

PRESENTED & NARRATED by EXECUTIVE PRODUCER **MARTIN SCORSESE**



**COHEN MEDIA GROUP**  
PRESENTS

# MADE IN ENGLAND



## The Films of **POWELL & PRESSBURGER**



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# SYNOPSIS



Martin Scorsese first encountered the films of Powell and Pressburger when he was a child, sitting in front of the family TV. When their famous logo came up on screen, Scorsese says, “You knew you were in for fantasy, wonder, magic - real film magic.”

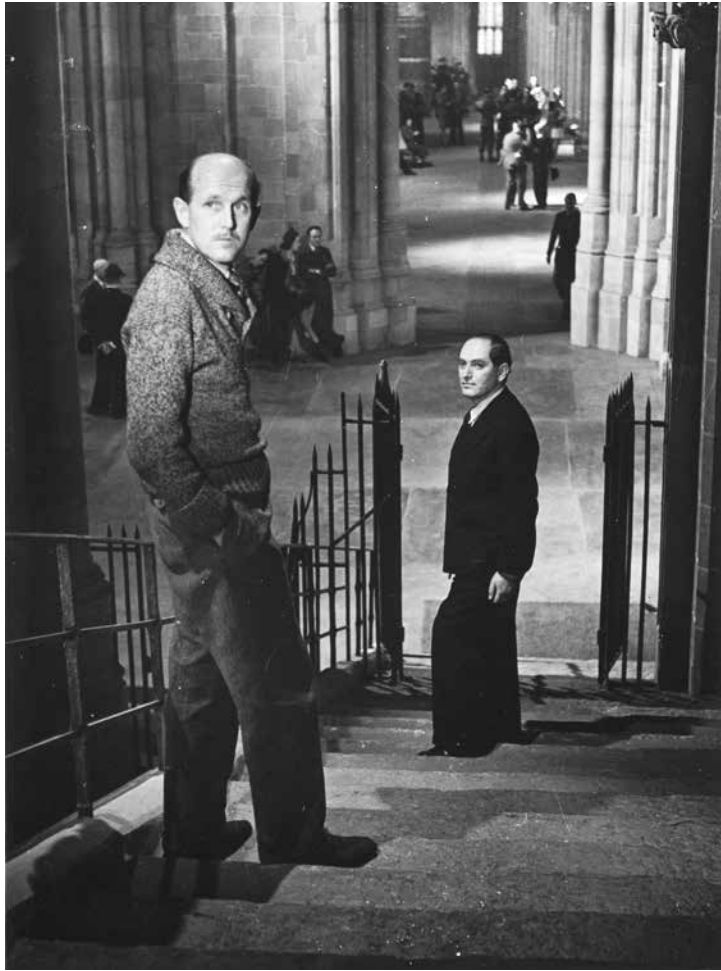
Now, in this documentary, he tells the story of his lifelong love-affair with their movies, including *The Life and Death Of Colonel Blimp*, *Black Narcissus*, *The Red Shoes* and *The Tales of Hoffmann*.

“Certain films you simply run all the time and you live with them.” Scorsese says. “As you grow older they grow deeper. I’m not sure how it happens, but it does. For me, that body of work is a wondrous presence, a constant source of energy, and a reminder of what life and art are all about.”

Drawing on a rich array of archive material, Scorsese explores in full the collaboration between the Englishman Powell and the Hungarian Pressburger - two romantics and idealists, who thrived in the face of adversity during World War II but were eventually brought low by the film industry of the 1950’s.

Scorsese celebrates their ability to create “subversive commercial movies” and describes how deeply their films have influenced his own work.

# PRODUCTION NOTES



MADE IN ENGLAND: THE FILMS OF POWELL AND PRESSBURGER is a uniquely personal project for its makers, one which originated several decades ago.

For director DAVID HINTON the story begins in 1986, when he directed an acclaimed, BAFTA-nominated film about MICHAEL POWELL for *The South Bank Show*. The film is playful and irreverent, and POWELL delighted in collaborating on it with HINTON. The pair struck up a friendship and remained close. Through his connection with POWELL, David also came to be good friends with THELMA SCHOONMAKER who married POWELL in 1984.

In 2018 producers NICK VARLEY and MATTHEW WELLS were discussing subjects they'd most like to make a documentary about. For both it was obvious: Powell and Pressburger. At the time VARLEY was CEO of Park Circus Group. WELLS had made a series of short documentaries for the company about Stanley Kubrick, with VARLEY acting as Executive Producer. The films were a success. The pair were ready to develop a feature documentary together, and they shared a love for the films of Powell and Pressburger.

