

## Document Citation

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TODAY'S PROGRAM

1. THE GOLD RUSH, directed by Charles Chaplin (1925): 3:30, 7:30, 10:15-running time: 72 minutes.
2. THE BICYCLE THIEF, directed by Vittorio deSica (Italy, 1950) 8:45 - 87 minutes evening show begins at 7 p.m. with short NICE TIME-British Free Cinema film, and Road Runner cartoon. FIVE-MINUTE INTERMISSION BETWEEN EACH FEATURE

\* THIS PROGRAM WILL BE REPEATED SUNDAY EVENING with "Gold Rush" at 7:30 p.m. BThief at 8:45.

COMING NEXT WEEK ---THE GORKY TRILOGY---SENSO (area premiere)---NIGHTS OF CABIRIA

WEDNESDAY: 7:30 p.m. PART I GORKY TRILOGY-directed by Mark Donskoi

(USSR - 1938-40) "The Childhood of Maxim Gorky"

(75¢ adm)

9:15 p.m. Part II GORKY TRILOGY - "My Apprenticeship"

Part III "My University" - shown Saturday 8p.m. at Newman Center (this film is, however, being shown by the U.F. Society) (75¢)

Gorky Trilogy is among the 12 greatest films of all times

(Sight and Sound Poll, 1952.)

FRIDAY: 3:30 p.m. NIGHTS OF CABIRIA - Guilietta Masina plays a streetwalker on the outskirts of Rome; this 1957 film by Fellini has been called even more powerful than his LA STRADA.

9:30 p.m. SENS0 - directed by Luchino Visconti (THE LEOPARD, ROCCO AND HIS BROTHERS); 1954; a rich and opulent film built around the story of doomed love of a decadent Austrian officer for an Italian countess during the 1866 occupation of Venice. One of the landmarks in realist cinema and with some of the finest color in film history.

AREA PREMIERE-There will probably be only one showing of this film because the Museum is booked up for next weekend.

We'd advise you not to miss it.

PROGRAM SWITCH Fri. Mar. 5 - Previously announced "Before the Revolution" unavailable for this date. Substitute will be SALVATORE GUILIANO, the Sicilian bandit killed by the Mafia; the film was directed by Francesco Rosi, a "new" Italian director who espouses a starkly realistic style owing much to the "neo-realistic" tradition of Bicycle Thief.

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CHAPLIN ON THE FILMING OF 'THE GOLD RUSH' (from his recently published autobiography)

I was now free to make my first comedy for United Artists and anxious to top the success of THE KID. For weeks I strove, thought and brooded, trying to get an idea. I kept saying to myself: "This next film must be an epic! The greatest!" But nothing would come. Then one Sunday morning, while spending the weekend at the Fairbankes', I sat with Douglas after breakfast, looking at stereoscopic views. Some were of Alaska and the Klondike; one a view of the Chilkoot Pass, with a long line of prospectors climbing up over its frozen mountain, with a caption printed on the back describing the trials and hardships endured in surmounting it. This was a wonderful theme, I thought, enough to stimulate my imagination. Immediately ideas and comedy business began to develop, and, although I had no story, the image of one began to grow.

In the creation of comedy, it is paradoxical that tragedy stimulates the spirit of ridicule, because ridicule, I suppose, is an attitude of defiance; we must laugh in the face of our helplessness against the forces of nature--or go insane. I read a book about the Donner Party who, on the way to California, missed the route and were snowbound in the Sierra Nevada mountains. Out of one hundred and sixty pioneers only eighteen survived, most of them dying of hunger and cold. Some resorted to cannibalism eating their dead, others roasted their moccasins to relieve their hunger. Out of this harrowing tragedy I conceived one of our funniest scenes. In dire hunger I boil my shoe and eat it, picking the nails as though they were bones of a delicious capon, and eating the shoelaces as though they were sphaggetti. In this delirium of hunger, my partner is convinced I am a chicken and wants to eat me.

For six months I developed a series of comedy sequences and began shooting without a script, feeling that a story would evolve from comedy routine and business. Of course, I was led up many a blind alley, and many amusing sequences were discarded. One was a love scene with an Eskimo girl who teaches the tramp to kiss in Eskimo fashion by rubbing noses together. When he departs in quest of gold, he passionately rubs his nose against hers in a fond farewell. And as he walks away he turns and touches his nose with his middle finger and throws her a last fond kiss, then surreptitiously wipes his finger on his trousers, for he has a bit of a cold. But the Eskimo part was cut out because it conflicted with the more important story of the dancehall girl....

