



In honour of Sir David Lean, the great master of British cinema who died twenty five years ago, we present the twice BAFTA-nominated romance *Summer Madness* (1955), widely believed to have been his favourite work.

American tourist Jane Hudson (**Katharine Hepburn**), a middle-aged singleton fulfilling her lifelong ambition to holiday in Europe, encounters Venice on her first trip to Italy. As she takes in the beauty of the city Hudson becomes aware of her own isolation and begins an ill-fated whirlwind romance with Renato (**Rossano Brazzi**), a handsome antique dealer.

It was Alexander Korda who first brought Lean's attention to the bittersweet play and Broadway hit *Time of the Cuckoo* by Arthur Laurents. Lean then co-adapted the play with the help of British novelist H.E Bates.

Lean relished the opportunity to cast his leading lady in post-war technicolour against the stunning backdrop of Venice in the summer months. His skilled production designer, Vincent Korda, worked the romantic Venetian setting into his very



designs; no less so than in the terrace scenes which he built next to the Grand Canal so as to capture the water traffic gliding by.

With the cinematography of Jack Hildyard and the camera-work of Peter Newbrook used to superb effect, Lean frames Hudson's passionate but doomed encounter against the visual splendour of the Floating City.

Summer Madness was Lean's third film in colour and his first major international location picture. As Kevin Brownlow in *David Lean, A Biography* explains, "...it was not customary in the fifties for British pictures to be shot entirely on location... but David was determined to convey to an audience what he felt about Venice... (and he) had been impressed by William Wyler's *Roman Holiday* (1953) which had been filmed entirely on location in Rome."

Fortunately, the film's executive producer Alexander Korda supported David's decision. He said to David 'Good luck, just remember that if I'd chosen some of the highly respected directors of the present moment, they would seek out all the side streets of Venice and never take a shot of the Grand Canal or the Piazza San Marco because that would be a cliché. They're not a cliché for nothing.

For God's sake don't be shy of showing these famous places.' For David, what Korda had told him '...was bloody good advice, because you can easily end up in a dirty Venetian alley and think you're being arty and you're not'."

In later life Lean confessed that whilst making this film he fell in love with Venice, and his deep passion can be felt in every single frame.

With special thanks to the David Lean Foundation.

SYDNEY SAMUELSON ON SUMMER MADNESS AND THE ARRIFLEX CAMERA

It was his first film made entirely on location. The risks of shooting a feature production without studio back-up were accompanied by his total rejection of the huge, heavy and unwieldy sound camera equipment he'd had to cope with on all his earlier films. But his camera technicians assured him that top quality cinematography was entirely possible with dramatically smaller, lighter camera equipment. Thus, the film you will see was mostly shot on the lightweight Arriflex system. Relatively small (it can be hand-held), it delivers images perfectly

appropriate to the glories of Venice. The director's creative imagination, coupled with the ability of his crew to set up the little 'Arri' camera in places thought to be too difficult to get to, caused him to observe years later "I do believe I put more into *Summer Madness* than any other film I'd ever done".

Sydney Samuelson, long-time friend and Camera Consultant to David Lean.

RELEASE YEAR: 1955

RUNTIME: 100 mins

DIRECTOR: David Lean

SCREENWRITERS:

David Lean and H.E Bates, based on an original play by Arthur Laurents

PRODUCER: Ilya Lopert

ASSOCIATE PRODUCER:
Norman Spencer

BAFTA HERITAGE SCREENINGS

BAFTA Heritage Screenings are a series of quarterly screenings and on-stage interviews which celebrate British film and television classics and the professionals who make them.



LEFT TO RIGHT: DAVID LEAN, JACK HILDYARD AND PETER NEWBROOK (OPERATING LIGHTWEIGHT ARRIFLEX CAMERA) WAY ABOVE ST MARK'S SQUARE, VENICE; JACK HILDYARD TAKING A LIGHT READING WITH AN EXPOSURE METER; SHOOTING ON THE TERRACE SET BUILT BY VINCENT KORDA

