganda piece *A Matter of Life and Death*, commissioned by Jack Beddington of the Ministry of Information in the interests of improving post-war Anglo-American relations. In 1944, the war may well have been over bar the shouting, but the celebration of a post-war consumer boom at this stage seemed, to the Archers at least, premature and inappropriate.

There's an element of romantic nostalgia in this—an unwillingness, perhaps, to leave the war behind and to look confidently towards the future. Nostalgia for the war, and the clear-cut ideals for which it was fought, is not so surprising at this point in the Archers' career. After a string of box-office successes, *A Canterbury Tale* had been met by a cool reception from audiences and critics—mostly, it seems, because of the perversity of the peculiar glue-pouring Culpepper, but also because of its complicated,

meandering plot. Powell and Pressburger were unsure what direction to take next. The temporary shelving of *A Matter of Life and Death* created a hiatus; this celebrated black-and-white and Technicolor fantasy made way for an apparently simple, straightforward narrative, an intense love story that would link the idealism of their previous film with the life-and-death romance of the one that was to follow.

On the face of it, the storyline is reassuringly transparent. The theme of star-crossed lovers with its "love conquers all" moral is not so far removed from previous productions such as *The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp* (1943) and *A Canterbury Tale*. It was also the mainspring of the delayed extravaganza *A Matter of Life and Death*. However, *IKWIG* was heralded as a more conventional enterprise than the Archers' other films, and it could be seen as a bridging exercise—an attempt to regain lost ground with critics and audiences, and to mark time until the more complex project could go into production. As it turned out, *IKWIG* was a critical and commercial success, though many still found parts of the story confusing, despite its more classical structure. However, it is far from being a minor transition piece bracketed between two wayward masterpieces. This is a film that encapsulates the memories, working ethos and artistic aspirations of a remarkable group of film-makers at a unique moment in British cultural history.

IKWIG's happy ending leaves many questions unanswered. Indeed, it is less clear at this point where our travelers are going than it was at the beginning. As in the case of Brigadoon, the protagonists make a choice to remain in an imaginary past rather than embrace the future, seeking a recovery of lost innocence. With its affirmation of simple human values of love and loyalty, and its evocation of an enchanted realm of impossible beauty, the film deploys legend, myth and fairytale to invite us to lose our modern, cynical selves and rediscover a childlike naïveté. It celebrates the magical possibilities of cinema to transport us to places beyond our imagination where good overcomes evil and monsters are annihilated. At the same time, its ironic patchwork of familiar images reinforces a sense of loss, reminding us that new identities and solutions do not appear from nowhere—they are fabricated from fragments of the old. This is perhaps why *IKWIG*'s bright and breezy conclusion is tainted by a faint aura of melancholy, deriving from a feeling that it is too good to be true.

Since its release in 1945, *IKWIG* has continued to touch different audiences over the decades, inspiring some to follow Joan's route in search of the Scotland portrayed in the film, and to relive her journey of self-discovery. This is a tribute to the power of cinema to engage us on profound levels, even when we are aware of the fact that the truth we seek behind images will always elude us. Apart from a wish to experience "the real thing", what may attract *IKWIG* fans to follow in Joan's footsteps is the sense the film conveys of perpetual motion, as though it embodies the rhythms of restless desire. It could be that Joan Webster's fellow-travellers are compelled to act out the dilemmas of modern existence by choosing to cast themselves as characters embarking on a heroic quest, in a bid to escape the humdrum routine of urban life. This suggests an empathetic response to the film's epic dimension, whereby the protagonists are propelled by unseen forces to discover their fate, as in classic tragedy. Such imaginative encounters lead us somewhere outside time and place, where conventional social boundaries no longer hold sway.

