

## THE RED SHOES (1948)

Written, Produced and Directed by  
Michael Powell & Emeric Pressburger

Based on the fairy tale by  
Hans Christian Andersen

Director of Photography  
Jack Cardiff

Production Designer  
Hein Heckroth

Art Director  
Arthur Lawson

Editor  
Reginald Mills

Music composed by  
Brian Easdale

The Royal Philharmonic  
Orchestra conducted by  
Sir Thomas Beecham

## CAST

Boris Lermontov  
Anton Walbrook

Julian Craster  
Marius Goring

Vicky Page  
Moira Shearer

Ivan Boleslawsky  
Robert Helpmann

Grischa Ljubov  
Léonide Massine

Sergei Ratov  
Albert Basserman

Irina Boronskaja  
Ludmilla Tchérina

Livingstone 'Livy' Montague  
Esmond Knight

## “Why do you want to dance?” “Why do you want to live?”

Over the years, I’ve thought a lot about that exchange from *The Red Shoes*. It expresses so much about the burning need for art, and I identified with that feeling the very first time I saw the picture with my father. I was so young then. It put me in contact with something in myself, a driving emotion I saw in the characters up there on the screen, and in the color, the rhythm, the sense of beauty—in the filmmaking.

The opening scene, for instance. Two worried men, dressed in black, pacing in a corridor. Behind them, two doors. We start to hear a clamor from the other side. One of them signals that it’s time to open those doors, and when they do a herd of students bursts through and lunges up the stairs, grabbing for mezzanine seats to a ballet performance. They’re driven by that hunger, that passion, for art. To see it, to feel it, to be inspired by it and maybe to become artists themselves.

That passion drives every single, extraordinary moment of *The Red Shoes*, and it’s what makes the film’s glorious Technicolor images so forceful and moving, now restored to their full, shimmering beauty. The characters and their world are brought to life with the aching beauty they themselves long to create. The vivid reds and deep blues, the vibrant yellows and rich blacks, the lustrous fleshtones of the close-ups, some of them ecstatic and some agonizing, or both at once...so many moments, so many conflicting emotions, such a swirl of color and light and sound, all burned into my mind from that very first viewing, the first of many.

*The Red Shoes* was the tenth collaboration between Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger, and the seventh official production they made under the banner of their own company, The Archers. Powell and Pressburger—two great artists working side by side, sharing credit, in a unique and unprecedented creative partnership. As was the case on all their pictures, they worked with a team of extraordinary collaborators: the great Jack Cardiff, their cinematographer; Hein Heckroth, their production designer; Brian Easdale, their composer; the legendary Léonide Massine, who lent his presence to the film in the role of Ljubov, and created and danced the part of the Shoemaker in the glorious central ballet sequence; and the remarkable cast, including Anton Walbrook, Moira Shearer, Marius Goring, Ludmilla Tchérina, Albert Basserman, and Robert Helpmann, who was also the film’s choreographer; together, they created something enduring and enthralling. *This* is how important art is, they seemed to be saying from the first shot to the last—it’s so important that it’s worth living for, and dying for.

I’d like to thank Bob Gitt and his team at UCLA for their painstaking work, the Hollywood Foreign Press Association for their generous funding, and the Louis B. Mayer Foundation for their support. Once you see this restoration of *The Red Shoes*, you’ll want to thank them too.



MARTIN SCORSESE  
Founder and Chair, The Film Foundation



TOP TO BOTTOM: B&W separation master positive of the blue record showing mold damage in B&W; recombined Eastman color image showing red, blue and green mold damage; 4K digital restoration output to film.



# DANCING TO THE MUSIC OF TIME

## THE RED SHOES RESTORED

Seen in full-scale projection, *The Red Shoes* is not only one of cinema's great sensuous experiences, but a profound meditation on the power and the price of all-consuming spectacle. Beyond the intensity of its performances and the beauty of its images, it is this reflexive quality, shared with other masterpieces of the 1940s, that makes it a true classic, capable of being endlessly re-interpreted and rediscovered.

*The Red Shoes* was indeed born from a determination to throw caution to the winds. "You go too far", the distinguished art director Alfred Junge warned Michael Powell, whereupon Powell dropped him to take a chance on the painter Hein Heckroth, who would triumphantly unify the film's backstage and on-stage elements. So too with the all-important music and dance elements. Powell and his partner Emeric Pressburger rejected a score by their established composer in favor of one by the young Brian Easdale, taking the same risk that the impresario Lermontov does with Julian Craster in the film's story.

