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Romanzo popolare (Come home and meet my wife), Monicelli, Mario, 1974



MARIO MONICELLI

BY ORIO CALDIRON

FILMOGRAPHY BY
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■ ORIO CALDIRON

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Notice:

The compilers of the present volume have been unable to indicate, for all the films mentioned in the text, the titles with which they were distributed in the various countries. Therefore, the film titles in the text have been left in the original Italian with a literal translation in parentheses.

In the contemporary Italian cinema, Mario Monicelli represents professional perseverance and a craftsman's intelligence. Loyalty to entertainment, in its bondage and greatness. A lesson in anti-rhetoric. The narrative fluency of a story-teller endowed with an immediate and confident style. The flavour of farce, which does not fear vulgarity and turns despair into mockery. A taste for ridicule, a sardonic spirit that appears between the bitter and dramatic accents. A concern — sometimes mischievously grotesque and sometimes trepidantly human — for the antiheroes and the poor devils who have to make do with the crumbs from the party, for the born losers who are doomed to failure. If the Italian critics had a greater awareness than they normally have, of the hard work of the good professional director and of the greatness of first-class craftsmanship, they would already have awarded him a prominent place among the national cinema's "conscript fathers", instead of having to be taught their job by their French colleagues, who did not hesitate to acknowledge him as a master of popular cinema.

Monicelli belongs to the generation in-between which, during the late fifties and early sixties, took over from the masters of Neorealism and often overturned hope into disillusionment, certainty into doubt; he has a prominent position among those directors who have succeeded in eliminating the prejudiced attitude to comedy which exists in the country of the "commedia dell'arte"; who have studied to the full the lesson of anti-rhetoric, as well as its ability to grasp the symptoms of every-day life and to voice the moods and bad moods of the country. There is no intention, here, to overrate the rôle of comedy, its ability to make the Italian reality self-evident, but it is hard to deny that it has somehow been a mirror which has reflected the changes in customs and the ups and downs of a society that is suffering from an identity crisis and has now realized that it has more questions to raise than answers to give. Certainly, the cinema is a treacherous, contradictory mirror, which is no longer consulted with the enthusiasm and naivety of the past, and one is tempted, if anything, to invert the process of Plato's cave in order to verify whether the images correspond, whether they actually can represent things. But it would be impossible to deny that films like "I soliti ignoti" (The Usual Unknowns), "La grande guerra" (The Great War), "I compagni" (The Comrades), "L'armata Brancaleone" (Brancaleone's Army), "Un borghese piccolo piccolo" (The Average Little Man) have counted for something in that difficult operation which consists in looking at the mirror and grimacing disgustedly before recognizing oneself in the ramshackle and distorted image that is reflected there.

No one is saying that Monicelli is something of a sociologist — far from it. He is too witty to have anything to do with such a boring and peevish category of people. Monicelli is first and foremost a talented story-teller by images, a director who knows the ambiguities and artifices of the “mise en scène”, the play of perspective illusions and faceted refractions which is the very basis of the medium, the constraints and freedoms of a cinema that works within genres; and all this without losing sight of the audience. If we were to ask his opinion, he would be the first to put us on our guard against an over-hasty identification of the films with the country's reality, of the images with the mirror, and would probably suggest that we forget the contents of and the pretexts for the story, but take a good look right into the secrets of the trade. His journey into the film world started in the pre-war days and passed through more than one of Italy's cinematic waves, from the explosion of Neorealism to its premature decline, from the very beginnings of comedy, with the conventions and indolence of a trade that was often the victim of haste and improvisation, to the crisis of “Italian-style comedy” and the attempts at “grotesque drama” which came after it. We should follow this journey if we want to understand his works.

Mario Monicelli was born in Viareggio on 16th May, 1915, into a middle-class family that had never had any direct contact with the cinema, but had close ties with journalism, publishing, and the theatre. His father, Tomaso Monicelli (1883-1946), was an important name in Italian journalism during the first twenty years of the century; he had begun to write for “Avanguardia socialista”, the official organ of the unionist group, and had then become the literary and theatrical critic of “Avanti!”, before devoting himself to political journalism, while his originally Socialist convictions tended more and more towards Nationalism. Together with Luigi Federzoni and Forges Davanzati, he had founded two daily papers, “L'Idea Nazionale” (1918-1920) and “Il Giornale di Roma” (1921-1922), and had then been the editor of “Il Tempo” (1923) and “Il Resto del Carlino” (1924-1926). Author of about ten plays, which were not devoid of social issues, he had also been a writer of children's books — with Arnaldo Mondadori (who was just starting up as a publisher, at Ostiglia, a small town in the province of Mantova where both were born), he worked as the editor of “La Lampada”, a series of children's books, and continued to do so until the thirties. This reference to the family's relations with Mondadori will not seem completely superfluous if one notes that young Mario, after beginning his studies at Pisa, continued them at Milan where he joined a group of students which also included Alberto Mondadori, one of

the publisher's sons and his younger by just a year.

In the early thirties, when Fascism was beginning to win widespread support around the country, there were many young people who sensed the profound uneasiness that lay behind the regime's façade and were trying to use cultural sensitivity to arrive where political immaturity could not. Alberto Mondadori and Mario Monicelli, who had known each other all their lives because they were cousins, ended up together in “Camminare”, a bi-monthly magazine for youngsters which Alberto had founded; Alberto then went into professional journalism, at the end of the thirties, and became the editor of the illustrated weekly “Tempo” (1939-1943). It was a very mixed group that worked for “Camminare” — among others, it included Remo Cantoni, Enzo Paci, Luciano Anceschi (who were destined to become some of the most important philosophers of the post-war years, and were already very close to existentialism and phenomenology, in open opposition to idealism), Alberto Lattuada, Riccardo Freda, Mario Zagari, Giorgio Granata, Roberto Ducci. The magazine went on for a couple of years, from 1932 to 1933; some of its collaborators subsequently ended up in “Corrente” (1938-1940), which was already a more explicitly anti-Fascist magazine.

The call of the cinema had already made itself felt among these youngsters — they had been writing and talking of films for some time, and had started to potter with 16mm cameras. The first attempt was a short, “Il cuore rivelatore” (The Revealing Heart, 1934), based on a story of the same title by Edgar Allan Poe, and made by Alberto Mondadori, Mario Monicelli and Cesare Civita, who is currently a big publisher in Buenos Aires. Alberto Lattuada, who was to study architecture, took care of the art direction. But the whole group had suggestions to make, either during the shooting or after, when the shorts were screened for friends; sometimes, to economize, the films had to be shot without sound, and then records were used for the commentary.

The next attempt was more important, and more successful. Monicelli and Mondadori moved on to a feature-length film, no less. In 1935, they made a picture in 16mm, called “I ragazzi della via Paal” (The Boys From Paal Street); it was based on a well-known novel by Ferenc Molnár, and starred youngsters chosen in schools, from amongst friends and siblings of friends. Entered for the 16mm films competition, organized as a side event to the third Venice Festival, the picture won the first prize for feature films. That same year, the official festival presented an American film, “No Greater Glory”, by Franz Borzage, starring George Breakston and Frankie

Darro, which was also based on Molnár's novel — all in all, an encouraging coincidence. But the real prize consisted in being admitted to the professional film world, in being allowed to learn the job on a real set. Mondadori and Monicelli were sent off to be assistants to Gustav Machatý, who, fresh from his success with "Extase" (1933), had been called to make a film in Italy. Nobody yet knew that the Hungarian maestro was a haughty megalomaniac who was already undergoing a premature decline, and that "Ballerine" (1936) would turn out to be a muddled, fatuous film. It must have been hard for his two young assistants to digest the sensational failure of a picture from which they, like everyone else, were expecting a lot. Monicelli consoled himself by making his first trip to Africa. That same year, in fact, he was one of the assistants of Augusto Genina, who went off to the Libyan desert to shoot "Squadrone bianco" (White Squadron), a story about a squadron of meharists fighting bands of rebels in Tripolitania. Genina was an extremely competent and meticulous director, who constructed his films with care, but shunned the overweening attitude of a "Mr. Big" — he did not give himself airs. The success of "Squadrone bianco", compared to the fiasco of "Ballerine", was the first real lesson that Monicelli learnt from the cinema.

The young assistant director's apprenticeship continued in the following years with a number of films made, for the most part, by minor directors: "I Fratelli Castiglioni" (The Castiglioni Brothers, 1937), by Corrado D'Errico, with Amedeo Nazzari and Camillo Pilotto, a confusing story about an inheritance of theatrical equipment; "Equatore" (Equator, 1939), by Gino Valori, a mediocre colonial story set in a Kenyan dockyard, which had been reconstructed at Cinecittà, "Fascino" (Charm, 1939), by Giacinto Solito, one of many films centred on the vocal qualities of the usual opera singer. In the years that followed, Monicelli took a step ahead and worked on a series of films that were better than the previous ones: "Il documento" (The Document, 1939), by Mario Camerini, "La granduchessa si diverte" (The Grand Duchess Has Fun, 1940), by Giacomo Gentilomo, "Marco Visconti" (1941), by Mario Bonnard, and "Cortocircuito" (Short-circuit, 1943), again by Giacomo Gentilomo. If Bonnard, who had been an actor in silent movies, represented a link with the past, Gentilomo, who had been a cutter, was an extremely competent technician and a skilful builder of entertaining gadgets — they were two professionals who pointed the way to efficiency and to a certain narrative fluency. But the most significant encounter was that with Mario Camerini, a talented director who, in his films, was slowly putting together a kind of subdued epopee of the lower

middle class; he was an extremely personal director endowed with extraordinary powers of observation, particularly with respect to the little things, the little signs of every-day life. He had sure way with actors, and had been the first to mould Vittorio De Sica in such important films as "Gli uomini, che mascalzoni!" (Men, What Rascals!, 1932), "Darò un milione" (I'll Give a Million, 1935), "Il Signor Max" (Mister Max, 1937), "Grandi Magazzini" (Department Stores, 1939), pointing out a course that De Sica himself was to follow when he decided to move behind the camera. Monicelli was to learn a great deal from this encounter and glimpsed the possibility of making popular films centred on every-day occurrences, marked by an anti-rhetorical approach, shot as much as possible from life, taking many elements from reality, working on the actor, on the visual creation of the character. In many ways, Monicelli considers Camerini to be his mentor.