This is not to imply that *IKWIG* operates on the level of the universal and the transcendental. The Archers' film emerged from specific historical, cultural and industrial circumstances, which profoundly affected its conception and making—yet it reaches beyond that context, drawing on a rich treasury of mixed cultural resources, including the memories and experiences of its makers. It manages to be both of its time, and timeless. It conjures up a particular region in Scotland, which is also nowhere in particular, a hybrid concoction of miscellaneous images from various sources. By adopting this dual

focus, and by playing off the authentic reconstruction of place against its recreation via pastiche, the Archers mobilised a powerful emotion which lies at the heart of the diasporic experience, provoking a longing for the lost homeland which simultaneously recognises that it is gone for ever. In turn, this yearning for something lost and irrecoverable appeals to audiences beyond those for whom the film was originally intended, making connections between people from different social and cultural contexts. No doubt this was part of a deliberate strategy to ensure that *IKWIG* could be successfully marketed to as many audiences as possible. But it is also the key to the film's enduring freshness and vitality, and one of the reasons it continues to exert a spellbinding effect on successive generations of viewers.
—Extract from *I Know Where I'm Going!* by Pam Cook (BFI, 2021). Reproduced by kind permission of Bloomsbury Publishing. © Pam Cook

A Matter of Life and Death (Stairway to Heaven). 1946. UK. Written and directed by Michael Powell, Emeric Pressburger. With David Niven, Kim Hunter. Restored in 2017 in 4K by Sony Pictures Entertainment from the original Technicolor 3-strip picture negative. Digital image restoration by L'Immagine Ritrovata in Bologna. Additional restoration by MTI Film. Audio restoration by Deluxe Audio. Color grading, conforming, DCP creation at Deluxe Culver City. 104 min.
Friday, June 28, 7:00, T1; Friday, July 19, 4:30, T1

Moments before his plane crashes, RAF pilot Peter Carter (Niven) makes radio contact with an American operator named June. When the heavenly conductor dispatched to Earth to retrieve him gets lost in the thick fog over the English Channel, Peter awakes having cheated death, and he quickly falls for June. From that point, he is suspended between Heaven and Earth—and between black-and-white and Technicolor. This was a breakthrough film for Powell, who remarked, "from then on, there was no more realism in films, only surrealism." The design centerpiece of the film is Alfred Junge's spectacular stairway to Heaven. Preserved by the Academy Film Archive

Black Narcissus. 1947. UK. Written and directed by Michael Powell, Emeric Pressburger. With Deborah Kerr, David Farrar, Flora Robson, Kathleen Byron. DCP courtesy Park Circus. 101 min.
Friday, June 21, 7:00, T1 (Introduced by Thelma Schoonmaker); Friday, July 12, 4:30, T1

A group of Catholic nuns who founded a convent in the Himalayas must confront conflicts between duty and passion. Kerr paired again with Powell and Pressburger, though this time Powell believed the actress was too young to play Sister Clodagh. The elaborate Himalayan sets were built at the Pinewood Studios while the verdant parklands at a Sussex estate stood in for lush Indian gardens; novelist Godden was unhappy with the production, as it wasn't shot on location in India.

Powell and Pressburger's delirious melodrama is one of the most erotic films ever to emerge from British cinema, let alone in the repressed 1940s—it was released just two years after David Lean's *Brief Encounter* (1945), with its more typically "British" story of desire denied.

Starting from a controversial novel by Rumer Godden—an Englishwoman living long-term in India—Powell and Pressburger fashioned a taut melodrama of unusually fierce passions and barely contained erotic tension. Although the script never directly challenged the strict standards of the censors, it hardly needs saying that the repressed desires of nuns was not a common—or safe—subject for a British film in 1947.

Deborah Kerr, in her third film for Powell and Pressburger (following *Contraband*, 1940, and *The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp*, 1943), was nominally the star of the film, playing the emotionally detached Sister Superior, secretly tormented by memories of lost love. But it was an extraordinary performance from the barely-known Kathleen Byron as the deranged Sister Ruth which really stood out. Byron had played an angel in *A Matter of Life and Death* (1946), but there was nothing in that role which suggested that she was capable of a performance of such furious intensity.

