

The Museum of Modern Art

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No. 167
FOR RELEASE:
January 8, 1970

TRIBUTE TO GEORGE STEVENS AT THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART

A tribute to George Stevens, one of America's best-known film directors, will be given by the Department of Film of The Museum of Modern Art from January 8th to 27th. Covering a span of three decades, this retrospective will consist of eighteen of Stevens' films including not only such well-known pictures as "Shane" and "A Place in the Sun," but also "Alice Adams," "Gunga Din," and "Woman of the Year."

At the same time the Museum will commemorate the director's work by publishing the first book-length study of his films: "George Stevens: An American Romantic," by Donald Richie.

In the introduction, Willard Van Dyke, Director of the Museum's Department of Film, describes Stevens as "a craftsman who became an artist, a romanticist who developed into a realist." His work reflects many of the salient social and philosophical attitudes of his times. As a result, audiences identify with the characters in Stevens' films and, in the opinion of Van Dyke, "whether or not he intended such a thing, Stevens has, in a very important way, become the spokesman for his country and his era," because he shared with his audiences so many of its assumptions.

What are these assumptions? In his study of the director, Donald Richie refers to the traditional American values of the past to which George Stevens, born in Oakland, California in 1904, was heir. He cites "optimism, faith in innate goodness, liberalism towards other individuals, and belief in the absolutes of truth and beauty." Like most Americans, Richie says, Stevens was a romantic, an idealist.

"Eventually, he began to question these assumptions so central to the American experience." It was during these later years, Richie says, that Stevens emerged as a mature artist, one who discovered that romantic idealization proved no solution to the manifold problems of American life.

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Though Stevens' detractors would label him a sentimentalist, Richie points out that fairly early in his career, Stevens, "with his romantic's apprehension that all was not well with the world, and his romantic's duty to do something about it," became aware the necessity for a sterner and more honest evaluation of the American experience. Thus his career constitutes a major quest, one which discovered its object in "A Place in the Sun," "Shane," and "Giant."

As the content of his films evolved, so too Stevens' style changed. A consummate craftsman from the first, he then learned "how to break the rules." Though known as one of the most careful and painstaking directors in America, his early years had at the same time given him an admirable sense of timing and spontaneity.

Early in his career he made comedy short-subjects, beginning work in 1924 as a cameraman for the Hal Roach studios during which he shot a number of the Laurel and Hardy and Harry Langdon films. In 1933 he made his first feature, and two years later completed the now-famous "Alice Adams."

From then, he went on to make such well-remembered pictures as "Gunga Din," with Cary Grant, from an original story by Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur; "Vivacious Lady," with Ginger Rogers and James Stewart; "Penny Serenade," with Irene Dunne; and "Woman of the Year," with Katharine Hepburn and Spencer Tracy.

In the years after World War II, Stevens emerged as a major artist, beginning with "I Remember Mama" and continuing into the later films. From early romantic and idealistic beginnings he evolved the realistic and questioning view which is now his. In conclusion, Richie finds that these later films - "Shane," "Giant," "A Place in the Sun" "are prophetic, as all art is meant to be. They indicate what can happen, what one hopes will happen, when the American romantic finally realizes himself as a human being."

The George Stevens program follows:

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Thursday, January 8th (2:00, 5:30, & 8:00)

A PLACE IN THE SUN. 1951. Produced and directed by George Stevens. Based on Theodore Dreiser's An American Tragedy. With Montgomery Clift, Elizabeth Taylor, Shelly Winters. Courtesy of Paramount Pictures. 122 minutes.

Friday, January 9th (2:00 & 5:30)

DAMSEL IN DISTRESS. 1937. Produced by Pandro S. Berman. Directed by George Stevens. With Fred Astaire, George Burns, Gracie Allen. Courtesy RKO-Radio Pictures. 100 minutes.

Saturday, January 10th (3:00 & 5:30)

GUNGA DIN. 1939. Produced and directed by George Stevens. From an original story by Ben Hecht and Charles MacArthur suggested by the Rudyard Kipling poem. With Cary Grant, Victor McLaglen, Douglas Fairbanks, Jr., Sam Jaffe, Eduardo Ciannelli, Joan Fontaine, Montague Love. Courtesy RKO-Radio Pictures. 117 minutes.

Sunday, January 11th (2:00 & 5:30)

ALICE ADAMS. 1935. Directed by George Stevens. Based on the Booth Tarkington novel. With Katharine Hepburn, Fred MacMurray, Fred Stone, Evelyn Venable, Frank Albertson, Ann Shoemaker, Charles Grapewin, Grady Sutton, Hedda Hopper, Hattie McDaniel, Ella McKenzie. Courtesy RKO-Radio Pictures. 99 minutes.

