

Graham Greene

Shadowing the Third Man

Shadowing the Third Man

Director: Frederick Baker

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Production Companies: Media Europa, Silverapples Media, StudioCanal, Österreichischer Rundfunk-Fernsehen, Nippon Hoso Kyokai

In Association with: Turner Classic Movies

Executive Producer: Avril MacRory

StudioCanal Executive Producer: Ron Halper

ORF Executive Producer: Franz Grabner

NHK Executive Producer: Nobuo Isobe

Producer: Frederick Baker

Series Editor: Anthony Wall

Line Producer: Lucie Conrad

Location Manager: Genny Masterman

Archive Research: Jan Przegralek, Jane Bywaters

Written by: Frederick Baker

Script: Sandra Fasolt

Camera: Christian Mehofer, Alexander Bobschewski, Vaughan Matthews

Camera Assistants: Bernhard Mehl, Roland Winkler, Michael Schletterer, Artur Höfinger

Editor: Thomas Kühne

On-Line Editor: Christian Leiss

Sound Design: Stefan Oertl

Sound: Günther Tuppinger, David Keene

Sound Mix: Peter Schöffler

Historical Consultants: Brigitte Timmermann, Charles Drazin

Special Thanks to: Shepperton Studios,

MA 45 Wasserbau, MA 36 Wien Kanal,

MA 43 Stadt Friedhöfe, Wiener Berufsfeuerwehr,

Viennale International Film Festival

Archives: Canal+ Image UK Ltd.,

Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, Getty Images,

Hulton Archive, Popperfoto, Sammlung Kurt Miksch,

Familie Karas, British Film Institute,

Österreichischer Rundfunk-Fernsehen, Adrian

Turner, US National Archives

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62 mins

The exhibition 'The Third Man In the Footsteps of a Film Classic' (Frederick Baker and Brigitte Timmermann) is in Bradford, Berkhamsted, Oxford and London this summer and Autumn.

'Shadowing the Third Man' will be shown 2 October on BBC4.

We are very pleased to welcome Frederick Baker and Anthony Wall to the National Film Theatre to take part in a Q&A session after this evening's screening.

In the year 2000, Graham Greene's classic thriller *The Third Man* was voted the best British film of the 20th Century in a *bfi* poll. *Shadowing the Third Man* is the first documentary made exclusively about the making of *The Third Man*. It shadows *The Third Man*, in the sense that it uses sequences from the original film to tell the story of the film's own making. At its heart are the amazing parallels between the on and off-screen action's mix of fact and fiction.

This documentary for the BBC's prestigious *Arena* strand, takes a journey through the film, in an attempt to separate fact from fiction. In a BBC interview Orson Welles claims to have written his own dialogue. He did deliver the famous cuckoo clock speech, but that was where Welles's literary contribution stopped. Orson Welles is seen in the Vienna sewers, but most of the water he splashes through is Thames water, hundred of kilometres from the blue Danube. The sewers had to be rebuilt just for Welles, because the real ones were too unhygienic for him as 'an American'.

The archives of the Austrian state broadcaster ORF have even divulged, rare newsreel footage from period. There is even footage of Welles's arrival in Vienna and Reed working on location in the sewers. The BBC archives have revealed precious radio interviews with Reed, Greene and even the Austrian-born Cameraman Robert Krasker. The archive shows that the black market on which Greene based his story is very much fact not fiction. A world expert on penicillin tells how he himself stole penicillin from the army stores after the war.

Shadowing the Third Man looks at the fascinating creative transatlantic tensions between the European and American views of the world. Alexander Korda in London, and David O. Selznick in LA, two of the film world's giants battled it out behind the scenes. They even argued about the garments Alida Valli should wear. What for Korda and Reed was realism, was for Selznick 'intensely uninteresting clothing'.

That the new world, old world conflicts feel too familiar, bears witness to the timeless nature of the film. If one were to shoot *The Third Man* today, then the dark quarters of Baghdad would provide a perfect setting. In fact it was a film set in Algiers, that provided Greene with a starting point for *The Third Man*. He said in his review of the 1937 French classic *Pépé le Moko* starring Jean Gabin as a Parisian gentleman gangster, that it 'raised the thriller to the level of the poetic'. Vienna, Algiers, Bagdad, the pattern is the same, a western criminal hiding in an oriental maze of otherness.

What does however, make the film unmistakably Viennese is the music by Anton Karas. Guy Hamilton has been able to finally give a definitive eye witness account of how Carol Reed discovered the man who was going to unleash a musical craze and become the first Austrian to top the US music charts. It all started at the welcoming party thrown by the Austrian studio boss Karl Hartl. He had worked with Alexander Korda in the same Viennese film studios that had

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Graham Greene

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The Third Man

Fri 9 July 8.20 NFT1; Sun 11 July 8.45 NFT2; Sat 17 July 8.45 NFT1

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nurtured local boy Fritz Lang... With drinks came the music of the Vienna woods. 'In the corner there was a funny little man plonking away on an instrument and Carol was absolutely fascinated. He was like a snake charmer and he was squatted on the floor in front of him and he said "Guy what is that thing?" I didn't know what it was and I said "Oh Carol, come on, you know perfectly well what that is, everybody knows." And he says "Oh you are a clever clogs" because no assistant should ever say that he doesn't know. And so I made enquiries and drifted back to him. And he said "oh it's fabulous, what is it Guy?" he says and I said "a zither" and he said "A what?" "A zither."'

The next Sunday Karas came to the crew hotel, and played for Reed. He turned his bedroom into a makeshift recording studio, stuffing bed sheets under the door to block out the sound of the maids in the corridor. Only much later in Shepperton Studios, under pressure from the film's homesick Austrian film editor Oswald Hafenrichter, that Reed decided to use the zither for the whole score.

Carol Reed's documentary style makes the city of Vienna the other central character. As one of the first British feature films to be shot largely on location, Reed is a neo-realist like his contemporaries like Visconti, Rossellini and De Sica. In order to honour Reed's vision and to develop the documentary style further, I decided to literally take back the 1948 feature classic back to its original locations. This was possible to find the exact locations, because local historian Brigitte Timmermann has spent years researching the film and Brigitte and I have just completed a book and exhibition on the making of *The Third Man*.

My central idea for *Shadowing the Third Man* was to break out of the dark cinema with the film and become freestyle projectionists, taking the celluloid fictions back to their factual sources. Sequences that were shot in studios, like much the sewer chase get a whole new dimension, in terms of mixing fact and fiction. The cameramen Christian Mehofer (Vienna), Vaughan Matthews (London) and their teams helped take Robert Krasker's oscar-winning photography and give it a whole new aura. We experimented beaming sequences on everything from huge objects like the famous Ferris wheel, ten-metre-high sewer walls, to Harry's snow-covered grave and pint-sized beer glasses, much beloved by Trevor Howard.

I studied archaeology and maybe it was this frame of mind that helped me develop this 'projectivist' technique of creating new visual layers to excavate the spirit of the original film pictures. For me this technique achieves both distance and between the then and now, and a fascinating overlap between fact and fiction. The patina and contortions of the real life locations provide not just atmosphere, but also bring a dimension of colour, that literally sheds new light on old classics like Orson Welles's confrontation in the big wheel. I have tried to use the projections not just as a one-off, but as an on-going device that introduces its own aesthetic and gives film fans a fresh look at sequences like the sewer chase, that have almost been repeated to death. I hope this will be an interesting watch whether its your first time with *The Third Man* or your you 33rd...

Frederick Baker

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