David Farrar took the role of the agent, Dean, full of macho swagger, and the catalyst for Sister Ruth's madness. It was the first of three parts for Powell and Pressburger, and anticipated his lusty, malevolent squire in *Gone to Earth* (1950). Among the supporting roles were Sabu, in his first work with Powell since *Thief of Bagdad* (1940), and an 18-year-old Jean Simmons, fresh from her success in *Great Expectations* (1946), as a native temptress.

In its depiction of young women torn between duty and passion, *Black Narcissus* has common elements with the Archers' next film *The Red Shoes* (1948), while its evocation of the mystical power of landscape and geography positions it in a line of Powell's work which includes *The Edge of the World* (1937), *I Know Where I'm Going!* (1944) and *A Canterbury Tale* (1945).

With the help of designer Alfred Junge and cinematographer Jack Cardiff—both rewarded with Oscars—Powell convincingly created a Himalayan convent on a Pinewood soundstage, lending the proceedings a tense, claustrophobic atmosphere. An oppressive jungle scene was filmed in a Sussex tropical garden.
—Mark Duguid

The Red Shoes. 1948. UK. Written and directed by Michael Powell, Emeric Pressburger. With Moira Shearer, Anton Walbrook, Marius Goring, Robert Helpmann. Digital restoration by the UCLA Film & Television Archive in association with the BFI, The Film Foundation, ITV Global Entertainment Ltd., and Janus Films. Restoration funding for the film was provided by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association, The Film Foundation, and the Louis B. Mayer Foundation. DCP courtesy Park Circus. 135 min.
Saturday, June 29, 6:30, T1; Weds. July 31, 4:00, T1

Time rushes by, love rushes by, life rushes by, but the red shoes dance on. With its captivating behind-the-scenes insights into the creative process, fairytale enchantments and characters for whom art is more important than life itself, *The Red Shoes* is perhaps the definitive ballet film. It details the staging of a glittering new production of *The Red Shoes* by the Ballet Lermontov, conveying how the intensity of the production and the behaviour of uncompromising impresario Boris Lermontov drive prima ballerina Victoria Page to the very edge. Shot in glorious Technicolor by Jack Cardiff, *The Red Shoes* won Oscars for art direction and music, and features standout performances by real-life ballerina Moira Shearer and Anton Walbrook at his ruthless best. It's no surprise that Powell and Pressburger's cinematic fever dream has inspired generations of artists and filmmakers.
—Claire Smith

The Small Back Room. 1948. UK. Written and directed by Michael Powell, Emeric Pressburger. With Michael Gough, Henry Caine, Milton Rosmer. 4K DCP courtesy Rialto Pictures. Restored by The Film Foundation and BFI National Archive in association with Studiocanal. Funding provided by The Film Foundation and Studiocanal. Special thanks to Martin Scorsese and Thelma Schoonmaker for their consultation. 106 min.

Sunday, June 30, 4:00, T1; Saturday, July 20, 4:00, T1

Following a series of Technicolor extravaganzas, Powell and Pressburger turned to a suitably low-key presentation for this Nigel Balchin adaptation, chiming with the darker post-war mood. David Farrar gives perhaps his best performance as the embittered bomb disposal expert driven to drink, while Christopher Challis' black and white cinematography looks especially stunning in this new restoration—the shadowy, surrealist sequences giving a compelling insight into the mental anguish of the alcoholic.

Gone to Earth. 1950. UK. Written and directed by Michael Powell, Emeric Pressburger, based on the novel by Mary Webb. With Jennifer Jones, Cyril Cusack, David Farrar. 35mm. 111 min.
Monday, July 1, 7:00, T1; Saturday, July 20, 7:00, T1

Hazel Woodus is a country girl who enjoys being outdoors in the company of woodland creatures—she even keeps a fox cub as a pet. When the local squire, Jack Reddin, sees Hazel, he is enchanted by her beauty and serenity. But the two may not be such a great match, as Jack participates in the tradition of fox hunting across the countryside.

In 1950, austerity and rationing still prevailed in Britain, but the Archers—Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger—chose to continue their series of post-war Technicolor melodramas (following *Black Narcissus*, 1947, and *The Red Shoes*, 1948) with an adaptation of Mary Webb's Thomas Hardy-esque novel of 1917, *Gone to Earth*.