Through his work distributing the Powell and Pressburger films, VARLEY had got to know and work with SCHOONMAKER and FIONA WILLIAMS at Berlin Associates, who manage the Powell and Pressburger estate. WELLS and VARLEY proposed to them the idea of a documentary on the partnership. They were enthusiastic and SCHOONMAKER recommended HINTON as the ideal director, because of his personal connection to POWELL and the trust that SCHOONMAKER had in him. The producers agreed.

Early on, the team also sought the support of the film-makers KEVIN and ANDREW MCDONALD, who are the grandsons of EMERIC PRESSBURGER. The MACDONALD brothers offered to help however they could, and encouraged the team to be ambitious with the project.

HINTON's idea was to tell the story through the personal connection MARTIN SCORSESE had with Powell and Pressburger. As he recounts in the documentary, SCORSESE first encountered their work as a child and their films were among his earliest experiences of the power of filmmaking, even though he was watching them at home on a small black-and-white television set. As the years passed, SCORSESE's appreciation of the films only deepened and grew stronger.

After the release of *Mean Streets* in 1973, SCORSESE sought out POWELL. The pair became friends and SCORSESE played a huge part in the revival of interest in Powell and Pressburger's work at a time when they had been largely forgotten by the British film industry. He even helped pay for an important re-release of *Peeping Tom*, POWELL's 1960 film which critics had hated so much that it almost destroyed his career.

When he heard about the documentary project, SCORSESE quickly came on board and began working with HINTON on the script, which the pair went on to shape together. The result is a profoundly personal film, drawing on SCORSESE's friendship with POWELL and his deep love of the work of Powell and Pressburger.

As the script was being developed, both WELLS and VARLEY left Park Circus to set up their own production companies, TEN THOUSAND 86 and ICE CREAM FILMS respectively. They took the project with them and continued to act jointly as producers, with THOMAS HOEGH and ARTS ALLIANCE PRODUCTIONS by now providing development financing.

The Producers were lucky to be backed by several companies who believed in the commercial viability of the film and, more importantly, also believed in it culturally and creatively. Principal financiers BBC FILM and SCREEN SCOTLAND have shown their support for British cinema and an admirable willingness to back two producers venturing into their first feature production together.

Distribution partners TURNER CLASSIC MOVIES, COHEN MEDIA GROUP and NON-STOP ENTERTAINMENT came on board at the financing stage and have shown tremendous support and patience. Special mention must be given to WILL CLARK and his team at ALTITUDE FILM GROUP, serious lovers of film, who not only proved willing partners as our sales agent but also helped close financing.

Despite the support from the film industry, a gap remained in the budget and this is where SCORSESE's dedicated team, in particular LISA FRECHETTE and CHRIS DONNELLY, opened the door to financing from ROLEX and latterly - and very generously - OLIVIA HARRISON.

Production started in early 2022 with archive producer SAM DWYER and associate producer JAMIE MUIR doing extensive and meticulous research. ITV STUDIOS and STUDIOCANAL, who between them own most of the Powell & Pressburger films, quickly gave us access to their holdings, including magnificent 4k restorations of many of the films as well as associated archive material, such as behind-the-scenes photographs.

The BFI National Archive supplied us with a wide variety of storyboards, design sketches, documents and photos from their Special Collections; MARIANNE BOWER sent us treasures from Martin Scorsese's own archive; the MACDONALD brothers gave us access to items belonging to EMERIC PRESSBURGER, and THELMA SCHOONMAKER was endlessly generous in providing us with MICHAEL POWELL images.

After one of the most extensive research projects undertaken for a documentary of this kind, the result is a film composed of an unprecedented range of materials, some of it never seen before, encompassing stills, moving images and audio recordings from collections all over the world. There's beautifully restored home movies, luminous footage of POWELL at work on *A Matter of Life and Death* and a miraculous glimpse (from a Hungarian archive) of PRESSBURGER at work on a film in Budapest in the 1930's.

DAVID HINTON worked with editors STUART DAVIDSON and later MAGARIDA CARTAXO to structure the film, with significant input from SCORSESE and SCHOONMAKER. While they were busy with *Killers of the Flower Moon*, the team in the UK prepared an initial cut of the film, working with just voiceover, the films and archive material. Once *Killers* wrapped, SCORSESE and SCHOONMAKER worked with DAVID and the editors to refine the film, with iterations being sent back and forth between London and New York. Only when the edit was solid did filming with SCORSESE take place, in the summer of 2023.



