



CINEMA UNBOUND: THE CREATIVE WORLDS OF POWELL + PRESSBURGER

# Ill Met by Moonlight

## Ill Met by Moonlight

Directed by: Michael Powell, Emeric Pressburger  
©/Production Company:

The Rank Organisation Film Productions Ltd

Presented by: The Rank Organisation

Released by: J. Arthur Rank Film Distributors

Executive Producer: Earl St. John

Produced by: Michael Powell, Emeric Pressburger

Associate Producer: Sydney Streeter

Production Manager: Jack Swinburne

Production Controller for Pinewood Studios:

Arthur Alcott

Assistant Director: Charles Orme

3rd Assistant Director: David Tringham \*

Continuity: Gladys Goldsmith

Written by: Michael Powell, Emeric Pressburger

Adapted from the book [by]: W. Stanley Moss

Director of Photography: Christopher Challis

Camera Operator: Austin Dempster

Special Effects: Bill Warrington

Editor: Arthur Stevens

Art Director: Alex Vetchinsky

Dress Designer: Nandi Routh

Make Up: Paul Rabiger

Music Composed by: Mikis Theodorakis

Music Director: Frederic Lewis

Sound Recordists: Charles Knott,

Gordon K. McCallum

Sound System: Westrex Recording System

Sound Editor: Archie Ludski

Technical Advisers: Micky Akoumianakis,

Major Xan Fielding

Cretan Dialect Coach: Patrick Leigh Fermor \*

Made at: Pinewood Studios

Cast:

Dirk Bogarde

(Major Patrick Leigh Fermor, 'Philedem')

Marius Goring (Major General Karl Kreipe)

David Oxley (Captain W. Stanley Moss M.C.)

Demetri Andreas (Niko)

Cyril Cusack (Sandy)

Laurence Payne (Manoli)

Wolfe Morris (George)

Michael Gough (Andoni Zoidakis)

John Cairney (Elias)

Brian Worth (Stratis Saviolkis)

Rowland Bartrop (Micky)

George Eugeniu (Charis Zographakis)

Paul Stassinou (Yanni Katsias)

Adeeb Assaly (Zahari)

Theo Moreas (village priest)

Takis Frangofinos (Michali)

Christopher Lee (German officer in dentist's)

Peter Augustine

John Houseman

Phyllia Houseman

Gisela Birke \*

Patrick Leigh Fermor

(Greek-speaking voice for Patrick Leigh Fermor) \*

E.V.H. Emmett (narrator) \*

UK 1957©

104 mins

35mm

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, BFI Screenonline

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