Under a co-production agreement between Alexander Korda (London Films) and David O. Selznick, sultry Hollywood star Jennifer Jones played heroine Hazel Woodus. The conflict for Hazel emerges when her husband and Baptist minister Edward Marston (Cyril Cusack) fails to consummate their marriage, and she is relentlessly pursued by the rich squire and hunter Jack Reddin (David Farrar).

This tragic story articulates the dilemma of female autonomy trapped between conflicting male desires of love and lust. Shropshire writer Webb wrote, "They did not live her life. She had to live theirs," but ultimately, "She wanted neither. Her passion, no less intense, was for freedom."

As a motherless, half-gypsy girl, Hazel's wildness and freedom are expressed through her close affiliation to her pet fox and to the wild landscape of the Welsh/Shropshire borders, the film's main location. This landscape, "with its abrupt change from civilisation to savagery" (Powell) is captured by Christopher Challis's powerful cinematography and contributes significantly to the film's thematic and visual impact.

But Hazel's rebellion is finally steeped in blood and suffering. Designer Hein Heckroth's use of reds for Hazel's costumes hint at her final doom, while Brian Easdale eloquently scored this fate in his music.

As the film neared completion, the British Field Sports Society took objection to its perceived anti-blood-sports stance and members were advised not to lend hunting packs to the production company. Powell appealed for help in the *Times* (October 1949) and a Cardiganshire farmer finally lent his own hounds to finish the shoot.

In 1950, Selznick attempted to sue Korda's company for not keeping to the spirit of Webb's novel, but was overruled in court. Consequently, London Films was given the British rights to the film, while

Selznick retained the American rights. Selznick later hired Hollywood director Rouben Mamoulian to re-edit the film, which was released in the USA as *The Wild Heart*.
—Trish Sheil

***The Elusive Pimpernel*.** 1950. UK. Written and directed by Michael Powell, Emeric Pressburger. With David Niven, Margaret Leighton, Cyril Cusack. 35mm courtesy BFI. 109 min.
Tuesday, July 2, 7:00, T1; Sunday, July 21, 1:30, T1

Although *The Elusive Pimpernel* is a light-hearted romp that refuses to take itself seriously, it was the source of bitter recriminations and a subsequent lawsuit between its executive producers. The film was conceived as a co-production deal between Alexander Korda's London Films and Samuel Goldwyn, in which it was agreed that Goldwyn would fund half the film's production costs in exchange for US distribution rights. Korda had produced a version of Baroness Orczy's *The Scarlet Pimpernel* in 1935 (d. Harold Young) with Leslie Howard and Merle Oberon, and Goldwyn anticipated a colour remake that would emulate some of that film's international success. However, like David O. Selznick, who had worked with Korda on *Gone to Earth* (1950), the American mogul hadn't counted on the free-spirited filmmaking of Michael Powell, Emeric Pressburger and their long-term creative collaborators including production designer Hein Heckroth, editor Reginald Mills and composer Brian Easdale.

Powell's suggestion to make the film as a musical was less than enthusiastically received by Goldwyn and Korda, and Pressburger continued to struggle with the script until he decided to abandon his straight approach and opt for an altogether more playful style. The use of vibrant Technicolor and the light-treatment of the story anticipate later period swashbucklers such as Richard Lester's hugely successful *The Three Musketeers* (1973), but dismayed Goldwyn, who refused to pay his share of the production costs. Powell and Pressburger were obliged to re-edit the film, but this failed to pacify Goldwyn. He and Korda promptly sued each other for breach of contract and *The Elusive Pimpernel* was eventually released in America in a further truncated form (and in black and white) as *The Fighting Pimpernel*.