Everything was now ready for the final versions of ADRIAN JOHNSTON's music tracks to be recorded and laid in. JOHNSTON did not want to compete with, or pastiche the dramatic orchestral music of the films themselves, but instead evolved a score that would introduce intimate, subconscious memories of Powell and Pressburger's work into the documentary.

Post Production services were provided by SERIOUS FACILITIES in Glasgow. LESLEY WEIR and her team, including DAVID LEISHMAN, JASON HILLIER, JOHN SACEY and DAN TAYLOR, were exceptional in their commitment to both the creative work on the film and in providing solutions to the complex technical issues that often cropped up.

MADE IN ENGLAND: THE FILMS OF POWELL AND PRESSBURGER has been a labour of love for all involved. Many people along the way have helped, been generous with their time, and more importantly shared our passion for this project.

# NOTES ON THE ORIGINAL MUSIC BY ADRIAN JOHNSTON



I'd previously worked with David Hinton on soundtracks for his extraordinary and ground-breaking dance films (*Strange Fish*, *Touched*, *Birds And Snow*), and he got in touch with me when he first began editing *Made In England*, as we had become good friends and he remembered I had a long-lasting admiration for the cinema of Powell & Pressburger.

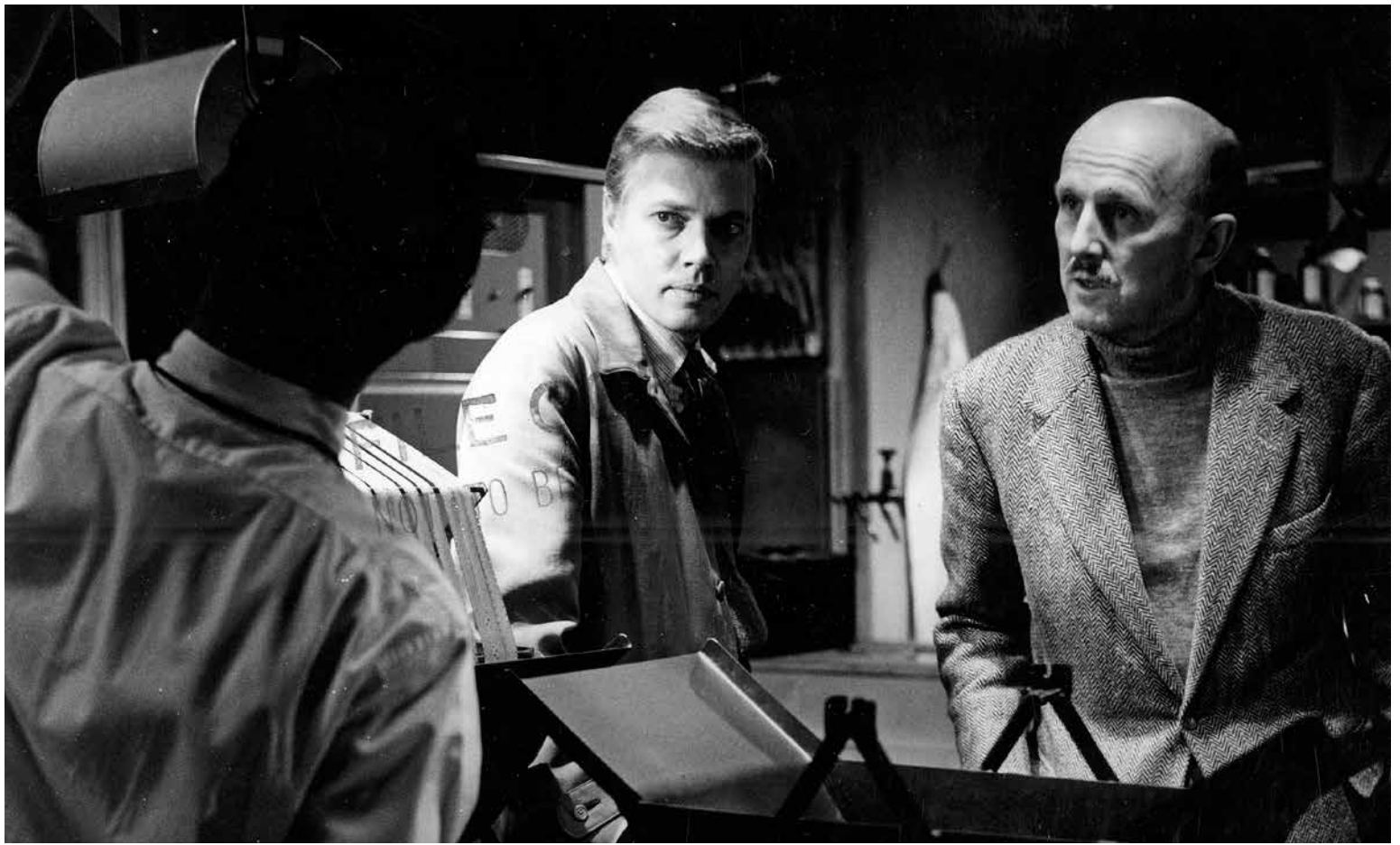
But I'm not sure whether David knew then that it had also been one of the greatest privileges of my career to write music for two major Powell & Pressburger actors in their very last performances — Kathleen Byron (*A Matter Of Life And Death*, *Black Narcissus* and *The Small Back Room*) in Stephen Poliakoff's *Perfect Strangers* (2001) and Moira Shearer (*The Red Shoes*, *The Tales Of Hoffman*, *Peeping Tom*) for her final stage performance in 1994, in a version of *The Aspern Papers* at the Glasgow Citizens Theatre.

