

## Some interesting films on US television May 16-22

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**16 May 1998**

Asterisk indicates a film of exceptional interest

### **Saturday, May 16**

6:00 am (AMC) - *The Fugitive* (1947) - Henry Fonda is a unorthodox priest wanted by the government in Mexico. He is turned in by a man who once helped him, in this John Ford film.

\*8:00 am (AMC) - *The Lady Eve* (1941) - Barbara Stanwyck, as a connman's daughter, and Henry Fonda, as a rich young man who happens to love snakes, slug it out in this battle of the sexes directed by Preston Sturges. 'Snakes are my life,' says Fonda. 'What a life!', replies Stanwyck.

\*11:15 am (AMC) - *Young Mr. Lincoln* (1939) - John Ford's account of Abraham Lincoln's early years as a frontier lawyer, starring Henry Fonda.

12:00 pm (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.

1:00 pm (AMC) - *Drums Along the Mohawk* (1939) - The story of American colonials in upstate New York during the Revolutionary War. With Henry Fonda and Claudette Colbert, in one of John Ford's more modest works.

\*1:00 pm (TCM) - *Bringing Up Baby* (1938) - Classic screwball comedy, with Katharine Hepburn as bedazzling, eccentric heiress and Cary Grant as the sedate zoologist whose life she

turns upside down. Howard Hawks directed this comedy of sex and morals.

3:00 pm (AMC) - *Artists and Models* (1955) - An extravagant Frank Tashlin cartoon, with Jerry Lewis, Dean Martin, Dorothy Malone and Shirley MacLaine.

3:00 pm (Bravo) - *The Rain People* (1969) - One of Francis Ford Coppola's first efforts: an unhappy housewife takes off and picks up a football player on the road. With Shirley Knight, James Caan and Robert Duvall.

5:00 pm (AMC) - *The Shepherd of the Hills* (1941) - One of Henry Hathaway's more unusual efforts. An Ozark Mountain man lives under a curse: he has promised to kill the man who left his mother. With John Wayne, Berry Field, Harry Carey and Beulah Bondi.

5:00 pm (TCM) - *Deep Valley* (1947) - A convict from a prison camp barges in on an isolated farm. With Ida Lupino, Chester Morris and Dane Clark-an excellent cast for a modest, well-made *film noir*.

8:00 pm (TCM) - *Dodge City* (1939) - One of the Errol Flynn-Olivia de Haviland cycle of films, usually directed by either Michael Curtiz or Raoul Walsh. Curtiz directed this one, a rousing, lively Western. With the Warner Bros. company of character actors.

10:00 pm (TCM) - *Santa Fe Trail* (1940) - A very peculiar film. Hollywood's marketing strategy, at this time, included adapting itself to pro-Southern sensibilities. Purportedly a film about the pursuit of John Brown after the Harper's Ferry raid. Errol Flynn plays Jeb Stuart and Ronald Reagan is George Custer, West Point classmates and rivals for the affection of Olivia de Haviland. Raymond Massey plays a maniacal, but

finally sympathetic, Brown. Michael Curtiz presided over the goings-on.

11:30 pm (AMC) - *The Crimson Pirate* (1952) - A swashbuckling adventure, with Burt Lancaster at his most athletic. The German émigré Robert Siodmak directed.

### **Sunday, May 17**

12:00 am (TCM) - *The Private Lives of Elizabeth and Essex* (1939) - Stylishly done version of romance between Queen of England (Bette Davis) and Earl of Essex (Errol Flynn). Directed by Michael Curtiz, from play by Maxwell Anderson.

1:00 am (Bravo) - *Hannah and Her Sisters* (1986) - The affairs and careers of neurotic, middle class New Yorkers. Barbara Hershey is excellent, as are Mia Farrow and Dianne Wiest. One of Woody Allen's serious efforts-how successful an effort, let the viewer decide. (Also, 5:00 pm, Sunday; 8:00 pm, Tuesday; 12:00 am, Wednesday; 3:30 pm, Wednesday)

4:45 am (AMC) - *Rain* (1932) - W. Somerset Maugham story about the South Sea island tramp (Joan Crawford) and the preacher (Walter Huston) who, at first, is determined to save her soul. This film has been made numerous times. Lewis Milestone directed this version.

6:30 am (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.

1:00 pm (TNT) - *The Beguiled* (1971) - Don Siegel directed this film about a wounded Confederate soldier (Clint Eastwood) who meets his emotional and physical match when he is tended to by a school full of women. Geraldine Page and Elizabeth Hartman co-star. (Also, 10:35 pm, Sunday)

6:00 pm (TCM) - *Clash by Night* (1952) - Fritz Lang directed this melodrama which sees

Barbara Stanwyck, as a woman bored with her fisherman husband Paul Douglas, suddenly taken

with Douglas' cynical friend (Robert Ryan). Clifford Odets wrote the story.

