

M

Thriller

Posted by: milliefs

Posted on : 2007/1/7 10:30:00

After over 70 years of ever increasing blood, guts and gore introduced into our films, **Fritz Lang's M** still holds up without one single drop of blood shown on film . . .

. . . now that's a masterpiece.

Before I watched this film it had three strikes against it in my book - it was black and white, it was subtitled and it was just plain old. Not that these things necessarily make a movie bad, they just make it one that I will fight watching. I am thrilled that last night, I finally gave up that fight.

You truly feel the terror of a town held captive by a seemingly uncatchable child murderer as yet another of their children, little Elsie Beckmann (*Inge Landgut*) is snatched from the streets on her way home from school. The only evidence of her grisly demise glimpsed by riveted viewers is Elsie's striped ball rolling in solitude in the grass and the strange balloon purchased by her murderer, Hans Beckert (*Peter Lorre*), floating untethered up into the power lines.

I constantly found myself amazed at the power of one image to convey the feeling of what is now blatantly shoved into the faces of most horror movie viewers. As I said in the opening - not one drop of blood is shown in this film.

As the police struggle to catch this depraved lunatic subjecting every inch of every seedy little dive to nightly raids and townspeople begin to turn on one another in a desperate attempt to put an end to this madness, the criminals of the town become quite fed up. Not only is this monster snatching up and doing unspeakable things to the children, but he is really putting a hamper on their business dealings as well. Their monetary wells are beginning to run dry and this forces them to spring to action.

It is quite interesting the way Lang switched back and forth between the progress of the police and the criminals. You are never quite sure until the end who will actually get to Beckert first or what his fate will be once caught. Also interesting is the debate Lang throws up about criminality vs. insanity in the case of Beckert. I found myself twisted over wanting to see Beckert pay for his crimes. I mean, should he be executed like the mad dog that he was, or should he be institutionalized because he knew not what he did?

M is an excellent film and a strong recommend. I am still getting chills now hearing Beckert whistle [In the Hall of the Mountain King](#) in my mind . . .

If you enjoyed M, here are reviews of other recommended movies: [The Silence of the Lambs](#)
[Se7en](#)

M Movie Cast and Credits

Directed by

Fritz Lang

Writing credits

Egon Jacobson (article) uncredited
Thea von Harbou (script) and
Fritz Lang (script)

Cast (in credits order)

Peter Lorre Hans Beckert
Ellen Widmann Frau Beckmann
Inge Landgut Elsie Beckmann
Otto Wernicke Inspector Karl Lohmann
Theodor Loos Inspector Groeber
Gustaf Gründgens Schränker
Friedrich Gnaß Franz, the burglar
Fritz Odemar The cheater
Paul Kemp Pickpocket with six watches
Theo Lingen Bauernfänger
Rudolf Blümner Beckert's defender
Georg John Blind panhandler
Franz Stein Minister
Ernst Stahl-Nachbaur Police chief
Gerhard Bienert Criminal secretary
Karl Platen Damowitz, night watchman
Rosa Valetti Elisabeth Winkler, Beckert's landlady
Hertha von Walther Prostitute

Rest of cast listed alphabetically:

Walter Burke (uncredited)
Behal Carrell (uncredited)
Josef Dahmen (uncredited)
J.A. Eckhoff (uncredited)
Else Ehser Woman (uncredited)
Karl Elzer (uncredited)
Ilse Fürstenberg (uncredited)
Anna Goltz Woman (uncredited)
Heinrich Gotho (uncredited)
Heinrich Gretler Man (uncredited)
Günther Hadank (uncredited)
Albert Hoermann (uncredited)
Ellen Isenta Woman (uncredited)
Karl Junge-Swinburne Man (uncredited)
Albert Karchow (uncredited)
Werner Kepich (uncredited)
Hermann Krehan (uncredited)
Kurth Leeser (uncredited)
Rose Lichtenstein (uncredited)
Lotte Loebinger Woman (uncredited)

Sigurd Lohde (uncredited)
Alfred Loretto Man (uncredited)
Paul Mederow (uncredited)
Margarete Melzer (uncredited)
Hanna Meron Girl in circle at the beginning (uncredited)
Trude Moos (uncredited)
Hadrian Maria Netto (uncredited)
Günter Neumann Man (uncredited)
Maya Norden (uncredited)
Fred Nurney Man (uncredited)
Edgar Pauly Man (uncredited)
Klaus Pohl Witness/one-eyed man (uncredited)
Franz Poland (uncredited)
Paul Rehkopf (uncredited)
Hans Ritter (uncredited)
Agnes Schulz-Lichterfeld (uncredited)
Leonard Steckel Man (uncredited)
Wolf Trutz (uncredited)
Otto Waldis (uncredited)
Borwin Walth (uncredited)
Rolf Wanka Man (uncredited)
Bruno Ziener (uncredited)

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