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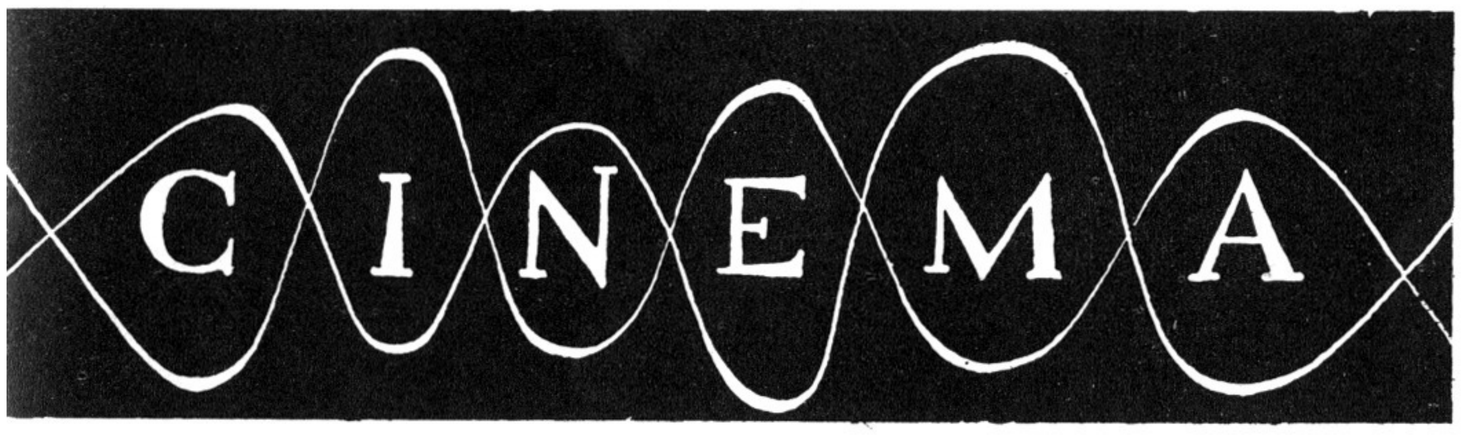
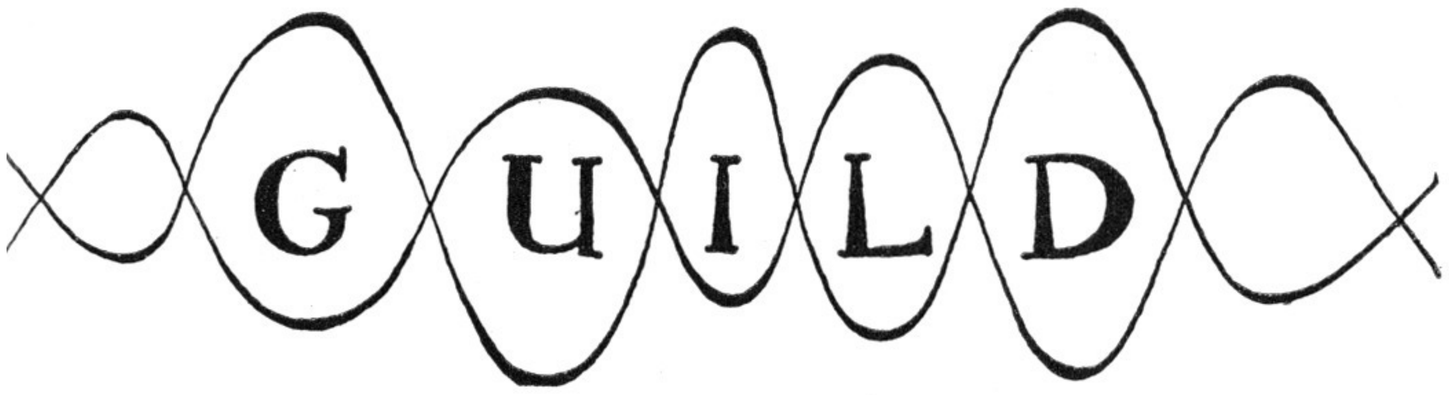
JANUARY - FEBRUARY 1963

12th YEAR





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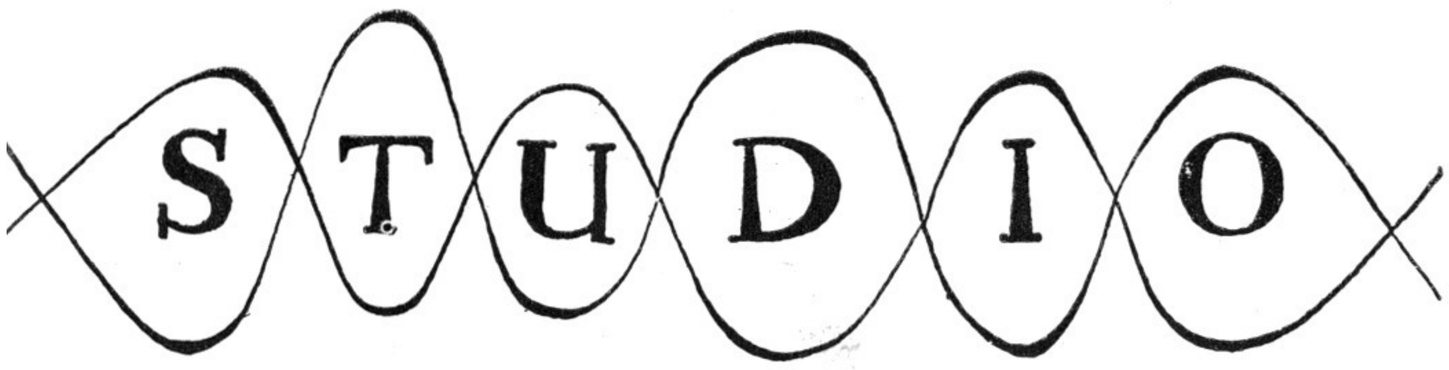

NEW GUILD POLICY

Please note that the GUILD is not included in our current calendar.

