



Massagno Cinema LUX

18.15

Friday, 17th November 2017

THE LOST CITY OF Z

2016

141 minutes

Directed by **James Gray**

Starring: Charlie Hunnam, Robert Pattinson and Sienna Miller

First in his 2005 article "The Lost City of Z" and later in the book he developed and published with the same title, David Grann reported on archaeological excavations by archaeologist Michael Heckenberger at a site in the Amazon Xingu region that might be the long-rumoured lost city. The ruins were surrounded by several concentric, circular ditches, with evidence of palisades that had been described in the folklore and oral history of nearby tribes. Heckenberger also found evidence of wooden structures and roads that cut through the jungle. Black Indian earth (or *terra preta*) showed evidence that humans had added supplements to the soil to increase its fertility to support agriculture.

In 1905, British Army Major Percy Fawcett is ordered by the Royal Geographical Society to venture out to a grand adventure in the uncharted and dense Bolivian jungles to act as a referee and map out the borders with Brazil. Anxiously, Fawcett, resting his reputation entirely on the venture's success as the son of a disgraced ex-military man, together with aide-de-camp Henry Costin, sets off on a dangerous mission to Amazonia, where apart from starvation, the infernal heat, hostile indigenous Indian tribes and wild animals, they will also find evidence of advanced, non-white civilizations.

The Lost City of Z tells this incredible true story of Percy Fawcett, who journeys into the Amazon at the dawn of the 20th century and discovers evidence of a previously unknown, advanced civilization that may have once inhabited the region. Despite being ridiculed by the scientific establishment who regard indigenous populations as "savages," the ambitious Fawcett – supported by his devoted wife, son and aide-de-camp, is determined to find the impossible and the ultimate missing piece of the human puzzle, the Lost City of Z. Fawcett will visit the lush beloved Amazonian jungles time and again in hopes of getting closer to his dream, culminating in his mysterious disappearance in 1925

Critics' comments:

- "Terrible diseases, murderous savages." Not to mention waters that boil with piranhas: Col Percival Fawcett is prepared to face all of this and more on a mapping expedition to Bolivia. His hope is that a successful mission will help him excise the shame that clings to his family name like some parasitic growth. But in fact, in James Gray's rough account of a real-life explorer's obsession with Amazonia, Fawcett discovers that he feels more alive picking leeches out of his armpit hair than he ever did in the drawing rooms of polite society. And there are moments of richly realised magic here in which we fully sympathise with him.

A nod to Herzog's *Fitzcarraldo* is one – an exquisitely odd segment in which Fawcett and his team stumble upon an opera performance deep in the heart of the jungle. And music in general is key. The score, by Christopher YOUNG, is a glorious, transcendent surge and swell, which evokes both the lush orchestral compositions of old Hollywood and the devotional music of John Tavener. Together with the reverence of Khondji's photography, it captures the wonder and the spiritual element of Fawcett's travels. (from *The Guardian*)

- In *The Lost City of Z*, a lush, melancholic story of discovery and mystery, a mesmerizing Charlie Hunnam plays a British adventurer in the Amazon who is consumed by "all the glories of exploration", as Joseph Conrad once wrote of a different journey. Enveloped by the forest, the explorer and his crew face snakes, piranhas, insects and that most terrifying of threats: other people, who at times bombard the strangers with arrows. Fearless, he perseveres, venturing more deeply into a world that first becomes a passion and then something of a private hallucination. (from NYTimes)