

# The Lean Years

From *Summertime* in Venice to *Lawrence of Arabia* in the desert, David Lean was one of film's greatest visual storytellers. Here's a glimpse at how the magic happened.



**ORDERED CHAOS:** Lean (on crane) is the calm in the center of the desert storm as he orchestrates a cast of thousands and a few dozen camels on the set of *Lawrence of Arabia* (1962). (Above) Portrait of the artist as a young man in 1946 while filming *Great Expectations*.





**ON THE BEACH:** Lean demonstrates how he wants Sarah Miles to walk with her parasol in a scene from *Ryan's Daughter* (1970), filmed on the Dingle Peninsula in western Ireland.



**LIGHTS! ACTION!:** The setup for an intimate scene in *The Happy Breed* (1944), Lean's second film, based on a play by Noel Coward about life in Britain between the wars. The director is seated at the right.



**ON SCHEDULE:** Lean seems pleased with Julie Christie's performance as she emerges from a trolley during the filming of *Doctor Zhivago* (1965). The film was shot in Finland and Spain, filling in for pre-revolution Russia.



**TUNDRA TAKE:** From the crane, the director leads a battalion of Russian soldiers in the middle of nowhere in a typical Lean composition from *Doctor Zhivago*.

(Top) British Film Institute; (below) Photofest

Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences



**THE POINT IS:** Sir David explaining exactly what he wants to Dame Peggy Ashcroft (left) and Judy Davis in a crowd scene from *A Passage to India* (1984), filmed on location in India and at Shepperton Studios in England.



**CIAO, KATARINA:** Lean and Katharine Hepburn go over her pages before a take on *Summertime*, filmed on location in Venice (1955). The picture was Lean's first filmed on an exotic foreign site.

**MARCHING ORDERS:** Lean prepares a long tracking shot in the desert on *Lawrence of Arabia*. Almost all movement in the film goes from left to right because he wanted to emphasize that the story was a journey.



(top left) Photofest; (bottom left) AMPAS; (above) ©1962, Renewed 1990 Columbia Pictures Industries, Inc.



**MAD DOGS AND ENGLISHMEN:** Shooting in the heat of the Sri Lankan jungle, Lean (on box) directs a rag-tag band of POWs during World War II in *The Bridge on the River Kwai* (1957).



**EYE TO EYE:** The director made six films with Alec Guinness, here as the dogmatic Col. Nicholson in *The Bridge on the River Kwai*. The film was another one of Lean's intimate character studies told in epic proportions.

**TOP OF THE WORLD:** Lean (far left) and crew members survey the scene from atop the dome of St. Mark's Basilica in Venice, overlooking St. Mark's Square, during the filming of *Summertime*.

(top) AMPAS; (bottom) ©1957, renewed 1985 Columbia Pictures Industries, Inc.; (opposite) AMPAS

