

Making movies under bombs



By London's famous Tower Bridge, Gabriel Pascal (standing at left) shoots a scene of *Major Barbara*, starring Wendy Hiller and Robert Morley, while the sky is still clear of bombers. This area, around the Thames docks, got the worst bombing of any part of London.

THE British may have tea during air-raids and dress for dinner in bomb shelters, but for sheer British composure we give you Mr. Gabriel Pascal, who is calmly making a movie at Denham outside London. Mr. Pascal, a Briton out of Budapest, is the producer who, by virtue of making *Pygmalion*, enjoys a monopoly of the film rights to Shaw's plays. He started shooting last August on Shaw's *Major Barbara* and, come bombs or parachutists, he intends to finish it. These pictures, exclusive to STAGE, show some of his problems and the following notes, from a diary kept by a member of the cast, tell others:

"Tuesday: We are working on a set of the big drawing room at Lady Britomart's. It's perfect—pink damask walls, fine Aubusson carpets, crystal chandeliers—all scrounged from Gaby's friends. We were just ready to take when the sirens started wailing. Down we trooped into the tunnels under the studio. The electricians had a dart-board down there and Robert Morley brought his portable radio. At 7:40 the All Clear sounded but it was too late to start work again."

"Wednesday: Got in a good morning's take before the sirens went off at 12:20. Of course when the sirens come in the middle of a take it ruins the sound track. Gaby and I sat up on the lawn the first time but after lunch there was another raid and the wardens chased us down. The All Clear sounded at 6:15, leaving just time for one take."

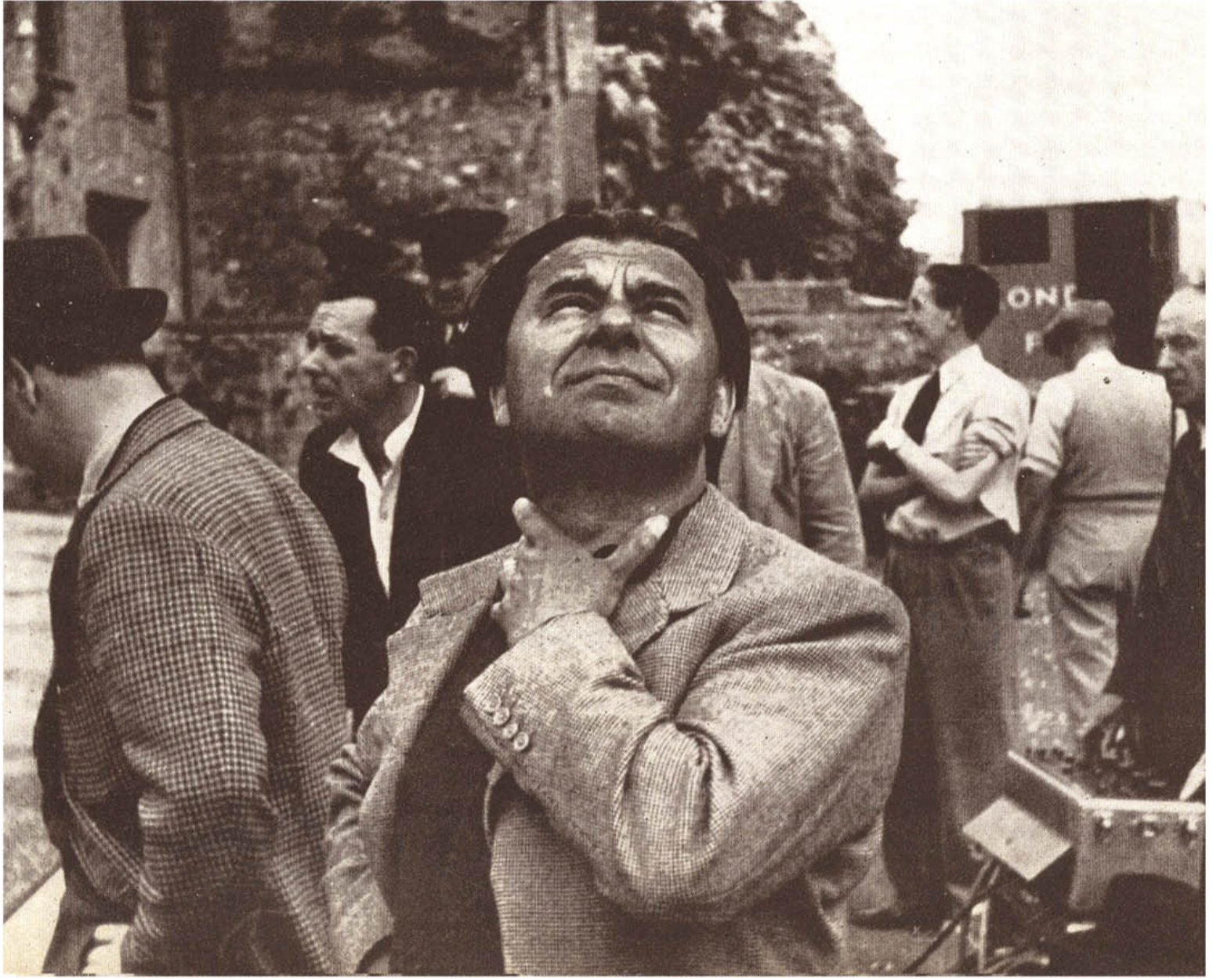


WENDY HILLER
IN THE MOVIE

“Friday: Today the sirens found me in the middle of a shampoo. There was nothing for it but to rush out, all tied up in nets and hairpins and plunge down into those deadly ducts.”

“Monday: After dinner we had a script conference off the lot and kept on working through the sirens, relieved to be away from studio discipline. Tonight the sky was one vast blaze of searchlights, and no sleep for anyone. It’s tough staying up all night and trying to work between raids all day but Gaby says damn the bombs we’ll finish the picture.”

DIRECTOR PASCAL SCANS THE SKY, WONDERING WHETHER BOMBERS WILL RUIN HIS NEXT TAKE.



THE AUTHOR DROPS IN. SINCE THE WAR WAS STARTED WITHOUT HIS CONSENT, SHAW FIRMLY IGNORES IT.



STAGE
November, 1940
p. 70

OldMagazineArticles.com