

Some interesting films on US television, 18-24 April, 1998

David Walsh
18 April 1998

Asterisk indicates a film of exceptional interest

Saturday, April 18

5:00 a.m. (AMC)— *Leave Her to Heaven* (1945)—Extraordinary melodrama by John Stahl, about a woman (Gene Tierney) consumed by jealousy and possessiveness, to the point of madness and murder. With Cornel Wilde and Vincent Price.

5:30 a.m. (TCM)— *Purple Rose of Cairo* (1985)—Mia Farrow is a Depression-era movie fan whose idol (Jeff Daniels) walks off the screen and into her life, in this work directed by Woody Allen.

5:00 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.

10:00 p.m. (History)— *Merrill's Marauders* (1962)—It's questionable how much this has to do with real history, but engrossing war film directed by Samuel Fuller. Jeff Chandler is the commander of US soldiers fighting the Japanese in Burmese jungle. (Also, Sunday, 2:00 a.m.)

Sunday, April 19

12:30 a.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.

12:40 a.m. (TBS)— *The Longest Yard* (1974)—A prison comedy-drama, with Burt Reynolds, as a former football player, who directs a team against warden Eddie Albert's squad. Directed by Robert Aldrich.

4:45 a.m. (TCM)— *Freaks* (1932)—Tod Browning's astonishing film, really a revenge drama, about a traveling sideshow and its performers. Once described as the most compassionate film ever made. With Olga Baclanova and Wallace Ford.

*6:30 a.m. (AMC)— *The Long Voyage Home* (1940)—Sentimental, murky, but enormously moving account of sailors at sea, adapted by screenwriter Dudley Nichols from four short plays by Eugene O'Neill. John Ford was the director, Gregg Toland (who shot *Citizen Kane* the following year) the cinematographer.

9:00 a.m. (TCM)— *Lady in the Lake* (1946)—Robert Montgomery directed himself as Raymond Chandler's private detective Philip Marlowe. The camera, as a novelty, takes the first-person (Montgomery's) point of view.

Take 12,000 Out to the Ball (TCM) (1948)—film made by famed musical extravaganza director Busby Berkeley. A relatively restrained work about a baseball team, with Frank Sinatra and Gene Kelly as its stars, taken over by Esther Williams.

*2:00 p.m. (Family)— *Rio Bravo* (1959)—Classic Howard Hawks western, with John Wayne as a sheriff, Angie Dickinson as a dance hall girl, Dean Martin as a drunk and singer Ricky Nelson joining forces to thwart a jailbreak and other crimes. Much first-rate dialogue by Leigh Brackett and Jules Furthman.

8:00 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.

8:05 p.m. (AMC)— *An Affair to Remember* (1957)—Leo McCarey directed this remake of his own 1939 *Love Affair* (Irene Dunne and Charles Boyer), this time with Cary Grant and Deborah Kerr. A shipboard romance has unexpected complications on land. Sentimental, but it has something.

Monday, April 20

12:35 a.m. (AMC)— *The Best Years of Our Lives* (1946)—William Wyler's occasionally affecting drama about exservicemen in postwar America. With Fredric March, Dana Andrews, Myrna Loy, Virginia Mayo and Teresa Wright.

*1:05 a.m. (TBS)— *The Birds* (1963)—Alfred Hitchcock's terrifying drama about swarms of birds attacking humans in a small northern California town. With Rod Taylor, Tippi Hedren and Jessica Tandy.

*3:35 a.m. (AMC)— *Young Mr. Lincoln* (1939)—John Ford's account of Abraham Lincoln's early years as a frontier lawyer, starring Henry Fonda.

*7:15 a.m. (TCM)— *The Woman in the Window* (1945)—Top-notch Fritz Lang melodrama, with Edward G. Robinson as a respectable married man who becomes involved with the model (Joan Bennett) of a painting he sees in a window and a lowlife, Dan Duryea.

11:00 a.m. (Bravo)— *Germinale* (1993)—(Also, Monday, 8:00 p.m.; Tuesday, 1:35 a.m.) Claude Berri's expensive, turgid adaptation of the famous Zola novel (1884), about French coal miners, their struggles and personal dramas. With Gerard Depardieu, Miou-Miou, Laurent Terzieff and many others.

