

The Museum of Modern Art

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MUSEUM SALUTES THE FOREIGN FILM IN AMERICA: 1946 - 71

The major summer film retrospective at The Museum of Modern Art will be "The Foreign Film in America: 1946 - 71." This series, starting August 5 with three showings of Roberto Rossellini's "Open City," was planned by the Department of Film as a tribute to the International Film Importers and Distributors Association, whose members have been responsible for bringing to American audiences important works of film art from abroad.

This retrospective consists of films that received the annual Joseph Burstyn Award from the Association. Several of the films, such as "Miracle in Milan," precede this award in honor of the late pioneer distributor, but they were in most instances imported by him, and received the New York Critics' Prize for the Best Foreign Film of the Year.

"Open City" was presented by Arthur Mayer and Joseph Burstyn as was "Paisan," another early Rossellini, and "The Bicycle Thief," a film by Vittorio De Sica, the second neo-realist to attract critics' attention here. It was a time when the streets were turned into studios and non-actors became actors. The results brought accolades. Of "The Bicycle Thief" Bosley Crowther, erstwhile critic of The New York Times, wrote, "It ranks for all around greatness with any picture made."

Altogether 27 foreign films, all considered film masterpieces, are scheduled to be shown. 12 come from Italy, 13 from France, one from Czechoslovakia and one from Japan. The films include "To Live in Peace," "Umberto D," "Gate of Hell," "Gervaise," from the Zola story, and "The 400 Blows." Lesser known are "Sundays and Cybele," "Mafioso" and the controversial "Ways of Love." More recent films are "Z" and Claude Chabrol's "This Man Must Die."

In assembling the program commemorating 25 years of foreign film, Adrienne Mancina, Associate Curator of the Department of Film, worked with Thomas Brandon of the Importers Association. Mr. Brandon, a specialist in 16mm, has in recent years brought to the college campuses many of these early films, for which leading distributors had scanned world markets in

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search of off-beat, mature content. For example, "Justice is Done" evinced a concern in France over the inequities of the jury system. It was the work of André Cayatte, a lawyer turned filmmaker.

All the films have in common both a unique filmic style and thematic departure from the average American film. For film importers here were relentless in their efforts to cultivate American film taste and make it international. That they have succeeded is evident, according to Mrs. Mancina, who claims the foreign film has become accepted as part of our cultural heritage. The present-day audience is not aware, however, of the struggle to import films in the past decades. It was a challenge that involved censorship problems, and demanded of the importer courage and resourcefulness. The films invariably introduced new values and reflected the contemporary scene in other parts of the world.

Many post-war foreign films dwelled on the hard times that followed the war years, with the neo-realistic films of Italy in the forefront. "Miracle in Milan" told of insupportable poverty, while "The Bicycle Thief" could only have been made in Rome, where a stolen bike deprived a family man of his livelihood.

The French films were more apt to deal with the immediate past-- the war itself. "Forbidden Games" told of two children who do not comprehend the bombing and burials during the French occupation. Later Alain Resnais was to draw a parallel between the occupation of France and the destruction of Hiroshima as it affected two individuals, a French woman and her Japanese lover, whose associations in "Hiroshima, Mon Amour" tell the story of their lives. It was the first film applying free association.

On the program is the seldom seen "Ways of Love," a trio composed of Jean Renoir's "A Day in the Country," from the De Maupassant short story; "Jofroi," directed by Marcel Pagnol, and the controversial film "The Miracle," by Rossellini, with Anna Magnani in the starring role. "The Miracle" was written by Fellini, who plays a role in the picture, which became a notorious censorship case in the fifties. Its showing was prohibited until the Supreme Court ruled in its favor. Sacrilege was no longer to be considered grounds for censorship. This was the first victory on a national scale in the battle against screen censorship. It was contested by Joseph Burstyn.

Members of the importers association have consistently sought freedom of the screen. They have contested the ruling of lower courts and of individual state boards of censorship. While

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Joseph Burstyn was able to reach the Supreme Court, the battle for the most part was fought by the early pioneers on a state-to-state basis. There will be 3 showings of "The Miracle," on August 10 and August 11.