Beginning January 3, its programs will be listed daily in the NEIGHBORHOOD MOVIE GUIDES of the S. F. CHRONICLE, THE OAKLAND TRIBUNE and THE DAILY CALIFORNIAN.

It is our intention to use the GUILD as a move-over house for successful films from either the CINEMA or the STUDIO, or for others that we can obtain only by offering the distributors the possibility of extended runs. This approach should open many new films to us, and so make possible a greater variety of high-level programming.

May we remind you also that arc equipment has been installed in the GUILD, and that as regards brightness of image and excellence of sound the theatre is now second to none in the area.

THE CINEMA: Shattuck & Haste · TH 8-2038 · GUILD & STUDIO: Telegraph at Haste

Bernard Wicki's THE BRIDGE

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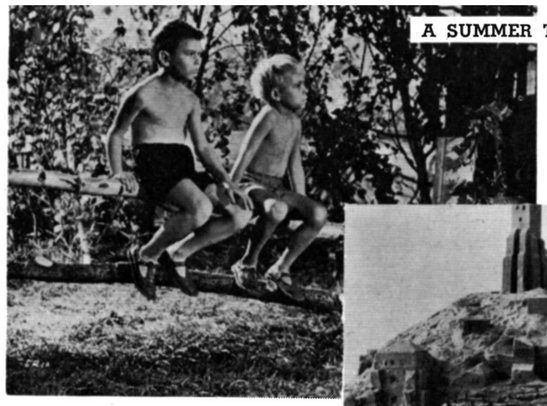
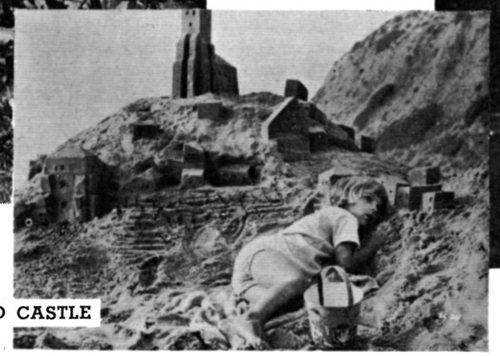


A SUMMER TO REMEMBER



THE SAND CASTLE

Peter Lorre in M

GUILD THEATRE

Under the new GUILD policy, the opening programs will be as follows:

JANUARY 3-9 (one week only)

THE PURSUIT OF THE GRAF SPEE*

Peter Finch gives a brilliant portrayal of the GRAF SPEE's commander in this magnificently photographed re-enactment of the celebrated sea battle of World War II, which ended with the scuttling of the German dreadnaught in Montevideo harbor. John Gregson plays the British commander. 1958. (color)

and Curt Jurgens in THE DEVIL'S GENERAL

In this variation on the Faust theme, the devil takes his reckoning of a gallant Luftwaffe general. The general works for Hitler because he loves his air force, but his repugnance is so strong that "he can't eat as much as he wants to vomit." Though the film is a drama of conscience as much as a study of German Angst, it derives much of its impact from the extraordinary presence of Curt Jurgens: Faust was never before so glamorous a man. Jurgens creates a mature but dashing figure that is one of the most satisfying romantic images of masculinity ever to adorn the screen; his performance took First Prize at Venice. Helmut Kautner's direction has pulse and excitement; this is what people used to go to the movies for—a solid story, well told, about characters and obstacles. From Carl Zuckmayer's play (the biggest stage success of post-war Germany). With Marianne Koch, Victor de Kowa. 1955.

JANUARY 10 (opening an exclusive East Bay engagement)

Harold Lloyd's WORLD OF COMEDY*

Lloyd, who owns most of the films he made, has hoarded them even more jealously than Chaplin. After a lapse of so many years, we wondered whether this sampling of key scenes from over a dozen of his comedies would hold up. We needn't have. It does—superbly. (Shown retrospectively at Venice, Lloyd's film was the only one at the festival that received an ovation.) The compilation is beautifully proportioned, as much in the selection as in the narration, and many sequences will have you weeping from excess of laughter. (1923-38)

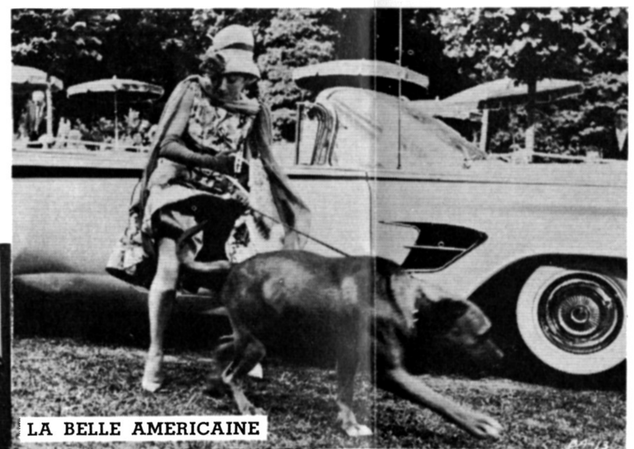
and WEE GEORDIE

A runty little bit of a boy, the son of a Scottish gamekeeper, sees an ad for a body-building course: are you undersized? Let me make a man of you! When next we see the boy, ten years of sweat and exercise have turned him into a strapping 6 feet 6 inches of solid muscle—muscle even between the ears. He is a giant obsessed with his giantism—a dour boor who meets his match at the Olympics: a 6-foot lady shot-putter. Bill Travers (after a course of muscle development and a steak diet) was assigned the role of Geordie; Alastair Sim turns up as the Laird, and the Scottish Highlands provide the background for this gentle satire of man's mania for body-building. Sidney Gilliat and Frank Launder did the script; Launder directed. 1956.

(LLOYD'S WORLD OF COMEDY and WEE GEORDIE will play for at least one week, through January 16. Beyond this date, please consult your NEIGHBORHOOD MOVIE GUIDES for the current GUILD program.)

