

Document Citation

Title	Farewell, Luchino - hello, Bernardo
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Source	<i>Soho Weekly News</i>
Date	1975 Jun 10
Type	review
Language	English
Pagination	25, 27
No. of Pages	2
Subjects	
Film Subjects	Novecento (1900), Bertolucci, Bernardo, 1976

F I L M

Farewell, Luchino - Hello, Bernardo

1900

FABIANO CANOSA

Closing Night at the Cannes Film Festival

Day and night, for weeks the lavish press books had flooded the tables set out on four floors of the Palais, and then it was all over with the appearance of a single, white-and-blue mimeographed sheet, a symbol of austerity and simplicity, and the final pronouncement from the jury of the world's greatest film fair.

The judges had chosen their award films, and if their sheet was greeted in *blase* fashion, it was because the best of the Cannes Festival was shown either out of competition (Bernardo Bertolucci's *1900*) or in parallel exhibitions such as the Quinzaine des Realisateurs (Nagisa Oshima's *Empire of the Senses* and Jose Fonseca Costa's *The Devils of Alcazar-Kibir*), the Critic's Week (Jorge Bodansky's *Iracema*) and in the new format called Air du Temps (Marcel Ophuls' *The Memory of Justice*).

markable. You don't need to see *Taxi Driver* to believe it; a ride up the West Side via Times Square to Broadway and 96th Street confirms it.

In terms of future United States playoff, all the other prizes seem minor, especially when you consider that with the exception of Eric Rohmer's *La Marquise D'O* (which will certainly be in the New York Film Festival), the careers of the other films are not likely to be affected. Carlos Saura (special jury prize to his *Cria Cuervos*, shared with Rohmer's film) is not a household name anywhere else but in Spain. *Where Are You, Madame Dery* (best Actress Award to Mari Torocsik, shared with Dominique Sanda) will be, at most, a sleeper as was *Love*, but when did the last Hungarian film play New York? Dominique Sanda's splendid performance in *The Ferramonti Heirs* may help the film to reach Manhattan, but its director, Mauro Bolognini, has always been treated with indifference by exhibitors, distributors and film critics. Best Actor in the Festival was awarded

full of that humanity which is so sadly lacking in Lina Wertmuller's films. Probably because message films are out-of-fashion, the award to Scola was most judicious; and, one by one, I thank the people who composed the jury, especially Tennessee Williams, who said in a brilliant article printed in *Le Figaro* on the opening day of the Festival: "The image of truth is that of God. In the new films, both come out of the darkness, and the audiences receive them favorably." He mentions Renoir, Fellini, Bunuel, Godard, the late De Sica, Visconti, and Pasolini, among others. One should trust the judgment of a man who thinks of those men, of truth and of God.

AMONG THE BEST

1900 by Bernardo Bertolucci: I thought that *1900* would open in Italy before the forthcoming elections of June 20th, but it won't. It is scheduled for September. The film is an absolutely astonishing work, perhaps the most beautiful and effective political film since the days of Dovshenko and Eisenstein.



Robert de Niro and Dominique Sanda span the twentieth century in Bernardo Bertolucci's *1900*.

It also went without saying that the Festival's most moving experience was Luchino Visconti's last opus, *The Innocent*, not because of the film itself, but for the fact that you sense throughout the film the presence of a true genius of the cinema waving goodbye to all those who followed his steps through minor and major films. *The Innocent* was one of the earliest events of the Festival; and while I'm writing this, the closing film, Alfred Hitchcock's delightful *The Family Plot*, is being shown.

I'm very glad, however, that *Taxi Driver* was the official award winner; that will prod a lot of people to take a second look at the film and to see what Martin Scorsese's love for New York has led him to make. It is his Mean Streets, Part III, if you consider *Who's That Knocking at My Door?* as the first of a trilogy about New York. *Taxi Driver* may be quite unbelievable as far as Robert de Niro's character goes, but its background, the New York City of 1976, is re-

to Jose Luis Gomez for *Pascual Duarte*; and I'm sorry to have missed it because where else could a New Yorker have seen, except in the late First Avenue Screening Room, a film from Spain with political overtones? Finally, Best Direction was awarded to Ettore Scola, a director who has yet to make his mark in Manhattan.

It seems that either New York City is out of touch with modern cinema, or else the Cannes Film Festival is. Ettore Scola, for instance, has a filmography of over ten films; and yet only a couple of these films (some of them severely cut) have ever been presented in the United States. I hope that the tax-shelter dealers learn that there is cinema somewhere else besides France, and I hope they take a trip to Rome and get the rights to Scola's films (along with those of Dino Risi, another rare stateside visitor).

The Brute, the Dirty and the Captive, Scola's tragicomedy about Roman slum characters, is

Some already call it the *Gone With the Wind* of the Italian Communist Party, and others seem overwhelmed by the five-and-a-half-hour (in two parts) parable about fifty years in the life of two friends, a landowner and a peasant (Robert de Niro and Gerard Depardieu). The truth is that miles of galleys will be written about the film. I'm dying to read Pauline Kael's review, and I hope that Richard Roud brings it to the New York Film Festival *in totum*. It seems that Paramount isn't happy with either the length or the proselitism of the film. Yet, deservedly, there was no hotter ticket in Cannes; and if Paramount realizes that the event of seeing this film giant is as big as the film itself, *1900* will come out in the U.S. with all its brilliant 340 minutes intact. From now on, every single student of mass communication will have in his agenda a viewing of Bernardo Bertolucci's *1900* as the most poetic, involving and operatic piece of propaganda

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in the last fifty years of cinema. No one in Cannes was quite the same after this film, and I hope no one will compare it to *The Last Tango in Paris*. *Tango* was a rivulet; *1900* is a river.

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