



EVENTS

Thelma Schoonmaker in Conversation

Thelma Schoonmaker

Born in Algiers, Algeria

As Editor

All USA unless stated

- 2023 **Killers of the Flower Moon** (d. Martin Scorsese)
- 2019 **The Irishman** (d. Martin Scorsese)
- 2017 **The Snowman** (USA/UK/Sweden/Japan, d. Tomas Alfredson) co-edited with Claire Simpson
- 2016 **Silence** (USA/Mexico/UK/Taiwan, d. Martin Scorsese)
- 2015 **Bombay Velvet** (India, d. Anurag Kashyap) co-edited with Prema Saigal
- 2014 **Learning to Drive** (USA/UK, d. Isabel Coixet) co-edited with Keith Reamer
- 2013 **The Wolf of Wall Street** (d. Martin Scorsese)
- 2011 **Hugo** (d. Martin Scorsese)
- 2010 **Shutter Island** (d. Martin Scorsese)
- 2007 **The Key to Reserva** (d. Martin Scorsese) Short film
- 2006 **The Departed** (d. Martin Scorsese)
- 2004 **The Aviator** (d. Martin Scorsese)
- 2002 **Gangs of New York** (d. Martin Scorsese)
- 1999 **My Voyage to Italy** (d. Martin Scorsese) documentary
- Bringing Out the Dead** (d. Martin Scorsese)
- 1997 **Kundun** (d. Martin Scorsese)
- 1996 **Grace of My Heart** (d. Allison Anders) co-edited with James Y. Kwei and Harvey Rosenstock
- 1995 **Casino** (d. Martin Scorsese)
- 1993 **The Age of Innocence** (d. Martin Scorsese)
- 1991 **Cape Fear** (d. Martin Scorsese)
- 1990 **Made in Milan** (d. Martin Scorsese) documentary short film
- Goodfellas** (d. Martin Scorsese)
- 1989 **New York Stories**, segment **Life Lessons** (d. Martin Scorsese)
- 1988 **The Last Temptation of Christ** (d. Martin Scorsese)
- 1986 **The Color of Money** (d. Martin Scorsese)
- 1985 **After Hours** (d. Martin Scorsese)
- 1982 **The King of Comedy** (d. Martin Scorsese)
- 1980 **Raging Bull** (d. Martin Scorsese)
- 1979 **The Kids Are Alright** (d. Jeff Stein) documentary Special Consultant
- 1970 **Woodstock** (d. Michael Wadleigh) documentary + Assistant Director, co-edited with Michael Wadleigh, Martin Scorsese, Stan Warnow, Yeu-Bun Yee, and Jere Huggins
- Street Scenes** (d. Martin Scorsese) documentary co-edited with Angela Kirby, Maggie Koven, Gerry Pallor, Peter Rea, Larry Tisdall
- 1968 **The Virgin President** (d. Graeme Ferguson) co-directed with Mark Rappaport, Burt Rashby
- 1967 **Who's That Knocking at My Door** (d. Martin Scorsese)
- 1966 **Passages from James Joyce's Finnegans Wake** (d. Mary Ellen Bute) co-edited with Mary Ellen Bute, Yoshio Kishi, Catherine Pichonnier, Paul Ronder, Albert Tompkins

The collaboration between Martin Scorsese and Thelma Schoonmaker is the stuff of cinematic legend – not so very unlike that between Powell and Pressburger. It was Scorsese who introduced Schoonmaker to her husband Michael Powell, and she soon joined Scorsese as he continued to rehabilitate the critical reputation of the films made by Powell and Pressburger. Schoonmaker helped her husband edit his autobiography and to get it published. Since Powell's death in 1990 she has worked tirelessly with Scorsese's Film Foundation to help restore the films of Powell and Pressburger and most recently Powell's own *Peeping Tom*. Schoonmaker's genius as an editor and her devotion to the art of cinema saw her awarded with a BFI Fellowship in 1997, our highest honour, and it is with the greatest pleasure that we celebrate her achievements and the work of many decades, together.

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The films of Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger have a shimmering, magical quality that distinguishes them from all others. The great run of films this pair made together as 'The Archers' began in the midst of World War II and continued through the austerity years, but they are romantic, musical, lustrous and bewitchingly supernatural – as well as sincerely internationalist. There's no better guide to them than Thelma Schoonmaker. The triple Oscar-winning editor was married to Powell from 1984 until his death in 1990. Since then she has been the custodian of his legacy, overseeing projects including his posthumous memoir, the restorations of his films and an English Heritage Blue Plaque at the Archers' former offices in London. Her creative partner Martin Scorsese (she has edited all his fiction features since 1980) is likewise a tireless champion of Powell and Pressburger's films. Schoonmaker describes his devotion to preserving their legacy as 'unstoppable'.

I spoke to Schoonmaker in September, when she was deep in preparation for the release of *Killers of the Flower Moon*, but seemingly still on a high from II Cinema Ritrovato in Bologna in June, which hosted a retrospective of Powell's early films. 'It was so wonderful to screen the films with fresh audiences, particularly because that audience is so young there, and see that people were enjoying the films tremendously. I think Michael would've enjoyed that. Wim Wenders was sitting next to me laughing and [Cannes film festival director] Thierry Frémaux also.' Many of these early films, made under the British 'quota quickies' system, meaning low budgets and short schedules, have been remastered and will screen as part of a major BFI season. For all their cut corners, there's a tangible sense of Powell's talent in the verve and variety of these early films. Not for nothing did the *Observer* critic C.A. Lejeune write in 1931 that Powell's work 'shows what a good movie brain can do within the strictest limits of economy'.