But his apprenticeship was not yet over, and many years were to pass before Monicelli could put into practice what he had learned. If he had been an assistant-director before the war, after it he was to become a screenwriter — another important stage of his career. In fact, he returned to the cinema almost by accident, after the hiatus of the war years, when he was called to Rome by Riccardo Freda, one of the youngsters of the "Camminare" group with whom he had worked in Milan. A screenwriter during the years when Monicelli had been an assistant, Freda had already made his directing debut with "Don Cesare di Bazan" (Don Cesare of Bazan, 1942), which had launched his enterprising style, with its genuine popular streak and great narrative aplomb; after the war, he went back to work with "Aquila nera" (Black Eagle, 1946), "I miserabili" (The Wretched, 1948), "Il cavaliere misterioso" (The Mysterious Cavalier, 1948), "Il conte Ugolino" (Count Ugolino, 1949), all period pictures in the tradition of popular fiction with thoroughly upright, irreproachable heroes who were to be a great success with the more naive audiences. "Aquila nera" marked the start of Monicelli's collaboration with Stefano Vanzina, who was already using his pseudonym of Steno and came from humorous periodicals such as "Marc'Aurelio" and "Bertoldo". It was Freda, a friend of both, who brought them together, guessing that the two young men would immediately get on well together. In the wake of these successful films came a big trend in costume pictures, which dipped alternately into famous novels and celebrated "feuilletons", without making any great distinction between Stendhal or Pushkin, Hugo or Dostoyevsky, Montépin or Ponson du Terrail; the aim was to excite the daydreams of popular audiences, sometimes satisfying them

with the exploits of redressers of wrongs, avengers mindful of the public weal, friends of the weak and the oppressed, and sometimes giving them the purely superficial but nevertheless enticing gratification of the traditional cloak and dagger fare. A major producer of costume pictures packed with adventure was Lux, which had Carlo Ponti and Dino De Laurentiis as its executive producers, and made, among others, "Il corriere del re" (The King's Courier, 1947), by Gennaro Righelli, "La figlia del capitano" (The Captain's Daughter, 1947) and "Il Brigante Musolino" (The Brigand Musolino, 1950), by Mario Camerini, and even "I fratelli Karamazov" (The Brothers Karamazov, 1946), by Giacomo Gentilomo.

In the space of a few years, either on his own, or in partnership with Steno or other screenwriters, Monicelli found himself much in demand, and was even writing several scripts at once. His name, if not his talent, could be found in many popular film trends directed by past masters and by new recruits. These trends went from opera pictures, inspired by 19th century works, such as "Follie per l'opera" (Crazy for Opera, 1947), by Mario Costa, "Cavalleria rusticana" (The Rustic Code of Honour, 1953), by Carmine Gallone, "Giuseppe Verdi" (1953), by Raffaello Matarazzo, to films drawn from the endless mine of Neapolitan songs, such as "Marechiaro" (1949), by Giorgio Ferroni, and "Core'ngrato" (1951), by Guido Brignone. There were also various other genres and sub-genres, from "L'ebreo errante" (The Wandering Jew, 1947), by Goffredo Alessandrini, to "Il lupo della Sila" (The Wolf of the Sila, 1947), by Duilio Coletti, from "Guai ai vinti!" (Woe to the Conquered!, 1955), by Raffaele Matarazzo, and so on to "La donna più bella del mondo" (The Most Beautiful Woman in the World, 1955), by Robert Z. Leonard, a soap-opera which tried to achieve the international consecration of a "star cult Italian-style".

However, Monicelli's most meaningful experience during the post-war period (before his encounter with comedy, which brought his apprenticeship to a close) was his meeting with Pietro Germi, who, after an uncertain debut with "Il testimone" (The Witness, 1946), was gradually finding his feet as a frank, confident story-teller with "Gioventù perduta" (Lost Youth, 1947) and "In nome della legge" (In the Name of the Law, 1949). Monicelli flanked him as a screenwriter, and was immediately won over by the seriousness of this reclusive director, who rejected the conventions of the movie world. If the subject of justice, of the relationship between the citizen and the State, which was Germi's main concern, did not have a great influence on Monicelli's future activity, it was nevertheless marked by the extreme conscientiousness of a prematurely mature

director, by the popular streak in his story-telling, and by the American cut of a style that aimed for visual concreteness. Monicelli was to remember all this when, a few years later, he began to try out his own talents, and also looked into the bourgeois world and the family scenes which Germi had been one of the first to treat.

Monicelli's apprenticeship drew to a close in the slap-dash, picturesque world of comedy — it was a particularly important period of his career because it was then that he was to take the step into directing. Screen comedies had been developing since before the war on the double front of humorous journalism and variety theatre. Comedy needed gags and sketches, and it drew its first script and story-line writers from those who worked for major humorous publications such as "Marc'Aurelio" or "Bertoldo", which featured names such as Vittorio Metz, Marcello Marchesi, Sandro Continenza, Federico Fellini, Ettore Scola, Steno, Age, and many others. No less important were the actors, who came from the variety theatre, which had been putting on curtain-raisers since the pre-war period and was currently moving into more organic and articulate reviews, before the advent of musical comedy. The Italian cinema's comedians all came from the theatre — Totò, Macario, Nino Taranto, who had had years of experience on the stage, and even Alberto Sordi and Ugo Tognazzi. For that matter, the two worlds of journalism and minor theatre were not so far apart — they had often met before, because the men who worked for humorous publications were also authors of reviews and sketches, and often collaborated with the foremost comedians, whose lines they wrote.

Steno had been part of this world for years, and although this was not the case for Monicelli, he had nevertheless had some indirect contact, if not with the papers, at least with the theatre, for his brother Franco, who was one of the founders of "Cantachiaro", one of the most well-known humorous weeklies, had written with Garinei and Giovannini two of the most successful satirical reviews of the post-war period — "Cantachiaro" (1944) and "Cantachiaro no. 2" (1945). He was probably also influenced by his brief experience with the Arlecchino, a small avant-garde theatre in Rome, enlivened, in the early post-war period, by Ennio Flaiano, Vitaliano Brancati and Carlo Mazzarella, who staged sketches and one-act plays that had a marked satirical flavour. It was undoubtedly a dispersive but intense period, marked not only by Ennio Flaiano's caustic jokes, which rebounded from the Rambaldi to the Aragno, the cafès where the screenwriters worked, but also by the rapid demise of the illu-

sion nourished by the liberation, as well as by an increasingly strict censorship, which pounced on anything that referred too explicitly to the Italian reality and its contradictions. In spite of the fact that Monicelli did not take a direct part in Neorealism — which dominated the important films of the time — and was in fact working in a field such as comedy, which was particularly removed from it, it is not difficult to see traces of the new climate in the three pictures which he scripted with Steno as a vehicle for Erminio Macario, who was an extremely popular comedian at the time. “Come persi la guerra” (How I Lost The War, 1947), “L’eroe della strada” (The Hero in the Street, 1948), and “Come scopersi l’America” (How I Discovered America, 1949), by Carlo Borghesio, achieved different results (the best was probably the first, the title of which echoed Buster Keaton’s “The General” which had been released in Italy as “Come vinsi la guerra” (How I Won the War)) in their intention to outline the character of a poor Italian who is overcome by what is going on around him, and, in a state of stupefaction, experiences events that are beyond him, such as war, concentration camps, indigence. Macario’s comedies — which were full of references to the Italian reality, and were based on an anti-rhetorical formula that occasionally slipped into social and political agnosticism — distantly recalled the Chaplin of “City Lights” and “Modern Times” and were a great success.

The same cannot be said for two other films starring Nino Taranto: “Lo sciopero dei milioni” (The Millions Strike, 1948), by Raffaello Matarazzo, and “Accidenti alla guerra” (Damn the War, 1948), by Giorgio C. Simonelli; the first put together a comedy of misunderstandings on football pools winnings, while the second diluted comedy into a more fragile and fragmentary structure in which the sketches of curtain-raisers were basted together with white thread. This same kind of rough-and-ready comedy also characterized two films by Mario Soldati: “O.K. Nerone” (O.K. Nero, 1951), and “È l’amor che mi rovina” (Love Is My Ruin, 1951), which made a fairly successful attempt to exploit the resources of Walter Chiari, one of the new generation’s most talented comedians. Then there was a separate group of films by Mario Mattoli, who had been emerging since the thirties as a gifted, versatile director, and was responsible for launching Totò on the screen in the post-war period. Steno and Monicelli’s encounter with Mattoli took place in the early fifties with a few minor films such as “Accidenti alle tasse” (Damn the Taxes, 1951), which tried to raise two talented variety comedians, Riccardo Billi and Mario Riva, to the status of leading actors; “Vendetta... sarda” (Sardinian

Vendetta, 1951), which featured the Billi-Riva tandem together with Walter Chiari and Carlo Campanini; “Cinque poveri in automobile” (Five Poor Men in a Car, 1952), based on a story-line by Cesare Zavattini, and starring Aldo Fabrizi, Eduardo and Titina De Filippo. There is no doubt that many of Italy’s routine directors learned more than they like to admit from the versatile Mattoli. Steno and Monicelli were right to remove themselves from this subordination because when they started working with Mattoli they had already made their directing debut; hence, their relationship with Mattoli was more one of continuity than dependence, because they were working in the same direction, in a terrain that was strewn with contacts with humorous publications and variety theatre, with the same screenwriters and often with the same actors, particularly Totò.

Steno and Monicelli’s directing debut had in fact taken place in 1949 with “Totò cerca casa” (Totò Looks For A House), which had been an important moment in the evolution of the great Neapolitan comedian. Antonio De Curtis (1898-1967), stage-name Totò, had a long and significant theatrical career behind him. After his first café-chantant appearances in the twenties, he had experienced his greatest successes during the long season of curtain-raisers, when he had performed with his companies in the country’s various theatre-cinemas, and in the big reviews of the forties, in which he had often been flanked by Anna Magnani, an exuberant Roman “soubrette” who had yet to become the star of “Roma città aperta” (Rome Open City, 1945). The tremendous popularity which the comedian had won on the stage, had already aroused the interest of the cinema, which, ever since the pre-war period, had tried to exploit his extraordinary talents as a mimic in a series of mediocre films that did not go far. Instead, Totò’s movie fortunes exploded immediately after the war, continuing into the fifties and sixties with a giddy round of about a hundred films that were sometimes botched and muddled, and could always count on public kudos and critical brickbats. With “I due orfanelli” (The Two Little Orphans, 1947) and “Fifa e arena” (Funk and Arena, 1948), Mario Mattoli had already indicated that farce was the most congenial formula for a type of comedy that he felt should be left free to express itself in its characteristic slapstick form, in its preposterous flights of fancy and off-the-cuff improvisations.

Steno and Monicelli continued in the same direction, embracing to the full the measure of farce, which can seem simple and naive only to those who are unaware of the importance it has had ever since the American cinema’s silent funnies, and of the

mathematical precision of the mechanisms on which its success depends. But into the well-trying techniques of farce (in which the memory of the American classics was fused with the extravagant, "vulgar" comedy of popular Italian tradition, whose origins are even seen by some as going back to the "commedia dell'arte"), the two directors inserted a new element — they referred to the present, to the Italian reality of the moment, to the problems of a difficult post-war period in which unemployment and the shortage of housing had reached a dramatic level. The link between the mechanics of farce and topical references was achieved from two different angles: one was the dialogue itself, which was thick with gags and allusions, following the example of humorous journalism which formed the background of their screenwriting experience, and of the tradition of curtain-raisers; the other was an in-depth study of the characters and of the narrative structure of the stories, which started to show the signs of incipient psychological probing and of greater and more precise human and social motivation.