Although both Powell and Pressburger were dissatisfied with *The Elusive Pimpernel*, the film itself is highly enjoyable. It features stunning location work in Bath, the Loire Valley and on Mont-Saint-Michel and there are numerous spirited and quirky moments, such as the intercut fireworks that suggest the force of Chauvelin's pepper-induced sneezes and the jaunty editing that visually echoes the rhythm of Sir Percy's poetry recitation in the Russian Baths. Hein Heckroth's understated sets (a few screens and pillars in the steam room for example) give precedence to the sumptuous costumes, with David Niven and Jack Hawkins' humbug-striped tailcoats and frilly lace cuffs commanding as much visual attention as Margaret Leighton's elegant ball gowns and satin nightdresses.
—Nathalie Morris

The Tales of Hoffmann. 1951. UK. Directed by Michael Powell, Emeric Pressburger. Screenplay by Powell, Pressburger, based on the opera by Jacques Offenbach. With Moira Shearer, Robert Helpmann, Léonide Massine, Robert Rounseville, Ludmilla Tchérina, Pamela Brown. Digital restoration by the BFI National Archive and The Film Foundation, in association with Studiocanal. Restoration funding provided by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association, the Franco-American Cultural Fund, a unique partnership between the Directors Guild of America (DGA); the Motion Picture Association of America (MPAA); the Société des Auteurs, Compositeurs et Editeurs de Musique (SACEM); and the Writers Guild of America,

West (WGAW), The Hollywood Foreign Press Association, the Louis B. Mayer Foundation and The Film Foundation. DCP courtesy Rialto Pictures. 128 min.
Wednesday, July 3, 7:00, T1; Sunday, July 21, 4:00, T1

Powell and Pressburger's subversive, audacious take on Offenbach's opera drew on some of the greatest film, music and dance talents of the period. Transforming it into a phantasmagoria of feverish colours, the sensual and unsettling delights include Tchérina as a 19th-century dominatrix, a chorus of pan-sexual mannequins who appear to have raided Marc Bolan's dressing-up box, and Shearer's dismembered but still-blinking head.
—Robin Baker

Oh…Rosalinda!! 1955. UK. Written and directed by Michael Powell, Emeric Pressburger. With Anthony Quayle, Anton Walbrook, Dennis Price. 35mm courtesy BFI. 101 min.
Saturday, July 6, 4:00, T1; Saturday, July 27, 4:00, T1

Like the gloriously camp, all-singing, all-dancing cousin of *The Third Man*, the Archers' take on Strauss's operetta of infidelity is as frothy as the champagne it celebrates. With Anton Walbrook as a kind of masked Harry Lime, the team fuses kitsch with their typically inventive subversion. This criminally underseen delight is showing on a sensational dye-transfer Technicolor Scope print. You have no excuse!
—Robin Baker

The Battle of the River Plate. 1956. UK. Written and directed by Michael Powell, Emeric Pressburger. With John Gregson, Anthony Quayle, Peter Finch. 35mm courtesy BFI. In English, German, Spanish; English subtitles. 119 min.
Saturday, July 6, 6:30, T1; Saturday, July 27, 1:00, T1

Made towards the end of Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger's creative partnership, *The Battle of the River Plate* is based on the British Navy's triumph over a German "pocket battleship", the *Graf Spee*, in the early months of the second world war. Rarely included in discussions of their great works, *The Battle of the River Plate* was nevertheless Powell and Pressburger's most commercially successful film.

The gallant heroism of both the British Navy and the German Captain Langsdorff, who scuttles his own ship rather than face defeat, strongly appealed to Powell and Pressburger. Indeed, so fond of the story was Michael Powell that he published a novel, *The Last Voyage of the Graf Spee*, retelling the story in the hope that, as he wrote in the book's introduction, future generations of children would "read it and absorb it into their experience".

Echoing the friendship between the British and German officers Wynne-Candy and Schuldorff in Powell and Pressburger's earlier *The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp*, an important subplot in *The Battle of the River Plate* explores the relationship of Langsdorff and Captain Dove of the British merchant vessel Africa Shell. Like Wynne-Candy and Schuldorff, Dove and Langsdorff find that, while their two nations are at war, as individuals they have much in common.