Of course, in keeping with the conventions of the time in which they were made, there's a lot of big, dramatic orchestral music in the Powell and Pressburger films, and we were never going to be able to match that sound, so David and I discussed using a more intimate sound whilst trying to create a score that was tonally in keeping with their films, so it could resonate with the original scores. Almost to try to create something that could have the feeling of a lost Powell & Pressburger film score!

I played around with key sounds and instrumentation that are constants in their work – bells, gongs, horns, choirs, piano, harp and strings – in an attempt to suggest a Powell & Pressburger subconscious, a feeling of a memory of their films heard long ago, memories of the films that we have loved and watched obsessively over the years. In one of my improvisation sessions in my studio, having listened specifically to the Ballet score in *The Red Shoes*, I found myself developing a new theme which restlessly rises and falls out of four descending bars in Brian Easdale's score - and that became the signature theme of the film.

The Barcarolle sequence from *The Tales Of Hoffman* seems to be a key influence for Scorsese, so, as a contrast, I developed variations of a similar lilting character for double bass, piano, strings, marimba and cymbals to underscore his narration.

# NOTES ON THE STILLS RESEARCH BY JAMIE MUIR



Knowing David Hinton of old – we were colleagues on *The South Bank Show* – I realised he wouldn't be happy until he'd seen every possible image that could be found of Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger. While Sam Dwyer searched film archives for moving images of the pair, I constructed a computer memory palace which I fed with thumbnails of still images from a myriad of sources.

I became obsessed with the sets of press photographs assembled at the time, each photograph with its distinguishing number written in white ink. Portraits of the stars of the film would form one set, production stills would form another, but it was the third category that we really homed in on: the shots - often candid – of the crews at work on the films. It was here that we found some of the best images.

The Special Collections at the BFI were a thrilling source. I vividly remember on one of the last days before the first lockdown in 2020 unwrapping Emeric Pressburger's Berlin notebook from its conservation tissue paper. David and I also got to pore over trolley-loads of black albums containing photographs that Thelma Schoonmaker had collected together over the years, all meticulously catalogued by Marianne Bower.

Relations of the actors and designers who worked with Powell and Pressburger welcomed me into their private archives: I held one of Moira Shearer's tiny ballet shoes in my hand, and felt the weight of Alfred Junge's Oscar for Art Direction on *Black Narcissus*. Everyone was unfailingly encouraging and generous with their time.

I never did find a high-resolution version of the shot of the clapper loader on *Black Narcissus* giving away the trick of the matte shot by the bell tower – one of David's all-time favourite photographs – but, believe me, it was not for want of trying.

# BACKGROUND ON MICHAEL POWELL AND EMERIC PRESSBURGER BY IAN CHRISTIE

Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger enjoyed a partnership unique in the history of cinema. For nearly twenty years, from 1939-1957, they worked together on equal terms through the most challenging war that Britain had faced and the frustration of the years that followed, devising some of the most daring and original films that have ever emerged from British studios.