3:45 p.m. (Bravo)— *America, America* (1963)—Elia Kazan's account of the immigrant experience, based on his uncle's emigration in the late nineteenth century. (Also, Tuesday, 11:00 a.m.)

8:00 p.m. (TCM)— *The Dawn Patrol* (1938)—Remake of Howard Hawks 1930 film about World War I flyers. Officer Basil Rathbone is forced by circumstances to send up novices Errol Flynn and David Niven. Edmund Goulding directed.

10:00 p.m. (AMC)— *The Razor's Edge* (1946)—An overlong some embarrassingly silly moments, but also some extraordinarily believable ones. With Tyrone Power, looking for the meaning of life, Gene Tierney, Anne Baxter. Directed by Edmund Goulding, from the novel by Somerset Maugham.

10:00 p.m. (TCM)— *Dark Victory* (1939)—Bette Davis is a socialite who learns she has a terminal illness. George Brent is her brain surgeon husband. Directed by Edmund Goulding.

Tuesday, April 21

1:45 a.m. (TCM)— *Virginia City* (1940)—Intriguing Civil War drama, the follow-up to *Dodge City*, with Miriam Hopkins as a Confederate spy posing as a dance hall girl, Errol Flynn, Randolph Scott.

6:00 a.m. (AMC)— *Midnight* (1939)—Very clever film, directed by Michell Leisen and written by Billy Wilder and Charles Brackett, about penniless Claudette Colbert pretending to be an aristocrat in Paris. Memorable scene with Don Ameche, a taxi driver.

9:15 a.m. (AMC)— *Union Pacific* (1939)—Cecil B. DeMille's epic about railroad building, with Barbara Stanwyck, Joel McCrea, Robert Preston and many others.

*2:30 p.m. (TNT)— *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.”

4:15 p.m. (AMC)— *Brute Force* (1947)—Jules Dassin's prison drama with Burt Lancaster, Charles Bickford, Yvonne DeCarlo and Hume Cronyn as brutal prison official. Scripted by Richard Brooks.

8:00 p.m. (AMC)— *Magnificent Obsession* (1954)—The first, and perhaps least ironic, of Douglas Sirk's extraordinary 1950s melodramas, starring Jane Wyman and Rock Hudson.

8:00 p.m. (Fox)— *To Die For* (1995)—Gus Van Sant's uneven film, starring Nicole Kidman and Matt Dillon, loosely based on the case in New Hampshire in which a teacher allegedly seduced a student and egged him on to shoot her husband. Van Sant turns it into an examination of the American fascination with fame and television. It has a few moments.

11:35 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.

Wednesday, April 22

6:30 a.m. (AMC)— *Berlin Express* (1948)—Spy drama set in postwar Germany, as agents from a number of countries attempt to rescue politician kidnapped by Nazi underground. With Robert Ryan, Merle Oberon and Paul Lukas. Directed by Jacques Tourneur.

*3:00 p.m. (AMC)— *Ministry of Fear* (1944)—Suspenseful, complicated Fritz Lang wartime thriller set in London. With Ray Milland trying to unravel an espionage plot. Dan Duryea also stars.

4:00 p.m. (TCM)— *Annie Hall* (1977)—Woody Allen's first serious effort, a semi-autobiographical film about his life and loves, likes and dislikes. Diane Keaton memorably plays his girlfriend.

Thursday, April 23

2:45 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.

4:30 a.m. (AMC)— *Ride the Pink Horse* (1947)—Robert Montgomery directed himself as a man coming to a New Mexico town to blackmail a gangster (Fred Clark) during a fiesta. Interesting *film noir* type, with Wanda Hendrix and Thomas Gomez.

9:00 a.m. (AMC)— *The Naked Dawn* (1955)—Poverty Row director, German-born Edgar Ulmer made this Mexican crime drama, with Arthur Kennedy and Eugene Iglesias.

11:00 a.m. (Bravo)— *Richard III* (1955)—Laurence Olivier's version of one of Shakespeare's greatest plays. Whether one approves of Olivier's interpretation or not, the film should be seen.