Monday, January 12th (2:00 & 5:30)

ANNIE OAKLEY. 1935. Directed by George Stevens. Based on an original story by Joseph A. Fields and Edward Adamson. With Barbara Stanwyck, Preston Foster, Melvyn Douglas. Courtesy RKO-Radio Pictures. 88 minutes.

Tuesday, January 13th (2:00 & 5:30)

QUALITY STREET. 1937. Directed by George Stevens. After the play by Sir James M. Barrie. With Katharine Hepburn, Franchot Tone. Courtesy RKO-Radio Pictures. 84 minutes.

Thursday, January 15th (2:00 & 7:00)

GIANT. 1956. Produced by George Stevens and Henry Ginsburg. Directed by George Stevens. After the novel by Edna Ferber. With Elizabeth Taylor, Rock Hudson, James Dean, Carroll Baker, Chill Wills, Mercedes McCambridge, Sal Mineo, Dennis Hopper. Courtesy Warner Brothers Pictures. 198 minutes.

Friday, January 16th (2:00 & 5:30)

SWINGTIME. 1936. Produced by Pandro S. Berman. Directed by George Stevens. With Fred Astaire, Ginger Rogers. Courtesy of RKO-Radio Pictures. 103 minutes.

Saturday, January 17th (3:00 & 5:30)

VIVACIOUS LADY. 1938. Produced and directed by George Stevens. Based on a story by I.A.R. Wylie. With Ginger Rogers, James Stewart, James Allison, Beulah Bondie, Charles Coburn, Frances Mercer, Jack Carson, Willie Best. Courtesy of RKO-Radio Pictures. 90 minutes.

Sunday, January 18th (2:00 & 5:30)

WOMAN OF THE YEAR. 1942. Produced by Joseph L. Mankiewicz. Directed by George Stevens. With Katharine Hepburn, Spencer Tracy, Fay Bainter, Reginald Owen, Minor Watson, William Bendix, Gladys Blake, Dan Tobin, Roscoe Karns, Sarah Haden. Courtesy of MGM Motion Pictures. 112 minutes.

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Monday, January 19th (2:00 & 5:30)

PENNY SERENADE. 1941. Produced and directed by George Stevens. Based on a story by Martha Cheavens. With Irene Dunne, Cary Grant, Beulah Bondi. Courtesy of Columbia Pictures and Mr. Grant. 125 minutes.

Tuesday, January 20th (2:00 only)

SOMETHING TO LIVE FOR. 1952. Produced and directed by George Stevens. With Joan Fontaine, Ray Milland, Teresa Wright. Courtesy of Paramount Pictures. 89 minutes.

Thursday, January 22nd (2:00 & 5:30)

THE TALK OF THE TOWN. 1942. Produced and directed by George Stevens. Written after the adaptation of a Sidney Harmon story by Dale van Every. With Cary Grant, Jean Arthur, Rex Ingram. Courtesy of Columbia Pictures. 118 minutes.

Friday, January 23rd (2:00 & 5:30)

THE MORE THE MERRIER. 1943. Produced and directed by George Stevens. Based on an original story by Robert Russell and Frank Ross. With Jean Arthur, Joel McCrea, Charles Coburn, Richard Gaines. Courtesy of Columbia Pictures. 104 minutes.

Saturday, January 24th (3:00 & 5:30)

I REMEMBER MAMA. 1948. Directed by George Stevens. Based on the Kathryn Forbes novel. With Irene Dunne, Barbara Bel Geddes, Oscar Homolka, Philip Dorn, Sir Cedric Hardwicke, Edgar Bergen, Rudy Vallee, Edith Evans. Courtesy of RKO-Radio Pictures. 134 Minutes.

Sunday, January 25th (2:00 & 5:30)

SHANE. 1953. Produced and directed by George Stevens. After the novel by Jack Schaefer. With Alan Ladd, Jean Arthur, Van Heflin, Brandon de Wilde, Jack Palance, Ben Johnson, Edgar Buchanan. Courtesy of Paramount Pictures. 118 minutes.

Monday, January 26th (2:00 & 5:30)

VIGIL IN THE NIGHT. 1940. Produced and directed by George Stevens. After the novel of A.J. Cronin. With Carole Lombard, Brian Aherne, Anne Shirley, Julien Mitchell. Courtesy of RKO-Radio Pictures. 96 minutes.

Tuesday, January 27th (2:00 only)

THE GREATEST STORY EVER TOLD. 1965. Produced and directed by George Stevens. With Max von Sydow, Dorothy McGuire, Charlton Heston. Courtesy of United Artists. 210 minutes.

Additional information and stills available from Lillian Gerard, Film Coordinator, and Elizabeth Shaw, Director, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10019. (212) 956 - 7296, 7501.