The fact that they came together in the shadow of a war that would cement their partnership was vital. But the challenges of peace proved just as great, in a Britain that was deeply in debt, taking them in new directions that would not be fully appreciated until decades later. For the makers of what now seem such quintessentially English films, their very different backgrounds and the routes that led to their partnership were unusual. Signing their films 'written, produced and directed by Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger' declared a bold merging of identities, and naming their company The Archers, with its famous target logo, was explained by a contemporary critic's ironic lines: 'The arrow was pure gold / But somehow missed the target / But as all Golden Arrow trippers know / 'Tis better to miss Naples than hit Margate'.

## POWELL BEFORE PRESSBURGER

Born in 1905, Michael Powell had the unusual distinction of taking part in British army cavalry manoeuvres as a youngster near Canterbury on the eve of the First World War. But after public school in London, there seemed little chance that his growing passion for cinema would lead to employment, especially in the doldrums of British production in the 1920s. Fortunately for Powell, his father remaining in France after the war provided an opportunity for him to gatecrash a very unusual production unit. Rex Ingram had directed some of Metro's





biggest box-office successes, notably *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* and *Scaramouche*, and was now working at the Victorine Studios near Nice. For Powell, this was an extraordinary opportunity to gain experience in every department of movie-making, as part of a versatile cosmopolitan company which was regularly visited by some of the greatest names in American and European cinema. Little wonder that it gave him a vision of cinema as a synthesis of all the arts, which he would recreate in films such as *The Red Shoes* and *Tales of Hoffmann*.

However, the impact of *The Jazz Singer* and the sound revolution put an end to Ingram's Riviera idyll, and in 1928 Powell returned to England to see if he could break into a film industry that was still coming to terms with sound, and with new government legislation designed to encourage British production. Teaming up with an ambitious young American, Jerry Jackson, Powell landed a contract for two 'quota quickies', as films that qualified for 'British quota' became known. During the next six years, Powell would direct over twenty low-budget films, making contacts among actors and fellow-technicians that would later stand him in good stead. Many of these were thought lost, but as they have gradually surfaced and been restored, they show a young filmmaker learning his craft and often achieving miracles with unpromising material.

But Powell had long wanted to make a truly personal film, inspired by a news story about the evacuation of a remote Scottish island. In 1937, he gained the backing of a small-time American producer and took cast and crew to an even more remote island to make *The Edge of the World*. This romantic tale of struggle and survival brought him to the attention of Britain's most dynamic producer, the Hungarian Alexander Korda, who offered him a contract – and introduced him to a writer under contract, fellow-Hungarian Emeric Pressburger.

## PRESSBURGER BEFORE POWELL

Imre Pressburger was born in the northeastern Hungarian town of Miskolc in 1905, the son of an estate manager. While his musical talent led to playing in the town orchestra, civil engineering offered better career prospects. But his father's death forced him to abandon studies that had started in Prague, followed by Stuttgart. After the war, Miskolc became part of Romania, and Pressburger decided to try his luck in Weimar Berlin. Here he experienced real poverty, sleeping on park benches, before he succeeded in selling a whimsically ironic tale to a popular newspaper. Then in 1928, he sold a script idea to Germany's leading film company, Ufa, and soon found himself with a job in the script department as a dramaturg. A dozen script collaborations would follow, many of them different language versions during this period of 'multilingual' production. But with Hitler coming to power in 1933, Jews like Pressburger knew it was time to leave.

So Emmerich Pressburger, as he had become, set off for Paris, hoping to continue his career in his third language. Some of his prior contacts proved valuable, especially when he sold the idea of an updated Offenbach operetta *La Vie Parisienne* to the international producer Seymour Nebenzal, responsible for some of the greatest German films of the early sound period. It was this project that first took him to London, to work on the script for an English version. By the end of 1935, he had made a final move to what seemed a safer refuge, and started to pick up work from fellow emigrants. One of these was his old friend the German producer Gunther Stapenhorst, now based in Britain, who had him work on two historical dramas, *The Great Barrier* (1937) and *The Challenge* (1938). Another Hungarian, the composer Miklós Rózsa, introduced him to Korda, which led to a request: could Pressburger see a way of involving another figure contracted to Korda, the great German actor Conrad Veidt?

In his memoir *A Life in Movies*, Powell memorably described this first encounter with Emeric, as he now had become (although Powell would always address him as Imre): 'I listened spellbound to this small Hungarian wizard, as he unfolded his notes, until they were at least six inches long. He had stood [the writer's] plot on its head and completely restructured the film'.