The pendulum swung between France and Italy for film honors until American audiences were captured by "La Dolce Vita," considered the cinematic equivalent of Dante's Hell; "8 1/2," the autobiographical self-searching of a film director; and "Juliet of the Spirits," the introspection of a middle-aged woman-- all films of Fellini, whose first success^{here} was "La Strada," the memorable tale of a waif who joins a travelling circus, and becomes the love object of a sadistic strong man.

Towards the end of the sixties, a Czechoslovakian picture, "The Shop on Main Street" by Jan Kadar, attracted American interest in the Eastern European film.

Attention then reverted to France again, with "Belle de Jour" and "Z," both prize winners, the former by Luis Bunuel of Spanish origin, and the latter by the Greek Costa Gavras. Both directors are self-exiles working outside their native lands as was the American Jules Dassin, who made the prize-winner "He Who Must Die" ("Celui Qui Doit Mourir").

If these films have reached American shores, it is only because of distributors here vying with each other to obtain quality on the screen. Among the distributors were such unsung heroes as the late Edward Kingsley and Ilya Lopert, members of the importers association, which just presented (on July 29) a citation to Arthur L. Mayer, elder statesman of the group. Now in his 85th year, Mr. Mayer was honored by the Museum's Department of Film and the importers at a ceremony inaugurating the foreign film series. Other importers and pioneers of notable foreign films include Irvin Shapiro, Jean Goldwurm, William and Max Goldberg, Jean Lenauer, the late Martin Lewis and Edward Harrison, Thomas Brandon, Richard Davis and Walter Reade.

The complete schedule of The Foreign Film in America: 1946 - 71 follows:

Thursday, August 5 (2:00, 5:30, 8:00) OPEN CITY (1946). Directed by Roberto Rossellini. With Aldo Fabrizi, Anna Magnani. Italian; English titles. Courtesy Contemporary/McGraw-Hill Films. 100 min.

Friday, August 6 (2:00, 5:30) TO LIVE IN PEACE (1947). Directed by Luigi Zampa. With Aldo Fabrizi, Mirelli Monto. Italian; English titles. Courtesy Audio/Brandon Films. 90 min.

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Saturday, August 7 (3:00, 5:30) PAISA (1946). Directed by Roberto Rossellini. With Carmela Sazio, Gar Moore, Bill Tubbs. Italian; English titles. 115 min.

Sunday, August 8 (2:00, 5:30) THE BICYCLE THIEF (1949). Directed by Vittorio De Sica. With Lamberto Maggiorani, Lianella Carell. Italian; English titles. Courtesy Audio/Brandon. 87 min.

Monday, August 9 (1:00) THE BICYCLE THIEF (see Sunday, August 8).

Tuesday, August 10 (2:00) THE WAYS OF LOVE. A trilogy assembled in 1950 consisting of the following films: A DAY IN THE COUNTRY (1936). Directed by Jean Renoir. With Sylvia Bataille, Guy d'Arnoux. French; English titles. Courtesy Contemporary/McGraw-Hill. 45 min. THE MIRACLE (1948). Directed by Roberto Rossellini. With Anna Magnani. Italian; English titles. Courtesy George Eastman House, Motion Picture Division. 41 min. JOFROI (1934). Directed by Marcel Pagnol. With Vincent Scotto, Annie Toinon. French; no titles. Courtesy Cinematheque de Toulouse. 40 min.

Wednesday, August 11 (2:00, 5:30) THE WAYS OF LOVE (see Tuesday, August 10).

Thursday, August 12 (2:00, 5:30, 8:00) MIRACLE IN MILAN (1951). Directed by Vittorio De Sica. With Francesco Golisano, Paolo Stoppa. Italian; English titles. Courtesy Audio/Brandon. 105 min.

Friday, August 13 (2:00, 5:30) FORBIDDEN GAMES (1952). Directed by Rene Clement. With George Poujouly, Brigitte Fossey. French; English titles. Courtesy Janus Films. 89 min.

Saturday, August 14 (3:00, 5:30) JUSTICE IS DONE (1950). Directed by André Cayatte. With Claude Nollier, Michel Auclair, Jean d'Yd. French; English titles. 97 min.

