



CINEMA UNBOUND: THE CREATIVE WORLDS OF POWELL + PRESSBURGER

Behold a Pale Horse

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Directed by: Fred Zinnemann
©/Production Company: Highland Films, Brentwood Productions Inc.
Associate Producer: Alexander Trauner
Production Manager: Louis Wipf
Assistant Director: Paul Feyder
Continuity: Alice Ziller
Casting: Margot Capelier
Screenplay by: J.P. Miller
Based on the novel by: Emeric Pressburger
Director of Photography: Jean Badal
Camera Operator: Henri Tiquet
Editor: Walter Thompson
Production Designer: Alexander Trauner
Art Director: Auguste Capelier
Set Decoration: Maurice Barnathan
Costumes Designed by: Elizabeth Haffenden, Joan Bridge
Make-up: Michel Deruelle
Hair Stylist: Marc Blanchard
Opening montage by courtesy of: Nicole Stephane, Frederic Rossif
Music Composed and Conducted by: Maurice Jarre
Recording: Poste Parisien, SIMO (Paris)
Sound: Jean Monchablon
Dialogue Coach: Ruth Roberts, Walter Kelley
Studio: Franstudio-Saint Maurice
Cast:
Gregory Peck (*Manuel Artiguez*)
Anthony Quinn (*Captain Vinolas*)
Omar Sharif (*Father Francisco*)
Raymond Pellegrin (*Carlos*)
Paolo Stoppa (*Pedro*)
Mildred Dunnock (*Pilar Artiguez*)
Daniela Rocca (*Rosanna*)
Christian Marquand (*Lt. Zaganar*)
Marietto Angeletti (*Paco Dages*)
Perette Pradier (*Maria*)
Zia Mohyeddin (*Luis*)
Rosalie Crutchley (*Teresa*)
Molly Urquhart
Jean-Paul Moulinot
Laurence Badie
Martin Benson
Jean-Claude Berck
Claude Berri
Claude Confortes
Michael Lonsdale (*reporter in hospital*)
Alain Saury
Jose-Luis Vilallonga
Elisabeth Wiener
USA 1964©
120 mins
35mm

Set 20 years after the Spanish Civil War, Pressburger's perspective-shifting first novel *Killing a Mouse on Sunday*, published in 1961, characteristically avoided simplistic moral judgments. He wrote the initial draft of Fred Zinnemann's adaptation (subsequently heavily revised by others), in which Gregory Peck plays exiled anti-fascist Artiguez, who returns to his village and back into conflict with his old adversary, Anthony Quinn's police chief Vinolas.

James Bell

A contemporary review

Fred Zinnemann's latest film, or something very like it, could have been made ten or more years ago when, for reasons that need little elaboration, its reception would almost certainly have been several degrees warmer than is possible today. Adapted by J. P. Miller from a novel by Emeric Pressburger, it is, by current standards, a conventional drama about the last days in the life of an exiled Spanish guerilla leader, 20 years after the civil war. 'Behold a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death ...' Manuel Artiguez (Gregory Peck) is, metaphorically, riding into the valley of the shadow, and that is the visual note to which the film (designed by Alexander Trauner) carefully adheres. So the opening daylight scenes, in which the orphaned son of Artiguez' former comrade escapes across the Spanish border and tries to make Artiguez take up arms again, have a tonality that sombrely heralds the grey night when Artiguez, at last emerging from retirement, chooses to confront his personal destiny.

The film seems to be about free will: the individual's need to make the choice worthy of himself, even if it is only to die as he has lived. Artiguez has become a failure in his own eyes, and consequently does not visit his mother while she is dying in a Spanish hospital, in case his lifelong enemy, the police chief Vinolas (Anthony Quinn), captures him. Later, when he knows that the man who brought him information about his mother is in Vinolas's pay, that Vinolas has sealed off the hospital in order to trap him there, and that his mother is dead, he decides to visit her.

Short dialogue scenes of a type that Zinnemann can handle particularly well (regardless sometimes of the lines that are spoken, and even of the quality of the acting) indicate the kind of moral pressures that can affect decisions of this kind: pressures complicated, in this case, by the church-hating Artiguez's indebtedness for the truth to a priest (Omar Sharif), and to a small boy, beside whom he finds himself wanting in courage. Peck's performance, adequate while it is simply one thread in the dramatic fabric, ceases to work on any level, however, when it is later meant to dominate the film, and the most happily assured moment in the unnecessarily prolonged final sequences is a nostalgic one when a pretty barmaid smiles a Western-style farewell to the departing hero.

Yet the best of this film is pleasantly characteristic of the best of Zinnemann as a whole: his feeling for location (the Franco-Spanish border), his generosity of spirit and the intelligence that he takes for granted in his audience. With his gentle asides (young priests playing ball or elderly ones clipping roses) and the special way in which he introduces each new character so that he or she momentarily matters very much (one certainly expected to see more of Rosalie Crutchley as Vinolas's ailing wife), Zinnemann has a knack of leaving open the possibility of other developments and other endings. One's interest in *Behold a Pale Horse* is held for exactly as long as such a possibility remains.

Elizabeth Sussex, *Sight and Sound*, Autumn 1964

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