

Films on US television this week

David Walsh
24 March 1998

As a service to US readers, we are introducing the following regular feature—a weekly guide to some of the more interesting films on basic cable television networks. The vast majority of what appears on American television screens is not worth watching. The purpose of this listing is to direct attention to those televised films that possess some aesthetic and social value.

In the future the list will be posted each Friday and run Saturday through Friday. All times are Eastern Standard Time.

Tuesday, March 24

12:30 a.m. (AMC)- *Stage Door* (1937)-Amusing, lively comedy-drama set in a theatrical boarding house. Extraordinary cast includes Katharine Hepburn, Ginger Rogers, Lucille Ball, Eve Arden, Franklin Pangborn and Jack Carson. Directed by Gregory La Cava.

2:15 am (AMC)- *Young Mr. Lincoln* (1939)-John Ford's account of Abraham Lincoln's early years as a frontier lawyer, starring Henry Fonda.

4:00 a.m. (TNT)- *Modern Romance* (1981)-Occasionally amusing film, directed by and starring Albert Brooks as a neurotic film editor obsessed with Kathryn Harrold.

10:00 a.m. (Hist)- *The Assassination of Trotsky* (1972)-(Also 3 p.m.) Former Stalinist Joseph Losey's superficial and distorted account of the last year in the life of the great Russian revolutionary, with Richard Burton.

5:30 p.m. (Bravo)- *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie* (1972)-Described by one critic as famous Spanish director Luis Buñuel's "most completely achieved fusion of satire, comedy, fantasy and (controlled) emotion."

5:45 p.m. (AMC)- *Kiss of Death* (1947)-Perhaps best known for Richard Widmark's turn as a giggling, psychopathic killer. Victor Mature is a criminal who goes to work for the authorities. Directed by Henry Hathaway.

8:05 p.m. (TBS)- *The Horse Soldiers* (1959)-Another classic John Ford western, with John Wayne as a cavalry officer leading Union troops into Confederate territory during the Civil War.

10:30 (TCM)- *Some Like It Hot* (1959)-Marilyn Monroe, Jack Lemmon and Tony Curtis in Billy Wilder's black comedy about musicians and gangsters during Prohibition.

Wednesday, March 25

The Plutonsman (1936)-Absurd (AMC)- the view of historical fact, Cecil B. DeMille's film—which brings together Wild Bill Hickok, Calamity Jane, Buffalo Bill and Abraham Lincoln—still says something about American society and mentality.

1:00 a.m. (TCM)- *Moulin Rouge* (1952)-John Huston's engrossing account of the life of nineteenth century French painter Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec, with Jose Ferrer.

6:00 a.m. (AMC)- *The Blue Angel* (1930)-Josef von Sternberg's classic, adapted from a novel by Heinrich Mann, about a middle-aged professor (Emil Jannings) who falls for a night-club singer (Marlene Dietrich).

9:30 a.m. (TCM)- *North by Northwest* (1959)-One of Alfred Hitchcock's wondrous late 1950s color pieces, with Cary Grant as an ad executive turned into a wanted and hunted man.

12:00 p.m. (TCM)- *The 400 Blows* (1959)-François Truffaut's semi-autobiographical film about a young boy in Paris suffering the slings and arrows of everyday, lower-middle-class life. With Jean-Pierre L aud.

2:00 p.m. (TNT)-*3:10 to Yuma* (1957)-A modest, yet suspenseful western with Glenn Ford as an outlaw and Van Heflin as the farmer, in need of money, who agrees to watch him until the train arrives. Directed by Delmer Daves.

5:00 p.m. (AMC)- *Deadline U.S.A.* (1952)-Humphrey Bogart as a crusading editor, trying to keep a big city newspaper alive. Ethel Barrymore plays the paper's owner. Directed by Richard Brooks.

6:00 p.m. (TCM)- *That Man From Rio* (1964)-Jean-Paul Belmondo stars in this lightweight action comedy, mostly memorable for the performance of Fran oise Dorl  ac, Catherine Deneuve's older and more talented sister, who died in a car accident only three years later. Directed by Philippe De Broca.

8:00 p.m. (TCM)- *Citizen Kane* (1941)-Orson Welles's classic work, the tragic story of a newspaper tycoon with delusions of grandeur. Based loosely on the life of millionaire William Randolph Hearst, the film was essentially suppressed when it came out.

10:30 p.m. (AMC)- *Breaking Away* (1979)-Intelligent story of group of "townies" in Bloomington, Indiana, home of Indiana University. Directed by Peter Yates.

10:30 p.m. (TCM)- *Woman of the Year* (1942)-Katharine Hepburn as a globe-trotting political commentator and Spencer Tracy as a sports reporter, in their first film together. Entertaining film, directed by George Stevens, marred by a conformist ending.

Thursday, March 26

12:15 a.m. (AMC)- *His Girl Friday* (1940)-Marvelous film version

of Ben Hecht-Charles MacArthur's *The Front Page*, co-scripted by Hecht, with Cary Grant as scheming editor and Rosalind Russell as his star reporter trying to get married to Ralph Bellamy. Directed by Howard Hawks.

4:15 a.m. (TCM)- *The Hospital* (1971)-Exposé of the workings of a big city hospital. George C. Scott as a doctor on the verge of cracking up. Arthur Hiller directed, Paddy Chayevsky wrote the long-winded script.