Pressburger had written the first version of the script while under contract to Alexander Korda in 1939. Intended as a vehicle for Korda's future wife Merle Oberon, it was assumed that a real ballerina would double in the dance sequences. But when Powell and Pressburger, now sharing their credits as The Archers, returned to the subject in 1947, Powell insisted that the role of Vicky must be entirely performed by a dancer and that a real ballet must be created. So the rising young ballerina Moira Shearer became the star of Lermontov's ambitious new production and of the film.

In Hans Christian Andersen's savage, moralistic fairy tale, the red shoes that a girl covets lead to her destruction as they dance her to death. In The Archers' film, the girl lives a more complex version of the story both on stage and in life, when she joins an international ballet company and *The Red Shoes* brings her fame and love, but also intolerable pressure to submit to the impresario's will in order to live her dream.

What was revolutionary in 1948 was to create and show a continuous 15 minute ballet that takes us from the stage world into the subjective heart of Vicky's desires and conflicts. Easdale's music, Heckroth's surreal design, Jack Cardiff's painterly use of Technicolor, and the inspired partnership of leading dancers Helpmann and Massine with Shearer, all combined to make it a landmark in film as 'total art', and an immediate inspiration to contemporary filmmakers

such as Vincente Minnelli and Stanley Donen. Standing midway between Maya Deren's avant-garde psychodrama *Meshes of the Afternoon* (1943) and Jean Cocteau's poetic allegory *Orphée* (1950), it is now belatedly recognized as a major achievement of Britain's Neo-Romantic movement, usually identified with painting and poetry, but here triumphantly carried into cinema.

The model for the Lermontov company was clearly the Ballets Russes companies that continued to tour after Diaghilev's death in 1929, and their style and allure is wonderfully evoked in both the film's Covent Garden and Monte Carlo scenes. But as some early reviewers realised, the world that Anton Walbrook's Lermontov rules with a mixture of steel and seduction could be any collective artistic enterprise. It's about the joy of teamwork, adrenaline and discipline, and ultimately sacrifice. And as much about making cinema as about ballet, with the Alexander Korda that Powell and Pressburger knew so well serving more as a model for Lermontov than Diaghilev.

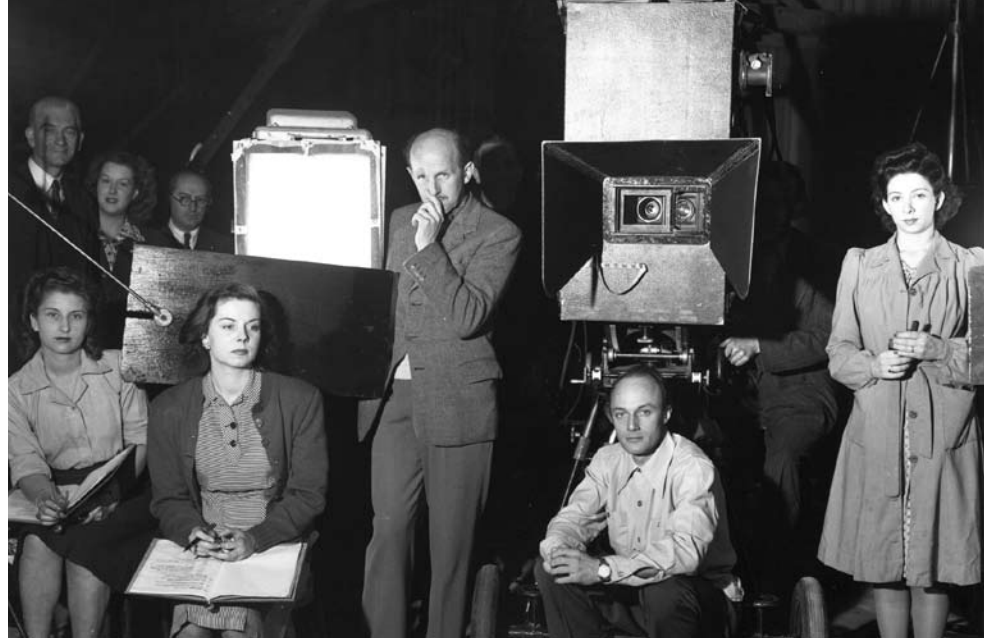
It was also a reminder of the wider world for audiences weary after World War II. Foreign travel and the Mediterranean setting for the young lovers' romance and the ballet company's relaxation may have seemed remote to most in 1948, but The Archers had always aimed ahead and often abroad—their motto was 'better to miss Naples than hit Margate'. Images of Paris and the Riviera were intended to transport viewers beyond their limited horizons, to strike a blow for art and beauty amid post-war austerity. And it is this sense of a creative world and its passion that communicated with audiences, especially in America, making *The Red Shoes* an inspiration for generations of would-be dancers, and filmmakers. Martin Scorsese and Brian de Palma are just two of many who testify to being profoundly influenced by seeing the film in childhood, and its traces can still be seen in theirs and others' work. What impressed Scorsese so powerfully was the vivid Technicolor choreography of color and movement, the bold play of point-of-view as we move from being spectators to sharing the protagonists' emotions, and the commanding figure of Anton Walbrook as Lermontov—inspiring, demonic and seductive, in one of cinema's great character creations.

Now, thanks to Martin Scorsese, Thelma Schoonmaker Powell and The Film Foundation, Powell and Pressburger's original vision has been restored so that it can continue to challenge and inspire future generations.

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IAN CHRISTIE

Writer and Film Historian



## ABOUT THE RESTORATION

UCLA Film & Television Archive and The Film Foundation have been working on the current restoration of *The Red Shoes* from the fall of 2006 through the spring of 2009. Earlier, in the 1980s, the film had been optically copied from flammable nitrate to safety acetate film by the BFI and Rank Film Distributors, using the best celluloid technology then available. In undertaking this new restoration, our goal has been to build upon these past efforts, utilizing modern techniques to produce digital and film preservation elements of the highest possible quality.

We were provided access to over two hundred reels of 35mm nitrate and acetate materials, including vintage Technicolor dye transfer prints, nitrate and acetate protection master positive copies, original soundtrack elements, and—most important of all—the still extant three-strip Technicolor camera negatives. For quality reasons, we chose these original negatives as our starting point even though they were afflicted with a daunting number of problems: sixty-five per cent of the film had bad color fringing caused by differential shrinkage and sometimes by mis-adjustment of the camera during shooting; 176 shots contained color flickering, mottling and “breathing” because of uneven development and chemical staining; seventy sequences contained harsh optical effects with excessive contrast; and throughout there were thousands of visible red, blue and green specks caused by embedded dirt and scratches. Worst of all, mold had attacked every reel and begun to eat away the emulsion, leaving behind thousands of visible tiny cracks and fissures.

Extensive digital restoration was the only practical solution. Warner Bros. Motion Picture Imaging and Prasad Corporation Ltd. were chosen to undertake the immense task of digitally scanning 579,000 individual frames directly from the three-strip camera negatives, re-registering the colors, removing visible specks and scratches, mitigating color breathing, solving contrast issues, performing shot-to-shot color correction, and finally recording all 134 minutes back to 35mm Eastman color internegative stock. To obtain uniformly high quality results, 4K resolution was employed at every stage of the digital picture restoration work. Digital techniques were also employed by Audio Mechanics to remove pops, thumps, crackles and excessive background hiss from the film’s original variable density optical soundtrack.

In the restoration process, the entire film was turned into ones and zeros, repaired, and then converted back into a motion picture again. In order to achieve a proper film look, we compared the new digital images with those in an original Technicolor dye transfer print and in a new Eastman color test print struck by Cinetech Laboratories directly from the YCM camera negatives. Careful adjustments were made in the finalized digital version to combine the best qualities of modern color film (greater image sharpness, more sparkle in highlights) with the most pleasing attributes of vintage Technicolor dye transfer prints (bold colors, deep blacks, gentle contrast with a pleasing range of tones in actors’ faces). We have even retained the familiar Technicolor changeover cues, with their distinctive magenta circle surrounded by a bright green ring. The end result is a restoration that combines the best of the past with our digital present.

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ROBERT GITT

*Preservation Officer, UCLA Film & Television Archive*



*Photos depict severe mold damage to the original negatives.*



## HOLLYWOOD FOREIGN PRESS ASSOCIATION



Since first contributing to The Film Foundation thirteen years ago, the Hollywood Foreign Press Association (HFPA) has become a major supporter of The Film Foundation, donating 2.3 million dollars and funding the preservation of 70 important films, including work by John Ford, Stanley Kubrick, Ida Lupino, Alfred Hitchcock, John Cassavetes, and Jean Renoir, among many others.

Today the members of the Hollywood Foreign Press Association represent some 55 countries with a combined readership of more than 250 million. Through the success of the Golden Globe awards, the HFPA has been able to donate more than 8.4 million dollars over the past fourteen years to entertainment-related charities, as well as funding scholarships and other programs for future film and television professionals.

## LOUIS B. MAYER FOUNDATION

Formed by the legendary Hollywood producer Louis B. Mayer, the Foundation's film preservation program specifically focuses on the body of work of key figures in the history of film. In 2008, The Louis B. Mayer Foundation provided The Film Foundation with grant support for restoration of two films from the directing team of Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger: *The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp* (1943) and *The Red Shoes* (1948). The three-year grant from the Louis B. Mayer Foundation has helped to ensure the restoration and preserve the legacy of these two masterpieces.