This trend (in which farce betrayed the ambition to transform itself into comedy) became even clearer in the second film that Steno and Monicelli made with Totò: "Guardie e ladri" (Cops and Robbers, 1951). Here, the figure of small-time thief trying to cope with a good-natured but inflexible police sergeant, marked, in Totò's filmography, the passage from a "marionette" to a "man", as the actor took off with one of his most measured and irresistible performances. The fluctuation between the farcical tones of exuberant comedy and the bitter underscorings of a comedy of manners, could also be seen in the other films that Steno and Monicelli made at this time. Although "È arrivato il cavaliere" (The Knight Has Come, 1950) was not much more than a film-review built around the talents of Tino Scotti, a Milanese comedian who never had much success in a cinema that was devoted to all things Roman, "Vita da cani" (A Dog's Life, 1950), on the other hand, inserted a witty description of the wanderings of a company of strolling players into the context of a comic-sentimental comedy, where the characters' traits tended to be portrayed melodramatically.

Having cast off all ties with the farcical aspects of screen comedies, the portrayal of manners with strong dramatic overtones clearly emerges in "Le infedeli" (Unfaithful Women, 1952), which gives a cutting and harsh description of the hypocrisy of a group of middle-class men and their women, at a time when the bourgeoisie was an unusual subject for the Italian cinema. This was a particularly significant film not only because of its importance from the point of view of customs (the description of the environment

betrayed a certain moralistic emotionalism), but also because it revealed the ambitions of Monicelli who shot the picture on his own, although, for contractual reasons, he shared a credit with Steno. While the work of screenwriting had not created problems for a well-attuned tandem which had always availed itself of numerous collaborators, it was becoming increasingly difficult to turn out films as a duo, not so much for creative reasons as for logistic ones. On the set, they had always split the work between them (Steno had concentrated on the actors, Monicelli had dealt with the technical side, and they had both taken turns during shooting according to their inspiration and to whether they felt like it), but their directing engagements were multiplying and each reacted to the pace in a different way, opting for a break, a vacation, or for full-time work. The partnership broke up without traumas.

The first films that Monicelli made alone seemed to go off in a variety of directions, as he attempted to find his own road. "Totò e Carolina" (Totò and Carolina, 1953) continued the character-analysis started with "Guardie e ladri", but made fewer concessions to pathos and paid greater attention to the social side of events, which won him the heavy intervention of an obtuse censorship. With "Proibito" (Forbidden, 1954), he attempted a film shot entirely on location, a kind of village western set in Sardinia, which had a certain popular cut but was compromised by the seriousness of the undertaking and by the wretched performance of Mel Ferrer, who was all wrong for the part. "Un eroe dei nostri tempi" (A Hero of our Time, 1955) went back to the well-trying formula of farcical comedy and the paradox of customs, which provided a vehicle for an exuberant and irrepressible actor such as Alberto Sordi, who had played a bit part a few years earlier in Monicelli's "Totò e i re di Roma" (Totò and the Kings of Rome). "Donatella" did not altogether abandon the portrayal of customs, albeit in a very diluted way, but reduced it to something that closely resembled a modern fairy-tale, a sort of glittering "photo-play", complete with a Prince Charming in a sports car. These were four uneven and eclectic films, with which the director seemed to protract his long journey through the movie profession and his dogged industriousness in the various sectors of cinematic craftsmanship. His next two films, "Padri e figli" (Fathers and Sons, 1957) and "Il medico e lo stregone" (The Physician and the Witch-doctor, 1957) appeared to mark the end of an uncertain period of research — one could not say they were perfectly made or wholly accomplished, but they did explicitly reveal the agile, confident, neat way that Monicelli has of telling stories by images, his innate narrative vein and his shrewd visual

perspicacity. The models of dialect comedy and country farce (which had such a great influence on the Italian cinema, starting with "Pane amore e fantasia" (Bread, Love and Fantasy)) formed the precedent for a composite choral work, in which the various ingredients of a still sketchy layout were becoming amalgamated in an unusual way — it was still clumsy and jarring at times, but at others it was most agreeable, with a wealth of moods and inspiration, of bitter notes and dramatic accents.

These qualities and inclinations asserted themselves completely in the films he made at the end of the fifties, which established him as a first-class director. "I soliti ignoti" (The Usual Unknowns, 1958) marks the birth-date of a new Italian comedy cinema in which the hystrionic spontaneity of mockery and buffoonery was set against a backdrop of harsh despair. At first glance, the picture seemed to be a deliberate parody of the sensational robbery celebrated by Jules Dassin's "Rififi" and by detective films in general, but it was gradually built up by the alternately maliciously grotesque and trepidantly human attention devoted to the vicissitudes of a shabby group of poor wretches who embarked on an undertaking that was too much for them, while the wealth of inventions and the amusing assortment of characters gave it an extraordinary and extremely fresh narrative fluency. If "La grande guerra" (The Great War, 1959) followed in the same direction, inserting two irreverent antiheroes into the tragic context of World War I, seen for the first time without a rhetorical and triumphant eye, "I compagni" (The Comrades, 1963) seemed to find a newer and more subdued way of telling a story about a strike which broke out in Turin at the end of the century, among workers who were hearing talk of Socialism for the first time. They were undoubtedly two important pictures, which tackled new and unusual subjects for the Italian cinema, confirming the intelligent craftsmanship and the ability to communicate frankly which characterized films for mass audiences; although they accepted the inevitable compromises of entertainment, they did not allow themselves to be overcome by the taste for sketches and caricatures to which they nevertheless owed much of their overall effectiveness.

Impatient with the results he had achieved and eager to try new things, Monicelli went on to make "L'armata Brancaleone" (Brancaleone's Army, 1966), one of his most accomplished and convincing films, in which the mocking mood of "I soliti ignoti" blended with the anti-rhetorical approach of "La grande guerra". Although it had greater freedom of invention and a more uncluttered narrative fluency, the plot was again centred on a group of nincompoops call-

ed to an undertaking that was beyond them; but the story of these blunderers doomed to failure served as a pretext to mock the mannered concept of the Middle Ages which, according to romantic tradition, was seething with knights in shining armour and damsels, turreted castles and mystic sighs. The papier-mâché Middle Ages, which are still put together in schools occasionally, in this film became a time of braggadocio and cruelty enveloped in ignorance, dirt and hunger. With its figurative mastery and unusually exuberant narrative style, the film owed its particular effectiveness to the mocking irony and the grotesque vein that ran right through it, amid funereal touches and gloomy glimmers; one of its most irresistible aspects was the rambling macaronic language, a happy blend of verbal nonsense and parodied references to all sorts of things. Naturally, part of the merit was also due to the script and the acting. At this point, one should underscore the particularly well-tuned relationships that Monicelli has often had with his screenwriters, especially the talented Age-Scarpelli tandem — one of the best of the Italian cinema — which created a host of characters and stories, often using verbal distortion to deal a death blow to the mannerisms of every-day speech and of cultured jargon. If the Medieval "Italianese" of "L'armata Brancaleone" was long to be remembered by the spectators, the same can undoubtedly be said of the figure of Brancaleone da Norcia, as played by Vittorio Gassman, whom Monicelli has always directed particularly well; he has proved to be a consummate inventor of actors throughout his long career, readily availing himself of the often decisive contribution of the great "show-stealers", especially Gassman and Sordi, as well as of a host of minor actors and bit players, to whom he has frequently given an unforgettable and unmistakable identity.

"I soliti ignoti", "La grande guerra", "I compagni", and "L'armata Brancaleone" not only represented the moment in Monicelli's new-found cinematic maturity when his most characteristic inclinations emerged to the full, but also marked his entry into high-cost productions dominated by the stars of the day — a kind of gilded cage which he often entered of his own free will, attracted by the work he could do on the actors and by the idea of popular films for mass audiences, two aspects that were particularly congenial to such an active craftsman; this "gilded cage", however, did sometimes hamper his more venturesome projects, particularly those in which novel subjects or the desire for renewal would have required new faces. This basic fluctuation emerged more than once in the many films he made at the end of the sixties and in the

early seventies, and sometimes conditioned the very success of the pictures. Although "La ragazza con la pistola" (The Girl with the Gun, 1968) still managed to find some suitable material in the story of a trip to London made by a beautiful Sicilian girl endowed with Monica Vitti's mocking humour, "La mortadella" (Bologna Sausage, 1971) tried in vain to squeeze sociological meanings and digs at customs out of a New York trip made by an Italian girl who had Sophia Loren's typical celluloid glamour. No more effective, on the other hand, were his partial attempts to work outside the conditioning of the market — "Toh, è morta la nonna" (Fancy That, Granny's Dead, 1959) was a kind of «serious comedy» which featured no big stars, while "Caro Michele" (Dear Michele, 1976) was an indifferent screen version of Natalia Ginzburg's novel, in which a talented comedienne such as Mariangela Melato was overshadowed by a curious group of non-actors.

If anything, Monicelli had obtained better personal results with Marcello Mastroianni in "Casanova '70" (1965) and with Ugo Tognazzi in "Vogliamo i colonelli" (We Want the Colonels, 1973), which are still among the director's most underrated works; although the first was built around the hero and poked fun at the classic model of the Latin lover, while the second was a choral work that ridiculed the clumsy attempt at a coup d'état made by a group of rascally officers, both films were marked by the irrepressible measure of farce, with its vulgar, irreverent overtones and the hoppety structure of a comic strip which skips rapidly from one cartoon to the next. The call of farce is a constant in Monicelli's career, a fixed point in his cinematic vocation — it almost seems that just when he has climbed to the higher reaches of the profession, where slapdash farce is looked upon with suspicion and rejected as being too vulgar, too lacking in nobility, he likes to make an occasional return to his former loves, in order to remember his point of departure and find solace again in the brash vitality of such a stimulating source.

In the seventies, after more than one disappointing film, Monicelli reverted to his former fluency with "Romanzo popolare" (Popular Novel, 1974), in which the amusing reproduction of the "tics" of every-day language blends with an effective portrayal of a rootless humanity that lives in the anonymous and promiscuous tenements of the suburbs. The renewal in the formula of comedy, which here took place thanks to the taste for verbal contamination of a particularly well-tuned script, continued in an even more accomplished and effective way in Monicelli's next two films. "Amici Miei" (My Friends, 1975) and "Un borghese piccolo piccolo" (The Average Little Man, 1977) revealed the explicit desire to break away

from the hackneyed production methods that flogged a genre to death; they seemed, in fact, to turn a page and mark the end of a season. With "Amici miei", the film that Pietro Germi was preparing before his premature death, Monicelli not only rendered sincere homage to the memory of a friend, but, in this story of a group of fifty-year-olds still given to playful pranks and cruel jokes which to them are the salt of life and a superstitious mockery to ward off death, he gave a confident and sympathetic portrayal of the exasperation of a middle-aged generation which is intolerant of the meanness of every-day life. "Un borghese piccolo piccolo" aimed higher — it was more compact in its inspiration and better orchestrated in its effects. Its sarcastic descriptions and mocking overtones constitute an X-ray of a social class and of a city that are portrayed with cold ferociousness, while the grotesque representation of the fourth floor of a ministry finally reveals the unconscious mechanisms of a frustration that does not disdain to dirty its hands with blood in the propitiatory rites of vengeance. The film unerringly captures the drab squalor of a disintegrated society and the twisted mechanisms of "daily fascism", and lucidly overturns the risks of involvement by portraying its negative heroes, its corpses on leave, with a pained solidarity that even reaches the point of summoning everyone as an accomplice.