THE GOLD RUSH opened at the Strand Theatre in New York and I attended its premiere. From the moment the film started, showing me blithely rounding a precipice unconscious of a bear following, the audience yelled and applauded. Throughout the laughter there was sporadic applause till the end of the picture. Hiram Abrams, the United Artists sales manager, later came up and embraced me. "Charlie, I guarantee that it will gross at least six million dollars"--and it did! . . .

Chaplin refurbished "The Gold Rush" in the early Forties, adding a musical track and dubbed-in narrative. While editing out whole sequences from the original and shortening others, he added film which had been cut from the original, lengthening, in particular, the shoe-stewing sequence and another in which Big Jim, dizzy with hunger, sees the Little Fellow as an enormous chicken. Although films of the Gold Rush era were photographed for projection at 60 feet a minute, the picture unrolls at today's 90-feet-a-minute speed with hardly a jerk. Two of the old-time players in Chaplin's troupe appearing in today's film are Mack Swain as "Big Jim" and Georgia Hale as "Georgia."

#### Bibliography

Theodore Huff, Charlie Chaplin (N.Y., 1952); Robert Payne, The Great God Pan (N.Y., 1952); Parker Tyler, Chaplin, Last of the Clowns (New York, 1947); Georges Sadoul, Vie de Charlot, (Paris, 1952); Jean Mitry, Charlot et la Fabulation Chaplinesque, Editions Universitaires, Paris; Pierre Leprohon, Charles Chaplin, Nouvelles Editions Debresse.

THE BICYCLE THIEF: DeSica, born in 1902, spent his youth in Naples. He began his film career in 1931 as an actor in comedies. His first efforts as a director began in 1939. From his collaboration with scriptwriter Cesare Zavattini in 1942 for THE CHILDREN ARE WATCHING US stems his subsequent identification with the "neo-realist" movement. THE BICYCLE THIEF remains the archetypal expression of aspirations of this esthetic. The film, made in 1949, was inspired by a novel of Luigi Bartolini. The story of how DeSica found his actors in the street and cast them in the roles of the script has become part of the folklore of the "realist" approach to much of Italian film-making. Olmi in Il Posto and the Fiances, Rosi in Salvatore Giuliano and de Seta in Bandits of Orqosolo use the same approach toward actors in their gloriously successful experiments with realistic technique in today's Italian films. While the terms "realist" and "neo-realist" may seem vague as mentioned in this brief context, the intentions of the director will become apparent with the viewing of the film. The progression from THE BICYCLE THIEF and SENSO (shown next week) to SALVATORE GIULIANO will demonstrate, we believe, the continuing vitality of the "Italian" school. (We might also suggest you watch OPEN CITY, due to open at the Varsity this Sunday. This 1945 film by Rossellini thrust the Italian film industry into international prominence following World War II, and gave the first hint that unusual artistic things were happening amid the ruins of the Mussolini empire.)

It may be arguable that THE BICYCLE THIEF was the "greatest film ever made," as the film poll in Sight and Sound, 1952, concluded. (The same magazine conducted a poll 10 years later and the film was now sixth).

The ending of BICYCLE THIEVES caused considerable controversy and Zavattini wrote:

Neorealism, it is said, does not offer solutions. The end of a neo-realist film is particularly inconclusive. I cannot accept this at all. With regard to my own work, the characters and situations in films for which I have written the scenario, they remain unresolved from a practical point of view simply because "this is reality." But every moment of the film is, in itself, a continuous answer to some question. It is not the concern of the artist to propound solutions. It is enough, and quite a lot, I should say, to make an audience feel the need, the urgency, for them.

(Sight and Sound, Oct. Dec. 1953)

As guide and mentor of the "neorealist" school, Zavattini wrote in the same article about the objectives and methods of the neorealist approach:

No doubt one's first and most superficial reaction to everyday reality is that it is tedious. Until we are able to overcome some moral and intellectual laziness, in fact, this reality will continue to appear uninteresting. One shouldn't be astonished that the cinema has always felt the natural, unavoidable necessity to insert a "story" in the reality to make it exciting and "spectacular." All the same, it is clear that such a method evades a direct approach to everyday reality, and suggests that it cannot be portrayed without the intervention of fantasy or artifice.

The most important characteristic, and the most important innovation, of what is called neorealism, it seems to me, is to have realized that the necessity of the 'story' was only an unconscious way of disguising a human defeat, and that the kind of imagination it involved was simply a technique of superimposing dead formulas on living social facts. Now it has been perceived that reality is hugely rich, that to be able to look directly at it is enough; and that the artist's task is not to make people moved or indignant at metaphorical situations, but to make them reflect (and, if you like, be moved or indignant too) on what they and others are doing, on the real things, exactly as they are. (Sight and Sound, Oct.-Dec. 1953)

( note prepared by )  
--A. Milgrom, UFS