

## Document Citation

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**"49th PARALLEL"** (Ortus Productions-G.F.D., 1941; U.S. release in 1942 by Columbia under the title "The Invaders"); Directed and produced by Michael Powell; Production Supervisor, John Sutro; Scenario by Emeric Pressburger and Rodney Ackland from an original story & screenplay by Pressburger; Director of Photography, Frederick Young; cameramen, Skeets Kelly & Henry Creel; Music: Ralph Vaughn Williams; edited by David Lean; Art Director, David Ramsley; made at the D & P Studios in Denham, and the Associated Sound News Studios in Montreal; 11 reels.

With Laurence Olivier, Leslie Howard, Eric Portman, Anton Walbrook, Raymond Massey, Glynnis Johns, Richard George, Raymond Lovell, Niall McGinnis, Peter Moore, Ley On, John Chandos, Basil Appleby, Finlay Currie, Charles Victor,

Preceding Noel Coward's "In Which We Serve" by almost a year, "49th Parallel" was not only one of the few really big prestige British pictures of the early years of the war, but also (in Britain at least) one of the biggest boxoffice hits. Its propaganda content becomes a little tedious: the British/Canadian hero "types" all seem a little over-the-top and decidedly artificial now, while the efficiency of the Nazi villain, so well played by Portman, eventually turns him into a kind of unwitting hero. One doesn't so much mind him being defeated at the end as one resents the way he is defeated - in very unsportsmanlike fashion by a dull cled of a Canadian who warrants even less sympathy. (In the same way, one resented Robert Cummings' triumph over Nazi villain Otto Kruger in Hitchcock's "Saboteur"). But apart from the let-down of the ending - a let-down shared by the fate of Walter Slezak's Nazi in Hitchcock's "Lifeboat", and the surprising shortage of genuine Canadians in the film (no Walter Pidgeon, no Walter Huston, not even Ruby Keeler), it does hold up as a piece of well-sustained chase adventure. Surprisingly, most of it was shot on location in Canada, and there's a modicum of studio-filmed inserts. It has less of the self-indulgent fireworks of the later Powell-Pressburger films, and more of the simplicity of the earlier solo Powell works like "The Spy in Black" and "Edge of the World". ~~Wm. K. Everson~~