## ASSEMBLING THE ARCHERS

From their first meeting under Alex Korda's auspices, both Powell and Pressburger recognised something in the other. As Powell wrote: 'I had seen a screenwriter who could really write. I was not going to let him get away in a hurry'. For Pressburger, there was the attraction of a director who seemed to appreciate his work and was not intent on changing or distorting it. *The Spy in Black* attracted exceptionally good reviews on its release in August 1939, two weeks before Hitler launched his invasion of Poland. And a month later a British battleship was sunk in Scapa Flow, making the film's story of a German U-boat mission to Orkney during World War One even more topical.

Both Powell and Pressburger had other commitments to Korda – Powell was one of the directors on the great Technicolor fantasy that would be completed in Hollywood, *Thief of Bagdad*; Pressburger was working on a ballet story that would eventually become *The Red Shoes* – but both were keen to continue their

collaboration. Within months, they had secured backing from British National for another wartime story that would reunite the *Spy in Black* stars, Veidt and Valerie Hobson, and the result would premiere in March 1940. *Contraband* was the first time audiences had seen wartime blackout conditions on screen, in a comedy-thriller set during the 'phoney war' that included topical satire directed against the now ex-Prime minister Neville Chamberlain. By the following year, they had completed the most ambitious production of the early war years, *49th Parallel*, an epic story of German U-boat survivors making their way across Canada and meeting its many ethnic communities, for which Pressburger received an Oscar.

*49th Parallel* had received Ministry of Information backing, but for their next collaboration Powell and Pressburger turned again to Lady Yule's British National Films. *One of Our Aircraft Is Missing* was already a familiar phrase from wartime broadcasts, as British bombers struck against German targets, with increasing numbers brought down over the Netherlands. Telling the story of 'B for Bertie' in reverse, starting from the unmanned plane crashing before showing how its crew were saved by Dutch resisters demonstrated Pressburger's characteristic way of shaping stories. The film's topicality helped make it a box-office success, and led Arthur Rank to offer them carte blanche as part of his group of Independent Producers.

Rank would support The Archers, as they named their partnership, against Winston Churchill's hostility to *The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp* (1943), their first Technicolor masterpiece, and would continue through *A Canterbury Tale* (1944), *I Know Where I'm Going!* (1945), *A Matter of Life and Death* (1946) and up to their first post-war film, *Black Narcissus* (1947), released shortly before Britain announced its withdrawal from ruling India.

But when they revived the pre-war ballet story that Pressburger had sketched for Korda, to become *The Red Shoes* (1948), the hostility of Rank's new boss, John Davis, drove them back to Korda. After *The Small Back Room* (1949), the films that followed, *Gone to Earth* (1950), *The Elusive Pimpernel* (1950) and *Tales of Hoffmann*



(1951) all suffered from compromises due to Korda's precarious situation, as Britain struggled to recover from its post-war economic weakness.

Increasingly, Powell's and Pressburger's own interests were diverging, with Powell drawn to dance-based subjects, while also excited by the potential of television, and Pressburger wanting to capitalise on earlier scripts. But in the mid-50s, they came together again for three major productions. *Oh Rosalinda!!* (1955) updated Johann Strauss's classic operetta to post-war Vienna, under the four-power Allied occupation that had just ended. Despite chocolate-box décor by Hein Heckroth, and a spirited performance as 'the Bat' by Anton Walbrook, it remained an uneasy compromise. By contrast, *The Battle of the River Plate* (1956) delivered a spectacular re-enactment of the naval engagement that led to the scuttling of the German battle-cruiser Graf Spee early in the war, giving Britain a welcome first taste of victory. The Archers' final film, *Ill-Met by Moonlight* (1957) was another re-enactment, this time of the kidnapping of the German commander on Crete, in a guerilla operation led by the scholar turned soldier Paddy Leigh-Fermor, whimsically played by Dirk Bogarde. Neither of these, however, matched the ambitions that had fuelled their early collaborations.

## AFTER THE ARCHERS

Despite dissolving their partnership, Powell and Pressburger continued to co-operate amicably. Even after the scandal that surrounded Powell's *Peeping Tom* (1960), now widely regarded as a film far ahead of its time, Pressburger scripted the first of two films that Powell directed in Australia, the comedy *They're a Weird Mob* (1966). And in 1972 their small-scale fantasy *The Boy Who Turned Yellow* became a hit for the Children's Film Foundation. Six years later, as the rediscovery of the Archers got under way in Britain and America, their novel of *The Red Shoes* was published in the United States, delighting many fans of the film with its wealth of background detail about the world of ballet.