If one compares "Amici miei" and "Un borghese piccolo piccolo", two of the most successful and significant films of the past few years, to such disjointed episode pictures as "Signore e signori, buonanotte" (Ladies and Gentlemen, Goodnight, 1976) and "I nuovi mostri" (The New Monsters, 1977), which Monicelli was called upon to make together with other directors of the in-between generation, there is no doubt that these last do not particularly reveal his personality. If anything, they are in a way a symptom of the fatigue of "Italian-style comedy", which had become increasingly noticeable in the broken stutters and the inventive paucity of the numerous episode films that accompanied it from the start of its vast production, in which the signs of genuine vitality became increasingly rare — from "Boccaccio '70" (1961) to "Alta infedeltà" (High Infidelity, 1964) and "Le fate" (The Fairies, 1965), from "Capriccio all'italiana" (Caprice Italian-style, 1967) to "Le coppie" (The Couples, 1970), to which Monicelli himself contributed sketches of varying quality.

Signs of restlessness and symptoms of uncertainty can also be found in his most recent films, from "Viaggio con Anita" (Journey with Anita, 1979) to "Temporale Rosy" (Rosy Storm, 1979), which betray even more clearly the need for a renewal, a sense of saturation, the urge to make a break. If the first inserts many variations

and a scarce sense of conviction into an old subject that Federico Fellini had wanted to treat in the early seventies with Sophia Loren and Gregory Peck, the second is an unusually refreshing film and far less weak than it may appear at first glance. The story of a boastful boxer and a female wrestling star whose muscular build fails to conceal a disarming sentimental fragility, "Temporale Rosy" gives a particularly lively portrayal of a minor sport that is extremely popular in the French provinces, and its amusingly acute description of the environment, as well as its giddy pace, confirm the unusual sprightliness of a director who is ageing nicely to the catchy rhythm of a circus march, as he amuses himself by copying the brashly multi-coloured pictures of children's comic books.

With his taste for paying for his mistakes in person, his intolerance of past achievements, his knack of tackling new experiences with the confident approach of an obstinate, patient professional, and with the inquisitive, feverish restlessness of his first efforts, Mario Monicelli looks far younger than his sixty-five years. He has no love of those who look to the past too much or resort to nostalgia, he has no thought of retiring, of resting on the laurels of his latest film, which he is currently shooting in Rome, he has no time for "movie buffs" devoted to the old masters — he cannot see himself as one of them, that is not his case. By the time "Camera d'albergo" (Hotel Room) goes on release (in which he would have liked to have used only unknown actors), Monicelli will be making his debut as a theatrical director. After much hesitation, he has decided to stage "Rose", a comedy written by Andrew Davis for Glenda Jackson, whose part will be played by Carla Gravina. In the English playwright's comedy, Monicelli has found much that is congenial to his way of making films: a group of characters portrayed with a few precise strokes, a series of topical themes rooted in every-day experiences, a long monologue structured in a number of flashes forward and back that recall the rhythm of the cinema, a full-blooded, rugged, Italiote text. Dismayed by the mysteries of the theatre and by its differences to the cinema, Mario Monicelli, after approximately forty films, is preparing for his debut as though he were uncertain of passing the test.



MARIO MONICELLI

■ MARIO MONICELLI AS WRITER

FILMOGRAPHY COMPILED BY
FRANCO MARIOTTI

1940 **LA GRANDUCHESSA SI DIVERTE**

Director: Giacomo Gentilomo - *Assistant Director:* Mario Monicelli - *Screenplay:* Mario Monicelli, Giacomo Gentilomo, Riccardo Freda, Mino Caudana and Aldo De Benedetti.

1943 **CORTO CIRCUITO**

Director: Giacomo Gentilomo - *Screenplay, Story and Dialogue:* Mario Monicelli, Ezio D'Errico, Ernesto Grassi and Giacomo Gentilomo.

1946 **AQUILA NERA**

Director: Riccardo Freda - *Screenplay and Dialogue:* Mario Monicelli, Riccardo Freda, Steno and Braccio Agnoletti.

1947 **FOLLIE PER L'OPERA**

Director: Mario Costa - *Screenplay:* Mario Monicelli, Giovanna Soria, Steno and Mario Costa - *Story:* Mario Monicelli and Steno.

I MISERABILI

segment CACCIA ALL'UOMO

Director: Riccardo Freda - *Screenplay:* Mario Monicelli, Steno and Riccardo Freda.

segment TEMPESTA SU PARIGI

Director: Riccardo Freda - *Screenplay:* Mario Monicelli, Nino Novarese, Steno and Riccardo Freda.

COME PERSI LA GUERRA

Director: Carlo Borghesio - *Screenplay:* Mario Monicelli, Mario Amendola, Leo Benvenuti, E. De Bernardi, Tullio Pinelli, Steno and Carlo Borghesio.

L'EBREO ERRANTE

Director: Goffredo Alessandrini - *Screenplay:* Mario Monicelli, Flaminio Bollini, Ennio De Concini, A. De Luca, Enrico Fulchignoni, Anton Giulio Maiano, Goffredo Alessandrini.

IL CORRIERE DEL RE

Director: Gennaro Righelli - *Screenplay:* Mario Monicelli, Steno, Nicolai, Guida, Gennaro Righelli.

LA FIGLIA DEL CAPITANO

Director: Mario Camerini - *Screenplay:* Mario Monicelli, Carlo Musso, Ivo Perilli, Steno, Mario Camerini.

GIOVENTÙ PERDUTA

Director: Pietro Germi - *Screenplay:* Mario Monicelli, Antonio Pietrangeli, Enzo Provenzale, Leopoldo Trieste, Bruno Valeri, Pietro Germi.

1948 IN NOME DELLA LEGGE

Director: Pietro Germi - *Screenplay:* Mario Monicelli, Federico Fellini, Pietro Germi, Aldo Bizzarri, Tullio Pinelli and Giuseppe Mangione.

L'EROE DELLA STRADA

Director: Carlo Borghesio - *Screenplay:* Mario Monicelli, Steno, Leo Benvenuti, Mario Amendola, Carlo Borghesio.

ABBASSO LA FORTUNA - LO SCIOPERO DEI MILIONI

Director: Raffaello Matarazzo - *Screenplay:* Mario Monicelli, Raffaello Matarazzo and Steno.

IL CAVALIERE MISTERIOSO

Director: Riccardo Freda - *Screenplay and Story:* Mario Monicelli, Steno and Riccardo Freda.

ACCIDENTI ALLA GUERRA

Director: Giorgio C. Simonelli - *Screenplay:* Mario Monicelli, Marcello Marchesi, Pisani and Vittorio Metz.

1949 COME SCOPERSI L'AMERICA

Director: Carlo Borghesio - *Screenplay and Story:* Mario Monicelli, Leo Benvenuti, Mario Amendola, Steno, Carlo Borghesio.

1950 IL BRIGANTE MUSOLINO

Director: Mario Camerini - *Screenplay:* Mario Monicelli, Steno, Franco Brusati, Ennio De Concini, Antonio Leonviola, Ivo Perilli, Vincenzo Talarico and Mario Camerini - *Story:* Mario Monicelli, Steno, and Antonio Leonviola.

IL LUPO DELLA SILA

Director: Duilio Coletti - *Screenplay:* Mario Monicelli, Steno, Carlo Russo, Ivo Perilli, Enzo Tarascio, Giuseppe Gironda - *Story:* Mario Monicelli and Steno.

1951 ACCIDENTI ALLE TASSE

Director: Mario Mattoli - *Story:* Mario Monicelli and Steno - *Screenplay:* Mario Monicelli, Steno, Leo Catozzo and Mario Mattoli.

VENDETTA SARDA...

Director: Mario Mattoli - *Screenplay and Story:* Mario Monicelli, Steno and Ruggero Maccari.

CORE 'NGRATO

Director: Guido Brignone - *Story:* Mario Monicelli, Steno.

O.K. NERONE

Director: Mario Soldati - *Story:* Mario Monicelli and Steno - *Screenplay:* Mario Monicelli, Age, Alessandro Continenza, Furio Scarpelli, Steno and Eduardo Ciannelli.

AMO UN ASSASSINO

Director: Baccio Bandini - *Screenplay:* Mario Monicelli, Sandro Continenza, Ennio De Concini, Steno and Baccio Bandini.

È L'AMOR CHE MI ROVINA

Director: Mario Soldati - *Screenplay and Story:* Mario Monicelli, Steno, Blasi and Bernardino Zapponi.

IL TRADIMENTO

Director: Riccardo Freda - *Screenplay:* Mario Monicelli and Riccardo Freda.

1952 ANEMA E CORE

Director: Mario Mattoli - *Screenplay:* Mario Monicelli, Steno, Ruggero Maccari, Leo Catozzo and Mario Mattoli.

TOTO' A COLORI

Director: Steno - *Screenplay:* Mario Monicelli, Steno, Age and Furio Scarpelli.

CINQUE POVERI IN AUTOMOBILE

Director: Mario Mattoli - *Screenplay:* Mario Monicelli, Cesare Zavattini, Titina De Filippo, Aldo Fabrizi and Steno.

1953 IL PIU' COMICO SPETTACOLO DEL MONDO

Director: Mario Mattoli - *Screenplay and Story:* Mario Monicelli, Sandro Continenza, Italo De Tuddo, Mario Mattoli.

GIUSEPPE VERDI

Director: Raffaello Matarazzo - *Screenplay and Story:* Mario Monicelli, Leo Benvenuti, Liana Ferri, Giovanna Soria and Piero Pierotti.

CAVALLERIA RUSTICANA

Director: Carmine Gallone - *Screenplay:* Mario Monicelli, Basilio Franchina, Francesco De Feo, Art Cohn and Carmine Gallone.

1954 VIOLENZA SUL LAGO ovvero ART. 519 C.D.

Director: Leonardo Cortese - *Screenplay:* Mario Monicelli, Cesare Torri, Braccio Agnoletti, Sabatino Ciuffini and Leonardo Cortese.

1955 GUAI AI VINTI

Director: Raffaello Matarazzo - *Screenplay:* Mario Monicelli, Achille Campanile, Raffaello Matarazzo, Piero Pierotti and Giovanna Soria.

