

# The Museum of Modern Art

## MoMA ANNOUNCES THE MOST COMPREHENSIVE US RETROSPECTIVE OF FILMS BY MICHAEL POWELL AND EMERIC PRESSBURGER

Presented in Collaboration with the BFI (British Film Institute), the Series Features 35mm Prints and New Digital Restorations

*Cinema Unbound: The Creative Worlds of Powell and Pressburger*

June 21–July 31, 2024

The Roy and Niuta Titus Theaters

**NEW YORK, NY, May 1, 2024**—The Museum of Modern Art announces *Cinema Unbound: The Creative Worlds of Powell and Pressburger*, a complete retrospective of the legendary British filmmaking duo of Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger. Presented in close collaboration with the BFI, *Cinema Unbound* screens at MoMA from June 21 to July 31, 2024, following BFI’s celebration and premiere of the retrospective at BFI Southbank, London, and across the UK last fall. The largest and most wide-ranging exploration of their work to date, this series of more than 50 films—many in new restorations—celebrates Powell and Pressburger’s cultural legacy and enduring influence. The monumental task of preserving and restoring many of the films presented in this series was completed by conservation experts, archivists, and curators at the BFI National Archive who care for a wealth of film- and paper-based material in the UK’s national collection. *Cinema Unbound* was organized at BFI by Robin Baker, Head of Cultural Partnerships, James Bell, Senior Curator of Fiction Film, and Claire Smith, Senior Curator of Special Collections, and at MoMA by Dave Kehr, Curator, and Olivia Priedite, Film Program Coordinator, Department of Film.

True cinematic visionaries and innovators, Michael Powell (1905–1990) and Emeric Pressburger (1902–1988) worked together on 24 British films between 1939 and 1972, including such classics as *The Red Shoes* (1948) and *A Matter of Life and Death* (1946). While Powell handled direction and Pressburger was responsible for the scripts, their duties blended often enough that, for the films they produced together as The Archers, their credit read, “Directed and written by Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger.”

“Powell and Pressburger have long been favorites of New York filmgoers,” said Dave Kehr, curator in MoMA’s Department of Film, “but this retrospective, the most comprehensive to date, will allow audiences to trace the development of their work from newly discovered early silent shorts to rarely screened late career masterpieces.”

MoMA’s series will open on June 21 with a new digital restoration of *Black Narcissus* (1947), an extravagant Technicolor psychodrama exploring themes of sexuality and spirituality, set in an Anglican convent in Nepal and starring Deborah Kerr, David Farrar, and Flora Robson.

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11 West 53 Street  
New York, NY 10019

The screening will be introduced by the Oscar-winning film editor **Thelma Schoonmaker**, who has most notably collaborated with Martin Scorsese on 22 films over five decades and was married to Michael Powell from 1984 until his death in 1990.

*Cinema Unbound* features many 35mm prints, as well as new digital restorations of such Powell and Pressburger classics as *The Small Back Room* (1949), *I Know Where I'm Going!* (1945) (both newly restored by the BFI National Archive and the Film Foundation), *The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp* (1943), and *The Tales of Hoffmann* (1951). Rarely screened films from Powell's late period include *Oh . . . Rosalinda!!* (1955), *The Battle of the River Plate* (1956), *Peeping Tom* (1960), and Powell's long-unavailable 1963 adaptation of Bela Bartok's opera *Bluebeard's Castle*. The latter two are newly restored by the BFI National Archive and the Film Foundation.

Of special interest to cinephiles, a selection of Michael Powell's early work as a director in the UK's "quota quickie" sector are presented. These low-budget films were made to satisfy the government's requirement that a certain percentage of films in theaters be of British origin. The program includes all 13 of Powell's quota quickies known to exist, from *Rynox* (1931) to *The Man Behind the Mask* (1936), in newly remastered editions from the BFI National Archive. Many of these films will be screening in the US for the first time.

The Archers worked with an exceptionally talented group of longtime collaborators who helped craft and deliver their narrative worlds, including production designer Alfred Junge, production designer and costume designer Hein Heckroth, cinematographer Jack Cardiff, sketch artist Ivor Beddoes, art director Arthur Lawson, and composer Brian Easdale, as well as on-screen collaborators including Roger Livesey, Anton Walbrook, Moira Shearer, Deborah Kerr, Kathleen Byron, and Sabu. The Archers' films continue to inspire a passionate fan base of artists and cultural practitioners, from Martin Scorsese (whose Film Foundation has worked with BFI National Archive and others to restore five films directed by Powell and Pressburger) to Kate Bush (whose album *The Red Shoes*, inspired by the eponymous film, marked its 30th anniversary last year).

#### SPONSORSHIP:

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