

Some interesting films on US television, 11-17 April 1998

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11 April 1998

Asterisk indicates a film of exceptional interest

Saturday, April 11

7:45 a.m. (TCM)—*The Enchanted Cottage* (1945)—Robert Young, as a disfigured man, and Dorothy McGuire, as an unattractive woman, who grew beautiful in an enchanted locale. Directed by John Cromwell.

1:00 p.m. (TNT)—*Ben-Hur* (1959)—Turgid retelling of Lew Wallace's 'epic.' Charlton Heston stars as the Jew Ben-Hur and Stephen Boyd as Messala, who remains loyal to Rome. Famous for its chariot-race. Directed by William Wyler.

2:15 p.m. (Bravo) - *Charlie Bubbles* (1968)—British actor Albert Finney's directing debut, about a married and unhappy writer who begins an affair with Liza Minnelli, as his secretary. It has moving moments. (Also Saturday, 11:10 p.m.; Sunday, 3:10 a.m.; Wednesday, 8:00 p.m.; Thursday, 2:00 a.m. and 12:30 p.m.)

7:15 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.

11:15 p.m. (TCM)—*Avanti!* (1972)—One of Billy Wilder's later films, about an American millionaire (Jack Lemmon) who travels to Italy to claim his dead father's body and falls for the latter's mistress.

Sunday, April 12

10:35 a.m. (TBS)—*Rain Man* (1988)—Barry Levinson's anti-Reaganite work, with Dustin Hoffman as an autistic man and Tom Cruise, a 1980s Babbitt, as his yuppie hustler brother.

12:00 p.m. (A&E)—*The Nun's Story* (1959)—Audrey Hepburn is a nun undergoing a crisis in Fred Zinnemann's stolid film. She serves in the Belgian Congo and later leaves the convent.

6:00 p.m. (TCM)—*Ninotchka* (1939)—Greta Garbo is an unlikely Soviet official in Paris, who gets seduced by Melvyn Douglas and the pleasures of capitalism, in Ernst Lubitsch's comedy.

9:45 p.m. (AMC)—*The Song of Bernadette* (1943)—Jennifer Jones is a nineteenth century French girl who sees visions and stirs up a storm in her village, in Henry King's version of the Franz Werfel novel.

Monday, April 13

1:00 a.m. (AMC)—*I Confess* (1953)—Alfred Hitchcock's tale of priest, played by Montgomery Clift, who hears a confession of a murder and later becomes accused of the crime. Filmed in Quebec.

6:30 a.m. (AMC)—*Ladies of Leisure* (1930)—Remarkably frank film, early Frank Capra, about the relationship between the poor and somewhat loose Barbara Stanwyck, who gives a luminous performance, and Ralph Graves, an artist and a playboy.

12:00 p.m. (TCM)—*Lady for a Day* (1933)—Frank Capra directed this story about an apple vendor transformed into a society lady by a kindhearted hoodlum. With May Robson and Warren Williams.

2:00 p.m. (TCM)—*Woman of the Year* (1942)—Katharine Hepburn as a globetrotting political commentator and Spencer Tracy as a sports reporter, in their first film together. Entertaining work, directed by George Stevens, marred by a conformist ending.

*4:15 p.m. (AMC)—*Out of the Past* (1947)—"A civilized treatment of an annihilating melodrama," in one critic's words, Jacques Tourneur's elegant *film noir* is the story of Robert Mitchum, a decent man, who gets mixed up with the wrong girl (Jane Greer) and the wrong guy (Kirk Douglas).

Tuesday, April 14

2:30 a.m. (AMC)—*The Great McGinty* (1940)—Preston Sturges fable about a derelict (Brian Donlevy) who, with the help of the political machine, makes it to the governor's mansion and then tries to turn honest, with catastrophic consequences.

6:00 a.m. (AMC)—*The Bank Dick* (1940)—Eddie Cline directed, but the mastermind here is W.C. Fields, who wrote the screenplay and starred. Fields is a lowlife who gets a job as a bank guard; Grady Sutton is his prospective son-in-law, Franklin Pangborn a put-upon bank inspector.

11:30 a.m. (TCM)—*Four Wives* (1939)—A Michael Curtiz film, sequel to *Four Daughters*, about a quartet of women in small-town America. Sentimental, but well directed and acted. With Claude Rains, John Garfield and the Lane sisters (Priscilla, Rosemary and Lola).

2:00 p.m. (TNT)—*Gun Fury* (1953)—Rock Hudson goes after the villains (including Neville Brand and Lee Marvin) who stole his fiancée (Donna Reed) in this fast-paced Raoul Walsh Western.

6:30 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.

8:15 p.m. (AMC) - *Breaking Away* (1979)—Intelligent story of group of "townies" in Bloomington, Indiana, home of Indiana University. Directed by Peter Yates.

11:00 p.m. (AMC)—*Deadline USA* (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.

Wednesday, April 15

12:00 p.m. (Bravo)— *Burnt by the Sun* (1994)—Nikita Mikhalkov's film, in which he plays the leading role, about a Soviet leader in 1936 brought face to face with the realities of Stalinism.