1956 LA DONNA PIU' BELLA DEL MONDO

Director: Roberto Z. Leonard - *Screenplay:* Mario Monicelli, Cesare Cavagna, Liana Ferri, Frank Gervasi, Luciano Martino, Piero Pierotti, Franco Solinas and Giovanna Soria.

1961 A CAVALLO DELLA TIGRE

Director: Luigi Comencini - *Screenplay and Story:* Mario Monicelli, Age, Furio Scarpelli, Luigi Comencini

1963 **FRENSIA DELL'ESTATE**

Director: Luigi Zampa - *Screenplay and Story:* Mario Monicelli, Age, Furio Scarpelli, Leo Benvenuti and Piero De Bernardi

1966 **I NOSTRI MARITI**

segment: IL MARITO DI OLGA

Director: Luigi Zampa - *Screenplay:* Mario Monicelli, Age, Furio Scarpelli

■ **FILMS AS ASSISTANT DIRECTOR**

1936 **BALLERINE**

Director: Gustav Machatý - *Assistant Director:* Mario Monicelli, Giorgio Bianchi and Alberto Mondadori

SQUADRONE BIANCO

Director: Augusto Genina - *Assistant Director:* Mario Monicelli

1937 **I FRATELLI CASTIGLIONI**

Director: Corrado d'Errico - *Assistant Director:* Mario Monicelli

1938 **EQUATORE**

Director: Gino Valori - *Assistant Director:* Mario Monicelli

1939 **FASCINO**

Director: Giacinto Solito - *Assistant Director:* Mario Monicelli

1940 **MARCO VISCONTI**

Director: Mario Bonnard - *Assistant Director:* Mario Monicelli

LA GRANDUCHESSA SI DIVERTE

Director: Giacomo Gentilomo - *Assistant Director:* Mario Monicelli - *Screenplay:* Mario Monicelli, Giacomo Gentilomo, Riccardo Freda, Mino Caudana and Aldo De Benedetti

■ **FILMS AS DIRECTOR**

1935 **I RAGAZZI DELLA VIA PAAL**

Directors: Mario Monicelli, C. Civita and Alberto Mondadori.
Nomination: Venice Film Festival 1935.

1949 **AL DIAVOLO LA CELEBRITA'**

Directors: Mario Monicelli and Steno - *Screenplay:* Mario Monicelli, Steno, Geo Taparelli, Dino Hobbes Cecchini and E. Calandri - *Story:* Mario Monicelli and Steno - *Photography:* Leonida Barboni - *Art Director:* Piero Filippone - *Music:* C. Franchi and M. Funaro - *Editor:* Renzo Lucidi - *Players:* Mischa Auer, Marilyn Buford, Marcel Cerdan, Carlo Campanini, Ferruccio Tagliavini, Leonardo Cortese, Nyta Dover, Franca Marzi, Folco Lulli, Gianni Rizzo, Alba Arnova, Agnese Dubbini, Bill Tubbs, Aldo Silvani, Luigi Pavese, Cesare Polacco, Enrico Luzi - *Production Company:* Scalera Film.

■ *Professor Bresci, the interpreter of an international delegation, is fired for making a mistake in his translation. Back in his room, he receives a visit from the devil, who guesses his secret wish and makes him become famous by incarnating him in various characters. In the end, Bresci wakes up and finds himself in the arms of Ellen, his boss' secretary, who informs him that she has been appointed interpreter.*

TOTO' CERCA CASA

Directors: Mario Monicelli and Steno - *Screenplay and Story:* Mario Monicelli, Steno, Furio Scarpelli, Age, Vittorio Metz - *Photography:* Giuseppe Caracciolo - *Art Director:* Carlo Egidi - *Music:* Carlo Rustichelli - *Editor:* Otello Colangeli - *Players:* Totò, Alda Mangini, Enzo Biliotti, Mario Castellani, Marisa Merlini, Lia Molfesi, Aroldo Tieri, Folco Lulli, Luigi Pavese, Mario Riva, Mario Molfesi, Liana Del Balzo, Gino Scotti, Cesare Polacco, Giacomo Furia, Nino Marchetti - *Production Company:* A.T.A.

■ *A succession of troubles for Totò, as he desperately searches for a house in the post-war period. Finally, when he thinks he has solved his problem, he finds he has been the victim of a swindle.*

1950 È ARRIVATO IL CAVALIERE

Directors: Mario Monicelli and Steno - *Screenplay and Story:* Mario Monicelli, Steno, Marcello Marchesi and Vittorio Metz - *Photography:* Mario Bava - *Art Director:* Flavio Mogherini - *Music:* Nino Rota - *Editor:* Mario Borghi and Franco Fraticelli - *Players:* Tino Scotti, Silvana Pampanini, Enrico Viarisio, Nyta Dover, Enzo Biliotti, Alda Mangini, Galeazzo Benti, Marcella Rovenà, Giovanna Galletti, Carlo Mazzarella, Federico Collino, Gilberto Mazzi, Guido Morisi, Enzo Maggio, Rocco d'Assunta, Pasquale Misiano, Arturo Bragaglia - *Production Companies:* A.T.A. - Excelsa Film - *Producer:* Carlo Ponti.

■ *The film centres on the "Cavalier", a strange kind of vagrant who makes repeated and vain attempts to save the land inhabited by hawkers from being overrun by buildings and the subway.*

VITA DA CANI

Directors: Mario Monicelli and Steno - *Screenplay:* Mario Monicelli, Sergio Amidei, Aldo Fabrizi, Ruggero Maccari, Nino Novarese, Fulvio Palmieri, Steno - *Story:* Mario Monicelli and Steno - *Art Director:* Flavio Mogherini - *Photography:* Mario Bava - *Music:* Nino Rota - *Players:* Aldo Fabrizi, Gina Lollobrigida, Giovanni Barrella, Michele Malaspina, Mario Russo, Tamara Lees, Delia Scala, Lidia Alfonsi, Bruno Corelli, Eduardo Passarelli, Pina Piovani, Enzo Maggio, Marcello Mastroianni, Enzo Furlani, Nyta Dover, Mariemma Bardi, Anna Pabella, Giuseppe Angelini, Pasquale Misiano, Tino Scotti - *Production Company:* A.T.A. - *Producer:* Carlo Ponti.

■ *The misadventures of three girls in search of success. The first finds love, the second commits suicide, and only the third manages to fulfil her dream of becoming a music-hall star.*

1951 GUARDIE E LADRI

Directors: Mario Monicelli and Steno - *Screenplay:* Mario Monicelli, Steno, Vitaliano Brancati, Aldo Fabrizi, Ennio Flaiano, Ruggero Maccari - *Story:* Piero Tellini - *Photography:* Mario Bava - *Art Director:* Flavio Mogherini - *Music:* Alessandro Cicognini - *Editor:* Franco Fraticelli - *Players:* Aldo Fabrizi, Totò, Ave Ninchi, Pina Piovani, Rossana Podestà, Gino Leurini, Bill Tubbs, Ernesto Almirante, Aldo Giuffré, Mario Castellani, Pietro Carloni, Rocco D'Assunta, Armando Guarnieri, Carlo Delle Piane, Tino Scotti - *Production Company:* Golden Film - *Producers:* Carlo Ponti and Dino De Laurentiis.

■ *To carry out his duty, a police sergeant is forced to arrest a small-time thief. The two become friends, and this leads the sergeant to take care of the other's family for the entire term of his prison sentence.*

TOTO' E I RE DI ROMA

Directors: Mario Monicelli and Steno - *Screenplay:* Mario Monicelli and Steno - *Story:* Dino Risi, Ennio De Concini, based on the novel by Anton Chechov - *Photography:* Giuseppe La Torre - *Art Director:* Alberto Tavazzi - *Music:* Nino Rota - *Editor:* Franco Fraticelli - *Players:* Totò, Anna Carena, Giovanna Pala, Aroldo Tieri, Alberto Sordi, Giulio Stival, Anna Vita, Mario Castellani, Pietro Carloni, Eva Vanicek, Eduardo Passarelli, Gianni Glori Musy, Ernesto Almirante, Lilia Landi, Giulio Calì, Paolo Ferrara, Celeste Almirante, Amedeo Girard, Emilio Petacci, Marisa Fiamini - *Production Companies:* Golden Film-Humanitas.

■ *A civil servant is fired by his General Manager, so he decides to die. On Olympus, he buys some numbers for his family to play the lottery with, and thus they become rich. Unfortunately, however, he wakes up — it was all a dream.*

1952 TOTO' E LE DONNE

Directors: Mario Monicelli and Steno - *Screenplay:* Mario Monicelli, Furio Scarpelli, Age and Steno - *Story:* Age and Furio Scarpelli - *Photography:* Tonino Delli Colli - *Art Director:* Piero Filippone - *Music:* Carlo Rustichelli - *Editor:* Gisa Radicchi - *Players:* Totò, Peppino De Filippo, Lea Padovani, Franca Faldini, Alda Mangini, Giovanna Pala, Ave Ninchi, Teresa Pellati, Primarosa Battistella, Mario Castellani, Olga Villi, Clelia Matania, Pina Gallini - *Production Company:* Rosa Film.

■ *Negative dissertations by Totò on women and his subsequent separation from his wife. In the end, however, he discovers his spouse's virtues and makes it up with her.*

LE INFEDELI

Directors: Mario Monicelli and Steno - *Screenplay:* Mario Monicelli, Steno, Franco Brusati, Ivo Perilli - *Story:* Ivo Perilli - *Photography:* Aldo Tonti - *Art Director:* Flavio Mogherini - *Music:* Armando Trovajoli - *Players:* May Britt, Anna Maria Ferrero, Gina Lollobrigida, Pier Cressoy, Irene Papas, Carlo Romano, Tania Weber, Marina Vlady, Tina Lattanzi, Bernardo Tafuri, Mirko Skofic, Charles Fawcett, Paolo Ferrara, Giulio Calì, Margherita Bagni, Carlo Dale, Carlo Lamas - *Production Company:* Excelsa Film - *Producers:* Carlo Ponti and Dino De Laurentiis.

■ *An unscrupulous adventurer blackmails some women, driving to suicide a young maid who has been unjustly accused of a theft he has committed. In the end, since the law seems powerless to intervene, one of the exasperated victims kills the blackmailer.*

1954 **TOTO' E CAROLINA**

Director: Mario Monicelli - *Screenplay:* Mario Monicelli, Ennio Flaiano and Rodolfo Sonogo - *Story:* Ennio Flaiano - *Photography:* Domenico Scala - *Art Director:* Piero Gherardi - *Editor:* Adriana Novelli - *Players:* Totò, Anna Maria Ferrero, Arnoldo Foà, Gianni Cavaliere, Bruno Lazzarini, Tina Pica, Fanny Landini, Maurizio Arena, Eugenio Galadini, Maurizio Bramante, Tullio Tomadoni, Salvo Libassi, Giovanni Carporale, Mario Castellani - *Production Company:* Rosa Film.