Sunday, August 15 (2:00, 5:30) THE GATE OF HELL (1953). Directed by Teinosuke Kinugasa. With Kazuo Hasegawa, Machiko Kyo. Japanese; English titles. 90 min.

Monday, August 16 (1:00) THE GATE OF HELL (see Sunday, August 15).

Tuesday, August 17 (2:00) UMBERTO D (1952). Directed by Vittorio De Sica. With Carlo Battisti, Maria Pia Casilio. Italian; English titles. Courtesy Janus Films. 89 min.

Wednesday, August 18 (2:00, 5:30) UMBERTO D (see Tuesday, August 17).

Thursday, August 19 (2:00, 5:30, 8:00) LA STRADA (1956). Directed by Federico Fellini. With Giulietta Masina, Anthony Quinn. Italian; English titles. Courtesy Audio/Brandon. 107 min.

Friday, August 20 (2:00, 5:30) GERVAISE (1957). Directed by Rene Clement. With Maria Schell, François Perier, Suzy Delair. French; English titles. Courtesy Walter Reade Organization. 116 min.

Saturday, August 21 (3:00, 5:30) HE WHO MUST DIE (1958). Directed by Jules Dassin. With Melina Mercouri, Jean Servais. French; English titles. Courtesy United Artists. 116 min.

Sunday, August 22 (2:00, 5:30) THE 400 BLOWS (1959). Directed by Francois Truffaut. With Jean-Pierre Leaud. French; English titles. Courtesy Janus Films. 98 min.

Monday, August 23 (1:00) HIROSHIMA MON AMOUR (1959). Directed by Alain Resnais. With Emmanuele Riva, Eiji Okada. French; English titles. Courtesy Contemporary/McGraw-Hill. 88 min.

Tuesday, August 24 (2:00) HIROSHIMA MON AMOUR (see Monday, August 23).

Wednesday, August 25 (2:00, 5:30) LA DOLCE VITA (1960). Directed by Federico Fellini. With Marcello Mastroianni, Anouk Aimee, Anita Ekberg. Italian; English titles. Courtesy American-International Pictures. 180 min.

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Thursday, August 26 (2:00, 5:30, 8:00) SUNDAYS AND CYBELE (1962). Directed by Serge Bourguignon. With Patricia Gozzi, Hardy Kruger. French; English titles. Courtesy Columbia Pictures. 110 min.

Friday, August 27 (2:00, 5:30) MAFIOSO (1963). Directed by Alberto Lattuada. With Alberto Sordi, Norma Bengell. Italian; English titles. Courtesy Audio/Brandon. 105 min.

Saturday, August 28 (3:00, 5:30) JULIET OF THE SPIRITS (1965). Directed by Federico Fellini. With Giulietta Masina. Italian; English titles. Courtesy Jerry Gross/Cinematic Industries. 137 min.

Sunday, August 29 (2:00, 5:30) THE SHOP ON MAIN STREET (1965). Directed by Jan Kadar and Elmar Klos. With Josef Kroner. Czechoslovakian; English titles. Courtesy Audio/Brandon. 128 min

Monday, August 30 (1:00) THE SHOP ON MAIN STREET (see Sunday, August 29).

Tuesday, August 31 (2:00) 8 1/2 (1964). Directed by Federico Fellini. With Marcello Mastroianni, Claudia Cardinale, Anouk Aimee. Italian; English titles. Courtesy Avco/Embassy Films. 135 min.

Wednesday, September 1 (2:00, 5:30) LA GUERRE EST FINIE (1966). Directed by Alain Resnais. With Yves Montand, Ingrid Thulin, Genevieve Bujold. Courtesy Audio/Brandon. 121 min.

Thursday, September 2

(2:00) BELLE DE JOUR (1968). Directed by Luis Bunuel. With Catherine Deneuve, Jean Sorel, Michel Piccoli. Courtesy Hurlock Cine-World. 100 min.

(5:30) Z (1969). Directed by Costa Gavra. With Yves Montand, Irene Papas, Jean-Louis Trintignant. Courtesy Cinema V. 123 min.

(8:00) QUE LA BETE MEURE (THIS MAN MUST DIE) (1969). Directed by Claude Chabrol. With Michel Duchaussoy, Jean Yanne. Courtesy Allied Artists. 110 min.

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