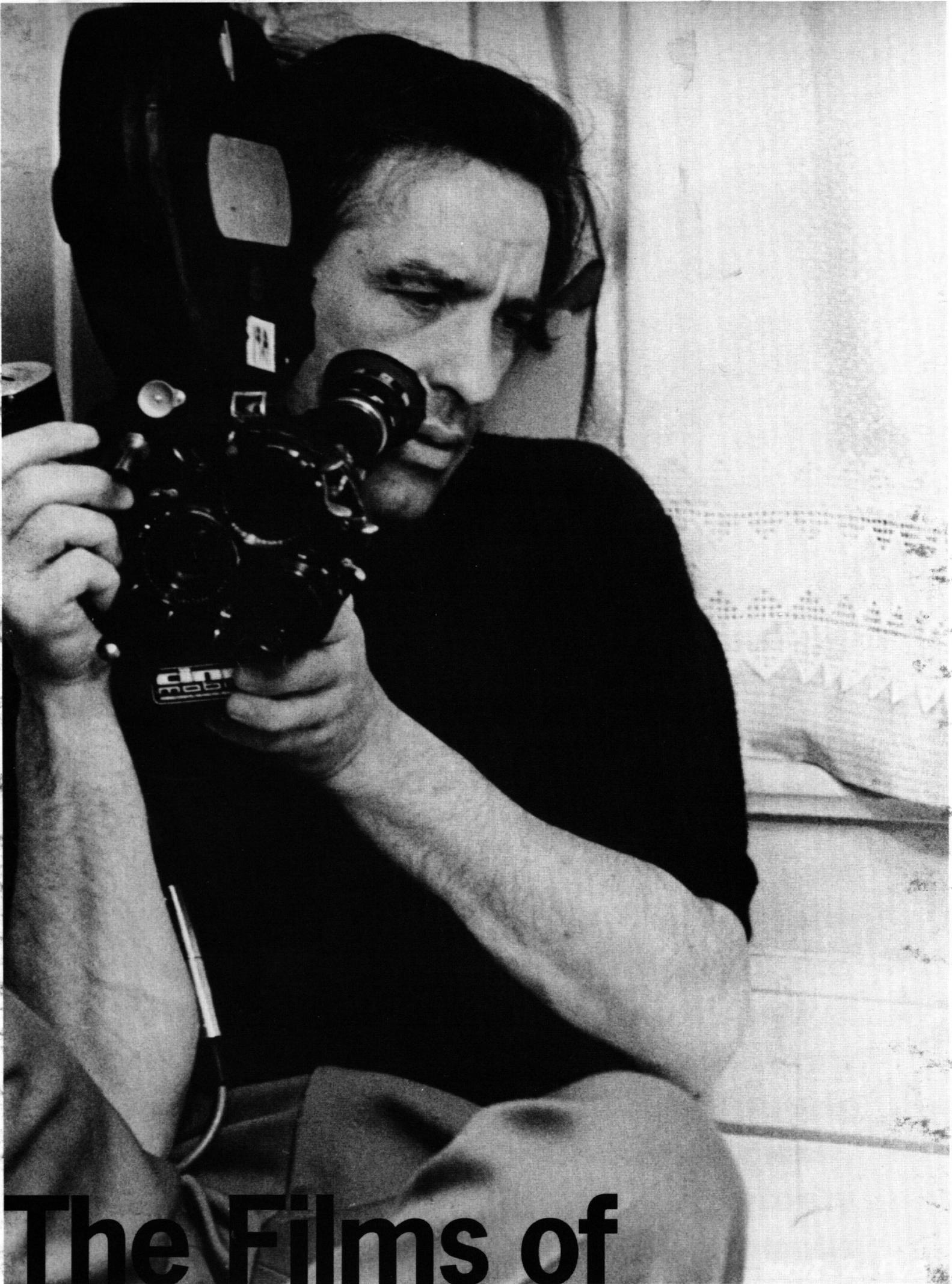


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The Films of John Cassavetes

a touring retrospective organized by the **WALKER ART CENTER**, Minneapolis, and the **PACIFIC FILM ARCHIVE**, Berkeley



SHADOWS 1958, 1959*

Script and Direction: John Cassavetes (based on a drama-workshop improvisation); Photography: Erich Kollmar (16mm, black and white); Editing: Maurice McEndree; Sound: Jay Crecco; Music: Charlie Mingus (Saxophone solos: Shafi Hadi); Sets: Randy Liles, Bob Reeh; Associate Producer: Seymour Cassel; Producers: Maurice McEndree, Nikos Papatakis (for Gena Productions); Released by Gena Productions. Running time: 60 minutes (1958, 16mm); 87 minutes (1959, 35mm).

