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Antonioni, Michelangelo

haps the lyrical love scene in the park. Its beautiful erotic scenes (which could have been scabrous but are always modest) contributed greatly to the film's international success.

AMERE VICTOIRE BITTER VICTORY France 1957. *Dir* Nicholas Ray *Scen* Gavin Lambert, Nicholas Ray, René Hardy based on *Bitter Victory* by René Hardy *Photog* Michel Kelber *Ed* Léonide Azar *Art Dir* Jean d'Eaubonne, Marc Frédéric, Petitot *Mus* Maurice le Roux *Cast* Curt Jurgens, Richard Burton, Ruth Roman, Raymond Pellegrin *Prod* Transcontinental Films/Robert Laffont Productions. 100 mins. (90 mins. Britain, 82 mins USA.) CinemaScope.

In 1942, the commander (Jurgens) of a desert patrol in Lybia allows a scorpion to mortally sting his wife's (Roman) lover (Burton) and then destroys the witness (Pellegrin) to his crime. His mission accomplished, he is welcomed as a hero.

Though the film contains certain weaknesses (particularly in the first part), the desert scenes, shot in Africa, are very striking. The most beautiful sequence, in which an officer under orders must put his wounded comrade out of pain, is extremely moving. Curt Jurgens gives a reasonable performance but is somewhat unconvincing as a British officer.

AMERICAN IN PARIS (AN) USA 1951. *Dir* Vincente Minnelli *Scen* Alan Jay Lerner *Photog* Alfred Gilks, Joan Aron *Art Dir* Cedric Gibbons, Preston Ames *Mus* George Gershwin *Ed* Adrienne Fazan *Choreog* Gene Kelly *Cas.* Gene Kelly, Leslie Caron, Oscar Levant, Nina Foch, Georges Guetary *Prod* MGM. 115 mins. Technicolor

An American painter coming to Paris is desired by a rich woman (Foch) but prefers a pretty girl (Caron), who is, however, the fiancée of his French friend (Guetary)

This cinematic ballet is not a series of vaudeville acts but more like an opera in which the dances and the music are an integral part of the dramatic action (though the plot is quite conventional). The film's appeal relies mainly on the lavish dances, choreographed by Gene Kelly, and the settings, which are a succession of homages to the great French painters Toulouse-Lautrec, Raoul Dufy, Utrillo, Renoir, etc. Gene Kelly and

Leslie Caron are magnificent. The final musical sequence is unparalleled as an example of film choreography. Winner of five Academy Awards.

AMERICAN TRAGEDY (AN) USA 1931. *Dir* Josef von Sternberg. *Scen* Josef von Sternberg, Samuel Hoffenstein based on the novel by Theodore Dreiser *Photog* Lee Garmes *Art Dir* Hans Dreier *Cas.* Phillips Holmes, Sylvia Sydney, Frances Dee, Irving Pichel *Prod* Paramount 90 mins.

"The script of *An American Tragedy* was first offered by Paramount to the famous Eisenstein. He prepared an outline that stressed the political aspects of the work, making of it an anticapitalist propaganda film that boosted his relationship with Moscow. Paramount therefore entrusted Sternberg with the task of making it into an unbiased dramatic film, a feat in which he was completely successful" (press release, 1931). ["I eliminated the sociological elements, which, in my opinion, were far from being responsible for the dramatic incident which Dreiser had concerned himself" (Joseph von Sternberg). An austere, detached version of the novel, in many ways more honest (and certainly more vigorous) in its dissection of a small-town tragedy than Stevens's later, more respectful, but pedestrian, version.]

See also **PLACE IN THE SUN (A)**

AMICHE (LE) THE GIRL FRIENDS Italy 1955. *Dir* Michelangelo Antonioni *Scen* Suso Cecchi d'Amico, Alba de Cespedes based on *Tra donne sole* by Cesare Pavese *Photog* Gianni di Venanzo *Art Dir* Gianni Polidori *Mus* Giovanni Fusco. *Cast* Eleonora Rossi Drago, Valentina Cortese, Fabrizio, Ettore Manni, Maurizio, Madeleine Fischer, Jeanne Neaux, Ettore Manni *Prod* Triunfalme. 90 mins.

Clelia (Rossi Drago) sets up a fashion house in Turin and makes friends with a model (Fischer), a potter (Cortese), a rich idler (Furieux), a painter (Faretto), a designer (Fabrizi). The model is driven to suicide by the rich woman and Clelia leaves the town.

The Pavese novel on which the film is based was freely adapted.