■ *After a series of misadventures, a young country-girl finds a home with the police officer who had arrested her by mistake during a raid on the park.*

PROIBITO

Director: Mario Monicelli - *Screenplay:* Mario Monicelli, Suso Cecchi D'Amico and Giuseppe Mangione - *Story:* Based on the novel by Grazia Deledda «La madre» - *Photography:* Aldo Tonti - *Art Director:* Piero Gherardi - *Music:* Symphony by Johannes Brahms, arrangement by Nino Rota - *Editor:* Adriana Novelli - *Players:* Mel Ferrer, Amedeo Nazzari, Lea Massari, Henri Wilbert, Germaine Kerjean, Eduardo Ciannelli, Paolo Ferrara, Decimo Cristiani, Aldo Pini, Orazio Costa, Marco Guglielmi, Antonio Gradoli, Ornella Spegni, Mimmo Palmara, Renato Terra, Manlio Busoni, Giulio Buttiferri, Giuseppe Chinnici, Armando Guarnieri, Memmo Luisi - *Production Companies:* Documento Film - U.G.C. and Comoran Film

■ *On returning to his birthplace, a young Sardinian priest has trouble exercising his pastoral mission due to the hatred and the vendettas that exist between rival families, as well as to a woman's love. In the end, everything is smoothed over, and he remains at his post.*

1955 **UN EROE DEI NOSTRI TEMPI**

Director: Mario Monicelli - *Screenplay:* Mario Monicelli and Rodolfo Sonogo - *Story:* Rodolfo Sonogo - *Photography:* Tino Santoni - *Art Director:* Carlo Egidi - *Music:* Nino Rota - *Editor:* Adriana Novelli - *Players:* Alberto Sordi, Giovanna Ralli, Franca Valeri, Tina Pica, Mario Carotenuto, Leopoldo Trieste, Lina Boniventuro, Alberto Lattuada, Paolo Ferrara, Mino Doro, Carlo Pedersoli, Pina Bottin, Giulio Cali, Mario Meniconi, Carlo Mazzaella, Rosanna Fabrizi, Lea Migliorini, Nino Vingelli, Ciccio Barbi, Jone Frigerio, Paola Quagliero, Vera Valentini, Giorgio Berti, Anita Durante, Pietro Carloni, Giuliana Manoni - *Production Companies:* Vides and Titanus

■ *A fearful young man who always dreads being involved in some unpleasant business, just manages to avoid being incriminated for a bomb-attempt. Advised not to be so timorous and to act more decisively, he ends up by joining the police force.*

1956 **DONATELLA**

Director: Mario Monicelli - *Screenplay:* Mario Monicelli, Roberto Amoroso, Ruggero Maccari, Sandro Continenza and Piero Tellini - *Story:* Mario Rappini, Alfredo Vittorio Reichlin - *Photography (Cinemascope, Technicolor):* Tonino Delli Colli - *Art Director:* Vittorio Valentini - *Music:* Gino Filippini and Xavier Cugat - *Editor:* Adriana Novelli - *Players:* Walter Chiari, Elsa Martinelli, Gabriele Ferzetti, Aldo Fabrizi, Liliana Bonfatti, Giovanna Pala, Virgilio Riento, Xavier Cugat, Mariù Gleck, Giuseppe Porelli, Abbe Lane, Lea Migliorini, Giancarlo Nicotra, Alan Furlan, John Rembu, Ria Lena, Catherine Williams, Luciano Fatur, and Child Pietro Chiassai - *Production Company:* Sud Film (104 mins.).

■ *A story with a happy ending about a bookbinder's daughter who is mistakenly taken for a rich lady. A wealthy young man falls in love with her and, after a series of unfounded suspicions, ends up by marrying her.*

1957 **PADRI E FIGLI**

Director: Mario Monicelli - *Assistant Director:* Mario Maffei - *Screenplay:* Mario Monicelli, Age, Furio Scarpelli, Leo Benvenuti, Luigi Emmanuele - *Story:* Mario Monicelli, Age, Furio Scarpelli - *Photography (Totalscope):* Leonida Barboni - *Camera Operator:* Aiace Parolin - *Art Director:* Piero Gherardi - *Set Decorator:* Vito Anzalone - *Make-up:* Giovanni Donelli - *Music:* Carlo Rustichelli - *Editor:* Mario Serandrei - *Players:* Vittorio De Sica, Lorella De Luca, Riccardo Garrone, Marcello Mastroianni, Fiorella Mari, Franco Interlenghi, Antonella Lualdi, Memmo Carotenuto, Marisa Merlini, Ruggero Marchi, Emma Baron, Raffaele Pisu, Gabriele Antonini, Franco Di Trocchio - *Production Manager:* Romano Dandi - *Producer:* Guido Giambartolomei - *Production Companies:* Royal Film (Rome) - Filmel, Lyrica (Paris).

■ *The film describes the often stormy relationships between the members of various families, and centres on a love story between two college students who finally succeed in overcoming their families' opposition and become engaged.*

IL MEDICO E LO STREGONE

Director: Mario Monicelli - *Assistant Director:* Mario Maffei, Franco Rossetti - *Screenplay:* Mario Monicelli, Age, Furio Scarpelli, Ennio De Concini - *Story:* Age, Furio Scarpelli - *Photography (Cinemascope):* Luciano Trasatti - *Assistant Camera Operator:* Franco Villa - *Art Director, Set Decorator:* Piero Gherardi - *Make-up:* Giovanni Donelli - *Music:* Nino Rota - *Editor:* Otello Colangeli - *Players:* Vittorio De Sica, Marcello Mastroianni, Marisa Merlini, Lorella De Luca, Gabriella Pallotta, Virgilio Riento, Carlo Taranto, Ilaria Occhini, Alberto Sorca, Giorgio Cerioni, Franco Di Trocchio, Riccardo Garrone - *Production Manager:* Romano Dandi - *Producer:* Guido Giambartolomei - *Production Companies:* Royal Film (Rome) - Francinex (Paris).

■ *A young doctor, who works as a national health service practitioner in a small village in the mountains, has to suffer the competition of a "healer". In spite of the latter's constant tricks, the doctor manages to have the better of him just when he is about to abandon his post.*

1958 **I SOLITI IGNOTI**

Director: Mario Monicelli - *Screenplay:* Mario Monicelli, Age, Furio Scarpelli, Suso Cecchi D'Amico - *Story:* Age, Furio Scarpelli - *Photography:* Gianni Di Venanzo - *Art Director:* Piero Gherardi - *Music:* Piero Umiliani - *Editor:* Adriana Novelli - *Players:* Totò, Marcello Mastroianni, Vittorio Gassman, Renato Salvatori, Memmo Carotenuto, Rossana Rory, Carla Gravina, Claudia Cardinale, Carlo Pisacane, Tiberio Murgia - *Producer:* Franco Cristaldi - *Production Companies:* Lux Film - Vides and Cinecittà.

■ *A group of small-time thieves plans the job of a lifetime — a bank robbery. Unfortunately, they only get as far as the apartment next to the bank, whereupon they console themselves with a snack. Disillusioned, they probably opt for an honest life.*

1959 **LA GRANDE GUERRA**

Director: Mario Monicelli - *Assistant Director:* Mario Maffei, Giovanni Fago, Maurizio Lucci - *Screenplay and Story:* Mario Monicelli, Age, Furio Scarpelli, Luciano Vincenzoni - *Dialogue:* Age, Furio Scarpelli - *Photography (Cinemascope):* Giuseppe Rotunno - *Camera Operator:* Silvano Ippoliti - *Art Director:* Mario Garbuglia - *Costumes:* Danilo Donati - *Make-up:* Romolo De Martino, Rino Carboni - *Music:* Nino Rota - *Music Director:* Franco Ferrara - *Sound:* Roy Mangano - *Editor:* Adriana Novelli - *Players:* Alberto Sordi, Vittorio Gassman, Silvana Mangano, Folco Lulli, Bernard Blier, Romolo Valli, Nicola Arigliano, Livio Lorenzon, Mario Valdemarin, Tiberio Mitri, Achille Compagnoni, Tiberio Murgia, Vittorio Sanipoli, Carlo D'Angelo, Geronimo Meynier, Ferruccio Amendola, Elsa Vazzoler, Luigi Fainelli, Marcello Giorda - *Directors Managers:* Alfredo De Laurentiis, Giorgio Adriani - *Production Companies:* Dino De Laurentiis Cinematografica (Rome) - Gray Films (Paris).

■ *During World War I, two fearful soldiers who do their best to avoid all danger and action, become heroes in spite of themselves and end up by being shot, after having regained their dignity as Italians.*

1960 **RISATE DI GIOIA**

Director: Mario Monicelli - *Screenplay:* Mario Monicelli, Suso Cecchi D'Amico, Age, Furio Scarpelli - *Story:* Based on the novels by Alberto Moravia «Risate di gioia» and «Ladri in chiesa» - *Adaptation:* Suso Cecchi D'Amico - *Photography:* Leonida Barboni - *Art Director:* Piero Gherardi, Giuseppe Ranieri - *Music:* Lelio Luttazzi - *Editor:* Adriana Novelli - *Players:* Anna Magnani, Totò, Ben Gazzara, Fred Clark, Edy Vessel, Gina Rovere, Mac Ronay, Toni Ucci, Rik von Nütter, Marcella Rovena, Kurt Polter, Alberto De Amicis, Gianni Bonagura, Peppino De Martino, Mara Ombra, Dori Dorika, Carlo Pisacane - *Production Company:* Titanus.

■ *A bit-actress at Cinecittà is involved in a theft by a second-rate ex-actor and by a pickpocket, with whom she falls in love. She ends up in jail, after having taken the blame for a robbery in a church, committed by the small-time thief. Upon her release, waiting for her outside the prison she finds her old friend, the ex-actor, who had always been in love with her.*

1962 **BOCCACCIO '70**
segment RENZO E LUCIANA

Director: Mario Monicelli - *Screenplay and Story:* Mario Monicelli, Giovanni Arpino, Italo Calvino, Suso Cecchi D'Amico - *Photography (Technicolor):* Armando Nannuzzi - *Art Director:* Piero Gherardi - *Music:* Piero Umiliani - *Editor:* Adriana Novelli - *Players:* Marisa Solinas, Germano Giglioli - *Producers:* Carlo Ponti and Antonio Cervi - *Production Companies:* Concordia Compagnia Cinematografica-Cineriz (Rome) - Francinex, Gray Films (Paris) (208 mins)
The other segments are directed by Vittorio De Sica, Federico Fellini and Luchino Visconti.