With: Lelia Goldoni (Lelia), Hugh Hurd (Hugh), Ben Carruthers (Ben), Anthony Ray (Tony), Rupert Crosse (Rupert), David Pokitillow (David), Dennis Sallas (Dennis), Tom Allen (Tom), Davey Jones (Davey), Victoria Vargas (Vickie), Pir Marini (Piano player), Jack Ackerman (Jack, director of dance studio), Jacqueline Walcott (Jacqueline), Joyce Miles, Nancy Deale, Gigi Brooks (Three girls in restaurant).

“To me *Shadows* will always be the film I love the best — simply because it was the first one and we were all young, and because it was impossible, and we were so ignorant, and for three years we survived each other and everything.”

Made for \$40,000 with an amateur cast and crew, *Shadows* won five awards at the Venice Film Festival. The film is a touching, bitter-sweet, coming-of-age comedy deeply indebted to the work of Roberto Rossellini and other Italian Neorealists in its use of nonprofessional actors and “found” dramatic moments. Cassavetes’ direction wears its heart on its sleeve as endearingly as do the young characters in the film.

TOO LATE BLUES 1961

Direction: John Cassavetes; Script: John Cassavetes, Richard Carr; Photography: Lionel Lindon (black and white); Editing: Frank Bracht; Art Direction: Tambi Larsen; Music: David Raksin (with seventeen original pieces by Shelly Manne, Red Mitchell, Benny Carter, Uan Rasey, Jimmy Rowles); Costumes: Edith Head; Producer: John Cassavetes (for Paramount Pictures); Released by Paramount Pictures. Running time: 103 minutes.

With: Bobby Darin (John “Ghost” Wakefield), Stella Stevens (Jess Polanski), Everett Chambers (Benny Flowers), Nick Dennis (Nick), Rupert Crosse (Baby Jackson), Vince Edwards (Tommy), Val Avery (Frielobe), Marilyn Clark (Countess), Cliff Carnell (Charlie, the saxophonist), Seymour Cassel (Red, the bassist), Dan Stafford (Shelley, the drummer), Richard Chambers (Pete, the trumpeter).

“I think *Too Late Blues* was potentially a hell of a lot better picture than I made it. I’m not copping any pleas. I just didn’t know how to work under that system at that time.”

The first of Cassavetes’ two doomed flirtations with the Hollywood system, *Too Late Blues* has some fascinating moments that mark it unmistakably as his work. But this story of a jazz musician who sells out his artistic ideals in order to pay the rent was perhaps too close to the personal situation of the filmmaker, who was then trying to make it in a big-time studio.

*version screened in retrospective

Except where noted, quotes are by John Cassavetes.



A CHILD IS WAITING 1963

Direction: John Cassavetes; Script: Abby Mann (based on his story and teleplay); Photography: Joseph LaShelle (black and white); Editing: Gene Fowler, Jr.; Production Design: Rudolf Sternad; Sound: James Speak; Music: Ernest Gold; Associate Producer: Philip Langner; Producer: Stanley Kramer (A Larcas Production for United Artists); Released by United Artists. Running time: 102 minutes.

With: Burt Lancaster (Dr. Matthew Clark), Judy Garland (Jean Hansen), Gena Rowlands (Sophie Widdicombe), Steven Hill (Ted Widdicombe), Bruce Ritchey (Reuben Widdicombe), Gloria McGehee (Mattie). Also featuring Billy Mumy, Brian Corcoran, Jay Phillips, Butch Patrick, Michael Stevens, Noam Pitlik, and the children of Pacific State Hospital, Pomona, California.

“From my point of view it was a painful experience, not because of the retarded children, but from the fact that it’s really hard to compromise a subject that shouldn’t be compromised. I worked with Stanley Kramer as my producer.... I don’t think his film — and that’s what I consider *A Child Is Waiting* to be, *his* film — was so bad, just a lot more sentimental than mine.”

