

Document Citation

Title	8 1/2
Author(s)	
Source	<i>College of William and Mary. Festival Film Society</i>
Date	
Type	program note
Language	English
Pagination	
No. of Pages	2
Subjects	
Film Subjects	8 1/2 ([eight and a half]8 1/2), Fellini, Federico, 1963

John Russell Taylor in Cinema Eye:

The material of *8½* evidently, and deliberately, recalls at many points that of Fellini's earlier films. Favourite images recur: the sea, suggesting freedom and infinity, the empty square at night as a setting for self-examination. So do Fellini's two principal types of women, the thin, angular, exacting wife and the plump, warm, complacent mistress, as well as the unseizable, mysterious innocent who passes momentarily across the scene, like the boy in *I Vitelloni* and the girl on the beach in *La Dolce Vita*. The seamy underside of show-business, which has fascinated him ever since *Luci del Varieta*, is to be recognized again in the person of the ageing French refugee from the follies who is unkindly banished to the attic of Guido's harem when he has grown tired of her. The mind-reader of the night-club scene in *8½* recalls the hypnotist in *Le Notti di Cabiria*, while the setting in which she performs suggests unmistakably the Baths of Caracalla in *La Dolce Vita*. Three of the principal actors in *La Dolce Vita* recur, two of them, Marcello Mastroianni and Annibale Ninchi, in the same relationship in both films. The musicians in the last scene of *8½* at once bring to mind the wandering musicians in *La Strada*; La Saraghina, La Bomba Atomica in *Le Notti di Cabiria*; the love-hate relationship with the Church that previously suggested in *Cabiria*, *Il Bidone*, *La Dolce Vita* and elsewhere. . . . The list could be continued almost indefinitely; *8½* is rather like a poet's notebook, which can only exert its full fascination for someone already well acquainted with the author's previous work and his whole imaginative world.

In construction the film is Fellini's most intricate and in some ways his most masterly; the pieces, apparently so different and incompatible one with another, ultimately fall into place with fantastic precision and inevitability. Above all, it is a triumph of style; a new, fuller, wider-ranging Fellini style which finally leaves realism, in any sense that a neo-realist would recognize, far, far behind.

NOTE

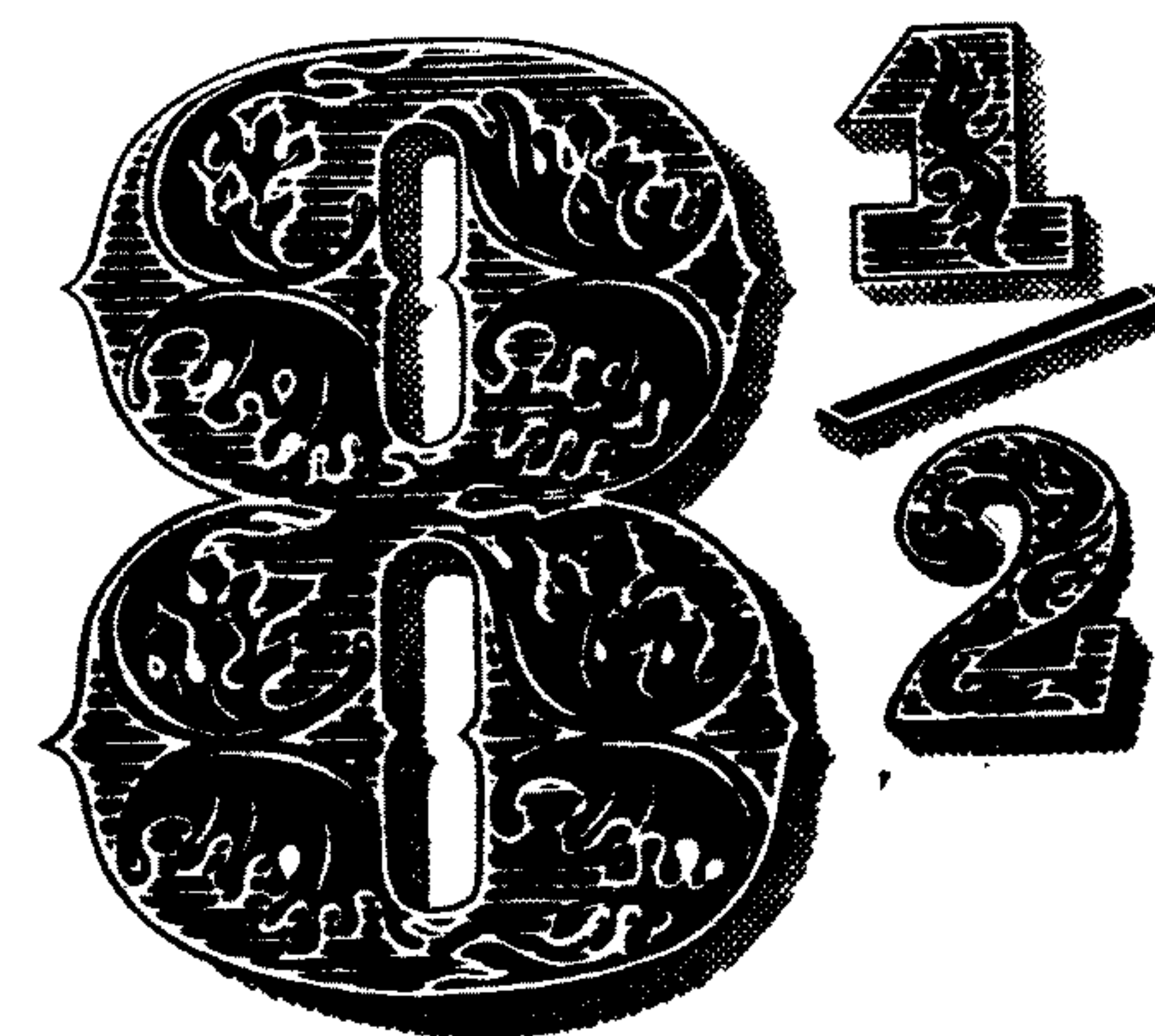
Variety Lights by Fellini will be shown in Phi Beta Kappa Auditorium Saturday evening, 8 p.m., May 28th. Subscribers unable to attend and wishing a refund of \$.50 may apply to the box office this evening. Please fill out the membership cards distributed in order to be on the mailing list for future Festival announcements.