It was as a teenager, shortly after her family moved from the Caribbean to New York, that Schoonmaker saw her first Powell film. It was *The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp* (1943) on TV. Of course, she never dreamed she would marry the man who made this romantic film. Her ambition was a career as a diplomat, but she swiftly learned her political views were too liberal: 'They said,

CINEMA UNBOUND: THE CREATIVE WORLDS OF POWELL + PRESSBURGER

Library Talk: The interior life of an archive: an evening with the Michael Powell Collection

Mon 27 Nov 18:00

The Elusive Pimpernel

Sat 28 Oct 12:20; Mon 13 Nov 18:00 (+ intro by Bryony Dixon, BFI National Archive Curator)

The Thief of Bagdad: An Arabian Fantasy in Technicolor (aka The Thief of Bagdad)

Sat 28 Oct 15:00; Sun 26 Nov 12:00

Gone to Earth

Sat 28 Oct 18:20; Wed 22 Nov 20:45; Sat 25 Nov 17:50

A Matter of Life and Death

Sun 29 Oct 12:10; Sat 4 Nov 15:00; Tue 7 Nov 18:10 (+ intro by academic Lucy Bolton); Sun 19 Nov 18:30

Silent Cinema: The Magician + The Riviera Revels

+ intro by Bryony Dixon, BFI National Archive Curator

Sun 29 Oct 15:00

The Spy in Black + Smith

Sun 29 Oct 15:30 (+ intro by Bryony Dixon, BFI National Archive Curator)

The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp

Sun 29 Oct 17:20 (+ intro by Kevin and Andrew Macdonald); Sun 5 Nov 17:45; Thu 23 Nov 17:45; Sun 26 Nov 14:00 (+ pre-recorded intro by Stephen Fry)

Contraband

Mon 30 Oct 20:30

Paths to Partnership: Powell + Pressburger before The Archers

Tue 31 Oct 18:30

One of Our Aircraft Is Missing!

Tue 31 Oct 20:40 (+ intro by film historian Ian Christie)

Farewell Abschied

Wed 1 Nov 20:40

Projecting the Archive: The Queen's Guards + intro by Josephine Botting, BFI National Archive Curator

Thu 2 Nov 18:20

His Lordship

Sat 4 Nov 12:20

Red Ensign + The Night of the Party

Sun 5 Nov 14:40

49th Parallel

Mon 6 Nov 20:30

Twice upon a Time

Mon 6 Nov 18:10 + extended intro by James Bell, BFI National Archive Senior Curator

Talk: Philosophical Screens: A Matter of Life and Death

Tue 7 Nov 20:20

Black Narcissus

Wed 8 Nov 18:15; Sun 12 Nov 18:50; Thu 16 Nov 20:50; Sat 18 Nov 20:50; Mon 20 Nov 20:45 (+ intro by author Mahesh Rao)

The Edge of the World + Return to the Edge of the World

Wed 8 Nov 20:30; Wed 15 Nov 20:50

Rynox + Hotel Splendide

Fri 10 Nov 18:10

The Fire Raisers

Sat 11 Nov 12:30

“What would you do if you were in a cocktail party at the embassy in South Africa, and somebody asked you what you thought about apartheid?” I said, “I would say it's terrible. It has to stop.” And they said, “You can't do that until the government... decides they want to say that.” Well, that got me bounced.’ She took a summer course in filmmaking, where she met Scorsese. She recut his film *What's a Nice Girl like You Doing in a Place like This?* (1963), which had been mangled by a negative cutter, and they became friends, and collaborators. Scorsese introduced Schoonmaker to Powell when they were editing *Raging Bull* in 1979; shortly afterwards they moved in together, and five years later they were married. ‘I think I'm the luckiest person in the world,’ says Schoonmaker. ‘I would never have met Scorsese except for the fact that somebody miscut his negative. And I would never have met Michael if I hadn't been working for Scorsese. I've had so many lucky breaks.’

Living with Powell, Schoonmaker saw a side of the director others didn't. ‘He has a reputation for being tough on actors, but that was because when he was making films, it was a religion, he says. And if someone came on that set who didn't have that same feeling and didn't perform properly, he could be quite tough, from what I understand. I never saw that, never in the ten years I lived with him.’ Schoonmaker recalls an indefatigable, endlessly imaginative man who refused to let the setbacks of his later career stifle his creative energy. ‘He made every second of every day count. I've never been around anyone like that since,’ she says. ‘He didn't waste a moment of any day. It was a joy to live with him because he was so full of life and never gave up.’

Thelma Schoonmaker interviewed by Pamela Hutchinson, *Sight and Sound*, November 2023

A Canterbury Tale

Sat 11 Nov 14:50; Fri 24 Nov 20:35

Talk: Centre Stage: The Leading Women of Powell + Pressburger

Thu 16 Nov 18:20

Ill Met by Moonlight

Fri 17 Nov 20:40; Sat 25 Nov 12:40

The Battle of the River Plate

Sat 18 Nov 18:20; Mon 27 Nov 20:30

Behold a Pale Horse

Sun 19 Nov 11:50 Wed 22 Nov 17:50

The Wild Heart

Sun 19 Nov 15:10

Miracle in Soho

Mon 20 Nov 18:10; Sun 26 Nov 18:30

Course: The Magic of Powell + Pressburger

Wed 25 Oct to Wed 22 Nov 18:30

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