



CINEMA UNBOUND: THE CREATIVE WORLDS OF POWELL + PRESSBURGER

# Crown v. Stevens + Behind the Mask

## Behind the Mask (aka The Man behind the Mask)

Director: Michael Powell  
Production Company: Joe Rock Productions  
Producer: Joe Rock  
Production Manager: Stanley Haynes  
Screen Adaptation: Syd Courtenay, Jack Bird  
Screen Adaptation: Stanley Haynes \*  
Dialogue: Ian Hay \*  
Original Novel by: Jacques Fitrelle  
Photography: Ernest Palmer  
Camera: Erwin Hillier  
Focus Puller: Skeets Kelly \*  
Clapper/Loader: Geoff Bellhouse \*  
Editor: Sam Simmonds  
Art Director: George Provis  
Art Director: Andrew Mazzei \*  
Music Director: Cyril Ray  
Recording: William H.O. Sweeney  
Cast:

Hugh Williams (*Nicholas 'Nick' Barclay*)  
Jane Baxter (*June Slade*)  
Donald Ward (*Jimmy Slade*)  
Barbara Everest (*Lady Slade*)  
George Merritt (*Inspector Mallory*)  
Henry Oscar (*chief of International Police Bureau*)  
Reginald Tate (*Hayden*)  
Kitty Kelly (*Miss Weeks*)  
Donald Calthrop (*Dr H.E. Walpole*)  
Ivor Barnard (*Hewitt*)  
Hal Gordon (*sergeant*)  
Syd Crossley (*postman*)  
Maurice Schwartz (*Melchior*)  
Peter Gawthorne (*Earl of Slade*) \*  
Esma Cannon (*Emily, waitress*) \*  
Wilfred Caithness (*butler*) \*  
Moyna Vawser (*Nora*) \*  
Cameron Hall  
UK 1936 55 mins Digital 4K

Remastering has been supported by Matt Spick and the Charles Skey Charitable Trust.

## Crown v. Stevens

Directed by: Michael Powell  
©/Produced by:  
Warner Brothers First National Productions  
Presented by: Warner Bros. Pictures Ltd.  
Executive Producer: Irving Asher \*  
Screen Play: Brock Williams  
From the novel/Third Time Unlucky by:  
Lawrence Meynell  
Photography: Basil Emmott  
Editor: A. Bates  
Art Direction: Peter Proud  
Sound: Leslie Murray, H.C. Pearson  
Sound System: Western Electric  
Cast:

Beatrice Thomson (*Doris Stevens*)  
Patric Knowles (*Chris Jansen*)  
Glennis Lorimer (*Molly Hobbs*)  
Reginald Purdell (*Alf*)  
Allan Jeayes (*Inspector Carter*)  
Frederick Piper (*Arthur Stevens*)  
Googie Withers (*Ella Levine*)  
Mabel Poulton (*Mamie*)  
Morris Harvey (*Maurice Bayleek*) \*  
Billy Watts (*Joe Andrews*) \*  
Davina Craig (*Maggie the maid*) \*  
Bernard Miles (*Police Detective Wells*) \*  
UK 1936 65 mins Digital 4K

\* Uncredited

*Crown v. Stevens* was made by Michael Powell with an eye firmly set on the light at the end of the tunnel. In fact, *Crown* proved to be his penultimate 'quota' film and the last of these that survives intact. His following assignment, *The Man Behind The Mask* was released only three weeks after *Crown*, and it importantly served as an introduction to producer Joe Rock, who would fund Powell's first truly 'personal' project, *The Edge of the World* (1937).

*Crown v. Stevens* was one of five Powell films made for producer Irving Asher at Warner Brothers' Teddington studios, and is a crime melodrama that, had it been made a few years later, would probably have been labeled a film noir.

Based on a recent novel by the popular and extremely prolific novelist Laurence Meynell (it had been published only a few months before production began), it tells the story of a naive young man who becomes involved in the machinations of a murderous and ultimately unrepentant femme fatale, played with strength and conviction by Beatrix Thompson, a theatre actress in her only starring role for the cinema.

