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CHRIST STOPPED AT EBOLI

(CRISTO SI È FERMATO A EBOLI)

Director: Francesco Rosi

Italy-France 1979 120 minutes

Cast: Gian Maria Volonté, Irene Papas

The hit of our recent Rosi retrospective, EBOLI is considered by many to be the director's best work. Longtime Rosi champion Derek Malcolm proclaimed that EBOLI made Rosi seem "a filmmaker of greater and greater distinction. . . . The film is a stunning example of what has been lost in the cinema over the last few years, and what we stand to gain from directors who attempt to speak the truth as well as to entertain." Often compared to Olmi's masterpiece THE TREE OF WOODEN CLOGS (see July 26), Rosi's eloquent epic tells the true story of Carlo Levi, an erudite doctor who was exiled from Turin to the bleak southern terrain of Lucania for his opposition to Mussolini. In this desolate place where "even Christ has never arrived," the doctor struggles with his guilt and romanticism about the impoverished south, and tries to connect with the suspicious townspeople. (Irene Papas is especially fine as his housekeeper.) Acted with penetrating intelligence by the late Gian Maria Volonté, shot and edited with poetic precision, EBOLI is a contemporary classic. Pauline Kael asserted that EBOLI was a greater film than even Rosi's THREE BROTHERS: "I was completely absorbed by what I was seeing. . . . The audience seemed hushed, as if at a concert where the musicians were playing very softly." Please note that tonight's print is the abbreviated North American release version.

Saturday, July 29 8:45 p.m.