Cassavetes repudiated *A Child Is Waiting*, his second and final excursion into studio-style production, when, near its completion and following a heated argument with its producer, Stanley Kramer, he was thrown off the set and fired. The film, which focuses on mentally retarded children, was recut without his supervision. The young people in the film, upon whom Cassavetes lavishes his cinematic love, become the real stars, upstaging the leads, Judy Garland and Burt Lancaster.



FACES 1968

Script and Direction: John Cassavetes; Photography: Al Ruban (16mm, black and white) (Camera Operator: George Sims); Editing: Al Ruban, Maurice McEndree; Art Direction: Phedon Papamichael; Sound: Don Pike; Musical Supervision: Jack Ackerman; Song (“Never Felt Like This Before”): Charles Smalls; Associate Producer: Al Ruban; Producer: Maurice McEndree; Released by Faces International Films, Inc. Running time: 220 minutes (March 1968); 129 minutes (August 1968).*

With: John Marley (Richard Forst), Gena Rowlands (Jeannie Rapp), Lynn Carlin (Maria Forst), Seymour Cassel (Chet), Fred Draper (Freddie), Val Avery (Jim McCarthy), Dorothy Gulliver (Florence), Joanne Moore Jordan (Louise), Darlene Conley (Billy Mae), Gene Darfler (Joe Jackson), Elizabeth Deering (Stella), O.G. Dunn (Comedian), George Sims (Bartender).

“Because I wrote it at a time when I thought the only free form of expression left to the actor was the stage, *Faces* was originally done as a play. Then I decided to do a film on my own again, avoiding any outside financial help or involvement from a major film company that might stifle the creative mind. I wanted to do a film that would allow the actors the time and room to act.”

Nominated for three Academy Awards, *Faces* marked a turning point both for its young director and for American cinema: it was the first truly independent American feature film to reach a national audience. A searing examination of a marriage on the rocks, *Faces* provides one of the most intense and demanding, yet ultimately exhilarating, emotional experiences in all of cinema. The film is the initial installment in what has come to be called Cassavetes’ “marriage trilogy” (*Faces*, *Minnie and Moskowitz*, and *A Woman under the Influence*).



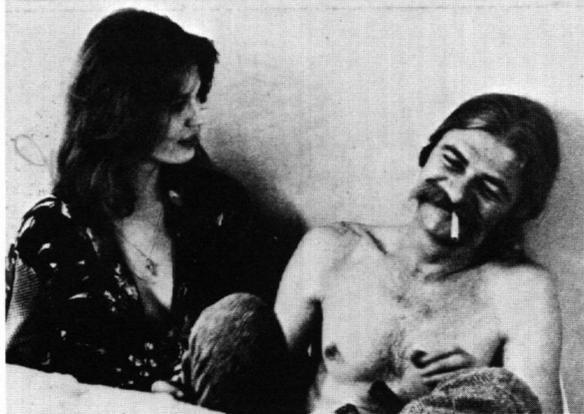
HUSBANDS 1970

Script and Direction: John Cassavetes; Photography: Victor Kemper (Camera Operators: Richard Mingalone, Mike Chapman [New York], Jeff Glover [London]); Editing: Peter Tanner, Tom Cornwell, Jack Woods; Production Supervision: Fred Caruso; Producers: Al Ruban, Sam Shaw (for Columbia Pictures); Released by Columbia Pictures. Running time: 154 minutes (for initial San Francisco screening); 140 minutes (release print).*

With: Ben Gazzara (Harry), Peter Falk (Archie), John Cassavetes (Gus), Jenny Runacre (“Big” Mary Tynan), Jenny Lee Wright (Pearl Billingham), Noelle Kao (Julie), Leola Harlow (Leola), Meta Shaw (Annie), John Kullers (Red), Delores Delmar (The Countess), Peggy Lashbrook (Diana Mallabee), Eleanor Zee (Mrs. Hines), Claire Malis (Stuart’s wife), Lorraine McMartin (Annie’s mother), Edgar Franken (Ed Weintraub), Sarah Felcher (Sarah), K.C. Townsend (Barmaid), Anne O’Donnell (Nurse), Gena Wheeler (Nurse), David Rowlands (Stuart Jackson).

“We started working on *Husbands* as a natural extension of people wanting to continue their lives in work: use what you think you’ve learned and try to find the subject and deepen it. The only thing you do learn is that you can’t go for ten cents and expect to come up with a million. You have to go for everything.”

