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Three Days only!
FEBRUARY 6 - 7 - 8, 1963
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PLUS: "BLACK ORPHEUS"
Filmed in Rio in Color!

VILLAGE THEATRE, CLAREMONT
NAtional 4-2612

THE NIGHT

Directed by
Michelangelo Antonioni



THE NIGHT (*La Notte*)

Directed by Michelangelo Antonioni
Produced by Emmanuel Cassuto
Story and Screenplay by Michelangelo Antonioni
Director of Photography Gianni di Venanzo
Art Director Piero Zuffi
Editor Eraldo da Roma
Music by Giorgio Gaslini
Production Manager Paolo Frasca
Assistant Director Franco Indovina
Sound Claudio Maielli

A NEPI-FILM (Rome) SOFITEDIP (Paris)

SILVER-FILM (Paris co-production)

Lidia Jeanne Moreau
Giovanni Marcello Mastroianni
Valentina Monica Vitti
Tommaso Bernhard Wicki
The Young Hospital Patient Maria Pia Luzi
Maria Theresa Rosy Mazzacurati
Guido Ajmone Marsan, Vittorio Bertolini, Vincenzo Corbella, Ugo Fortunati, Gitt Magrini, Giorno Negro, Roberta Speroni.

THE NIGHT
by
Richard Roud

THE NIGHT takes place in a single day and is set in Milan in the upper-class milieu of most of Antonioni's films. Giovanni Pontano is a well-known writer; he has been married to Lidia for ten years. The film takes them at a moment of decision in their lives. Their best friend is dying of cancer, and this confrontation with death forces them to take a hard look at their own lives, only to discover that for them passion is dead, that their marriage has succumbed to the erosive action of habit. Both react to this discovery in slightly different ways. As in all of Antonioni's films, the husband is the least perceptive of the two—he has his professional life to occupy him, and he is too frightened to open his eyes, to admit either that their marriage is a failure or that the institution of marriage bears little resemblance to the realities of their situation—or of anyone's. Therefore, while both of them react instinctively to the fact of death — and the common threat of death — and begin to seek forgetfulness and re-assurance in sex, Lidia alone knows that their marriage is finished: her eyes are fully open, and she knows that casual flirtations are no answer to their problem. The film reaches its climax at an all night garden party at the home of a rich industrialist where both have vainly sought distraction in the arms of other partners. At dawn they walk off across the millionaire's golf course. In the distance the orchestra is still playing. The music is different but it serves the same function as the *pasodobles* played at bull fights: it heralds the moment of truth. Giovanni crushes Lidia to him and desperately tries to embrace her. "No," she cries "I don't love you any more ... and you don't love me, either." "Be quiet" mutters Giovanni, thinking that making love is going to put everything right, "Be quiet." And as they vainly struggle on the grass the camera moves away slowly.

Only a sequence by sequence analysis could do justice to the supreme plastic beauty of THE NIGHT. Nothing is left to chance, nothing is improvised. One feels that Antonioni is in complete control of the smallest detail. If during the early part of the film Jeanne Moreau is constantly seen flattened against a building in the lower left hand corner of the screen, this is not by accident. It is an expression both of her need for support and her feeling that she has been whirled off centre by the force of the struggle which is going on inside her, as well as being a composition of great pictorial beauty. In THE NIGHT it is not only a question of style decorating or emphasizing content; almost any still from the film tells the whole story of Lidia and Giovanni — the tragedy is inherent in the placing of actors within the frame, the lighting, the sets. Nor is it just that there is nothing extraneous in THE NIGHT — for in L'AVVENTURA each scene made its point too. In THE NIGHT we have an example of the completely thought-out, completely controlled work of art in which the relations of part to part and part to whole have a beauty of their own, the beauty of music, of pure form.

Although it was his sixth film, L'AVVENTURA was the first work by Antonioni ever to have been shown in the United States. The earlier films, however, are not un-important, and in many ways they are more typical of Antonioni than L'AVVENTURA. CRONACA di un AMORE (*Story of a Love*) *Le Amiche* (*The Girl Friends*), and IL CRIDO (*They Cry*), are all very great films, fine enough to have established the reputation of any director. I mention them not to tantalise the American public with films they have never seen, but because THE NIGHT is more in the line of CRONACA DI UN AMORE than of L'AVVENTURA. The earlier films of Antonioni are not different in subject-matter; it is still the world of three o'clock in the morning, of the real dark night of the soul. A world of suicide and despair, in which passions are real but transient, in which guilt and remorse are permanent and inescapable; a world that is grey and cold, hard and spare, and where the sun rarely shines. All his earlier films were set in the north; the hard grey light of Turin (*Le Amiche*), the lonely highways on the outskirts of Milan (*Cronaca di un Amore*), the desolate Po Valley delta with its perspectives reaching out to infinity (*Il Grido*), L'AVVENTURA incredible as this may seem, marked a kind of lightening of the darkness. But more important, it used a broader canvas and a freer, less carefully controlled technique than the earlier films. In these works, film technique — camera movements, framing, the rigorous building of shots into sequence — was an essential part of the film's artistic and human meaning. One could even go as far as to say that the autonomous and occasionally non-functional use of camera movements created spatial patterns which were satisfying in their own right. This formal choreography of movements which accompanied the films provided a non-conceptual figure in the carpet, an experience in pure form.

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Much of this was thrown to the winds in L'AVVENTURA. Perhaps the fact that he was dealing with a more complex plot and a film on a large scale would account for this change. In any case, in THE NIGHT Antonioni has returned to a more formal approach, and this is why I feel it is his greatest film: his greatest because it probes as deeply as did L'AVVENTURA into its characters, but with a greater degree of formal rigor and a tighter structure.