



THE CURIOUS LIFE AND FILMS OF ALFRED HITCHCOCK

COLIN SHINDLER

The Arts Society Fylde

Lowther Pavilion Theatre

3 April 2024 at 2.00pm

For some people, the opening bars of Rossini's *William Tell* overture instantly conjure up memories of the adventures of the Lone Ranger; some others (who may even be in the same group) cannot hear Charles Gounod's *Funeral March of a Marionette* without calling to mind a simple line drawing of a (frankly) rather portly man whose silhouette passes across the television screen before the eponymous presenter says, in a somewhat lugubrious voice, "Good evening and welcome to Alfred Hitchcock Presents". The last programme was made in 1965; when the first series was made for the American network CBS in 1955, Hitchcock had already been directing films for 30 years.

Alfred Hitchcock (Leytonstone, Greater London, 1899-Los Angeles, California, 1980) directed more than fifty films. Colin Shindler, who makes his first visit to The Arts Society Fylde, takes as his subject the life and career of a film-maker who started in the silent era and ended in the age of cable and satellite television— a far cry from his parents' greengrocer's shop in East London. He was an innovator with a distinctive individual style. As Dr Shindler says, "there have been many directors who have tried to emulate Hitchcock but none have surpassed him in the genre of suspense, which he defined". Our speaker proposes to analyse his films in the context of his life and will attempt to discover just why Hitchcock's films have endured so successfully for so long.

COLIN SHINDLER

Colin Shindler has been lecturing on American and British social and cultural history for over 20 years. He was awarded his PhD at Cambridge University and subsequently lectured on film for their History Faculty between 1998 and 2019 exploring its relationship to modern British and American social and cultural history. Between 1975 and 1999 he pursued a wide-ranging career as a writer and producer in television, radio and film, winning a BAFTA for his production of *A Little Princess*. His production of Young Charlie Chaplin was nominated for a US Prime Time Emmy. He has written three novels as well as numerous television scripts and radio plays but regards his greatest cultural contribution as choosing the title music for the police series *Juliet Bravo*. He is perhaps best known for his childhood memoir *Manchester United Ruined My Life* which was short listed for the William Hill Sports Book of the Year Award. Other publications include *Hollywood Goes To War: Films & American Society 1939-1952* and *Hollywood in Crisis: Films & American Society 1929-1939*. He is currently working on the television adaptation of his novel *Hollywood Nazis*. His next book is called *Boom!: The Story of a Generation*.



SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

The dark side of genius : the life of Alfred Hitchcock, Donald Spoto; Plexus, 1994

Hitchcock / François Truffaut, (based on a series of interview with Truffaut), Faber and Faber, 2017.

Image: Sir Alfred Joseph Hitchcock, Howard Coster, 1936
National Portrait Gallery, London, by permission