Subtitled “A Comedy about Life, Death, and Freedom,” *Husbands* explores the question of where our responsibilities to others end and our responsibilities to ourselves begin. Following the death of a mutual friend, Archie (Peter Falk), Harry (Ben Gazzara), and Gus (Cassavetes) embark on a lost weekend in which they try to come to grips with the passing of their youth and the facts of adult life. They struggle to understand the inevitable losses and disappointments of growing up, as well as the joys and imaginative possibilities that are available to us at no matter what age.



MINNIE AND MOSKOWITZ 1971

Script and Direction: John Cassavetes;
Photography: Alric Edens, Arthur J. Ornitz,
Michael Margulies; Editing: Robert Heffernan;
Sound: Melvin M. Metcalfe, Sr.; Musical
Supervision: Bo Harwood; Costumes: Helen
Colvig; Associate Producer: Paul Donnelly;
Producer: Al Ruban; Released by Universal
Pictures. Running time: 115 minutes.

With: Gena Rowlands (Minnie Moore), Seymour
Cassel (Seymour Moskowitz), Val Avery (Zelmo
Swift), John Cassavetes (Jim), Tim Carey (Hobo
"Morgan Morgan"), Katherine Cassavetes (Mrs.
Moskowitz), Elizabeth Deering (Girl), Elsie Ames
(Florence), Lady Rowlands (Georgia Moore),
Holly Near ("Irish" Kelly), Judith Roberts (Wife),
Jack Danskin (Dick Henderson), Eleanor Zee
(Mrs. Grass), Sean Joyce (Ned), David
Rowlands (Minister).

"I'm a revolutionary — but not in the political sense.... In my opinion these people and these small emotions [in *Minnie and Moskowitz*] are the greatest political force there is. These small emotions, these characters' disagreements are of vital necessity."

Cassavetes utilized a slew of family and friends — including his mother, his wife Gena Rowlands' mother and brother, and actor Seymour Cassel's mother-in-law and wife — in this weird and wacky *homage* to the Preston Sturges and Howard Hawks screwball comedies he watched in his youth. "Comedy is more interesting to me than serious drama," he once said, "because there is more life, more possibility in it."



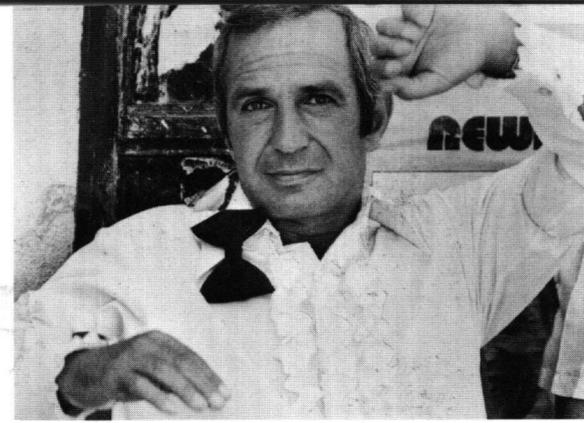
A WOMAN UNDER THE INFLUENCE 1975

Script and Direction: John Cassavetes;
Photography: Caleb Deschanel, Mitch Breit;
Editing: Tom Cornwell; Art Direction: Phedon
Papamichael; Music: Bo Harwood; Producer:
Sam Shaw (for Faces International Films, Inc.);
Released by Faces International Films, Inc.
Running time: 146 minutes.

With: Gena Rowlands (Mabel Longhetti), Peter
Falk (Nick Longhetti), Matthew Cassel (Tony
Longhetti), Matthew Laborteaux (Angelo
Longhetti), Christina Grisanti (Maria Longhetti),
Katherine Cassavetes (Mama Longhetti), Lady
Rowlands (Martha Mortensen), Fred Draper
(George Mortensen), O.G. Dunn (Garson Cross),
Mario Gallo (Harold Jensen), Eddie Shaw (Dr.
Zepp), Angelo Grisanti (Vito Grimaldi), James
Joyce (Bowman), John Finnegan (Clancy), Cliff
Carnell (Aldo), Hugh Hurd (Willie Johnson), Leon
Wagner (Billy Tidrow), Sil Words (James
Turner), Elizabeth Deering (Angela), Nick
Cassavetes (Adolph), Charles Horvath (Eddie
the Indian), Sonny Aprile (Aldo), Vince Barbi
(Gino).

"I think we're just reporters, all of us basically. And a story like [*A Woman under the Influence*] is not newsworthy really — it's not Watergate, it's not war; it's a man and woman relationship, which is always interesting to me."

