

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

11 WEST 53 STREET, NEW YORK 19, N. Y.

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No. 10

FOR RELEASE:

Sunday, Feb. 4, 1962

ROSSELLINI FILM SERIES AT MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

Twelve films by Roberto Rossellini, including five which have not been shown theatrically in this country, will be presented at the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, during the next two months. The afternoon film series will begin February 4 through 10 with Open City (Roma, Citta Aperta), 1945, starring Anna Magnani and Aldo Fabrizi. With showings daily at 3 and 5:30 except where noted, the series will continue February 11 - 17 with Paisan (Paisa'), 1946, with Harriet White, Maria Michi and Gar Moore; February 18 - 24, Una Voce Umana, one episode of L'Amore, 1947, with Anna Magnani, No English titles; and Envy (Invidia), 1952, episode from The Seven Deadly Sins, with Andree Debar and Orfeo Tamburi. At 3:00 p.m. only on February 22; February 25 - March 3, Flowers of St. Francis (Francesco, Giullare Di Dio), 1950, with the monks of Nocere Inferiore Monastery and Aldo Fabrizi; March 4 - 10, The Greatest Love (Europa 51), 1952, with Ingrid Bergman, Alexander Knox and Giulietta Masina. Dubbed; March 11 - 13, La Nave Bianca, 1941, with a cast of non-professionals. No English titles; March 14 - 17, Jeanne au Bucher, 1954, with Ingrid Bergman and Tullio Carnimati. In French, no English titles; March 18 - 24, Fear (Paura), 1954, with Ingrid Bergman and Mathias Wieman. Dubbed; March 25-- 31, General Della Rovere (Il Generale Della Rovere), 1959, with Vittorio De Sica, Hannes Messemer and Vittorio Caprioli. One showing only at 3:00 p.m.; April 1 - 3, India Matri Bhumi, 1957. In French, no English titles; April 4 - 7, Viva l'Italia, 1960, with Renzo Ricci, Paolo Stoppa, Franco Interlenghi and Giovanna Ralli. No English titles. One showing only at 3:00 p.m.

The films shown theatrically for the first time are Una Voce Umana, Jeanne au Bucher, Fear (Paura), India Matri Bhumi, and Viva l'Italia. La Nave Bianca was shown at the Museum in 1955.

According to Richard Griffith, Curator of the Museum's Film Library, "The Films of Roberto Rossellini is the seventh retrospective of the bulk of the work of an individual film-maker which the Museum has presented. Like its predecessors, it is intended as a conspectus, to enable the student to examine at one time and place films which he could otherwise see only on widely scattered occasions. We believe that this conspectus has particular importance, inasmuch as many of the Rossellini films have had few or no showings in this country, with the result that Rossellini's own outlook, and the meaning of the approach to film-making that came to be called neo-realism, have often been misunderstood, even by film connoisseurs.

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"Because of the expense of film-making, the demands of the boxoffice, and the prejudices of producers, it is comparatively rare for a film-maker to be able to impose the stamp of his own viewpoint and attitude to life on most of his films. Like Flaherty, Rossellini is one of the great exceptions. Seen together, his films reveal a gradual unfolding of one great theme. It is perhaps not altogether strange that, when Open City and Paisan first startled us with their brilliance and human truth, we tended to misunderstand their meaning. Because the heroes of both films were partisans, we supposed that the intent of neo-realism was political, and we waited expectantly for that intent to reveal itself in the terms of the post-war world. In that mood, Flowers of Saint Francis seemed an aberration and even a betrayal so completely was the idea of neo-realism invested with modernity. But seen today, Flowers of Saint Francis and Joan at the Stake show through historical allegory what Europa 51, thematically the clearest of the Rossellini films, states directly and completely, that neo-realism is a secularized form of the Christian ethic. At the beginning of this film, the character played by Miss Bergman rejects Communism as her salvation (and the film was consequently not shown in Iron Curtain countries); at the end she rejects all political action or the help of social institutions. We can only be saved, she says, by saving one another, here and now, all by ourselves with no one to help us. That such an uncompromising - and immemorial - moral attitude should find expression in an equally uncompromising camera approach to reality has led to one of the twentieth century's conspicuous ironies: neo-realism overreached the expectations of its original admirers, and they think the less of it therefor. But those who have come to think that Rossellini abandoned his major theme some time in the last ten years, or that it lost its power and coherence as a statement about human life today, may well change their minds when they see these films together. In the powerful General Della Rovere, Rossellini re-introduces as a significant figure the character of a partisan leader who says in effect: I joined the partisans to fight for a better world. Will we ever see it? Will our children? If not, the implication seems to go, we might as well die as Vittorio de Sica dies at the end of this film, with futility but in brotherhood. A harsh prophecy? No - a warning against drift, a command to act."

A printed schedule will be available. For photographs and further information contact Herbert Bronstein, Associate Publicity Director, Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York 19, N. Y. CI 5-8900.