

Educational Film Review: *Castle and Capital*

About the video

Title:

Castle and Capital

Country:

Scotland

Duration (mins):

17 mins 15 seconds

Is this a clip or segment of a film? Or part of a collection?

Part of 'Films of Scotland' collection

Year:

1979

Description:

An impressive visual history of the architecture of Edinburgh

Subject classification:

Architecture, history, archaeology, politics

Educational level of intended audience:

Secondary / undergraduates

Summary:

A visually stunning documentary, capturing the 1000 year history of Edinburgh and its relationship with the rest of Scotland and beyond.

Audience and Use

This particular documentary relies on the potent architectural imagery of Edinburgh as a backdrop to the history and folklore of the area. The filmmakers have concentrated on sweeping shots of buildings and monuments, as well as some impressive aerial views of the city. This programme would be of interest to students of architecture and architectural historians, as it traces the formation of Edinburgh from its earliest buildings up to the present day (i.e. 1979). The voice over is kept to a minimum to let the pictures speak for themselves, but it does manage to impart a concise history of the city that would also interest archaeologists or historians. Any student researching politics or the political history of Scotland would find the section on the original creation of a Scottish Parliament informative. This film could be used as a teaching aid in secondary schools as well as in universities as the content is simple, yet informative.

Content

This film provides a history of the city of Edinburgh and places it within the wider context of Lothian and beyond. Edinburgh is portrayed as a cosmopolitan, European city that stands at the centre of Scottish politics and history. The architecture of the city is used as the backdrop for

the account of the past with some impressive shots of the castle and other medieval parts of the city. As well as the political history, the programme also retells some of the folklore and myth that is part of the city's fabric. Many of the most famous characters in Scotland's story are mentioned here – Robert the Bruce, Mary Queen of Scots and John Knox are all mentioned in the film. Much of the documentary centres on the world renowned Edinburgh Castle and it is used as a focal point for retelling the saga of the area. The famed 18th century architecture is also examined – with sweeping aerial shots giving viewers a true appreciation of the geometrical style of urban planning.

Technical issues

This film was very easy and quick to download. The sound quality is patchy in places, with sound being lost completely in several places, although only for a few seconds. The picture quality is of a good standard. The film only breaks down in to 2 sections so downloading the entire film would be recommended as the narrative would be broken by only using 1 segment.

General comments

This documentary provides a well-structured, though simplistic, introduction to the history and architecture of the city of Edinburgh. It primarily uses visual imagery of the city to support the stories that lie behind the buildings. It would be a useful teaching tool for any student of architecture past or present, as the pros and cons of the city's layout can be discussed. Archaeologists and historians can use this film to gain an insight into the politics and society of the time as well as gaining insights into the broader social situation of Scotland as a whole. There is even a section that could be used by students of politics, as the old and new Scottish Parliaments could be compared.