The controversial sensation of the 1974 New York Film Festival, *A Woman under the Influence* won Oscar nominations for Best Director and Best Actress. Peter Falk and Gena Rowlands play a married couple as intensely in love as they are unable to express their love in terms that the other can understand. A profound and exultant journey through the tangled "influences" of married life in today's world, this is the final film in Cassavetes' marriage trilogy.



THE KILLING OF A CHINESE BOOKIE 1976, 1978*

Script and Direction: John Cassavetes;
Photography: Al Ruban (Camera Operators:
Fred Elmes, Mike Ferris); Editing: Tom
Cornwell; Production Design: Sam Shaw; Art
Direction: Phedon Papamichael; Sound/Music:
Bo Harwood; Music Arranger-Conductor:
Anthony Harris; Producer: Al Ruban (for Faces
Distribution Corporation); Released by Faces
Distribution Corporation. Running time: 135
minutes (1976); 108 minutes (1978).

With: Ben Gazzara (Cosmo Vitelli). Gangsters:
Tim Carey (Flo), Seymour Cassel (Mort Weil),
Robert Phillips (Phil), Morgan Woodward (John,
the boss), John Red Kullers (Eddie "Red"), Al
Ruban (Marty Reitz). The Family: Azizi Johari
(Rachel), Virginia Carrington (Betty, the mother).
The Entertainers: Meade Roberts (Mr.
Sophistication), Alice Friedland (Sherry), Donna
Gordon (Margo), Carol Warren (Carol), Jack
Ackerman (Musical director). Characters:
David Rowlands (Lamarr), Trisha Pelham
(Waitress), Salvatore Aprile (Sonny), Vince Barbi
(Vince), Val Avery (Blair Benoit), Soto Joe Hugh
(Chinese bookie).

"Maybe it's because we all like the child no one else likes: of all my films [*The Killing of a Chinese Bookie*] is one of the ones that interests me most.... Part of the fun was to imagine a self-contained world different from the one I live in; to move into it and live in it."

The Killing of a Chinese Bookie is a wry self-portrait of the artist as struggling repertory theater manager. Ben Gazzara plays Cosmo Vitelli, a nightclub owner and the director of its sleazy stage shows, who, against all odds, fights for his artistic and commercial independence. In debt and pressured by the Mob (which wants to foreclose on his property), Cosmo — like his creator — is doggedly dedicated to the proposition that the show must go on.



OPENING NIGHT 1978

Script and Direction: John Cassavetes; Photography: Al Ruban (Camera Operators: Frederick Elmes, Michael Ferris); Editing: Tom Cornwell; Art Direction: Brian Ryman; Sound/Music: Bo Harwood; Music Arranger-Conductor: Booker T. Jones; Executive Producer: Sam Shaw; Producer: Al Ruban; Released by Faces International Films, Inc. Running time: 144 minutes.

With: Gena Rowlands (Myrtle Gordon), John Cassavetes (Maurice Adams), Ben Gazzara (Manny Victor), Joan Blondell (Sarah Goode), Paul Stewart (David Samuels), Zohra Lampert (Dorothy Victor), Laura Johnson (Nancy Stein), John Tuell (Gus Simmons), Louise Fitch (Kelly), John Finnegan (Prop man), Katherine Cassavetes (Vivian), Lady Rowlands (Melva Drake), Peter Lampert (Maitre d'), Meade Roberts (Eddie Stein), Eleanor Zee (Sylvia Stein).

"Every film is an experience and really relates back to the way you worked on it, what kind of a pleasure it was in dealing with the people. [Opening Night] was just a war from the beginning, to see if we could do it; I found myself spending all of my energy saying, I don't care, we'll do it anyway."

Focusing on an actress at a point of crisis in her career, *Opening Night* may be viewed as a rewriting of *Husbands* from a woman's point of view. Perhaps the most demanding and difficult of all his works, this rarely screened film explores the conflict between our private needs and desires and our public roles and responsibilities.



GLORIA 1980

Script and Direction: John Cassavetes; Photography: Fred Schuler; Editing: George C. Villasenor; Art Direction: Rene D'Auriac; Music: Bill Conti; Costumes: Peggy Farrell, Emmanuel Ungaro; Paintings by Romare Bearden; Producer: Sam Shaw; Released by Columbia Pictures. Running time: 110 minutes.