■ *Two employees of the same company are secretly married. The boss finds out and fires them. With their severance pay, the two rent an apartment and finally manage to live together.*

1963 **I COMPAGNI**

Director: Mario Monicelli - *Assistant Director:* Renzo Marignano, Ferdinando Morandi, Bata Stoyanovic - *Screenplay and Story:* Mario Monicelli, Age, Furio Scarpelli - *Photography (Vistavision):* Giuseppe Rotunno - *Camera Operator:* Giuseppe Maccari - *Assistant Camera Operator:* Pino Di Biase - *Art Director, Set Decorator:* Mario Garbuglia - *Costumes:* Piero Tosi - *Assistant Costumes:* Vera Marzot - *Make-Up:* Giuseppe Banchelli - *Music:* Carlo Rustichelli - *Music Director:* Pierluigi Urbini - *Editor:* Ruggero Mastroianni - *Assistant Editor:* Vanda Olasio - *Players:* Marcello Mastroianni, Renato Salvatori, Annie Girardot, Gabriella Giorgelli, Folco Lulli, Bernard Blier, Raffaella Carrà, François Périer, Vittorio Sanipoli, Giuseppe Cadeo, Elvira Tonelli, Pippo Starnazza, Giampiero Albertini, Pippo Mosca, Mario Pisu, Kenneth Kove, Edda Ferronao, Anna Di Silvio, Roberto Diamanti, Antonio De Silvio, Franco Ciolli, Bruno Scipioni, Anselmo Silvio, Sara Simoni, Anna Glori, Enzo Casini, Antonio Casamonica, Gino Manganello, Giuseppe Marchetti, Fred Borgognoni - *Production Managers:* Giorgio Adriani, Fausto Lupi - *Producer:* Franco Cristaldi - *Production Companies:* Lux Film, Vides (Rome) - Méditerranée Cinema Production (Paris) (130 mins.)

■ *In a Turin textile factory at the end of the last century, the workers, led by a professor, organize a strike. The walk-out fails and there are two victims, but the defeated workers go back to their jobs with serious hopes for the future.*

1965 **ALTA INFEDelta'**
Segment GENTE MODERNA

Director: Mario Monicelli - *Screenplay and Story:* Age, Furio Scarpelli, Ettore Scola, Ruggero Maccari - *Photography:* Gianni Di Venanzo - *Art Director:* Mario Garbuglia - *Music:* Armando Trovajoli - *Editor:* Adriana Novelli - *Players:* Ugo Tognazzi, Michèle Mercier, Bernard Blier - *Producers:* Gianni Hecht-Lucari - *Production Companies:* Documento Film (Rome) - S.P.C.E. (Paris).
The other segments are directed by Franco Rossi, Elio Petri and Luciano Salce.

■ *A cheese merchant loses at cards and promises his opponent to let him spend a night with his wife. Anguished by the thought that he will be considered a cuckold, he shoots his rival before the act of infidelity takes place.*

1965 **CASANOVA '70**

Director: Mario Monicelli - *Screenplay and Story:* Mario Monicelli, Age, Furio Scarpelli, Suso Cecchi D'Amico, Ugo Guerra, Giorgio Salvioni - *Photography (Paranamic Screen, Eastmancolor):* Aldo Tonti - *Music:* Armando Trovajoli, Franco Bassi - *Editor:* Adriana Novelli - *Players:* Marcello Mastroianni, Virna Lisi, Marisa Mell, Michèle Mercier, Enrico Maria Salerno, Liana Orfei, Moira Orfei, Guido Alberti, Beba Loncar, Jolanda Modio, Margaret Lee, Rosemarie Dexter, Seyna Seyn, Luciana Paoli - *Production Companies:* Champion (Rome) - Concordia (Paris) (107 mins.)

■ *The misadventures of an Italian major serving with NATO, who collects love affairs. After various liaisons, he ends up in court on a murder charge. When he gets off, he makes peace with the only woman who is right for him.*

1966 **L'ARMATA BRANCALEONE**

Director: Mario Monicelli - *Screenplay and Story:* Mario Monicelli, Age, Furio Scarpelli - *Photography (Technicolor):* Carlo di Palma - *Art Director, Costumes:* Piero Gherardi - *Music:* Carlo Rustichelli - *Editor:* Ruggero Mastroianni - *Players:* Vittorio Gassman, Catherine Spaak, Gian Maria Volonté, Maria Grazia Buccella, Barbara Steele, Enrico Maria Salerno, Folco Lulli, Carlo Pisacane, Fulvia Franco, Luis Induni, Gian Luigi Crescenzi, Ugo Fancareggi, Joaquin Diaz, Pippo Starnazza, Carlos Ronda, Alfio Caltabiano - *Producer:* Mario Checchi Gori - *Production Company:* Fair Film (Rome) - Les Films Marceau (Paris) (120 mins.)

■ *A Medieval knight leads his slipshod army across Italy to take possession of a fief, in a venturesome journey studded with all kinds of adventures and encounters, finally culminating in a clash with the Saracens. In the end, the army and its leader set off on a crusade to Palestine.*

LE FATE
Segment **FATA ARMENIA**

Director: Mario Monicelli - *Screenplay and Story:* Tonino Guerra, Giorgio Salvioni - *Photography (Estmancolor):* Dario Di Palma - *Art Director:* Piero Gherardi - *Music:* Armando Trovajoli - *Editor:* Ruggero Mastroianni - *Players:* Claudia Cardinale, Gastone Moschin - *Producer:* Gianni Hecht Lucari - *Production Company:* Documento Film (120 mins.)

■ *A doctor allows a gypsy to woo him for a long time, but when matters come to a head, she runs away with another man.*

1967 **CAPRICCIO ALL'ITALIANA**
Segment **LA BAMBINAIA**

Director: Mario Monicelli - *Screenplay and Story:* Age, Furio Scarpelli, Bernardino Zapponi - *Photography (Technicolor):* Giuseppe Rotunno - *Music:* Marcello Giombini - *Editor:* Adriana Novelli - *Players:* Silvana Mangano - *Production Company:* Dino De Laurentiis Cinematografica (95 mins.)
The other segments are directed by Steno, Mauro Bolognini, Pier Paolo Pasolini and Pino Zac.

■ *A governess who feels that comic-strips are not suitable for the education of children, prefers to tell them fairy-tales, but only succeeds in frightening them with terrifying details.*

1968 **LA RAGAZZA CON LA PISTOLA**

Director: Mario Monicelli - *Screenplay and Story:* Rodolfo Sonego, Luigi Magni - *Photography (Eastmancolor):* Carlo Di Palma - *Music:* Peppino De Luca - *Editor:* Ruggero Mastroianni - *Players:* Monica Vitti, Stanley Baker, Carlo Giuffrè, Corin Redgrave, Anthony Booth, Stefano Satta Flores, Tiberio Murgia, Aldo Puglisi, Helen Downling, Dominique Allan, Ivan Giovanni Scratuglia - *Producer:* Gianni Hecht Lucari - *Production Company:* Documento Film (102 mins.)

■ *A young Sicilian girl set out to punish the man who has seduced her and follows him to London, where she is impressed by the different way of life and changes her mentality. Having spent a night with her seducer, she abandons him and returns to the doctor who helped her and with whom she has fallen in love.*

1969 **TOH, È MORTA LA NONNA!**

Director: Mario Monicelli - *Screenplay:* Mario Monicelli, Luisa Montagnana, Stefano Strucchi, Luigi Malerba - *Story:* Luisa Montagnana - *Photography (Technicolor):* Luigi Kuveiller - *Art Director:* Paolo Tommasi - *Music:* Piero Piccioni - *Editor:* Ruggero Mastroianni - *Players:* Sirena Adgemova, Carole André, Wanda Capodaglio, Peter Chatel, Valentina Cortese, Luigi De Vittorio, Riccardo Garrone, Vera Gherarducci, Raymond Lovelock, Giorgio Piazza, Helena Rónée, Gianni Scolari, Sergio Tofano, Giuseppina Cozzi, Gastone Pescucci - *Production Company:* Vides Film - *Producer:* Franco Cristaldi (89 mins.)

■ *Relatives brawl around the body of the old grandmother, who owned an insecticide factory, in an attempt to lay hands on the inheritance. The warring heirs end up by eliminating each other until the only one who is left is her grandson, a rebellious hippy who substitutes bombs for the spray-cans of insecticide.*

BRANCALEONE ALLE CROCIATE

Director: Mario Monicelli - *Screenplay and Story:* Mario Monicelli, Age, Furio Scarpelli - *Photography (Technicolor):* Aldo Tonti - *Art Director:* Mario Garbuglia - *Costumes:* Mario Garbuglia, Ugo Pericoli - *Music:* Carlo Rustichelli - *Editor:* Ruggero Mastroianni - *Players:* Vittorio Gassman, Adolfo Celi, Stefania Sandrelli, Beba Loncar, Paolo Villaggio, Gianrico Tedeschi, Luigi Proietti, Lino Toffolo, Pietro De Vico, Shel Shapiro, Albert Plebani, Sandro Dori, Augusto Mastrantonì, Abou Djarel, Ceuru Abgui - *Production Companies:* Fair Film (Rome) - O.N.C.I.C. (Algiers) - *Producer:* Mario Cecchi Gori (117 mins.).

■ *The rag-tag army continues its exploits in Palestine, amid all kinds of adventures and encounters: Death, the witch, the leper, the hermit, the Pope and real princes. In the end, the stalwart knight is saved by the witch who, having fallen in love with him, consigns herself to Death in his place.*

1970 LE COPPIE segment IL FRIGORIFERO

Director: Mario Monicelli - *Screenplay and Story:* Ruggero Maccari, Rodolfo Sonego, Stefano Strucchi - *Photography (Technospe):* Carlo Di Palma - *Art Director:* Giulio Coltellacci - *Music:* Enzo Jannacci - *Editor:* Ruggero Mastroianni - *Players:* Monica Vitti, Enzo Jannacci - *Production Company:* Documento Film - *Producer:* Gianni Hecht Lucari (111 mins.)

The other segments directed by Alberto Sordi and Vittorio De Sica.

■ *A Sardinian couple who have emigrated to Turin, have trouble paying the last instalment on their refrigerator, which is their pride and joy. With her husband's approval, the wife becomes a prostitute in order to pay off the debt... This marks the beginning of a new career.*

1971 LA MORTADELLA

Director: Mario Monicelli - *2nd Unit Director:* Mario Garbuglia - *Screenplay:* Mario Monicelli, Suso Cecchi D'Amico, Ring Lardner jnr. - *Story:* Based on an idea by Renato W. Spera - *Photography (Technocrome):* Alfio Contini - *Production Designer:* Fernando Giovannini, Richard Bianchi - *Art Director:* Mario Garbuglia - *Costumes:* Albert Wolsky, Enrico Sabbatini - *Music:* Lucio Dalla, Rosolino Celamare - *Editor:* Ruggero Mastroianni - *Players:* Sophia Loren, Luigi Proietti, William Devane, Beeson Carroll, Maria Luisa Sala, Danny Vito, Tommaso Bianco, Susan Sarendon, Charles Bartlett, Carla Mancini, Claudio Trionfi - *Production Companies:* Champion (Rome) - Concordia (Paris) - *Producer:* Carlo Ponti (109' mins.).

