

## Document Citation

|               |                                    |
|---------------|------------------------------------|
| Title         | <b>Omnibus film at the picfair</b> |
| Author(s)     | Kevin Thomas                       |
| Source        | <i>Los Angeles Times</i>           |
| Date          | 1979 Feb 19                        |
| Type          | article                            |
| Language      | English                            |
| Pagination    |                                    |
| No. of Pages  | 1                                  |
| Subjects      |                                    |
| Film Subjects | RoGoPaG, Rossellini, Roberto, 1963 |

## MOVIE REVIEW

LA TIMES  
2/19/79

# Omnibus Film at the Picfair

BY KEVIN THOMAS

Times Staff Writer

In the '50s and early '60s the European omnibus film, to which a number of directors contributed individual episodes, enjoyed a certain vogue before the novelty wore off and mediocrity set in. A general unevenness and a frequent lack of unifying theme were ever the bugaboos of the form, yet virtually every major French and Italian director of the time—and many lesser ones, of course—were represented in such films.

Some made it to America, although they were never as popular here as abroad. One such film, **RoGoPaG**, made in 1962, is in its first run through Tuesday at the Picfair along with a revival of Pier Paolo Pasolini's first film "Accatone" (1961).

Like others of its type, "RoGoPaG" is not very good as a whole but is of interest to cineastes since its parts were made by Roberto Rossellini, Jean-Luc Godard, Pasolini and the now obscure Ugo Gregoretti (whose surnames were the source of the film's otherwise meaningless title.)

By far the most intriguing of the sequences is Pasolini's "La Ricotta," which so raised the ire of Italian censors that the film was temporarily banned and Pasolini given a four-month suspended sentence for having made a purportedly blasphemous film.

It tells of the filming of the story of the Passion, featuring scenes of the Crucifixion and the Last Supper and clearly anticipating Pasolini's own "Gospel According to St. Matthew." Pasolini contrasts the gross behavior of the cast with the sanctity of the events it is reenacting. Of course, Pasolini is attacking hypocrisy, but what's really important is how the portrayal of these events confers upon these rowdy, foolish, vail souls a fleeting moment of

grace. (The key scenes of the film-within-the-film were shot by Tonio Delli Colli in rich colors inspired by the paintings of Pontormo and Rosso Fiorentino.)

The 40-minute "La Ricotta" is a work of grace itself. Overflowing with a largeness of spirit, it is one of Pasolini's most satisfying satisfying films. Orson Welles, no less, plays the film's director—wise, weary yet not cynical, always philosophical. Even dubbed into Italian he's a delight. For its eventual release in Italy Pasolini was forced to make a few small cuts, such as when someone shouts, "Away with the crosses!" when Welles is ready to shoot another scene because the remark was construed as anti-Catholic.

Godard's 20-minute "The New World" likewise anticipates his "Alphaville" with its bleak vision of the future which he sets in the present as a way of suggesting it's already here. Godard has very helpfully explained that his film is intended to illustrate metaphorically the disappearance of the notion of cause and effect, as proposed by atomic physics. Jean-Marc Bory plays a man who becomes convinced he's the last normal person on earth, everyone else, including his beautiful fiancée (Alexandra Stewart) having apparently been affected by fallout from an atomic blast. For all such theorizing "The New World" is essentially an eloquent, painful expression of love lost so characteristic of Godard.

In 1962, Roberto Rossellini was at a crossroads, his Neorealist masterpieces and deeply personal collaborations with Ingrid Bergman behind him and just beginning his remarkable series of austere historical studies. His sketch, "Virginity," in which a demure stewardess (Rosanna Schiaffino) fends off an obnoxious, mother-craving American (Bruce Balaban), is too slight to sustain Rossellini's cosmic vision and is, in fact, a pretty tedious business. So is Gregoretti's episode, a by-now-trite send-up of the consumer mentality featuring Ugo Tognazzi.

Both "RoGoPaG" and "Accatone" are Times-rated: Mature.