5:00 a.m. (AMC)- *Lifeboat* (1944)-Alfred Hitchcock's tale of shipwreck survivors during World War II. With Tallulah Bankhead, William Bendix, and Walter Slezak as a Nazi taken aboard.

7:30 a.m. (TCM)- *The Public Enemy* (1931)-James Cagney as a Prohibition gangster in William Wellman's crude, but energetic film. Mae Clarke gets a grapefruit pushed in her face in a famous scene.

8:15 a.m. (AMC)- *A Face in the Crowd* (1957)-Andy Griffith, in his film debut, as country boy made into a huge television star. With Lee Remick, also in her debut. Directed by Elia Kazan, script by Budd Schulberg (same team as *On the Waterfront*).

10:30 a.m. (TCM)- *What Price Hollywood* (1932)-Early critical view of Hollywood, with Constance Bennett as a waitress who becomes a movie star and Lowell Sherman as an alcoholic film director. George Cukor directed.

12:00 p.m. (TNT)- *The Left-Handed Gun* (1958)-Based on a television play by Gore Vidal, Arthur Penn directed this off-beat version of the Billy the Kid legend.

5:25 p.m. (Bravo)- *Rashomon* (1950)-Well-known work by Japanese master Akira Kurosawa. In medieval Japan, four people give differing accounts of violent attack by a bandit on a nobleman. With Toshiro Mifune.

5:30 p.m. (TCM)- *Fury* (1936)-German director Fritz Lang's first US work, a powerful statement against injustice and mob hysteria. Spencer Tracy as a traveler in a small town, mistaken for a murderer and apparently lynched.

6:30 p.m. (AMC)- *Criss Cross* (1949)-Wonderful *film noir* tale of betrayal, with Burt Lancaster as the fall-guy, Yvonne DeCarlo as the object of his desire and Dan Duryea as a gangster. Directed by Robert Siodmak.

11:00 p.m. (Bravo)- *Riff Raff* (1991)-A Ken Loach film. The trials and tribulations of building workers in London, with Robert Carlyle (of *Full Monty*). Some moving moments and performances.

Friday, March 27

3:45 a.m. (AMC)- *Cat People* (1942)-The first of the Val Lewton-produced horror films, directed with considerable elegance by Jacques Tourneur. Extraordinary moments of psychological terror.

10:00 a.m. (TCM)- *Bachelor Mother* (1939)-Ginger Rogers plays a sales clerk who discovers an abandoned baby and is assumed to be its mother. David Niven plays the storeowner's son in this fairly sharp-eyed work, directed by Garson Kanin.

12:00 p.m. (TCM)- *Meet John Doe* (1941)-Gary Cooper as John Doe, the barefoot Everyman, suspicious of ideas and doctrines, in Frank Capra's populist fable.

6:00 p.m. (AMC)- *Destry Rides Again* (1939)-James Stewart and Marlene Dietrich have memorable moments in this western comedy, directed by George Marshall. Dietrich sings the classic *See What the*

Boys in the Back Room Will Have.

6:00 p.m. (TCM)- *The Stranger* (1946)-Orson Welles thriller in which the director plays a Nazi war criminal living in a sedate Connecticut town. With Edward G. Robinson.

8:00 p.m. (TCM)- *La Strada* (1954)-Federico Fellini directed this work about a brutal carnival strongman (Anthony Quinn), his long-suffering girl-friend (Giuletta Masina) and a kindhearted acrobat (Richard Basehart).

Saturday, March 28

12:00 a.m. (TCM)- *Amarcord* (1974)-Fellini's semi-autobiographical work about a small town in Italy under Mussolini. An extraordinary film.

2:00 a.m. (AMC)- *The Spiral Staircase* (1946)-Taut thriller with Dorothy McGuire as a deaf-mute servant employed in a household in 1906 New England. Directed by Robert Siodmak.

2:15 a.m. (TCM)- *Seven Samurai* (1954)-Classic Kurosawa film about a village in medieval Japan that hires samurai warriors to defend them against bandits.

7:00 a.m. (A&E)- *The Fallen Idol* (1948)-A young boy idolizes a household servant accused of killing his wife in this valuable film by Carol Reed, with Ralph Richardson as the butler. From a story by Graham Greene.

8:00 a.m. (Comedy)- *Horse Feathers* (1932)-Marx Brothers madness, directed by Norman McLeod. "Groucho: You're a disgrace to the family name of Wagstaff, if such a thing is possible."

5 p.m. (Bravo)- *Bonjour Tristesse* (1958)-A critical and disturbing look at postwar morals and manners, with a memorable performance by Jean Seberg as a selfish teenager determined to break up her playboy father's romance. Directed by Otto Preminger.

8 p.m. (Hist)- *War and Peace* (1956)-An intelligent, if not inspired, version of Tolstoy's masterwork about Russian society, directed by King Vidor. With Audrey Hepburn, Henry Fonda and Mel Ferrer.

8 p.m. (VH1)- *Easy Rider* (1969)-Dennis Hopper's film about drugs, motorcycles and the search for the "real America." Does it stand up at all?

9 p.m. (Bravo)- *Melvin and Howard* (1980)-Jonathan Demme's amusing look at the story of Melvin Dummar, the man who claimed to be the beneficiary of Howard Hughes's will. Excellent performance by the underrated Paul LeMat as Dummar.



To contact the WSWS and the Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact