



MIKLOS ROZSA in person

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THE PRIVATE LIFE OF SHERLOCK HOLMES Britain 1970 125 Minutes Colour

DIRECTOR: Billy Wilder. SCREENPLAY: Billy Wilder; I.A.L. Diamond. PHOTOGRAPHY: Christopher Challis. EDITOR: Ernest Walter. MUSIC: Miklos Rozsa. SOUND: Roy Baker.

CAST: Robert Stephens (Sherlock Holmes); Colin Blakely (Dr. John W. Watson); Irene Handl (Mrs. Hudson); Stanley Holloway (1st Gravedigger); Christopher Lee (Mycroft Holmes); Genevieve Page (Gabrielle Valladon); Clive Revill (Rogozhin); Tamara Toumanova (Petrova); George Benson (Inspector Lestrade); Catherine Lacey (Old Lady); Mollie Maureen (Queen Victoria); Peter Madden (Von Tirpitz); Robert Cawdron (Hotel Manager); Michael Elwyn (Cassidy); Michael Balfour (Cabby); Frank Thornton (Porter); James Copeland (Guide); Alex McGrindle (Baggageman); etc.

"Some of the New York reviews of THE PRIVATE LIFE OF SHERLOCK HOLMES were fairly savage in tone when Billy Wilder's long-delayed film about the great detective opened last October in Radio City Music Hall.

Perhaps 'Unfairly savage' would be a more accurate description, at least from my point of view.

The picture, made in 1969, at last has reached Toronto and is on view at the Odeon Carlton. It strikes me as being, on the whole, an amiable and civilized entertainment, although at two hours and five minutes it's a bit too long for its story and its prevailing tempo is less brisk than we are accustomed to a Wilder movie.

This Holmes adventure is not from the original mother-lode, or father-lode, first uncovered in late-Victorian London by the sleuth's prolific creator, Sir Arthur Conan Doyle.

Instead, it's an entirely new, non-Doyle tale written by producer-director Wilder in collaboration with his long-time scripting partner, I.A.L. Diamond. They have been working together since they did SOME LIKE IT HOT in 1959.

Wilder's Holmes is the tall, lean and aristocratic Robert Stephens, remembered as the mob-quelling Prince of Berona in Zeffirelli's ROMEO AND JULIET and as the virile teacher-artist in THE PRIME OF MISS JEAN BRODIE.

Dr. John H. Watson, the detective's admiring flatmate and biographer, is played by Colin Blakely. I recall him, though not with any special pleasure, as Albert Finney's food-splattering luncheon companion in CHARLEY BUBBLES.

The time is 1889, and the mystery begins when an enigmatic Belgian beauty (Genevieve Page), evidently stricken with amnesia, is plucked safely from the Thames with Holmes' famous address, 221B Baker St., clutched in her hand. She recovers enough memory to hire Holmes to find her missing and perhaps murdered husband, a mining engineer.

But the main plot is not the main thing in THE PRIVATE LIFE OF SHERLOCK HOLMES.

Wilder and Diamond offer deeper satisfactions in the sardonic interplay between Holmes and Watson, and in the way the film gently debunks the super-sleuth without belittling his intellectual powers.

At the very outset Holmes is heard complaining that Watson's magazine stories about him have embarrassingly 'romanticized' him. As a result he must perpetually adopt the fancy-dress costume of tailored cape and deerstalker cap, along with the curved pipe and the violin and the cocaine needle and the other details of the legend.

(con't)

Billy Wilder's

The Private Life of Sherlock Holmes *

Before the Belgian-and-Scottish mystery gets under way, there is an amusing subplot involving an imperious Russian ballerina (Tamara Toumanova) who offers Holmes a priceless Stradivarius violin if he will father her child. She wants the baby to inherit Holmes' brains as well as her own beauty.

Alexander Trauner's production design is handsome and meticulous throughout, and Miklos Rozsa's musical score properly emphasizes a lush, turn-of-the-century violin."

-Clyde Gilmour, TORONTO TELEGRAM.

* *Being an account of some hitherto suppressed and thoroughly fascinating adventures of the greatest detective of all time as revealed by his friend John H Watson M D late Indian Army*