Antonioni says that he loved its account of "females and their interior lives—I have been told that Pavese and I are somewhat similar. His intellectual ex-

periences coincided tragically with his personal experiences (he committed suicide in 1955). Could the same be said of me? Doesn't the fact I'm here in the process of making films suggest optimism? For me, I want to have my characters part of their surroundings and not to separate them from their everyday environment. Also you won't find one single *champ-contre-champ* in *Le Amiche*. The technique is instinctive and derives from a desire to follow the characters in order to unveil their innermost hidden thoughts."

AMONG PEOPLE see DETSVO GORKOVO

AMORE IN CITTA LOVE IN THE CITY Italy 1953. *Dir* Michelangelo Antonioni, Federico Fellini, Cesare Zavattini, Alberto Lattuada, Carlo Lizzani, Francesco Muselli, Dino Risi *Scen* Zavattini, Aldo Buzzi, Luigi Chiarini, Luigi Malerba, Tullio Pinelli and others *Photog* Gianni di Venanzo *Art Dir* Gianni Polidori *Mus* Mario Nascimbene *Cast* non-professionals *Prod* FaroFilm. 110 mins. (Lizzani episode removed from foreign release versions at the instigation of the Italian Government.)

A six-part episode film, based on true situations. It was the first (and only) edition of a film journal to be called "The Spectator." 1. "Paradise for Three Hours" (Risi) — in the highly charged atmosphere of a cheap dance hall in Rome, where clerks, truck drivers, and servant girls meet and part again in a kind of formalized ritual involving an awkward, yet hectic, physical contact. 2. "When Love Fails" (Antonioni) — unsuccessful suicides recount their own stories of why they had wanted to commit suicide, blaming disappointment in love. 3. "Love Cheerfully Arranged" (Fellini) — a client (Fellini) of a matrimonial agency pretends he is looking for a wife for his friend who has delusions of being a werewolf. 4. "Paid Love" (Lizzani) — a survey of prostitution using girls "picked up" by the camera in streets, cafés, and rooms and interviewed by a reporter. 5. "The Love of a Mother" (Zavattini/Maselli) — based on a major Italian news story in which Catherina Rigoglioso, soon after she was released from prison, relives her story for the camera. As an unmarried mother she discovers that society will assume its responsibilities toward her child only

if she abandons it. 6. "Italy Turns Around" (Lattuada) — 20 sexy Italian beauties were let loose on the male population of Rome whose reactions were observed by hidden cameras.

Zavattini was the inspirational force behind this significant film, which marked an evolution of neorealism toward what later became known as *cinéma-vérité*. The style of films like *Bicycle Thieves* becomes in this film either a direct recording of actuality ("Paradise for Three Hours," "Italy Turns Around") or a reconstruction of real events with the protagonists acting out their own dramas ("The Love of a Mother," "When Love Fails"). These latter two episodes are the best, especially "The Love of a Mother" in which "realism surpasses all artistic prudence" (Bazin).

This film brought together the principal Italian film-making hopes of the Fifties. But the 1954–60 crisis and the producers' lack of understanding hindered the careers of Maselli, Lizzani, and Risi; even Fellini and Antonioni (then unknown) had difficulties.

AMOUR D'UNE FEMME (L') France/Italy 1953. *Dir* Jean Grémillon *Scen* René Wheeler, Jean Grémillon, René Fallet *Photog* Louis Page *Mus* Henri Dutilleul *Ed* Louisette Hauteceur *Cast* Micheline Presle, Massimo Girotti, Gaby Morlay, Marc Cassot *Prod* L.P.C. (Pierre Gerin)/Films Costellazione. 100 mins.

On an island, a young lady doctor (Presle), the friend of a teacher (Morlay), loves an engineer (Girotti), who leaves her because she is hindering his career.

An important and noble film on the female psyche and the relationship between men and women. It was a total commercial failure and was, unfortunately, the last feature of a great film maker.

AMOURS DE LA REINE ELISABETH (LES) QUEEN BESS, HER LOVE STORY/QUEEN ELIZABETH France 1912. *Dir* Louis Mercanton, Henri Desfontaines *Scen* Eugène Moreau *Art Dir* Théâtre Sarah Bernhardt, Paris *Cast* Sarah Bernhardt, Lou Tellegen, Romani, Maxudian, Chameroy, Decoeur *Prod* Histrionic Film. 3,093 ft. *Queen Elizabeth* is a photographed version of the play that Sarah Bernhardt wanted to adapt for the screen ("This is my one chance for immortality," she