## THE FILM FOUNDATION



The Film Foundation ([www.film-foundation.org](http://www.film-foundation.org)) is a nonprofit organization established in 1990 by Martin Scorsese. The foundation is dedicated to protecting and preserving motion picture history, and provides substantial annual support for preservation and restoration projects at the leading film archives. Since its inception, the foundation has been instrumental in raising awareness of the urgent need to preserve films and has helped to save more than 525 motion pictures. Joining Scorsese on the board are: Woody Allen, Paul Thomas Anderson, Wes Anderson, Francis Ford Coppola, Clint Eastwood, Curtis Hanson, Peter Jackson, Ang Lee, George Lucas, Alexander Payne, Robert Redford and Steven Spielberg. The Film Foundation is aligned with the Directors Guild of America whose President and Secretary-Treasurer serve on the foundation's board.

## UCLA FILM & TELEVISION ARCHIVE



The UCLA Film & Television Archive is renowned for its pioneering efforts to rescue, preserve and showcase moving image media, and is dedicated to ensuring that the collective visual memory of our time is explored and enjoyed for generations to come. The Archive is a world leader in the restoration of film, and important feature projects include *Stagecoach* (1939, John Ford), *His Girl Friday* (1940, Howard Hawks), *Macbeth* (1948, Orson Welles) and *Killer of Sheep* (1977, Charles Burnett). The Archive has also restored historical newsreels and hundreds of short subjects. Many of the Archive's restorations screen at prestigious events around the globe and are released commercially on DVD.

## BFI



The BFI is the UK's agency for film culture, aiming to provide people with access to the broadest choice of films, wherever they live and however they want to access them. The BFI does this through preserving and curating the UK's film heritage, generating new knowledge and content through an exciting and accessible cultural program (screenings, events, DVDs, festivals, theatrical distribution, publications, education) and reaching new audiences by inspiring and motivating people to seek out film culture. The BFI is proud to have contributed to the restoration of *The Red Shoes* with elements preserved by the BFI National Archive.



## WARNER BROS. MOTION PICTURE IMAGING

Warner Bros. Motion Picture Imaging (MPI) operates one of the entertainment industry's foremost state-of-the-art digital post production and restoration facilities, providing services such as digital intermediate, scanning, color correction, dirt and scratch removal and film recording. A leader in the field of film preservation and restoration, MPI has developed a unique and patented process to digitally restore classics from the vast Warner Bros. Studios film and television library as well as those of third-party clients including such titles as *The Godfather* (1972, Francis Ford Coppola), *Gone with the Wind* (1939, Victor Fleming), *The Wizard of Oz* (1939, Victor Fleming), *North by Northwest* (1959, Alfred Hitchcock) and *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* (1975, Jim Sharman). Located on the Warner Bros. Studio lot in Burbank, California, MPI's facility has received safety certification to store and work with nitrate film stock.



## PRASAD CORPORATION LTD.

Prasad Corporation Ltd., a member of the 50 year old Prasad Group, is a pioneer in film post production services operating the largest network of film labs and digital post facilities in India. Additionally, Prasad offers digital restoration of film, video and audio using the latest in equipment and technology. Prasad has digitally restored films from around the world including several Academy Award® winning motion pictures. Working with Warner Bros. Motion Picture Imaging, a team of more than 400 highly experienced digital restoration experts at Prasad's facilities in India worked tirelessly on *The Red Shoes* to bring this classic masterpiece back to its full Technicolor glory.





## RESTORATION CREDITS

*The Red Shoes* has been restored by UCLA Film & Television Archive in association with the BFI, The Film Foundation, ITV Global Entertainment Ltd., and Janus Films.

Restoration funding provided by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association, The Film Foundation, and the Louis B. Mayer Foundation.

Restoration supervised by Robert Gitt with the assistance of Barbara Whitehead.

### *Project Advisors*

Margaret Bodde, Fiona Maxwell & Karen Stetler

### *Restoration Consultants*

Martin Scorsese & Thelma Schoonmaker Powell

### *Digital Picture Restoration*

Warner Bros. Motion Picture Imaging in association with Prasad Corporation Ltd. (India) & MTI Film

### *Colorist*

Ray Grabowski

### *Motion Picture Laboratory Services*

Cinetech, An Ascent Media Company

### *Film Color Timing*

David Cetra

*Sound Laboratory Services*  
Audio Mechanics, DJ Audio & Dolby Laboratories

*Digital Audio Restoration*  
John Polito

*Technical Consultants*  
Ned Price, Maria Palazzola, Rob Legato & Ron Ames

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