GREAT EXPECTATIONS

LA TRAVERSEE DE PARIS: Gabin, Bourvil & pets



LA BELLE AMERICAINE

SUBSCRIPTIONS TO THE BROCHURE

Although the Cinema Guild brochure has been available free for years, we do not treat it as a throw-away. On the contrary, writing and editing the brochure is for us the hardest—and most enjoyable—part of running the theatres, and many of you, commenting on our "concise, witty and biting" program notes, have indicated that you appreciate the brochure as much or more than the films themselves.

In the past several years, however, the cost of printing and mailing the calendar has skyrocketed to a point where we spend roughly $3.00 yearly for each name on our mailing list. It has, regrettably, also become apparent that — however much out-of-towners may enjoy reading our brochures — they rarely or never come to our showings. Whether their defection is due to distance, babies, work-load, or the proliferation of art-theatres, the fact remains that for us this portion of the list (more than half the total!) represents a financial drain so severe we can ignore it no longer.

Under the circumstances we have no choice: IF YOU LIVE OUTSIDE THE EAST BAY, WE MUST ASK YOU TO SUBSCRIBE TO THE BROCHURE AT $3.00 PER YEAR IF YOU WANT TO GO ON RECEIVING IT. Copies will still be available free at our theatres, but if you live out of town and do not subscribe this is the last one you will receive in the mail. (In the hope of luring you to Berkeley at least occasionally, we are holding the subscription rate to our actual cost.)

For the present, we will continue to send the brochure free to people in BERKELEY, OAKLAND, ALAMEDA, ALBANY, EL CERRITO and RICHMOND, but we hope that residents of these cities who feel a stake in its survival will also subscribe. (According to our estimates, putting the brochure on a sound financial basis will require at least 5,000 paid subscriptions by the end of 1963.) We might add that a positive response from you would encourage us in the direction of publishing a monthly non-academic, non-journalistic review of significant new films and plays that would include the Cinema Guild calendar.

Subscription checks in the amount of $3.00 should be sent to:

BERKELEY CINEMA GUILD, INC. Box 1023, BERKELEY 4, CALIF.

Type or print clearly your name, address, city, zone and state. Please be sure to indicate whether you have been receiving our mailers at your current address.

THE MANAGEMENT

DECEPTION: Claude Rains

THE AMAZING DR. CLITTERHOUSE

Program Notes:

*Edward Landberg
†Jackson Burgess

HAROLD LLOYD

This straw-hatted hero of the roaring 'twenties dangled from clocks and building-sides 40 stories above the ground; he sleep-walked on window-ledges and through revolutions; and lions dragged him feet-first at the end of chains. Clobbered through nine-tenths of a picture, this Horatio Alger idealist always managed to emerge with the girl and the gold. He was too foolish to be destroyed; no one could be so simple without some saving grace. The saving grace was Lloyd's timing and his miraculous comic invention. He is one of the funniest men who ever lived, and one of the shrewdest. Although MAD WEDNESDAY, his last film, was made in 1952, he has managed to hang on to his money and remains among the richest men in America. The current compilation appears to have been designed to test the contemporary public's acceptance of his comic style. Its enormous success heralds the opening of a full-scale Lloyd revival. THE FRESHMAN is due to be reissued shortly, and his other films should follow in due course.

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CINEMA GUILD STUDIO

CINEMA Shattuck & Haste — consult your NEIGHBORHOOD MOVIE GUIDES — **STUDIO** Telegraph at Haste

JAN. 1

W. C. Fields in THE BANK DICK and Alec Guinness in THE LADYKILLERS

Peter Lorre in M

To say that Fritz Lang's first sound film, made in Germany in 1931, hasn't dated is to put it mildly—we haven't seen a new picture in years with this visual excitement, pace, brilliance of surface, and feeling for detail. Above all it has, caught in a terrible manhunt, a small, puffy, screaming monster, the child-murderer, interpreted by Peter Lorre with something we almost never ascribe to actors—a speck of genius. M is based on the actual case of the Duesseldorf murderer; the police, in trying to track him down, disturbed the normal criminal activities of the city, and the underworld organized to find him—so that crime could go on as usual. It is Lorre's triumph that he makes us understand the terrified, suffering human being who murders. Trapped by the underworld, he explains that he can't help himself: "I am always forced to move along the streets, and always someone is behind me. It is I. I sometimes feel I am myself behind me, and yet I cannot escape. . . . And afterwards, standing before a poster, I read what I have done. . . ."

and Jules Dassin's RIFIFI

(DU RIFIFI CHEZ LES HOMMES) The most celebrated sequence in Dassin's study of the Parisian underworld is a silent half-hour during which four men stage a jewel robbery. It's like a highly skilled documentary on how to disconnect a burglar alarm and open a safe, and it is thoroughly engrossing because we see the criminals, not from some outside point of moral reference, but as craftsmen in the exercise of teamwork and finesse. Ironically, we sympathize with their honest exhaustion after their dishonest labor. From this point, the movie follows in the tradition of SCARFACE and PUBLIC ENEMY (and of MACBETH before them), bringing the tragic, trapped figures (now symbols of our own anti-social impulses) to a finish so cadaverous that, as one critic remarked, "the lesson that crime doesn't pay is taught so thoroughly that no one in the cast is left alive to profit from it." RIFIFI—an enormous commercial success—was the film that rescued Dassin from the obscurity of his European exile. He has since made several others abroad, notably HE WHO MUST DIE, NEVER ON SUNDAY, and PHAEDRA, but RIFIFI—the least pretentious—is still the best of the lot. With Jean Servais, Robert Manuel, Carl Mohner, and Dassin as the four, and Robert Hossein, Marie Sabouret, Magali Noel, etc. 1955.

