Fellowship

Martin Scorsese

MARTIN SCORSESE: Please. Please. Thank you, thank you so much. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Thank you so much, BAFTA. Thank you, Max, for being here and presenting this to me tonight. It's such an honour, and I ... I mean, I think just holding this award is an honour. Actually getting it is like a dream.

For me, British cinema was something that was formative. Italian and British movies were the first movies that I ever saw that weren't made in America. The Italian films were familiar to me, more familiar, closer to home, you know, closer to what I knew and lived in New York. The British films were more exotic, more foreign, and they seemed to be in a language that was familiar, but enigmatic. Intriguingly enigmatic. British films were then what they are for me still, right now, a bit of a mystery and a great marvel.

The best British cinema, and there is so much, for me, of it, has always ... it's always a source -- you are challenged and you are inspired. The best British cinema is careful social delineation and political zzzcommitment, and most and best of all, of a resolution, implacable resolution, and invention. In fact, one of my favourite of all British film makers, Lindsay Anderson, he said it well when he wrote about all cinema. Quote:

"Poetry, visual as well as verbal, is its own justification."

And that's why, even before I opened my first literature textbook, I knew England was a land of great poets, because I had seen and loved so many great British films. It is a cinema in which, for me, richness of language animates, uniquely animates a tradition of visual dynamism.

It is a tradition that runs deep and it constantly yields new discoveries like Anthony Asquith, the two silent films that were restored recently -- a few years ago, A Cottage on Dartmoor and Shooting Stars, or the work of Robert Hamer, or -- just all the BFI DVD releases that they have coming out now, like -- I caught up watching the documentaries of Molly Dineen. The cinema of England is resilient, as witnessed by the young film makers who are working here, sometimes against what seems to be very tough commercial and political odds, yet still managing to do astonishingly forceful work.

The rich tradition of British cinema also embraces for me the fearless craftsmanship of the British crews who helped me with dedication and extraordinary imagination when making the film Hugo here at Shepperton, a film of which all of us who worked on it can, I hope, be proud.

I am particularly honoured to have worked alongside them, as I am to be here tonight holding this award. I like to hope this BAFTA Fellowship also gives me visiting privileges to that same rich tradition of British cinema that inspired your great film poets.

The BAFTA Fellowship also has a particularly personal resonance because it is the first award I have ever shared with Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger; I think of them as two of those great poets and as the Knights Templar of the British cinema. Well, the archers of the tradition, actually.

It is the highest, most profound honour for me to stand with them tonight, and with you. I thank you.