Made some 11 years after the end of the war, the sympathetic treatment of the German enemy was less controversial than *The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp* had been in 1943. Its year of release also meant *The Battle of the River Plate* was not required to be as propagandist as *49th Parallel*. Instead, like so

many other war films of the period, it fed the public's insatiable appetite for stories of British victories at a time when the country was still suffering from the economic hardships brought on by the financial cost of the war.
—Justin Hobday

Ill Met by Moonlight. 1957. UK. Written and directed by Michael Powell, Emeric Pressburger. Based on the book by W. Stanley Moss. With Dirk Bogarde, Cyril Cusack, Marius Goring. In English, Greek, German; English subtitles. 35mm courtesy Park Circus. 104 min.
Sunday, July 7, 4:30, T1; Thursday, July 25, 7:00, T1

In 1950, Emeric Pressburger read an extract from *Ill Met by Moonlight*, Stanley Moss's account of his adventures on occupied Crete during the Second World War, and immediately optioned its film rights. Michael Powell set off on a location scouting expedition to Crete, but it was another six years before *Ill Met by Moonlight* finally went into production. After leaving the Rank Organisation in 1949, Powell and Pressburger had briefly returned to producer Alexander Korda to make films such as *The Small Back Room* (1949) and *Gone to Earth* (1950). They then encountered a period of difficulty in securing financing for the projects they wanted to make, and by the mid-1950s were willing to contemplate a return, albeit a short-term one, to John Davis and the Rank Organisation. *The Battle of the River Plate* (1956) was a commercial success and chosen for the Royal Command Performance of that year (an honour that had been bestowed upon *A Matter of Life and Death* back in 1946). Davis then offered the Archers a seven-picture contract, but wary of committing themselves, they signed for just one picture—*Ill Met by Moonlight*.

By 1956, the political situation in Crete had made location shooting unviable and *Ill Met* was instead filmed in the hills behind Powell's family hotel in the south of France. However, the poetic use of landscape that characterises earlier Archers' films such as *A Canterbury Tale* (1944) and *I Know Where I'm Going!* (1945) is evident in the atmospheric shots of the mountainous countryside, beautifully photographed in black and white by Christopher Challis, while Mikis Theodorakis' rousing score conveys something of the richness of Greek culture, the patriotism and bravery of its people and the rugged beauty of the Cretan landscape.

Michael Powell took mischievous delight in tormenting Davis with requests for actors such as Orson Welles and James Mason to play lead roles, but Dirk Bogarde, one of Rank's contracted stars, was eventually chosen to play Patrick Leigh Fermor. His portrayal is flamboyant, charming and charismatic, although Powell later grumbled, "I wanted a flamboyant young murderer, lover, bandit…and instead I got a picture-postcard hero in fancy dress." Archers regulars Marius Goring and Cyril Cusack, as the malignant General and the unwashed Captain, turn in strong performances that rather obscure David Oxley's adequate but anaemic portrayal of author Stanley Moss.
—Nathalie Morris

Honeymoon (Luna de Miel). 1959. UK. Directed by Michael Powell. Screenplay by Powell, Luis Escobar. With Anthony Steel, Ludmilla Tchérina, Léonide Massine, Antonio El Bailarin. DCP. 109 min.
Sunday, July 7, 2:00, T1; Saturday, July 27, 6:30, T1

For decades almost impossible to see in its uncut English version, this restoration of Powell's film stars Anthony Steel and dancer Ludmilla Tchérina as a couple honeymooning in Spain. The travelogue

sections offer diverting vistas, but the film truly comes alive in its dance sequences, capped by "The Lovers of Teruel", scored by Mikis Theodorakis and wonderfully choreographed by Léonide Massine.
—James Bell

Peeping Tom. 1960. UK. Directed by Michael Powell. Screenplay by Leo Marks. With Karlheinz Boehm, Moira Shearer, Anna Massey. 4K DCP courtesy Rialto Pictures. Restored by The Film Foundation and BFI National Archive in association with Studiocanal. Funding provided by The Film Foundation and Studiocanal. Special thanks to Martin Scorsese and Thelma Schoonmaker for their consultation. 4K scanning by Silver Salt Restoration Limited, London; Picture restoration by Cineric, Inc., New York; Audio restoration by BFI National Archive. 102 min.
Wednesday, July 10, 7:00, T1; Sunday, July 28, 4:00, T1

What's so powerful is that you care about this man who was a murderer—so beautifully portrayed by Carl Boehm—but who has been created by his father to be a murderer. You care about him. The critics were horrified at that feeling in themselves. They thought, "Well, we must get rid of this film because people shouldn't be feeling that way." These days, many films are made like this. Michael wasn't even the first: Fritz Lang's *M* (1931) did something like this.