The rich cinematography is by Basil Emmott and the screenplay is a typically polished effort by Brock Williams; both also worked in the same capacities on three earlier films Powell had made for Asher: *Something Always Happens* (1933), and two currently 'lost' films, *The Girl in the Crowd* (1934) and *Someday* (1935). *The Girl in the Crowd* gave Googie Withers her first film role, and she turns up again in *Crown*, having great fun in a comic role as a breathless party girl with a lust for money, cigarettes and alcohol. The role of the 'good' woman is taken by the perky Glennis Lorrimer, who is rather charming in one of her last roles as Patric Knowles' interior decorator girlfriend; Lorrimer is probably best remembered today as the Lady in the Gainsborough Studios' opening logo. Although admittedly lightweight, in its ambiguous tone and suggestive cinematography, *Crown* recalls Powell's superior *Her Last Affaire* (1935) and, with the latter, is notable as one of the few comparatively 'dark' films he made in this period.

Sergio Angelini, BFI Screenonline, [screenonline.org.uk](http://screenonline.org.uk)

## Behind the Mask

Crucial for being the film that introduced Powell to *The Edge of the World* producer Joe Rock, Powell's final quota film was this bizarre thriller of masked balls, kidnapping and master criminals. It was long considered lost and listed on the BFI's 'Most Wanted' list, but a 16mm print of a truncated version survived at the George Eastman Museum, and it is from that print that this new scan was taken.

James Bell, [bfi.org.uk](http://bfi.org.uk)

## CINEMA UNBOUND: THE CREATIVE WORLDS OF POWELL + PRESSBURGER

**The Red Shoes** From Fri 8 Dec

**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

**Peeping Tom** 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 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

**Oh... Rosalinda!!** Wed 13 Dec 20:45

**They're a Weird Mob**

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

**The Phantom Light** Sun 17 Dec 12:30

**Espionage: Never Turn Your Back on a Friend / A Free Agent + intro** Sun 17 Dec 15:15

**Library Talk: The Glass Pearls**

Tue 19 Dec 19:30 BFI Reuben Library

**The Love Test + Something Always Happens** Tue 19 Dec 20:20

**Lazybones + Her Last Affaire** Wed 20 Dec 17:50

**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



### The Red Shoes: Beyond the Mirror

Our new BFI Southbank exhibition immerses you in Powell and Pressburger's *The Red Shoes*. From 10 November to 7 January. Blue Room

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## BIG SCREEN CLASSICS

**The Umbrellas of Cherbourg (Les Parapluies de Cherbourg)**

Fri 1 Dec 14:40; Wed 13 Dec 18:20 (+ intro by Geoff Andrew, Programmer-at-Large); Sun 17 Dec 18:45; Wed 20 Dec 20:55

**The Passenger**

Sat 2 Dec 20:20 (+ pre-recorded intro by Jason Wood, BFI Executive Director of Public Programmes & Audiences); Sun 10 Dec 15:45; Wed 27 Dec 17:50

**After Life (Wandafuru Ralfu)**

Sun 3 Dec 12:45; Tue 12 Dec 17:15; Wed 27 Dec 14:40; Sat 30 Dec 20:20

**My Night with Maud (Ma Nuit chez Maud)**

Mon 4 Dec 18:15; Thu 14 Dec 20:50; Thu 28 Dec 18:15

**Five Easy Pieces**

Tue 5 Dec 14:30; Sat 9 Dec 20:55; Tue 19 Dec 18:15; Fri 29 Dec 18:20

**White Material**

Wed 6 Dec 18:10 (+ intro by film curator Abiba Coulibaly); Fri 29 Dec 20:45

**Boyz n the Hood**

Thu 7 Dec 20:35; Sat 16 Dec 18:15; Sat 23 Dec 20:40

**Meet Me in St Louis**

Fri 8 Dec 18:10 (+ intro by writer Richard Dyer); Wed 20 Dec 14:30; Thu 21 Dec 18:10; Sat 23 Dec 11:50

**It's a Wonderful Life**

Wed 13 Dec 18:10; Sat 16 Dec 20:25; Mon 18 Dec 20:25; Wed 20 Dec 18:10; Fri 22 Dec 14:30, 20:25; Sat 23 Dec 18:10

**The Shop around the Corner**

Fri 15 Dec 18:20; Mon 18 Dec 14:30; Thu 21 Dec 20:45; Sat 30 Dec 12:20

**Remember the Night**

Sun 17 Dec 12:15; Tue 19 Dec 20:40

**Fanny and Alexander (Fanny och Alexander)**

Sat 23 Dec 14:20; Fri 29 Dec 13:30; Sat 30 Dec 13:00