As that rediscovery has continued, boosted by video and by digital restoration, there has been much speculation about what sustained their partnership? In one of the last public appearances they made together, with Martin Scorsese joining them on stage at the National Film Theatre in 1985, Powell was clear: 'it was love – you can't have a collaboration in anything without love'.

# TEAM BIOGRAPHIES

DAVID HINTON DIRECTOR



David Hinton is a director who has made many documentaries for British television. His subjects have included artists of all kinds, including painter Francis Bacon, filmmaker Bernardo Bertolucci, writer Alan Bennett, and choreographer Karole Armitage. He has also made films about Dostoyevsky, rock and roll, visual comedy, and the Cultural Revolution in China. He is best known in the dance world for *Dead Dreams of Monochrome Men* and *Strange Fish*, his film versions of stage shows by DV8 Physical Theatre. He has also made performance films with Adventures in Motion Pictures, the Alvin Ailey Company and the Royal Swedish Ballet, and he has collaborated with several choreographers to create original dance works for the screen. He has twice won British Academy awards for his documentaries, and his dance films have won many awards, including a Prix Italia, an Emmy, and the IMZ Dance Screen Award. In 2008 he co-directed the film *Nora* (with Alla Kovgan), based on childhood memories of the self-exiled Zimbabwean dancer Nora Chipaumire.

## FILMOGRAPHY

- The South Bank Show* (1985 - 1988)
- Ten Great Writers of the Modern World* (1988)
- The Making of a Legend: Gone with the Wind* (1988)
- Francis Bacon* (1988)
- Dead Dreams of Monochrome Men* (1989)
- Funny Business* (1992)
- Strange Fish* (1993)
- Children of the Revolution* (1995)
- Nora* (2008)
- All This Can Happen* (2013)
- Made in England: The Films of Powell and Pressburger* (2024)

