

Cameraman: The Life And Work Of Jack Cardiff

Cert: PG

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Dir: Craig McCall.

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Life through Jack Cardiff's lens

By Derek Malcolm, None 07.05.10

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There has never been a greater cinematographer, particularly as far as colour is concerned, than Jack Cardiff. He was the first of his profession to be presented with an Honorary Oscar. It was richly deserved, and Craig McCall's documentary about Cardiff's career, spanning nine of the cinema's 10 decades, strives hard to show exactly what made him such a virtuoso.



Jack Cardiff

Limited for clips as it is, probably due to the expense, it provides a portrait of a modest man who once said the film world was "full of hypocrisy, hyperbole and everything else you can think of". Even [Marlene Dietrich](#), the perfectionist shot so marvellously by Sternberg, admired him, as did other pernickity female stars, who knew he showed them in the best possible light.

He was often inspired by painters, among them the Impressionists Vermeer and Turner, and he did things to British films in the post-war golden era that nobody else had even thought about. Watch Michael Powell's *A Matter of Life and Death*, *Black Narcissus* and *The Red Shoes* (all illustrated here) to see which artist Cardiff had fixed upon. Each is a masterpiece of the cinematographer's art. But Cardiff was also a director of standing (Hitchcock called *Sons and Lovers* "bloody good"). This documentary could have been twice as long and retained our interest.

Details are correct at the time of publication - please check with venue before booking.