I've just finished helping restore the movie, and I love the great detail and care that went into it to make that character someone you felt for. Michael completely changed the way he made films with this movie. A different cameraman and a different look—very much a 1960s look, even the colour, the way sets are designed, the way people wear clothes is very 1960s. It was a big thing for him, to jump ahead and make a film relevant to that time.
—Thelma Schoonmaker on *Peeping Tom*, *Sight and Sound*, November 2023

Bluebeard's Castle (Herzog Blaubarts Burg). 1963. West Germany. Directed by Michael Powell. With Norman Foster and Ana Raquel Satre. Restored by the BFI National Archive and The Film Foundation in association with The Ashbrittle Film Foundation. Restoration funding provided by the BFI National Archive, The Louis B. Mayer Foundation and The Film Foundation. DCP courtesy BFI. In German; English subtitles. 62 min.
Tuesday, July 9, 4:30, T1; Monday, July 29, 4:30, T1

It was once declared "unperformable" due to its lack of stage action. But Powell turned this to his advantage when he adapted *Bluebeard's Castle* for German television. The result is a dark, intense opera in one act. In this new restoration by the BFI National Archive and the Film Foundation, Hein Heckroth's sets have to be seen to be believed, as shards of colour, shadow and light symbolise Bluebeard's tortured soul.
—Claire Smith

They're a Weird Mob. 1966. Australia. Directed by Michael Powell. Screenplay by Emeric Pressburger (as Richard Imrie). With Walter Chiari, Clare Dunne, Chips Rafferty, Alida Chelli. 35mm. 112 min.
Thursday, July 11, 7:00, T1; Tuesday, July 30, 4:00, T1

All but blacklisted at home, Powell headed to Australia to adapt local author John O'Grady's popular novel about a newly arrived Italian labourer's culture clash with the Aussie way of life. Pressburger

wrote the screenplay (under the alias Richard Imrie) and the result was a comedy rich in local colour and Sydney locations. It was an enormous hit down under.
—James Bell

Age of Consent. 1969. UK/Australia. Directed by Michael Powell. Screenplay by Peter Yeldham, based on the novel by Norman Linsday. With James Mason, Helen Mirren, Jack MacGowran. 35mm courtesy Swank/Sony Pictures. 98 min.
Tuesday, July 9, 7:00, T1; Wednesday, July 17, 4:30, T1

A disillusioned painter, frustrated with his career, travels to his birthplace of Australia to imbue himself in "colour, form and sensuality". In local teenager Cora (Helen Mirren's first major film appearance) he finds both inspiration and a like-minded, free-spirited soul. Each struggles to establish an authentic life amid impeding social noise—all set against the vibrant backdrop of the Great Barrier Reef.
—Tabitha Austin

The Boy Who Turned Yellow. 1972. USA. Directed by Michael Powell. Screenplay by Emeric Pressburger. With Mark Dightam, Robert Eddison, Helen Weir. 35mm courtesy BFI. 55 min.
Thursday, July 11, 4:30, T1; Tuesday, July 30, 7:00, T1

In the final collaboration between Powell and Pressburger, a schoolboy loses his pet mouse while on a trip to the Tower of London. The next day, he and an entire trainload of people all of a sudden turn bright yellow.

Made in England: The Films of Powell and Pressburger. 2024. UK. Directed by David Hinton. Narrated by Martin Scorsese. DCP courtesy Cohen Media Group. 131 min.
Saturday, June 22, 4:00, T1; Weds. July 10, 4:00, T1