With: Gena Rowlands (Gloria Swenson), John Adames (Phil Dawn), Buck Henry (Jack Dawn), Julie Carmen (Jeri Dawn), Basilio Franchina (Tony Tanzini), Lupe Garnica (Margarita Vargas), Jessica Castillo (Joan Dawn), Gary Klar (Irish cop), Michael Proscia (Uncle Joe), Ferruccio Hrvatin (Aldo), Edward Wilson (Guillermo D'Antoni), Carl Levy (Milt Cohen), Warren Selvaggi (Pat Donovan), Nathan Seril (The Baron), Vladimir Drazenovic (Tonti).

"Look. I'm not very bright. I wrote a very fast-moving, thoughtless piece about gangsters. And I don't even know any gangsters. Gloria has a wonderful actress and a very nice kid who's neither sympathetic nor unsympathetic. He's just a kid. He reminds me of me — constantly in shock, reacting to this unfathomable environment."

Gena Rowlands turns in a virtuoso, Oscar-nominated performance as the title character in this tale of a gun moll on the run from the Mob. An offbeat comedy cast in the mold of an action film, *Gloria* manages to pose a very Cassavetes-esque question: whether a personality on the run from life can slow down enough to carry any emotional baggage.



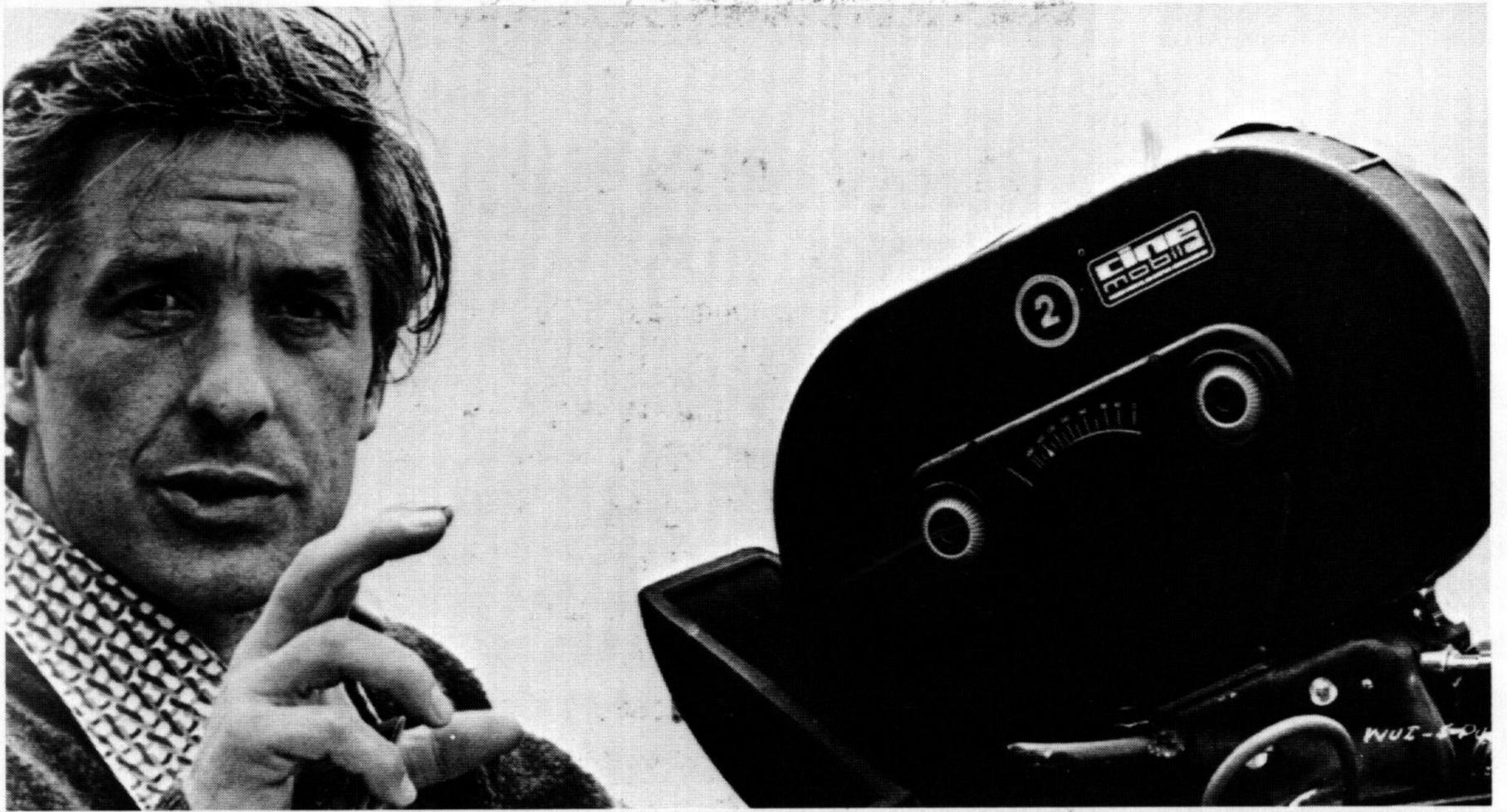
LOVE STREAMS 1984

Script and Direction: John Cassavetes (based on a play by Ted Allan); Photography: Al Ruban; Editing: George C. Villasenor; Music: Bo Harwood. Producers: Menahem Golan, Yoram Globus (for the Cannon Group); Released by MGM/UA Entertainment and the Cannon Group. Running time: 141 minutes.

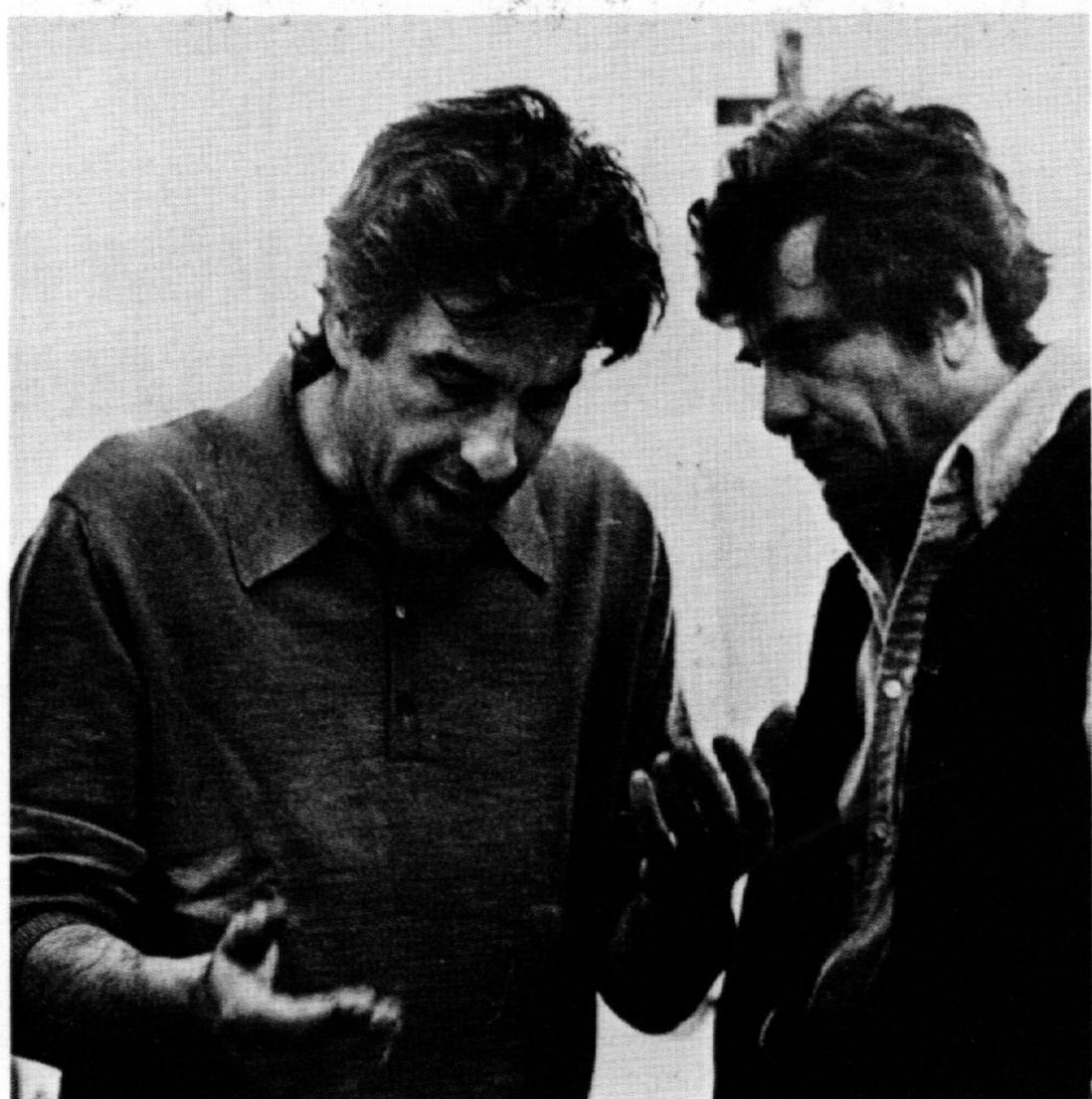
With: Gena Rowlands (Sarah Lawson), John Cassavetes (Robert Harmon), Diahanne Abbott (Susan), Seymour Cassel (Jack Lawson), Margaret Abbott (Margarita), Jakob Shaw (Albie Swanson), Risa Blewitt (Debbie Lawson), John Roselius (Ken), Michelle Conaway (Agnes Swanson), Eddy Donno (Eddy Swanson).

