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Co-Editor: Mark Leeper, mleeper@optonline.net
Co-Editor: Evelyn Leeper, eleeper@optonline.net
Sending Address: evelynchimesleeeper@gmail.com
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Mini Reviews, Part 10 (film reviews by Mark R. Leeper and Evelyn C. Leeper):

Here is the tenth batch of mini-reviews, all 2024 documentaries about film:

MADE IN ENGLAND: THE FILMS OF POWELL AND PRESSBURGER (2024): There's a "game" Jews play: "And you know who else is Jewish?" First this week was Claudia Sheinbaum, President of Mexico. And now from watching MADE IN ENGLAND: THE FILMS OF POWELL AND PRESSBURGER, we discover that one those those quintessentially British filmmakers known as "The Archers" , Emeric Pressburger, was a Hungarian Jew.

Two documentaries this year seem to indicate some sort of synchronicity. Not only are both are about filmmakers, but both are about a pair/team of filmmakers. (The other one is MERCHANT IVORY.)

(There is also a documentary about a single filmmaker, MY NAME IS ALFRED HITCHCOCK.)

MADE IN ENGLAND: THE FILMS OF POWELL AND PRESSBURGER is narrated (and presumably written) by Martin Scorsese, and is one of his many love letters to the cinema he grew up with. In this case, he also points about what it has influenced in his own films.

But he also talks about the trials and tribulations that Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger went through and which eventually broke up their partnership (but apparently not their friendship).

This is a dangerous film--it made me what to watch most of the films Scorsese talked about. However, it hasn't figured out a way to put more than 168 hours in a week, so ... (But some will definitely make it to the stack.)

As with all of Scorsese's film documentaries, this is highly recommended. [-ecl]

Released theatrically 12 July 2024.

Film Credits: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt19895822/reference>

What others are saying: https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/made_in_england_the_films_of_powell_and_pressburger

MERCHANT IVORY (2024): This two-hour documentary covers the films of Ismail Merchant and James Ivory, many of them with with writer Ruth Praver Jhabvala and composer Richard Robbins. The longevity of their partnership is astonishing--forty-four years from 1961 to 2005--as is their output, coincidentally four-four films, averaging one a year. (It is claimed to be the longest partnership in independent cinema history.) The film covers both their professional and romantic partnership, as well as details such as Merchant's cooking, giving a more complete view of them than just a catalog of award-winning films. [-ecl]

Released theatrically 30 August 2024.

Film Credits: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt14493970/reference>

What others are saying: https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/merchant_ivory

MY NAME IS ALFRED HITCHCOCK (2024): There have been previous documentaries about Alfred Hitchcock, such as DIAL H FOR HITCHCOCK (1999) and I AM ALFRED HITCHCOCK (2021). There was also a narrative film, HITCHCOCK (2012), about the making of PSYCHO. However, MY NAME IS ALFRED HITCHCOCK differs in that all the words are Hitchcock's, taken from interviews, articles, and so on, and formed into a coherent thread covering his work. As such, it provides a different perspective (although obviously one could pick and choose to present almost any representation of Hitchcock's position). A bit drier than some of the film documentaries of 2024, but worth seeing. [-ecl]

Released theatrically 25 October 2024.

Film Credits: <https://www.imdb.com/title/tt21154428/reference>

What others are saying: https://www.rottentomatoes.com/m/my_name_is_alfred_hitchcock

This Week's Reading (book comments by Evelyn C. Leeper):

I will once again give you my recommended Christmas reading list, with a couple of additions:

- "Happy Birthday, Dear Jesus" by Frederik Pohl
- "'Tis the Season" by China Mieville
- 'Newton's Mass' by Timothy Esaias
- "The Star" by Arthur C. Clarke
- "Rebuttal" by Betsy Curtis

"The Star" is added because Charles Harris found "Rebuttal", a response to it.

The ISFDb can help you find these.

You'll notice none of Connie Willis's Christmas stories are here. They are a bit too syrupy for the anthology I am putting together in my mind. You can find these in A LOT LIKE CHRISTMAS (an expanded edition of MIRACLE AND OTHER CHRISTMAS STORIES), which I reviewed in the 12/24/21 issue of the MT VOID. See my review of THE BEST OF FREDERIK POHL in the 09/04/09 issue of the MT VOID for more comments on some of these stories. Or find these (and all my on-line reviews) at . [-ecl]

Mark Leeper
mleeper@optonline.net

Quote of the Week:

Physicists who want to protect traditional Christmas realize that the only way to keep from changing Christmas is not to observe it.

--xkcd #679

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