

Some interesting films on US television, 25 April - 1 May 1998

David Walsh
25 April 1998

Asterisk indicates a film of exceptional interest

Saturday, April 25

*6:30 a.m. (AMC)— *The Palm Beach Story* (1942)—Preston Sturges's delirious film about a wife (Claudette Colbert) who leaves her husband (Joel McCrea) because of their financial woes. She heads for Palm Beach, where millionaires congregate. With Rudy Vallee, Mary Astor.

9:15 a.m. (AMC)— *Arch of Triumph* (1948)—Charles Boyer and Ingrid Bergman falling for each other in wartime France, from the novel by Erich Maria Remarque. Directed by the stolid Lewis Milestone.

11:00 a.m. (TCM)— *Shall We Dance* (1937)—A Fred Astaire-Ginger Rogers film, directed by Mark Sandrich. A tedious story line, but graced by such Gershwin melodies as "Let's Call the Whole Thing Off," "They Can't Take That Away from Me," and "They All Laughed."

2:30 p.m. (AMC)— *The Spirit of St. Louis* (1957)—James Stewart, a little long in the tooth, plays Charles Lindbergh in this Billy Wilder film about the first trans-Atlantic flight in 1927.

3:00 p.m. (TCM)—*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.

*6:30 p.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.

8:00 p.m. (TCM)— *The Spy Who Came in From the Cold* (1965)—Cold War melodrama of double- and triple-agents, based on the John Le Carré novel, with Richard Burton as the embittered British agent and Oskar Werner. Directed by Martin Ritt.

Sunday, April 26

12:35 a.m. (TBS)— *Poison Ivy* (1992)—A not very subtle study of the impact teenage Drew Barrymore has on a respectable middle class family. With Tom Skerritt and Diane Ladd.

*9:00 a.m. (TCM)— *The Big Heat* (1953)—Fritz Lang film about a policeman (Glenn Ford) who sets out to break up a crime ring and pays a heavy price. Lee Marvin is chilling as a tough guy, Gloria Graham is excellent as a mob girl who turns good.

12:00 p.m. (TCM)— *Northwest Passage* (1940)—King Vidor's vivid

film about Rogers' Rangers, an elite corps opening up territory in pre-Revolutionary America. Spencer Tracy is Rogers, with Robert Young and Walter Brennan.

2:00 p.m. (AMC)— *Love is a Many-Splendored Thing* (1955)—Melodrama set in Hong Kong during the Korean War, with Jennifer Jones as a Eurasian doctor who falls for William Holden. Directed by Henry King.

2:00 p.m. (USA)— *Wall Street* (1987)—Oliver Stone directed this film about Wall Street sharks and their comeuppance with his usual subtlety and restraint. With Charlie Sheen, Martin Sheen and Michael Douglas.

*2:15 p.m. (TCM)— *The Shop Around the Corner* (1940)—James Stewart and Margaret Sullavan are coworkers who, unbeknownst to themselves, have entered into a romance through letters. Marvelous Ernst Lubitsch film, occasionally precious, but deeply felt.

*4:15 p.m. (TCM)— *The Merry Widow* (1934)—Ernst Lubitsch directed this version of the Franz Lehar operetta. Described by one critic as "the last musical of a certain spirit and style to be made on this planet."

4:30 p.m. (USA)— *The Bridge on the River Kwai* (1957)—Tedious David Lean epic about British soldiers, prisoners of the Japanese, who are forced to build a bridge. Alec Guinness is their obsessive commander. (Also Monday, 12:30 p.m.)

5:45 p.m. (AMC)— *No Highway in the Sky* (1951)—James Stewart gives a remarkable performance as an aviation engineer who tries to persuade the authorities that planes should be grounded after a given time. With Marlene Dietrich.

Monday, April 27

12:00 p.m. (TNT)— *The Dirty Dozen* (1967)—Twelve convicts, serving life sentences, are recruited for a suicidal commando raid in Robert Aldrich's film.

11:00 p.m. (AMC)— *Champion* (1949)—Effective boxing drama, with Kirk Douglas as selfish, ambitious fighter determined to get to the top and stay there. Paul Stewart is his friend whom he betrays. Directed by Mark Robson.

Tuesday, April 28

*1:00 a.m. (TBS)— *The Searchers* (1956)—John Ford classic. John Wayne and Jeffrey Hunter search for Wayne's niece, taken by Indians. Natalie Wood plays the girl. An essential American film.

2:45 a.m. (AMC)— *Dead End* (1937)—The first appearance of the Dead

End Kids (Huntz Hall, Leo Gorcey et al) in a film about the Lower East Side slums of New York. Scripted by Lillian Hellman, directed by William Wyler.

7:45 a.m. (AMC)— *The Old Dark House* (1932)—A group of travelers comes together in a sinister house. Cast includes Charles Laughton, Boris Karloff and Melvyn Douglas. Directed by James Whale.

10:45 a.m. (AMC)— *A Bill of Divorcement* (1932)—Early George Cukor film about a man released from a mental institution who meets his strong-willed daughter. Katharine Hepburn's film debut.

12:00 p.m. (AMC)— *The Lodger* (1944)—John Brahm's atmospheric retelling of the Jack the Ripper story, with Merle Oberon and George Sanders, among others.

12:00 p.m. (TCM)— *The Cincinnati Kid* (1965)—Steve McQueen starred in Norman Jewison's film about card sharks in New Orleans. Jewison replaced Sam Peckinpah as director. With Edward G. Robinson, Karl Malden and Joan Blondell.

