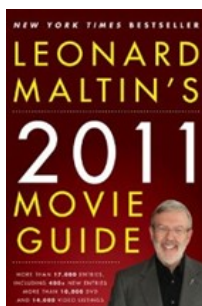


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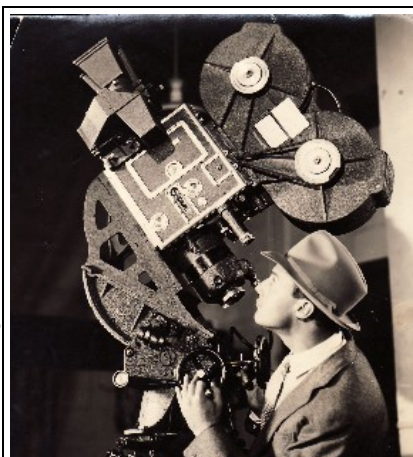
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movie review: Cameraman: The Life And Work Of Jack Cardiff

After years of DVD special features, even dedicated buffs may be somewhat blasé about a film that takes us behind the scenes to explore one man's career...but this is no ordinary documentary, and its subject is no ordinary filmmaker. Jack Cardiff was a remarkable artist who grew up with the British movie industry and carved a niche for himself through his pioneering use of Technicolor, notably in the Michael Powell-Emeric Pressburger classics *A Matter of Life and Death*, *The Red Shoes* and *Black Narcissus*. He was the first cinematographer ever presented with an honorary Academy Award, in 2001.



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Cameraman is thoroughly absorbing and is obviously a labor of love. Director Craig McCall filmed many conversations with Cardiff, who was still sharp and active in his 90s. (He died in April of 2009 at the age of 94.) He also spoke to



colleagues and admirers including Kirk Douglas, Martin Scorsese,—

—Lauren Bacall (who was on location when he shot *The African Queen*), Richard Fleischer, Freddie Francis, John Mills, Kim Hunter, Charlton Heston, and film editor Thelma Schoonmaker, who was married to Michael Powell.

McCall makes exceptionally good, and extensive, use of film clips (all of them restored in high definition), so even a novice doesn't have to take anyone's word for what the cinematographer achieved, from his earliest efforts in the 1930s through his "golden age" and beyond: we can see the results for ourselves. We also trace his brief but notable career as a director.



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their use of light, and then watch him apply those principles as he stands at an easel creating his own oil paintings. He also reveals, for the first time, a portfolio of photographs he took of beautiful women over the years, including Marilyn Monroe, Sophia Loren, and Audrey Hepburn. (These should be assembled in a coffee table book!)

Cardiff is impressive not only because of his longevity—he started as a clapper boy in 1929 and photographed Sylvester Stallone as Rambo and Arnold Schwarzenegger as Conan in the 1980s—but because of his unquenchable curiosity and forward thinking. We see him commenting on great artists' work, noting

Cameraman has already played at a number of film festivals and had a theatrical engagement in New York. It opens in Los Angeles today, and I recommend seeing it on a theater screen if at all possible. Film aficionados and aspiring filmmakers alike can learn from it, and anyone can find inspiration in the way Jack Cardiff lived his life.

Leonard Maltin posted to [Film Reviews](#) at 12:20 am on June 3, 2011 | [Permalink](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#)

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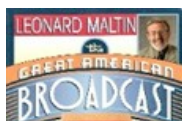
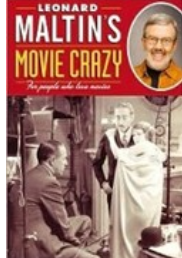
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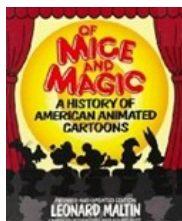
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