1:45 p.m. (TCM)— *Fort Apache* (1948)—One of John Ford's classic cavalry trilogy. Henry Fonda is an unbending officer who can't get along with his own men, or the neighboring Apaches. With John Wayne and Shirley Temple.

3:00 p.m. (Bravo)— *Macbeth* (1971)—Roman Polanski directed this version of Shakespeare's play about an ambitious minor Scottish nobleman, and his even more ambitious wife. With Jon Finch and Francesca Annis.

5:25 p.m. (Bravo)— *Othello* (1952)—Beautiful, terrifying version of Shakespeare's work, directed by and starring Orson Welles. Operating on a shoestring budget, Welles reportedly filmed one sequence in a bathhouse because he had no money for costumes. Micheal MacLiammoir is a chilling Iago.

8:00 p.m. (AMC)— *Stagecoach* (1939)—Famed western, directed by John Ford, about a group of disparate passengers thrown together on the same eventful journey. Starring John Wayne, Claire Trevor, Thomas Mitchell, John Carradine. Dudley Nichols wrote the script.

8:00 p.m. (TCM)— *Julius Caesar* (1953)—Joseph L. Mankiewicz's intelligently filmed version of Shakespeare's tragedy. James Mason as Brutus, John Gielgud as Cassius, Louis Calhern as Caesar and Marlon Brando as Antony.

10:15 p.m. (TCM)— *Romeo and Juliet* (1968)—Franco Zeffirelli's lush version of the famous love tragedy. Overwrought and simplified, but entertaining. With 17-year-old Leonard Whiting and 15-year-old Olivia Hussey in the leading roles.

11:00 p.m. (Bravo)— *Family Plot* (1976)—Late and mild-mannered Alfred Hitchcock, but still worth watching. Barbara Harris is a fake medium who unwittingly gets involved in a murder plot. William Devane is the mastermind. (Also, Friday, 1:30 p.m.)

Friday, April 24

12:45 a.m. (TCM)— *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1935)—Famed German theater director Max Reinhardt oversaw this oddity, with James Cagney as Bottom and Mickey Rooney as Puck in Shakespeare's magical play.

3:15 a.m. (TCM)— *Romeo and Juliet* (1936)—Norma Shearer and Leslie Howard were a good deal too old for their starring roles, but they perform admirably, in George Cukor's version of the tragedy.

4:00 a.m. (AMC)— *Cluny Brown* (1946)—Ernst Lubitsch's comedy about the relationship between Jennifer Jones, an orphan, and Charles Boyer, a Czech refugee and professor, in England before the Second World War. Anything by Lubitsch should be seen.

6:00 a.m. (AMC)— *Once More, My Darling* (1949)—Robert

Montgomery directed himself in this story about a middle-aged movie star and the young girl (Ann Blyth) infatuated with him.

4:00 p.m. (AMC)— *Spellbound* (1945)—Psychiatrist Ingrid Bergman attempts to unravel patient Gregory Peck's dilemmas. Has he committed a murder? Alfred Hitchcock directed.

5:30 p.m. (TCM)— *Some Came Running* (1958)—Remarkable melodrama, directed by Vincente Minnelli, about disillusionment in a small town after World War II; more generally, this is an extraordinary film about disillusionment with postwar America. With Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Shirley MacLaine, Martha Hyer.

6:30 p.m. (AMC)— *The Heiress* (1949)—William Wyler directed this screen version of the stage play based on Henry James's Washington Square. Some memorable moments, with Olivia de Haviland as the poor, neglected heroine, Ralph Richardson as her monstrous father, and Montgomery Clift as her fortune-hunting suitor. Score by Aaron Copland.

9:30 p.m. (TCM)— *The Apartment* (1960)—Billy Wilder's cynical-sentimental comedy-drama about a corporate lackey (Jack Lemmon) who tries to climb the company ladder by loaning his apartment to his bosses for their trysts. He falls for Shirley MacLaine. Fred MacMurray is memorable as a particularly unpleasant company executive.



To contact the WSWs and the
Socialist Equality Party visit:

wsws.org/contact