Wed. 2

Robert Dhery's LA BELLE AMERICAINE*

Let's not quibble: this gigantic comic improvisation is the funiest French film since MR. HULOT'S HOLIDAY. Dhery, a factory-worker, wants to buy a motorcycle but—unhappy with the deal a friend offers him—answers an ad in the paper. He returns with an enormous custom-built American automobile (la belle Americaine), sold him by a lady for $100.00. Everyone assumes the car was stolen, but presently we discover that a deceased rich man had indulged his mistress with it; as executrix of his estate, his wife deliberately gave the car away. Out of this central comic situation everything flows—and goes haywire. Dhery loses his job because his car is more grandiose than that of his boss, and finds himself job-hunting in an automobile a diplomat might envy. The mistress sees the car on TV and hires Dhery as chauffeur so that she can drive it past the wife's window; when he balks, she locks him in the car trunk overnight. Dhery's zany invention builds incessantly in the manner of the best silent comedies. If his work is deficient in the subtle pathos that is the glory of Chaplin and Tati, this is not much to say against a film which, in every other respect, holds its own against all but the very greatest visual comedies. We advise you to come prepared to laugh. With that marvellous French clown, Louis de Funes, in the dual role of a suspicious police inspector and his twin brother, and Colette Brossard as Dhery's wife. 1960.

and Fernandel in THE MAN IN THE RAINCOAT*

Fernandel is a henpecked clarinetist in a theatre orchestra who, with his back to the stage, has tootled for ten years without ever having seen the show. One night he is persuaded to pay an afterhours visit to Eva, one of the chorus girls who, from time to time, receives "friends" in her home to bolster her income. (Amusingly, her bedroom has a mirrored ceiling.) Before the night is out, Eva has collapsed in his arms with a knife in her back, he is being blackmailed by an untidy little character, and sought by the police for seven murders. Bernard Blier, sporting a huge black beard and fanning away belches, helps make it great fun. Julien Duvivier directed, from a script based on James Hadley Chase's "Tiger by the Tail." 1958.

Thurs. 3

Jerome Hill's THE SAND CASTLE*

This strange work, which has had showings at Cannes, Edinburgh and several other festivals, is among the few "hand-made" films professionally produced in the U. S. Begun as a documentary designed to illustrate Jung's theory of the creative unconscious, it gradually evolved into a feature-length comedy-fantasy. In its own way, it is as much a one-man show as CITIZEN KANE. Jerome Hill shot the realistic scenes in four weeks at Laguna Beach; the fantastic final third—a dream-sequence in color shot in a novel form of stop-frame animation—required a year of painstaking work in a New York loft. Writer-director-producer Hill, whose earlier feature, ALBERT SCHWEIZER, won an Academy Award, employed a cast of 24 unknowns, including Erica Speyer of the Actor's Workshop. A little boy, driven off by other boys when he attempts to join in their beach-games, decides to build a sand castle, which turns into a creation not unreminiscent of Mont St. Michel. A shrewdly-observed crowd gathers to watch him. The boy finally falls asleep. In his dream, which takes place in the rooms and corridors of the castle, articulated paper figurines represent the people he had previously observed; picking up the threads of their problems as he understands them, he dreams them through to his own conclusions—and the vindication of Jung's theories. Cited at Boston for "over-all excellence in breaking with conventional story techniques and presentation," THE SAND CASTLE has, for precisely that reason, never been able to get off the ground in America. For most theatre-owners, originality—which makes pre-selling impossible—is the most dangerous quality a film can have. This is its EAST BAY PREMIERE. The charming musical score is by Alec Wilder. 1958-60.

Fri. 4

and Orson Welles' CITIZEN KANE

The most controversial one-man show in film history was staged by 26-year-old writer-director-star Orson Welles in 1941 when he dramatized the life of William Randolph Hearst. Acclaimed a masterpiece, it is the only American movie of the sound period to be among the top selections at Bruxelles. Welles wrote later that he hadn't yet learned what can't be done in movies—he just tried everything he could think of. The final product is more fun to watch than any great movie we know. With Joseph Cotten, Agnes Moorehead, George Coulouris, etc. Photography, Gregg Toland.

Sat. 5

Ingmar Bergman's SUMMER WITH MONIKA*

SUMMER WITH MONIKA is a love story with Zolaesque elements so frank that its original American distributor shunted it toward the sex houses. The film has been in trouble with the censors, and for years was available only in a highly bowdlerized dubbed version. On the heels of the recent Supreme Court decision against film censorship, we were finally able to obtain an uncut, sub-titled print. The treatment is frank but not lascivious, and the long middle sequence of the lovers' elopement over the water has a lyric tenderness and photography of such dazzling splendor that aside from THE SEVENTH SEAL there is nothing in any Bergman film to match it. The director collaborated on the script with Per-Anders Fogelstrom, author of the original novel. The photography is by Gunnar Fischer; Harriet Andersson and Lars Ekborg play the lovers. 1952.

Sun. 6

Jean-Luc Godard's A BOUT DE SOUFFLE (BREATHLESS)*

(More accurately—OUT OF BREATH) When a work penetrates to the marrow of its age as this ones does, aesthetic questions are almost beside the point. Its hero (the term tends to confuse the issue) is something in the nature of a terribly appealing disaster. Jean-Paul Belmondo is brilliant as the young hood who mugs, murders, steals, screws—on impulse. In him and in his girl—repulsive, densely innocent, pseudo-sophisticated Jean Seberg — the specifically human dimension which past societies called soul is absent. Their lives are free, destructive, animal. A BOUT DE SOUFFLE mirrors the modern world as few films have done before it, and the people it portrays are the consequence of the abdication from responsibility of power elites the world over. In it the "democratic" way of life—of "freedom" and "equality" unqualified—ends, not with a whimper, but a bang. Belmondo and Seberg nihilistically stalk a moral vacuum each of us feels but few will acknowledge. Godard adapted Francois Truffaut's original story. 1960.

Mon. 7

Federico Fellini's LA STRADA

Fellini's spiritual fable has captured over 50 awards in at least nine countries; and until the release of BREATHLESS it caused more local discussion than any film we can remember. The theme—that everyone has a purpose in the universe—is acted out by three symbolic characters: soul (innocence, spirit, dreams) Guilietta Masina; body (physical, brutal strength, man as animal) Anthony Quinn; mind (the artist-fool) Richard Basehart. Though the background of the film is neo-realist poverty, it is transformed by the romanticism and poetry of the conception. The strange thing about the movie is that even if you reject its concepts, the mood and details of scenes stay with you; suddenly, a year or two later, a gesture or a situation brings it all back. 1954.