# TEAM BIOGRAPHIES

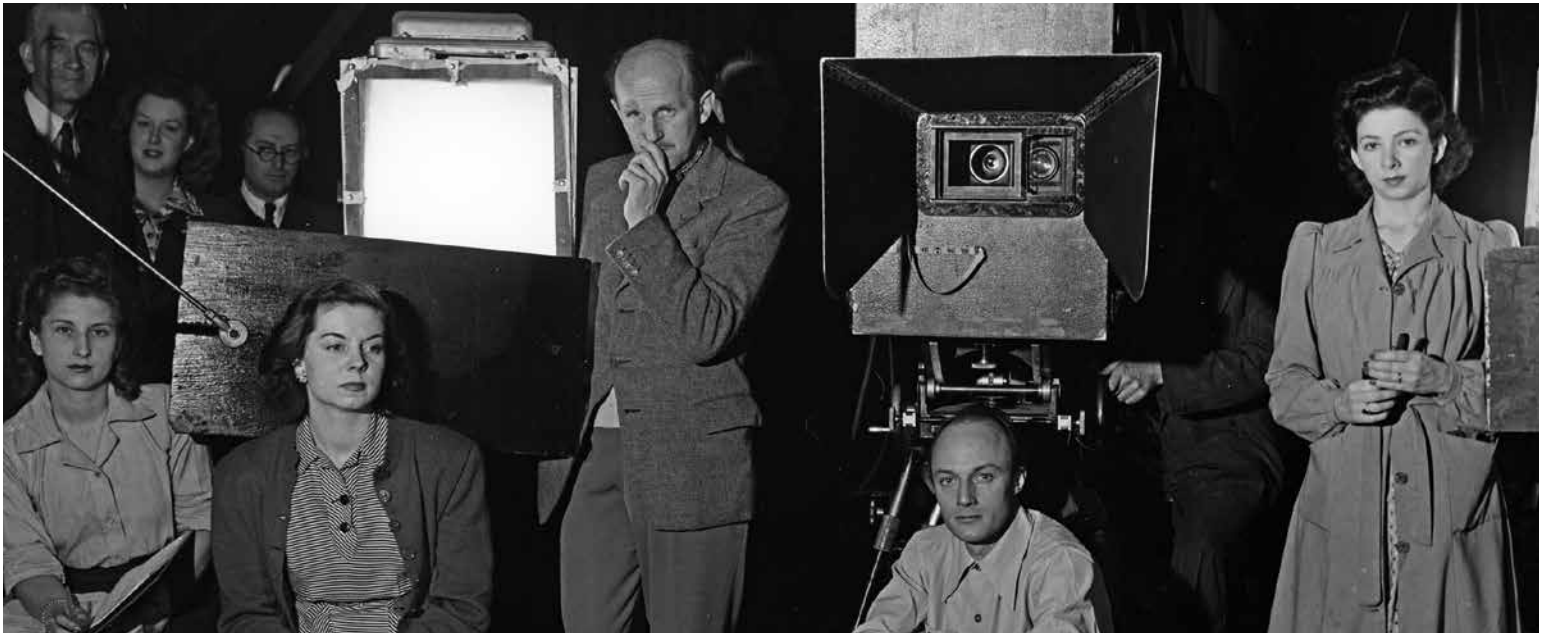
## MATTHEW WELLS PRODUCER

Matthew is a producer and director based in Bristol, UK. His most recent film as a director is *Frank Capra: Mr America* for Sony Pictures, which premiered at Venice Film Festival in 2023. Matthew served as producer on *Misha And The Wolves*, a feature documentary for Netflix and BBC Storyville, which premiered at Sundance in 2021. In 2018 he was executive producer of *Damian Hirst: Treasures From The Wreck Of The Unbelievable*.

Between 2017 and 2019 he produced and directed a series of three short documentaries about the life and work of Stanley Kubrick, with rare access to the filmmaker's archives, family members and inner circle. The films were made for Park Circus in partnership with Warner Bros., Sony Pictures and the Kubrick Estate. The most recent, *Never Just A Dream*, premiered at Venice 2019, and all three played theatrically with reissues of Kubrick's movies around the world.

In 2022 he launched Ice Cream Films as a vehicle for his work as a producer, *Made in England: The Films of Powell and Pressburger* is the company's first production.

[www.matthewwells.film](http://www.matthewwells.film)



## NICK VARLEY PRODUCER

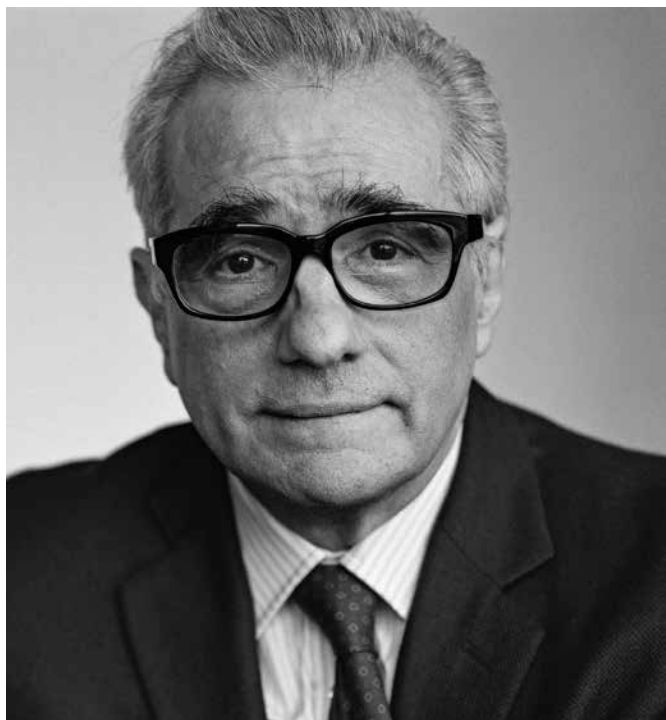
Nick is a film industry veteran of over twenty five years. He founded and was CEO of Glasgow based Park Circus Films which he sold in 2014. Nick consults for several film companies including Romulus Films, Filmbank/Warner Bros., and Sony Pictures. His main work now though is as a producer.

Nick was executive producer on Damien Hirst's *Treasures Of The Wreck Of The Unbelivalbe*, as well as several of Matthew Wells short films for Warner Bros. and Sony. He has just produced *Frank Capra: Mr America* for Sony Pictures which premiered at the Venice International Film Festival in 2023. Other projects in development include two documentaries and a TV drama series with a major US co-producer/studio.

[www.tenthousand86.com](http://www.tenthousand86.com)

Photographs available on request

# CAST/CREDITS



Martin Scorsese - Self/Narrator

Michael Powell - Self

Emeric Pressburger - Self

Director: David Hinton

Producers: Nick Varley, Matthew Wells

Composer: Adrian Johnston

Cinematographer: Ronan Killeen

Editors: Margarida Cartaxo, Stuart Davidson

Runtime: 133 min

Aspect Ratio: 1.85

Country of Origin: United Kingdom

Language: English

Year: 2024