Coffee will be served this evening in the Dodge Room.

The Festival Film Society

Presents

FEDERICO FELLINI'S



Phi Beta Kappa Hall

SUNDAY

May 22

8 P. M.

NOTES ON TONIGHT'S FILM

"8½"

In production for more than 18 months, "8½" derives its title from the fact that Fellini had previously made six full-length feature films, plus three one-half segments of other motion pictures, including "Boccaccio '70."

"8½" recounts the artistic and moral crisis of a famous motion picture director who, as he is about to begin a new work, finds himself bankrupt of ideas. In delineating the director's desperate struggle to free himself from his problems, Fellini alternates between sequences of reality and fantasy.

Marcello Mastroianni, now one of the top leading men on the international cinema scene, established a reputation for versatile dramatic ability in such films as Levine's "Divorce--Italian Style," "La Dolce Vita," "Bell'Antonio," "Big Deal on Madonna Street" and "La Notte." In Fellini's "8½," he portrays Guido, the motion picture director.

The idea for "8½" came to Fellini shortly after he finished "La Dolce Vita." The film, according to Fellini, was to be about "a man who is weak, confused and vacillating; who finds himself unable to cope with reality and seeks a way out in dreams."

With this germ of an idea, Fellini retired to Chianciano, a resort north of Rome, for a two-week rest cure. There, he encountered a strange community of sick and retired people taking the cure for real or imaginary ills. The "larva-like humanity" impressed him so much he decided that the setting for his new film would be a thermal resort to which the hero comes for a rest cure.

In the quiet, jaded atmosphere of a plush turn-of-the-century hostel, the hero searches his soul for purpose and inspiration. Memories, fears, doubts, anxieties drift in and out of his conscious and subconscious as he partly remembers, partly dreams, of the people and places he has known since childhood.

"He lives on two levels -- reality and fantasy," explains Fellini. "On the conscious level, he meets the people at the resort -- old friends and business associates who arrive from Rome, his mistress whom he hides in a small hotel and his wife who comes along to keep him company. On the subconscious level he recedes into the past and fantasy."

Long before filming began, Fellini had the various

FELLINI'S "8½"

Time: 135 min.

CAST

MARCELLO MASTROIANNI.....Guido Anselmi
CLAUDIA CARDINAIE.....Claudia
The Dream Girl
ANOUK AIMEE.....Luisa Anselmi
SANDRA MILO.....Carla
ROSSELLA FALK.....Rossella
BARBARA STEELE.....Gloria Morin
ANNIBALE NINCHI.....Anselmi's Father

CREDITS

Producer.....ANGELO RIZZOLI
Director.....FEDERICO FELLINI
Screenplay.....FEDERICO FELLINI
TULLIO PINELLI
ENNIO FLAIANO
BRUNELLO RONDI
Set Designer.....PIERO GHERARDI
Costumes.....PIERO GHERARDI
Director of Photography.....GIANNI DI VENANZO
Cameraman.....PASQUALE DE SANTIS
Assistant Director.....GUIDARINO GUIDO

episodes of the movie blocked out in his mind. "All of them," he says, "were taken, more or less, from my own life."

Three of Italy's leading scenarists began working on the screenplay for "8½" early in 1961. Each was assigned a different sequence of the story as conceived by Fellini, completely unaware of what his two collaborators were writing.

As the finished material kept coming in, Fellini locked the pages in a drawer. The final script emerged as the synthesis of these separate themes brought together and refined as a whole in the crucible of Fellini's imagination.

Like his hero in the film, Fellini found himself swept along by events and compelled to come to a decision. Taking a cue from his own experience, he decided, in what now seems an inevitable choice, to make the central character a movie director. He was then able to complete the final script without difficulty.