Tues. 8

and FROM HERE TO ETERNITY

As a book, FROM HERE TO ETERNITY triumphed over its own crudity; the movie succeeds through the excellence of its performers and Fred Zinnemann's disciplined direction. By the time it draws to a close, the film has given us the definitive screen portrait of life at an American military outpost. FROM HERE TO ETERNITY has been so over-publicized and under-rated we're almost afraid to show it; but if it behooves us to show distinguished little-known films, we have an equal obligation to show well-known films unjustly neglected by art-house audiences. Prewitt, the hero of James Jones' Dreiserian novel, is a 30-year-old army man who, nevertheless, believes that "If a man don't go his own way, he's nothin'." The conflict between his status and his beliefs is the mainspring of the action. As Prewitt, Montgomery Clift gives perhaps his finest screen performance; Burt Lancaster is excellent in a role within his range—the man's man who's also a lady's man (Deborah Kerr); Frank Sinatra contributes a beautiful performance as Maggio, who loses his life because he has so much life in him. With Ernest Borqnine as the smiling, innocently murderous Fatso; and Donna Reed as the respectable prostitute. Academy Awards: Best Production of 1953, and 7 other awards.

Wed. 9

Bernhard Wicki's THE BRIDGE*

(DIE BRUECKE) This is the most remarkable indictment of the human waste of war since ALL QUIET ON THE WESTERN FRONT, and twenty years from now the quality of its acting will probably stand up a good deal better. With World War II drawing to a close, a German village undertakes hopeless defense preparations. Few veterans remain; most of the inductees are old men and children. The protagonists are seven teenagers, romantic, excited, war-intoxicated. Seeing the boys mobilized, a veteran tries to keep them out of harm's way by assigning them to guard a bridge due to be blown up. But the boys take their assignment seriously, kill a member of the demolition crew, and attempt to hold the bridge against the Americans. One by one, they are cut down; two days later, the war ends. In theme, the film is curiously ambiguous. The boys are idealistic; yet their idealism must surely be made up of large doses of Nazi indoctrination. The thought that ideals as doubtful as these enter into the patriotism of all men is more than a little disturbing. But this may be the point: the propaganda that manufactures patriots is short-lived; death is everlasting. Bernhard Wicki, who played the memorable part of the dying writer in LA NOTTE, was for some years assistant director to Helmut Kautner. THE BRIDGE (1960) is his first film. From an established director it would be a remarkable work; from a novice it is nothing less than a miracle.

Thurs. 10

and WIR WUNDERKINDER (AREN'T WE WONDERFUL?)*

The most convincing film we know about what German life was like under the Nazis is this prize-winning study by Hans Pauck and Gunther Neumann of the relations between a decent German who left his homeland and a social climber who went along with Hitler. Kurt Hoffmann (who directed FELIX KRULL) seems more at ease in this Brechtian satire in which outrageous songs comment sardonically on the straightforward plot. The direction is enormously resourceful: hilarious surrealist interludes alternate with quite realistic sequences, each advancing the action in its own way. No attempt is made to exploit the horrors of the Nazi period; the film achieves its aims more subtly: by showing how perfectly natural life looked to Germans who went along with Hitler, how average they were, and how sane and reasonable Hitler's doctrines seemed to them, we begin to understand that the most savage deeds are carried out not by savages but by ordinary men who never think of questioning government policy. With Hansjorg Felmy as the expatriate, Robert Graf as the opportunist, and the adorable Johanna von Koczian as Felmy's Danish wife. Grand Prize, Berlin Film Festival, 1959.

Fri. 11

David Lean's GREAT EXPECTATIONS*

As a film director, David Lean is to Dickens what Cruikshank's illustrations are to the text—it is inconceivable that they could be bettered. No one who has seen the terrifying opening of GREAT EXPECTATIONS, when Pip chances upon the convict Magwich in the swamp, or Pip's rescue of Estella from Miss Havisham's cobwebbed mansion, is likely to forget his first experience of a real film based on a Dickens novel. (What an extraordinary advance over the saccharine American version of DAVID COPPERFIELD of scarcely a decade before, unredeemed even by W. C. Fields' Micawber!) Somehow, Lean and his co-adaptors managed to get a comprehensible storyline out of the book and onto the screen, to evoke the special, sumptuous Dickens atmosphere, and to cast an abundance of players who fit their roles as if poured into them. With Anthony Wagner and then John Mills as Pip; Jean Simmons and then Valerie Hobson as Estella; Alec Guinness as Anthony Pocket; Finlay Currie as Magwich; Martita Hunt as Miss Havisham; Bernard Miles as Joe Gargery; and Francis L. Sullivan as that most alarming upholder of the law, Jaggers. Three Academy Awards, 1946.

Sat. 12

and THE GRAPES OF WRATH

This famous film, high on almost all lists of the great films of all time, seems to us all wrong: one's outrage at the terrible injustices it reveals is blurred by its political sentimentality (what Bertrand Russell called "the fallacy of the superior virtue of the oppressed"); and yet, because of its raw material, the film is moving despite the pseudo-Biblical "pore-people" talk. John Ford directed the production which, in externals, is as authentic as a documentary; the cast includes Henry Fonda, John Carradine, Jane Darwell, Charley Grapewin. Academy Awards of 1940—Director, Supporting Actress (Darwell).