■ *An Italian girl, a factory worker, goes to join her boyfriend in America, but meets no end of difficulties at New York airport because of a Bologna sausage which customs officials will not allow her to take into the country. After various adventures, disappointed by her boyfriend and by the journalist who has helped her, she ends up alone in the great American metropolis.*

1973 VOGLIAMO I COLONELLI

Director: Mario Monicelli - *Screenplay and Story:* Mario Monicelli, Age, Furio Scarpelli - *Photography (Eastmancolor):* Albergo Spagnoli - *Art Director:* Lorenzo Baraldi - *Set Decorator and Costumes:* Piero Tosi - *Music:* Carlo Rustichelli - *Editor:* Ruggero Mastroianni - *Players:* Ugo Tognazzi, Lino Puglisi, Tino Bianchi, Gianni Solaro, Vincenzo Falanga, Antonino Faà Di Bruno, Carla Tatò, Pietro Tordi, Duilio Del Prete, Giancarlo Fusco, Renzo Marignano, Luigi Lenner, Max Turilli, Giuseppe Maffioli, Barbara Herrera, Camillo Milli, Pino Zac, Salvatore Biliardo, François Perier, Mico Cundari, Claude Dauphin, Mauro Misul - *Production Company:* Dean Film (Rome) - *Producers:* Pio Angeletti and Adriano De Micheli (100 mins.).

■ *A succession of coups d'état, first by the Right, then by the Minister of the Interior himself. Assaulted in his villa, the President of the Republic dies of a heart attack. The Minister of the Interior triumphs and effects negative changes within the State. Some years later, a right-wing member of parliament sells the plans for his unsuccessful coup d'état to a small African republic.*

1974 ROMANZO POPOLARE

Director: Mario Monicelli - *Screenplay and Story:* Mario Monicelli, Age, Furio Scarpelli - *Photography (Telecolor):* Luigi Kuveiller - *Art Director:* Lorenzo Baraldi - *Music:* Enzo Jannacci - *Editor:* Ruggero Mastroianni - *Players:* Ugo Tognazzi, Ornella Muti, Michele Placido, Pippo Starnaza, Vincenzo Crocitti, Nicolina Gapetti, Alvaro De Vita, Francesco Mazziere, Lorenzo Piani, Gaetano Cuomo, Gennaro Cuomo, Pietro Barreca - *Production Company:* Capitolina Cinematografica (Rome) - *Producer:* Edmondo Amati (102 mins.).

■ *A popular soap-opera centred on the marriage between a Milan factory-worker and a young southern girl. A southern policeman comes between them and the wife ends up by falling in love with him. Finally, the three break up — the worker retires, the policeman gets married, and the wife goes to work in a factory and becomes integrated into the northern way of life.*

1975 AMICI MIEI

Director: Mario Monicelli - *Screenplay:* Leo Benvenuti, Piero De Bernardi, Tullio Pinelli, Pietro Germi - *Story:* Pietro Germi - *Photography (Eastmancolor):* Luigi Kuveiller - *Art Director:* Lorenzo Baraldi - *Music:* Carlo Rustichelli - *Editor:* Ruggero Mastroianni - *Players:* Ugo Tognazzi, Philippe Noiret, Gastone Moschin, Adolfo Celi, Duilio Del Prete, Bernard Blier, Olga Karlatos, Milena Vukotic, Silvia Dionisio, Franca Tamantini, Angela Goodwin, Marisa Traversi, Edda Ferri, Maurizio Scattorin, Mauro Vestri, and the Dog Birillo - *Production Company:* Rizzoli Film (Rome) - *Producer:* Carlo Nebiolo (120 mins.).

■ *Five friends in their fifties continue to amuse themselves as if they were still youngsters by inventing hilarious pranks and childish situations. One of them dies, but even at the funeral they succeed in playing a trick on a greedy pensioner.*

1976 CARO MICHELE

Director: Mario Monicelli - *Screenplay:* Suso Cecchi D'Amico, Tonino Guerra - *Story:* Based on the novel by Natalia Ginzburg - *Photography (Technospes):* Tonino Delli Colli - *Art Director:* Lorenzo Baraldi - *Costumes:* Gritt Magrini - *Music:* Nino Rota - *Editor:* Ruggero Mastroianni - *Players:* Mariangela Melato, Delphine Seyrig, Aurore Clément, Lou Castel, Fabio Carpi, Marcella Michelangeli, Alfonso Gatto, Renato Romano, Eriprando Visconti, Isa Danieli, Adriano Innocenzi, Costantino Carrozza, Alfredo Pea, Loredana Martinez, Eleonora Morana, Carla Witting, Giuliana Calandra, Luca Del Fabbro - *Production Company:* Flag Production - *Producer:* Gianni Hecht Lucari (115 mins.).

■ *Michele is a character who is present in the minds of the members of a bourgeois family which is falling apart. Another character, Mara, turns up among Michele's relatives but cannot stir them out of their stupor. She subsequently goes north, after Michele dies in a student demonstration at Bruges.*

SIGNORE E SIGNORI, BUONANOTTE

Directors: Mario Monicelli, Luigi Comencini, Nanni Loy, Luigi Magni and Ettore Scola - *Screenplay and Story:* Ettore Scola, Luigi Comencini, Piero De Bernardi, Nanni Loy, Ruggero Maccari, Luigi Magni, Ugo Pirro and Furio Scarpelli - *Photography (Colour):* Claudio Ragona - *Art Director:* Lucia Miriso, Lorenzo Baraldo and Luciano Spadoni - *Music:* Lucio Dalla, Antonello Venditti, Giuseppe Mazzucca and Nicola Samale - *Editor:* Amedeo Salfa - *Players:* Vittorio Gassman, Marcello Mastroianni, Monica Guerritore, Nino Manfredi, Lucretia Love, Adolfo Celi, Senta Berger, Ugo Tognazzi, Paolo Villaggio, Gabriella Farinon, Andréa Ferréol, Mario Scaccia, Carlo Croccolo, Eros Pagni, Felice Andreasi, Franco, Scandurra, Sergio Graziani, Luigi Uzzo - *Production Company:* Cooperativa 15 maggio (Rome) (118 mins.).

■ *An imaginary TV channel broadcasts a series of programmes. The various episodes constitute a satire of the country's television and society, and each highlights a particular Italian-style tic or defect.*

1977 UN BORGHESE PICCOLO PICCOLO

Director: Mario Monicelli - *Screenplay:* Mario Monicelli and Sergio Amidei - *Story:* Based on the novel by Vincenzo Cerami - *Photography (Technospes):* Mario Vulpiani - *Art Director:* Umberto Turco - *Music:* Giancarlo Chiaramello - *Editor:* Ruggero Mastroianni - *Players:* Alberto Sordi, Shelley Winters, Romolo Valli, Vincenzo Crocitti, Renzo Carboni, Enzo Beruschi, Francesco D'Adda Salvaterra, Marcello Di Martire, Edoardo Florio, Ettore Garofolo, Mario Maffei, Renato Malavasi, Antonio Meschini, Aldo Miranda, Paolo Paolini, Valeria Perilli, Renato Scarpa, Pietro Tordi - *Production Company:* Auro Cinematografica - *Producers:* Luigi and Aurelio De Laurentiis (122 mins.).
Nomination: Festival Cannes 1977.

■ *The dramatic story an elderly couple whose only son is killed by a bank-robber on the eve of an exam that was to have opened the doors of a career to him. The mother is left paralyzed by the shock, while the father spends the rest of his life hunting the murderer and, having found him, massacres him to death in a crescendo of hatred and vengeance.*

I NUOVI MOSTRI

Directors: Mario Monicelli, Dino Risi, Ettore Scola - *Screenplay and Story:* Age, Furio Scarpelli, Ruggero Maccari, Bernardino Zapponi - *Photography (Technospes Color):* Tonino Delli Colli - *Art Director:* Luciano Ricceri - *Music:* Armando Trovajoli - *Editor:* Alberto Gallitti - *Players:* segment "L'uccellino della Val Padana": Ugo Tognazzi, Orietta Berti - "Mamma mia mammine": Ugo Tognazzi, Nerina Montagnani - "Hostaria": Vittorio Gassman, Ugo Tognazzi - "First Aid": Alberto Sordi - "Elogio Funebre": Alberto Sordi - "Con i saluti degli amici": Gianfranco Barra - "Tantum Ergo": Vittorio Gassman - "Autostop": Ornella Muti - "Il sospetto": Vittorio Gassman - "Pornodiva": Eros Pagni - "Come una regina": Alberto Sordi - "Cittadino esemplare": Vittorio Gassman - "Sequestro di persona cara": Vittorio Gassman - "Senza parole": Ornella Muti, Yorgo Voyagis - *Producers:* Pio Angeletti and Adriano De Micheli - *Production Company:* Dean Film (Rome) (115 mins.).

■ *A gallery of characters, some amusing, some pathetic, some almost too far-fetched to be true, in a series of episodes and gags that underscore the quirks, vices and defects of the average Italian.*

1978 VIAGGIO CON ANITA

Director: Mario Monicelli - *Screenplay:* Mario Monicelli, Leo Benvenuti, Piero De Bernardi, Tullio Pinelli, Paul Zimmermann - *Story:* Tullio Pinelli - *Photography (Technospes):* Tonino Delli Colli - *Art Director:* Lorenzo Baraldi - *Music:* Ennio Morricone - *Editor:* Ruggero Mastroianni - *Players:* Giancarlo Giannini, Goldie Hawn, Claudine Auger, Laura Betti, Aurore Clément, Andréa Ferréol, Renzo Montagnani, Gino Santercole, Nunzia Fumo, Mario Pachi, Lorraine De Selle, Franca Tamantini, Carlos De Carvalho - *Production Companies:* PEA (Rome) - Les Productions Artistes Associés (Paris) (115 mins.).

■ *A Roman bank manager on his way to see his dying father, is given a lift by a young American woman who is unaware of the purpose of his journey. He arrives when his father has already died, and the girl's presence causes a scandal among his relatives. He therefore takes revenge by revealing to his mother and brothers that one of his father's former mistresses is also there.*

1979 TEMPORALE ROSY

Director: Mario Monicelli - *Screenplay:* Mario Monicelli, Age, Furio Scarpelli and C. Brizzolara - *Story:* Based on the novel by Carlo Brizzolara - *Photography (Colour):* Tonino Delli Colli - *Music:* Gianfranco Plenizio - *Editor:* Ruggero Mastroianni - *Players:* Gérard Depardieu, Faith Minton, Roland Bock, Gianrico Tedeschi, Helga Anders, Charles Bollet, Arnaldo Taglietti, Katleen Thompson, Lola Garcia, Jean-Claude Levis, Claudia Polley, Natalia Pasquarelli, Barbara Awan, Cristina Rosci, Claudia Rerecich, Sergio Conti, - *Production Companies:* PEA (Rome) - Les Productions Artistes Associés (Paris) - Artemis (Berlin) (118 mins.).

■ *A love story between a failed boxer and a gigantic female wrestler, with much jealousy and constant fights. The two break up, but, after a series of spiteful tricks and new affairs, they go back together again and get married.*