12:00 p.m. (TNT)— *The Drowning Pool* (1975)—Paul Newman, as private detective Harper, becomes entangled in a murder case. Joanne Woodward is his ex-wife. Based on the Ross McDonald novels. Directed by Stuart Rosenberg.

11:00 p.m. (AMC)— *The Crimson Pirate* (1952)—A swashbuckling adventure, with Burt Lancaster at his most athletic. The German emigré Robert Siodmak directed.

Wednesday, April 29

*2:35 a.m. (TBS)— *Decision at Sundown* (1957)—One of the series of modest westerns starring Randolph Scott, directed by Budd Boetticher, produced by Harry Joe Brown, highly regarded by critics. Boetticher has been described as "one of the most fascinating unrecognized talents in the American cinema."

3:00 a.m. (AMC)— *Unfaithfully Yours* (1948)—Not Preston Sturges at his best, but still amusing. Rex Harrison is a symphony conductor convinced of his wife's (Linda Darnell's) infidelity.

11:00 a.m. (AMC)— *Days of Wine and Roses* (1962)—Blake Edwards's somber film about alcoholic Jack Lemmon who drags Lee Remick into his orbit.

*1:00 p.m. (TBS)— *Buchanan Rides Alone* (1958)—Another of the Budd Boetticher-Randolph Scott-Harry Joe Brown westerns. This time Scott battles a corrupt family in a town on the Mexican border.

*2:30 p.m. (AMC)— *The Major and the Minor* (1942)—Remarkable film by Billy Wilder, with Ginger Rogers, posing as a 12 year old to save train fare, becoming involved with Ray Milland.

*4:15 p.m. (AMC)— *Springfield Rifle* (1952)—Andre de Toth's film about a Union officer (Gary Cooper) who goes undercover to expose a Confederate horse stealing ring. Dark and spare, with an exemplary performance by Paul Kelly as the chief villain.

7:45 p.m. (AMC)— *The Getaway* (1972)—Steve McQueen as a convict who gets out of jail and immediately takes part in a bank robbery. With Ali McGraw. Directed by Sam Peckinpah, from the novel by Jim Thompson.

Thursday, April 30

1:45 a.m. (TBS)— *The Big Red One* (1980)—Sam Fuller's war film, semi-autobiographical, about an infantry squadron doing battle in World

War II. A vivid account. With Lee Marvin.

*2:00 a.m. (AMC)— *Double Indemnity* (1944)—Billy Wilder's marvelous and sinister version of the James M. Cain novel about a wife (Barbara Stanwyck) who connives with an insurance agent (Fred MacMurray) to murder her husband. Devastating picture of greed and amorality. Scripted by Raymond Chandler.

8:00 a.m. (TCM)— *Three Godfathers* (1948)—John Ford's version of the story of the Three Magi, with three lowlifes coming upon and taking care of an infant whose mother dies in the desert. John Wayne, Pedro Armendariz and Harry Carey Jr.

*12:00 p.m. (TCM)— *She Wore a Yellow Ribbon* (1949)—The second part of John Ford's cavalry trilogy, with John Wayne as an officer about to retire, drawn into campaign against a group of Indians. With Joanne Dru, Ben Johnson, Victor McLagen.

8:00 p.m. (AMC)— *Julia* (1977)—Vanesse Redgrave won an Oscar for her performance as the antifascist Julia based on Lillian Hellman's autobiographical work, *Pentimento*. With Jane Fonda, Jason Robards; directed by Fred Zinnemann.

Friday, May 1

12:30 a.m. (TCM)— *Father's Little Dividend* (1951)—Amusing follow-up to *Father of the Bride*, with Spencer Tracy as the father and Elizabeth Taylor as the bride. Vincente Minnelli directed.

10:00 a.m. (History)— *A Walk in the Sun* (1945)—Earnest Lewis Milestone directed, from a screenplay by earnest Robert Rossen, this study of American soldiers attacking a Nazi entrenchment in Italy. (Also, 3:00 p.m.)

2:00 p.m. (AMC)— *You Can't Take It with You* (1938)—Frank Capra's version of the George S. Kaufman-Moss Hart comedy. Starring James Stewart and Jean Arthur.

2:00 p.m. (TNT)— *Gunman's Walk* (1958)—Phil Karlson directed this western. Van Heflin wants his sons, Tab Hunter and James Darren, to go straight, but circumstances and personalities intervene.

4:00 p.m. (SCI)— *The Invisible Man* (1933)—Claude Rains made his film debut as the mad scientist who discovers a method of being invisible and terrorizes a British village. James Whale directed this version of the H.G. Wells story.

6:00 p.m. (TCM)— *A Day at the Races* (1937)—Marx Brothers foolishness. Set in a sanatorium where rich and hypochondriacal Margaret Dumont is the most prominent patient.

8:00 p.m. (TCM)— *National Velvet* (1944)—Elizabeth Taylor is dazzling as teenager determined to enter her beloved horse in the Grand National Steeplechase. With Anne Revere, Donald Crisp and Mickey Rooney; directed by Clarence Brown.

9:00 p.m. (AMC)— *Friendly Persuasion* (1956)—William Wyler directed this film about a family of Quakers and, therefore, pacifists, trying to survive with dignity during the Civil War. With Gary Cooper, Dorothy McGuire and Anthony Perkins.

10:25 p.m. (TBS)— *Spaceballs* (1987)—Mel Brooks' send-up of the Star Wars saga. Rick Moranis is Dark Helmet and Daphne Zuniga is Princess Vespa. Other characters include Pizza the Hut.



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