Sun. 13

A SUMMER TO REMEMBER (SERYOZHA)†

This restrained and adroit examination of a five-year-old's adjustment to his widowed mother's remarriage is less a narrative than a series of beautifully realized incidents and beautifully played scenes: the boy's discovery that his stepfather is something of a celebrity (he manages the nearby collective farm); the unveiling by the lake of Uncle Kostya's tatooing, which leads to the establishment of an amateur tatoo parlor; the departure for the city of the boy's older companion; the birth of a little brother. The episodes are drawn together by the motif of abandonment, from the boy's first, irrational fear, which is quickly and deliriously banished, to the final, terrible and very real possibility that he will be left behind when the family moves, to join them in the spring—a spring in which he can't really believe. The film's greatest asset is the presence of Borya Barkhatov in the role of the child, and Seryozha Metelitsin as his friend Vassya is almost as good. Georgi Danelia and Igor Talankin directed with simplicity and delicacy and a minimum of the standard Soviet shots of the vast Russian earth and the brooding Russian sky. 1960.

Mon. 14

and Rumer Godden's THE GREENGAGE SUMMER*

The subject of THE GREENGAGE SUMMER—the in-between period in a girl's life when she is no longer an adolescent, nor yet quite grown-up—requires handling of gossamer delicacy. After numerous false starts on this program note, we concluded that we were using a crane to pick up a handful of dandelion seeds; let us merely say that Joss' maturation—symbolized in glowing color by the fruit ripening in the orchards—gives the film its remarkable quality of seeming to let us witness a secret natural process. (The American title, LOSS OF INNOCENCE, almost wholly reverses the meaning.) The subject is oddly laced with melodrama, but the film is so perceptively directed and so imaginatively photographed it scarcely matters. THE GREENGAGE SUMMER is also—almost incidentally—the best comedy of childhood since THE MEMBER OF THE WEDDING — the heroine's fruity little brother designs women's clothes! With Susanna York as Joss; Kenneth More as a mysterious Englishman who takes her under his wing; and Danielle Darrieux as his hostile mistress. Lewis Gilbert directed, from Rumer Godden's novel. 1961.

Tues. 15

Wed. 16

Thurs. 17

Fri. 18

Sat. 19

Sun. 20

Mon. 21

Tues. 22

Wed. 23

Thurs. 24

Fri. 25

Sat. 26

Sun. 27

Mon. 28

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FEB. 1

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Thurs. 28

IF YOU LIVE OUTSIDE OUR IMMEDIATE AREA, AND WISH TO BE RETAINED ON OUR MAILING LIST, IT WILL BE NECESSARY FOR YOU TO SUBSCRIBE AT AN ANNUAL RATE OF $3.00. FOR FULL DETAILS, PLEASE TURN TO THE ANNOUNCEMENT ELSEWHERE IN THIS BROCHURE.

CASABLANCA

In the role of the cynic redeemed by love, Humphrey Bogart became the great lover of the screen during the war years. No one has appeared to take his place: there isn't an actor in American films today with anything like his assurance, his style, his magnetism, and his professional skill. As Rick, the most famous saloon keeper in film history, he had his great romance with Ingrid Bergman, and he established the rebellious hero—the lone wolf who hates and defies officialdom (and in the movies he fulfilled a universal fantasy: he got by with it). Questioned about his purposes and motives, the self-contained hero informs the police: "I came to Casablanca for the waters." "But there are no waters in Casablanca." "I was misinformed." The international cast includes Claude Rains, Paul Henreid, Conrad Veidt, Sydney Greenstreet, Peter Lorre, and, of course, Dooley Wilson singing "As Time Goes By." Academy Awards of 1943: Best Motion Picture, Best Director (Michael Curtiz), Best Screenplay, etc.

and The Marx Brothers in A NIGHT IN CASABLANCA

Standing on the sidewalk, Harpo pushes against a wall. A policeman accosts him: "What do you think you're doing, holding up the building?" Harpo nods, and the angry policeman pulls him away. The building collapses. Sanity, like a lettuce leaf, begins to wilt and curl at the edges. In this comedy—the last of their good ones—the Brothers dismantle the international intrigue thriller (the Brothers Warner, producers of the original CASABLANCA, indignantly asked the Hays Office to "restrain" the production). Archie Mayo directed. 1946.

Philippe De Broca's LES JEUX DE L'AMOUR*

(THE LOVE GAME) De Broca's first film has a theme so timeless, expressed with such exuberance and sparkle, that he will forever be hard-put to equal it. A pair of lovers (Jean-Pierre Cassell and Genevieve Cluny) operate a screwy antique shop whose wild decor gives De Broca's camera splendid opportunities to match the gaity in his lovers' hearts. The girl wants a baby; the boy, a joyous, carefree life, uncomplicated by children. This familiar material is unbelievably transformed by the director's balletomanic sense of style. In a brilliantly contrived contrasting sequence, the couple's best friend—a real estate salesman the girl uses to excite her lover's jealousy—pressures a customer into a new flat with its waste of empty white plaster, bare rooms, and hollow echoes. De Broca juggles his materials (romantic boy, determined mistress, rationalistic friend) as no one since Rene Clair in LE MILLION has succeeded in doing in over thirty years. This review cannot hope to convey the film's startling originality, its frantic pace, its imaginative set-pieces, its light-hearted juggling with emotion, or the bitter-sweet conclusion in which Cassell, sadly and inevitably trapped by life, calls helplessly for universal fecundation. All in all, we can't remember when we've been so magnificently entertained and—finally—so deeply moved. 1960.

and FORTY-SECOND STREET*

The British Film Institute still shows FORTY-SECOND STREET, and its songs—"I'm Young and Healthy," "Shuffle Off to Buffalo," "You're Getting to Be a Habit with Me," etc., will bubble in your head just as they did in ours when we heard them for the first time in 1933. These were the popular tunes of the period, but compare them to rock 'n roll and they sound like Mozart. For weeks after we show it, we expect all Berkeley will be whistling them. Busby Berkley's glittering production numbers have been so long out of favor they've acquired a patina at once naive and humorous, delightful and absurd. With Warner Baxter, Bebe Daniels, Ruby Keeler, Dick Powell, Ginger Rogers. Lloyd Bacon directed.

Claude Rains in DECEPTION*

In DECEPTION, Bette Davis tries casually to foresake her highly possessive lover, Alexander Hollenius (Claude Rains). A famous and worldly composer (and Mephistophelian egomaniac), Hollenius is not in the least disposed to let Davis claim a spurious innocence and go off with Paul Henreid—a musician who suffered much at the hands of the Nazis. That Henreid suffered, thinks Hollenius, is no reason whatever for Davis to shed his own august person, and he makes it clear that if she tries he will not hesitate to expose her to her new lover—a being of such fragile purity the slightest breath of intelligence must curdle his brain-cells. Davis has, finally, no option but to shoot the monster—which she does. The plot of DECEPTION counts for little, and the hero and heroine count for less; what matters is the bravura performance of Claude Rains in the role of the villain—the magnificently intelligent, cynical, decadent, corrupt Alexander Hollenius—a perfect symbol for the popular American distrust of the truly gifted, the intellectual, the wit. Few actors have ever so obviously relished a role, and 17 years later we remember almost nothing of the film but Rains titanic performance as the outrageous Shavian monster. We were supposed to hate him, but we've rarely been so thoroughly delighted and amused. Irving Rapper directed. 1946.

and John Cassavetes in VIRGIN ISLAND*

This is one of the sweetest comic improvisations in years. A young American writer (Cassavetes) meets a pretty British tourist (Virginia Maskell), proposes to her in record time, and literally leaps with her off a boat that has already set out to sea. Cheerfully they set up housekeeping on a tiny private key bought for a few dollars from a native without secure title to it. (It also happens to lack water.) A generous Negro ship's captain moves their belongings, and in return asks only that on dark nights they put a light in their window to help him navigate. (For this service he also supplies them with free cases of champagne.) How are they to know they're abetting smugglers? When the authorities begin to nose about, the couple declare their key an independent nation. Sidney Poitier plays a friendly Virgin Islander to whom, when they leave, the young couple turn over their house. The quality of this British comedy is hard to define; its sweetness is in its people, who are humane and free in subtle, but instantly perceived, ways. They are not—in the manner of men who suspect themselves enslaved—querulous about their freedom; in their assumption that life is open and infinitely malleable, they ARE free; and in their friendship Poitier and Cassavetes are men unaware that their skins are unequally pigmented. The script is by Philip Rush and Pat Jackson, who also directed. 1960 (color)

THE AMAZING MR. CLITTERHOUSE*

This John Huston adaptation of Barre Lyndon's play remains among the most intriguing films of the 'thirties. Dr. Clitterhouse (Edward G. Robinson) is a scientist so fascinated by criminal psychology that he dabbles in crime in order to penetrate its secrets. What is at first a problem in research becomes something quite different: sucked into the criminal milieu in perfectly logical but unforseen ways, Clitterhouse moves ineluctably, without ever losing the viewer's sympathy, from petty pilfering to murder. The script is miraculously self-consistent: Clitterhouse's academic exercise becomes his fate, for the film illustrates how the one wrong move that puts a man beyond the pale can be approached quite unintentionally via the intellect. The good doctor is finally adjudged insane because he admits to murder but denies madness, but the film's ambiguities are such that you may find yourself looking more than a little quizzically at your next science lecturer. The highly proficient cast includes Humphrey Bogart, Claire Trevor, Donald Crisp, Vladimir Sokoloff. Anatole Litvak directed. 1938.

and Alastair Sim as THE GREEN MAN

Alastair Sim is so limpid of eye, so arch of speech, and so gentle, unctuous, and tragic of demeanor, that he suggests the modern epitome of agonized courtesy: the undertaker. In this macabre farce, he is cast just one jump away: as an aesthetic assassin. It is unlikely that anybody in the history of the cinema has ever matched his peculiar feat of flipping expressions from benign innocence to bloodcurdling menace in one devastating instant. He dispatches an assortment of expendable types: headmasters, businessmen, dictators, etc., but gets snarled up while trying to liquidate a distasteful cabinet minister. With George Cole, Terry-Thomas, Jill Adams, Raymond Huntley, and a string trio of ladies right out of a George Price cartoon. Frank Launder and Sidney Gilliat wrote and produced. Robert Day directed. 1956.

Graham Greene's CONFIDENTIAL AGENT

In this lurid, vicious thriller by Graham Greene, the hero, a tired, aging Spanish Loyalist (tired, aging Charles Boyer, who is still better than most any actor in the business) starts out by trying to prevent a Fascist business deal in England, and is variously chased, beaten and framed by some of the most unsavory characters who ever intrigued. The cast includes Peter Lorre, Katina Paxinou, George Coulouris, Victor Francen, and Lauren Bacall as the heroine. Those of you unfamiliar with the melodramas of the '40's may be shocked at the brutalities indulged in under cover of the anti-Fascist theme, but CONFIDENTIAL AGENT has menace and excitement as well as shock, and some critics consider it the most authentic filmed Graham Greene. Herman Shumlin directed. 1945.

and TIME LIMIT

This 1957 film is the best yet made on the peculiarly fascinating subject of brainwashing. Richard Basehart is intensely disturbing as the major accused of collaborating with the Communists during the Korean War; he admits to breaking under pressure, signing a germ warfare "confession," and broadcasting for the enemy. Richard Widmark, as the army lawyer assigned to the case, probes into the major's motives. Two of the best actors in films, they bring charge and conviction to their roles. Karl Malden's direction—it was his first film—crackles with excitement. 1957.

Laurence Olivier in Hitchcock's REBECCA*

Some years ago, in THE NEW YORKER, Dwight MacDonald referred to Alfred Hitchcock's "superbly romantic REBECCA, which seems to me, because of its humor, its virtuoso twists and turns of plot, its cinematic inventiveness, and its use of the camera to establish mood, one of most entertaining films ever made." It is precisely that—an American film that is actually superior to its source. Daphne Du Maurier's book lacked suspense because the terrified heroine told her own story; the reader could not help inferring that she must have come out of it all right in the end. Hitchcock's camera establishes the viewpoint of the author omniscient, enabling him to preserve the suspense the novel dissipated. With Laurence Olivier as the glowering widower; Joan Fontaine as the heroine who tries to take the place of his dead wife; and Judith Anderson as the Gothic housekeeper fanatically dedicated to the memory of her dead mistress. Academy Award, Best Production of 1940.

and ELEVATOR TO THE SCAFFOLD*

(L'ASCENSEUR POUR L'ECHAFAUD) The characters in this unpretentious French thriller don't seem phoney (one wishes they did); they are simply people whose modernity consists in their cultural erosion by American gadgets and mores. The hero is an ex-army officer who murders his munitions-magnate boss because he loves his wife (Jeanne Moreau) and also a little because he detests munitions magnates. After committing a near-perfect crime, he is trapped in an elevator when the power is shut off for the night. Meanwhile, his automobile is stolen by a French beatnik who commits a senseless double-murder for which the hero is subsequently arrested. The ironies in this briskly professional new-wave film are neatly balanced, and it has some chilling moments, particularly one in which the hero, after burrowing through to the under side of the elevator is caught in the shaft when the power is turned back on . . . It may be possible to take the film's implications too seriously, but it begins to look as if—for sensitive souls—Paris is no longer the answer. Louis Malle directed. 1961.

The Marx Brothers in ROOM SERVICE

The Brothers apply their infernal machine to the Broadway hit about the bankrupt theatrical producers holed up in a hotel room with their stranded players. Lucille Ball, Ann Miller, Frank Albertson and Donald McBride add to the anarchy. William A. Seiter directed. 1938.

and THE GOLDEN AGE OF COMEDY

These sequences from Mack Sennett and Hal Roach two-reelers made between 1923 and 1928 show off the talents of Ben Turpin, Harry Langdon, Will Rogers, the Keystone Cops, the Sennett Bathing Beauties, etc., and best of all, they exhibit Laurel & Hardy in several classics of demolition-style silent comedy. Their custard-pie sequence—from THE BATTLE OF THE CENTURY— is the high point of the collection—a demonstration that throwing a pie can be both art and science. In THE COSMOLOGICAL EYE Henry Miller called it "the ultimate in burlesque" and "the greatest comic film ever made—because it brought pie-throwing to its apotheosis." Their paint-brush routine is a beauty, and there is also the methodical, fatalistic car-wrecking ritual. Jean Harlow makes a stunning appearance in black teddies. Robert Youngson compiled these clips in 1957.

Jean Gabin in LA TRAVERSEE DE PARIS (FOUR BAGS FULL)

When Marcel Ayme's novella was published in PARTISAN REVIEW, it was called simply CROSSING PARIS. The sardonic comedy Claude Autant-Lara based on it took the French award as the Best Film of 1957, but its ironies were too complicated for popular success in this country. The period is the German Occupation: a petty, anxious black marketeer (Bourvil) hires a helper (Jean Gabin) for a night's work—transporting a slaughtered pig across Paris to a butcher in Montmartre. The helper, a famous painter who takes the job for the mischief of it, has an uproarious night teasing his dull companion and outwitting both the French police and the Germans. Bourvil was selected Best Actor at Venice for his performance, but the surprise for us was Gabin, lusty and powerful as the man who loves life so much he can afford to play with it. When in the midst of sordid little perils, the artist devises quick-witted solutions, and then howls with delight, "This pig's making a genius out of me!" the contrast between him and the terrified, sweating petit bourgeois at his side makes it apparent that Autant-Lara has tossed off a little fable.

and CLUNY BROWN

A girl with a passion for plumbing is frightfully repugnant to stuffy people who don't even want to admit that they have drains. This wonderfully suggestive idea is the basis of Margery Sharp's wicked satire on English propriety, filmed by Ernst Lubitsch in 1946. Lubitsch cast Jennifer Jones as Cluny (it's her only performance, except for BEAT THE DEVIL, that we'd look at twice) and Charles Boyer as the debonair scrounger—two happy iconoclasts who violate the most sacred conventions. He surrounded them with a collection of English class and mass types — the wheezy Richard Haydn, Reginald Owen, Peter Lawford, Ernest Cossart, Sara Allgood, Florence Bates, Una O'Connor, Reginald Gardiner, C. Aubrey Smith, etc. The comedy is so good-natured and deft that you're not especially conscious of its sophistication until you think it over. If all this isn't sufficient lure, you'd better come just for Richard Haydn and Una O'Connor: they are incredible.

Bette Davis in DANGEROUS*

We've yet to locate a print of the Bette Davis version of OF HUMAN BONDAGE, but perhaps her approximation of Mildred's bitchery in DANGEROUS will somewhat appease her admirers. The script casts Davis as an actress toppled by a rather esoteric jinx. Franchot Tone, a brilliant architect who has never forgotten her Juliet (one of the few Shakesperean roles film audiences could be counted on to have heard of), is re-fascinated at a vastly different moment, when he finds her much the worse for straight gin in a glamorless dive. (Be ye forever warned against trying to raise up fallen women!) While she throws off a thickening alcoholic stupor, Tone sinks into an ominous romantic one. In the course of their affair, Davis is vicious, coy, and superbly near-hysterical. (Her acting took the 1935 Academy Award.) Laird Doyle's script does not, of course, approach that of OF HUMAN BONDAGE, but his dialogue is often stripped and biting, and the film has a fine period flavor. Alfred E. Green directed.

Jeanne Moreau in BACK TO THE WALL*

(DOS AU MUR) This chilling "nouvelle vague" film is the first work of Edouard Molinaro, a member of the group that includes Truffaut and Godard. A French industrialist (agonizingly played by Gerad Oury), discovering that his wife is in love with a second-rate actor, contrives to make her believe the actor is blackmailing her, then kills him and buries the corpse in a cement wall. Jeanne Moreau, who learned much from Bette Davis, plays the wife. Paired with DANGEROUS, BACK TO THE WALL should be a particularly instructive example of influence in acting style. Molinaro's direction is spare and angular, beautifully counterpointed by a nerve-wracking musical score. 1959.

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Philippe De Broca's LES JEUX DE L'AMOUR

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