"That's all I'm interested in — love. And the lack of it. When it stops, and the pain that's caused by loss of things that are taken away from us that we really need. So Love Streams is just another picture in search of that, of the grail or whatever."

Begun when Cassavetes was already quite ill, this film is his fond farewell to his art. *Love Streams* is an idiosyncratic interpretation of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, with a bizarrely withdrawn Prospero figure at its center, played by the filmmaker himself. Richly self-reflective, *Love Streams* allows Cassavetes to revisit scenes, characters, and events from his previous works and to meditate on the meaning of a life lived in art.



If anyone earned the right to be called the father of American independent filmmaking, it was John Cassavetes (who died in February 1989 at age fifty-nine). Before Woody Allen, David Lynch, Jim Jarmusch, or Spike Lee, Cassavetes served as the conscience and provocateur of American cinema. His work does not fit neatly into any school or category. The eleven films he made are personal, passionate, challenging — extravaganzas of acting and emotion. Since they were rarely screened during his lifetime (usually playing only in major cities for a few weeks or less), this retrospective offers a unique opportunity to view the work of our greatest cinematic maverick.



John was very shrewd about money. He knew it was worthless. It only had one purpose — to help find a piece of film or a stage and try to capture life as he saw it.

John had a vision. He wasn't afraid, in the name of his obsession, to make a fool of himself. And if, as someone said, "Man is God in ruins," John saw the ruins, and he saw them with a clarity that the rest of us would find unbearable. But he was drawn to the God part, man's need for love, and he was always looking for a story that expressed the stupidities, weaknesses, foibles, jealousies — whatever got in the way of that need.

Extraordinary people look at something and see three things, and the average person sees only one. John could see ten, and he was able somehow to put them all together. He housed in himself under one roof all the contradictions. He was a man of action, but also a dreamer. He was teeming with feeling, emotional, yet extremely intelligent. There are revolutionaries who want to tear down and make something fresh. Then there are the old-fashioned, those who see the wisdom in the past. John saw both. He was both. A complex man — he had antennae like Proust, but he was a competitor like Vince Lombardi. He was a wild animal, but at the same time the family was central to his universe. These are times when it's easy to be pessimistic; it's hard to be optimistic. But if the tribe can produce somebody like John, there is still hope.

— Peter Falk

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Itinerary:

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| September 1989 | Walker Art Center, Minneapolis |
| September – October 1989 | Harvard Film Archive, Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts, Harvard University, Cambridge |
| October – November 1989 | Pacific Film Archive, University Art Museum, University of California, Berkeley |
| November – December 1989 | Northwest Film and Video Center, Portland, Oregon |
| January 1990 | The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston |
| January – February 1990 | The Carnegie Museum of Art, Pittsburgh |
| February 1990 | Cleveland Cinematheque, Cleveland Institute of Art, Cleveland |
| March 1990 | UCLA Film and Television Archive, Los Angeles |
| March – April 1990 | Neighborhood Film and Video Project of International House, Philadelphia |
| April – May 1990 | International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House, Rochester, New York |
| June 1990 | Wexner Center for the Visual Arts, Columbus, Ohio |

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This brochure was researched and written by Ray Carney, professor of Film and American Studies, Boston University, and author of *American Dreaming: The Films of John Cassavetes* (1985).