



CINEMA UNBOUND: THE CREATIVE WORLDS OF POWELL + PRESSBURGER

Lazybones + Her Last Affaire

Lazybones

Director: Michael Powell
Production Company: Real Art Productions
Presented by: Julius Hagen
Assistant Director: Fred V. Merrick
Adapted for the screen by: Gerard Fairlie
From the play by: Ernest Denny
Photography: Ernest Palmer
Editor: Ralph Kemplen
Art Director: James A. Carter
Coiffure: Charles
Music Director: W.L. Trytel
Recording: Leo Wilkins
Studio: Twickenham Film Studios
Cast:
Ian Hunter (*Sir Reginald Ford*)
Claire Luce (*Kitty McCarthy*)
Bernard Nedell (*Michael McCarthy*)
Denys Blakelock (*Hugh Ford*)
Mary Gaskell (*Marjory Ford*)
Michael Shepley (*Hildebrand Pope*)
Pamela Carme (*Lottie Pope*)
Bobbie Comber (*Kemp*)
Fred Withers (*Richards*)
Sara Allgood (*Bridget*)
Frank Morgan (*Tom*)
Fewlass Llewellyn (*Lord Brockley*)
Harold Warrender (*Lord Melton*)
Paul Blake (*Viscount Woodland*)
Miles Malleon (*the pessimist*)
UK 1935
66 mins
Digital 4K

Her Last Affaire

Director: Michael Powell
Production Company: New Ideal Productions
Producers: Simon Rowson, Geoffrey Rowson
Assistant Director: Sidney Stone
Screen Adaptation: Ian Dalrymple
Based on the play 'SOS' by: Walter Ellis
Photography: Leslie Rowson
Camera: Harry Gillam
Editor: Ian Dalrymple
Art Director: J. Elder Wills
Recording: George E. Burgess
Studio: Riverside Studios
Cast:
Hugh Williams (*Alan Heriot*)
Francis L. Sullivan (*Sir Julian Weyre*)
Viola Keats (*Lady Avril Weyre*)
Sophie Stewart (*Jody Weyre*)
John Laurie (*Robb*)
Googie Withers (*Effie*)
Felix Aylmer (*Lord Camforth*)
Cecil Parker (*Sir Arthur Harding*)
Henry Caine (*Inspector Marsh*)
Eliot Makeham (*Dr Rudd*)
Shayle Gardner (*Boxall*)
Gerrard Tyrell (*Martin Smith*)
UK 1936
68 mins
Digital 4K

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The lazybones of Powell's amiable comedy is idle, penniless aristocrat Sir 'Reggie' Ford, who is shaken into a more productive existence when a criminal plot forces him to prove his worth to his American heiress wife. Shot after-hours with a cast hot-footing it from the West End, it betrays its stage origins, but Powell sprinkles it all with flashes of invention.

James Bell, bfi.org.uk

Lazybones, a typical depression-era comedy of impoverished aristocracy, was widely dismissed when first released. *The Monthly Film Bulletin* complained that 'such an incredible story needs more pace and a lighter touch all round', while *Kine Weekly* wittily commented that 'the producer makes the common mistake of thinking that an Englishman's home is a castle.' Michael Powell wasn't even credited as the director by *Picturegoer*, which instead mistakenly gave the honour to Julius Hagen, the film's producer. More recent assessments have not been much kinder. Jeffrey Richards damningly called it 'just the sort of film that got the British cinema a bad name', while Raymond Durgnat called it the 'runt of the litter', pointing out that it 'abounds in continuity bloopers'.

Looking at *Lazybones* today, it is worth noting that Powell had to shoot most of the film in 13 nights: common practice at Hagen's studio, which operated 24 hours a day. The schedule was necessitated by the fact that the film's two stars, Ian Hunter and Claire Luce, were appearing in West End plays at the same time.

There is some gold to be mined in this occasionally amiable comedy however, such as Powell's long and ambitious tracking shot that crosses a courtyard and then moves through two separate rooms before reaching its destination; a hilarious cameo by Miles Malleon, in which he is a witness to a wedding, all the time trying to talk the couple out of it; and, for today's audiences, there is the amusing line, 'it's about time there was a channel tunnel!'

The film's generally stage-bound nature does, unfortunately, weaken the comic potential of its outrageous conclusion – in which Hunter turns his palatial abode into a recreation home for the wealthy by giving them servile jobs – which mostly occurs offstage and is otherwise dealt with extremely cursorily. In its doltily Marxist presentation of the rich and powerful succumbing to a fantasy of poverty and lowly disenfranchisement, it anticipates the Hollywood classic *My Man Godfrey* (1936) and even such grisly modern-day TV spectacles as *I'm a Celebrity, Get Me Out of Here* (ITV, 2002-).

Sergio Angelini, BFI Screenonline, screenonline.org.uk

Her Last Affaire

Powell's adaptation of Walter Ellis's successful West End play *S.O.S.* was the most prestigious production he had made to date. A 'society drama' involving suspicion, clandestine romance and presumed murder, its cast of accomplished stage actors are nonetheless entirely upstaged by the glorious comic double-act of Googie Withers as mischievous maid Effie, and John Laurie as her pious, disapproving employer.