12:00 p.m. (TNT)— *Once Upon a Time in the West* (1969)—Sergio Leone's drawn-out classic anti-Western, with Claudia Cardinale as the owner of land made valuable by the impending arrival of the railroad. Henry Fonda is a cold-blooded killer. With Jason Robards and Charles Bronson. Memorable score by Ennio Morricone.

8:00 p.m. (TCM)— *Manpower* (1941)—Lesser Raoul Walsh, but memorable for performances of Edward G. Robinson, Marlene Dietrich and George Raft.

*8:15 p.m. (AMC)— *Strangers on a Train* (1951)—Hitchcock classic, with Farley Granger as a callow tennis player and Robert Walker as a psychopath, based on Patricia Highsmith novel, coscripted by Raymond Chandler.

10:00 p.m. (TCM)— *Gilda* (1946)—Rita Hayworth is spectacular (singing "Put the Blame on Mame") in Charles Vidor's drama about a love triangle in postwar South America. George Macready is a shady casino owner, Hayworth his restless wife and Glenn Ford a new employee.

Thursday, April 16

1:45 a.m. (TCM)— *Macao* (1952)—Not one of Josef Von Sternberg's finer efforts, but still worth watching. With Robert Mitchum as an adventurer and Jane Russell a singer, acting out a melodrama in the Portuguese enclave off the coast of China.

Charles Chaplin was born on April 16, 1889. AMC celebrates the occasion.

*6:30 a.m. (AMC)— *The Circus* (1928)—Underrated film, with Chaplin accidentally joining a circus troupe and falling in love with the bareback rider.

*8:00 a.m. (AMC)— *City Lights* (1931)—Chaplin's tramp in love with a blind flower girl. Sentimental, but unforgettable.

*9:30 a.m. (AMC)— *Limelight* (1952)—Chaplin is a washed-up music hall comic who saves Claire Bloom from suicide in this exquisitely painful look at the art of performance. Chaplin and Buster Keaton, two immortals, team up in one memorable scene.

*12:00 p.m. (AMC)— *Modern Times* (1936)—Chaplin on the machine age. Consistently funny and perceptive, with Paulette Goddard. Chaplin's last silent film.

*1:30 p.m. (AMC)— *The Great Dictator* (1940)—Chaplin plays the twin role of a Jewish barber and Adenoid Hynkel of Tomania, in this extraordinary attack, which also manages to be very funny, on Hitler and Nazism. Jack Oakie is Benzino Napaloni of Bacteria.

*3:45 p.m. (AMC)— *Monsieur Verdoux* (1947)—Chaplin plays a Parisian Bluebeard who murders women for their money. His famous courtroom speech, in which he describes himself as a small fry among mass murderers, did not endear him with US authorities. With the unlikely Martha Raye.

6:30 p.m. (AMC)— *The Plainsman* (1936)—Absurd from the point of

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.

8:00 p.m. (TNT)— *This Boy's Life* (1993)—Based on the novel by Tobias Wolff, about a young boy, his mother and his volatile stepfather, set in remote Washington state in the 1950s. With Robert DeNiro, Leonardo DiCaprio and Ellen Barkin. (Also, Friday, 12:00 p.m.)

8:30 p.m. (AMC)— *Battle Cry* (1955)—Raoul Walsh World War II melodrama, about the lives and loves of a group of Marines getting ready for battle, with Van Heflin, Aldo Ray, Tab Hunter and Dorothy Malone.

*9:00 p.m. (TCM)— *The Gold Rush* (1925)—Chaplin classic, with the famous tramp doing battle in the Yukon with the elements, dancehall girls, his burly prospecting partner, a shoe.

Friday, April 17

1:00 a.m. (AMC)— *Seminole* (1953)—Modest film, about an army officer, Rock Hudson, doing his best to help an Indian tribe preserve itself against the advances and intrusions of the white man's civilization.

2:30 a.m. (AMC)— *Detective Story* (1951)—William Wyler's somewhat dated film about the activities inside a New York City police station. Kirk Douglas is a bitter cop, Eleanor Parker his wife, William Bendix another detective. The good cast also includes Horace McMahon, Lee Grant and Joseph Wiseman.

4:15 a.m. (AMC)— *Arise My Love* (1940)—Odd film with Claudette Colbert rescuing Ray Milland from a Spanish firing squad as World War II begins. Billy Wilder and Charles Brackett wrote the script, Mitchell Leisen directed.

1:30 p.m. (Bravo)— *Othello* (1952)—Beautiful, terrifying version of Shakespeare's work, directed by and starring Orson Welles. Operating on a shoe-string budget, Welles reportedly filmed one sequence in a bathhouse because he had no money for costumes. Micheal MacLiammoir is a chilling Iago.

4:30 p.m. (AMC)— *Has Anybody Seen My Gal?* (1952)—Charles Coburn is marvelous in Douglas Sirk's film about a millionaire in 1920s small-town America planning to leave his money to the family of a woman who once rejected his marriage proposal.

8:00 p.m. (Bravo)— *Ruby in Paradise* (1993)—A film about a young woman who leaves her Tennessee home and tries to make her way in Panama City, Florida. Occasionally interesting, with a fine performance by Ashley Judd. Victor Nunez directed.

8:00 p.m. (TCM)— *Stalag 17* (1953)—Billy Wilder's World War II prison-camp film, with William Holden as a cynical GI accused of being a collaborator with the Germans who then uncovers the real traitors.



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