James Bell, bfi.org.uk

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Oh... Rosalinda!!

Sat 2 Dec 11:45; Wed 13 Dec 20:45

Lazybones + Her Last Affaire

Sat 2 Dec 15:20; Wed 20 Dec 17:50

The Love Test + Something Always Happens

Sun 3 Dec 15:30; Tue 19 Dec 20:20

Library Talk: The Glass Pearls

Mon 4 Dec 18:30 BFI Reuben Library

Wanted for Murder + intro by Simon McCallum,
BFI curator

Mon 4 Dec 20:40

Projecting the Archive: The End of the River +

intro by film scholar Dr Kulraj Phullar

Tue 5 Dec 18:20

The Phantom Light

Wed 6 Dec 20:30; Sun 17 Dec 12:30

Peeping Tom

Thu 7 Dec 20:45 (+ intro); Sat 9 Dec 15:00 (+

Doesn't Exist magazine launch and panel

discussion hosted by Victor Fraga); Fri 15 Dec

20:50; Mon 18 Dec 20:45; Thu 21 Dec 18:00; Sat 23

Dec 18:00; Fri 29 Dec 18:15

The Red Shoes

From Fri 8 Dec

The Red Shoes in the Spotlight

Fri 8 Dec 18:00

Bluebeard's Castle (Herzog Blaubarts Burg)

Fri 8 Dec 20:40; Fri 15 Dec 18:10 (+ intro by writer

Lillian Crawford); Sat 23 Dec 13:30

**Crown v. Stevens + Behind the Mask (aka The
Man Behind the Mask)**

Sat 9 Dec 12:40; Sat 23 Dec 15:00

The Tales of Hoffmann

Sat 9 Dec 17:30; Tue 12 Dec 20:20 (+ intro by

Andrew Moor, Manchester Metropolitan University);

Sat 16 Dec 14:45; Sat 30 Dec 17:30

Honeymoon (Luna de miel)

Sun 10 Dec 13:25; Thu 28 Dec 20:40

The Small Back Room

Sun 10 Dec 18:30; Sat 16 Dec 20:45; Fri 22 Dec

18:20; Wed 27 Dec 20:30; Sat 30 Dec 15:00

Queering Powell + Pressburger

Tue 12 Dec 18:00

Experimenta: Michelle Williams Gamaker and

Powell + Pressburger + Michelle Williams

Gamaker in conversation with Dr Kulraj Phullar

Wed 13 Dec 18:05

They're a Weird Mob

Sat 16 Dec 17:45; Fri 29 Dec 20:40

Espionage: Never Turn Your Back on a Friend /

A Free Agent + intro

Sun 17 Dec 15:15

Age of Consent

Fri 22 Dec 20:45; Wed 27 Dec 18:15

A Matter of Life and Death

Sat 23 Dec 15:00 BFI IMAX

Black Narcissus

Sat 30 Dec 14:30 BFI IMAX

With thanks to



In *Her Last Affaire*, Hugh Williams plays the secretary to a powerful man whose daughter he plans to marry, against the father's wishes, and who then gets mixed up in a mysterious death. Although recalling Ian Hunter's predicament in Powell's *The Night of the Party* (1934), the film was actually based on the play 'S.O.S.', produced by Gerald Du Maurier, which had not only provided Gracie Fields with one of her first dramatic roles in 1928, but had already been filmed under that title later the same year.

Williams' character is more interesting than Hunter's, however, because it is treated rather more ambiguously; for the first twenty minutes or so we believe he really is having an affair with his employer's wife (Viola Keats, in the role originally played by Gracie Fields). These scenes are played with surprising directness by Williams and Keats, and it is almost disappointing when we discover that he actually has an ulterior, altogether nobler, motive.

When Keats and Williams meet for their weekend in the country, the film is at its best, with strong support from John Laurie, as the innkeeper, and Google Withers. She provides the comic relief, constantly at odds with the stern, moralising innkeeper who threatens to dismiss her, but who is really jealous of her popularity with the customers. She ends up being Williams' main ally, covering up for him when he is recalled to the inn after Lady Avril's death. The sequence is at once comical and suspenseful in the best Hitchcock manner, as Williams tries to hide from Laurie so as not to be implicated.

Leslie Rowson's cinematography contains a number of intriguing visual flourishes, such as when Williams awaits the phone call to hear of Avril's death, the tension nicely evoked by shooting with strong horizontal shadows all over the room, contrasting with the light and airy settings that have dominated before. Rowson also gets the most from the low wooden beams and strangely curving staircases of the inn and its bedroom which, all wooden panelling and furniture and dominated by a large four-poster bed, is strikingly similar to the sets and atmosphere of the pub in *A Canterbury Tale* (1944).

Long thought lost, the film has been available again since the late 1980s, affording new audiences the chance to assess the most prestigious film Powell had directed up to that time.

Sergio Angelini, BFI Screenonline, screenonline.org.uk

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