8:00 pm (TCM) - *Tarzan, the Ape Man* (1932) - The original Tarzan, with Johnny Weissmuller and Maureen O'Sullivan (Mia Farrow's mother). Directed by 'One-take' W. S. Van Dyke.

10:00 pm (TCM) - *Anna Karenina* (1935) - A superficial and turgid version of the Tolstoy novel.

But anything with Greta Garbo is of interest. Clarence Brown, for some reason Garbo's favorite,

directed the film.

### **Monday, May 18**

1:30 am (TCM) - *A Yank at Oxford* (1937) - A lighthearted film, with Robert Taylor as an American trying to adjust to life at the English university. With Maureen O'Sullivan and a young Vivien Leigh; directed by Jack Conway.

3:10 am (Bravo) - *America America* (1963) - Elia Kazan's immigrant experience, based on his uncle's emigration in the late 19th century. (Also, 3:15 pm, Monday)

6:00 am (AMC) - *The Lost Weekend* (1945) - Ray Milland is a drunk, an unrelenting drunk, in Billy Wilder's bleak film. With Howard da Silva as a bartender, Jane Wyman and Frank Faylen.

1:30 pm (AMC) - *Interlude* (1957) - A soap opera, but executed with style. Unfortunately, June Allyson stars as an American falling in love with a European composer Rossano Brazzi. Directed by Douglas Sirk.

6:30 pm (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.

10:05 pm (AMC) - *The Gunfighter* (1950) - Gregory Peck is a gunslinger trying to live down his past. Henry King directed, from a script by William Bowers and Andre de Toth.

### Tuesday, May 19

4:30 am (AMC) - *The Strong Man* (1926) - Frank Capra made his directorial debut with this silent, with early comedy star Harry Langdon as a World War I veteran in search of the girl with whom he corresponded.

8:00 am (AMC) - *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* (1936) - Gary Cooper and Jean Arthur play the leading roles in one of Frank Capra's Depression parables. Longfellow Deeds (Cooper) has twenty million dollars and wants to give it away to those in need; Arthur is the hard-boiled reporter trying to figure him out.

1:00 pm (TCM) - *Mark of the Vampire* (1935) - One of Tod Browning's remarkable and obsessive horror films. A vampire terrorizes a small village. With Bela Lugosi, Lionel Barrymore and Lionel Atwill.

1:30 pm (AMC) - *The Star* (1952) - Stuart Heisler directed this film about a movie star whose career is a thing of the past, with Bette Davis, Sterling Hayden and a young Natalie Wood.

3:00 pm (AMC) - *A Star is Born* (1954) - Judy Garland is the star on the way up and James Mason the unfortunate drunk on the way down, in George Cukor's version of the tragic tale. A remake of the 1937 film made by William Wellman, with Fredric March and Janet Gaynor.

\*4:00 pm (TCM) - *Camille* (1937) - Perhaps Greta Garbo's finest film. She plays Dumas' tragic courtesan, forced to give up her love, a young man from a 'good family,' for the sake of his family's honor. Robert Taylor and Lionel Barrymore are adequate, but Henry Daniell enlivens the proceedings as the villain. Directed by George Cukor.

11:00 pm (AMC) - *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1951) - Elia Kazan's version of the Tennessee Williams drama about the strong and the weak in a New Orleans tenement. Marlon Brando, Vivien Leigh, Kim Hunter and Karl Malden.

11:00 pm (VH1) - *Sid and Nancy* (1986) - Flawed, but relatively unsentimental study of the

relationship between punk-rocker Sid Vicious (Gary Oldman) and girlfriend Nancy Spungen

(Chloe Webb). Directed by Alex Cox.

### Wednesday, May 20

12:00 am (TCM) - *A Woman's Face* (1941) - Joan Crawford is a vengeful woman, whose face has been disfigured. Not a consistently good film, but it has some moments. With the wonderful Conrad Veidt. George Cukor directed.

4:00 am (AMC) - *Days of Wine and Roses* (1962) - Blake Edwards' somber film about alcoholic Jack Lemmon who drags Lee Remick into his orbit.

\*8:30 am (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).

\*1:00 pm (TCM) - *The Mortal Storm* (1940) - One of Frank Borzage's anti-Nazi films. The family of a prominent academic (Frank Morgan) is

account apart by the Nazi ascendancy. The politics are murky, but Margaret Sullavan, as the professor's daughter, and James Stewart, as her fiancé, are magnificent.

2:00 pm (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.

4:00 pm (TCM) - *The Philadelphia Story* (1940) - George Cukor directed this film adaptation of Philip Barry's stage play about a spoiled mainline socialite yearning for... well, what exactly? One critic calls it 'simply the breaking, reining, and saddling of an unruly thoroughbred,' i.e., Katharine Hepburn.

6:30 pm (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.

8:00 pm (TCM) - *The Shop Around the Corner* (1940) - James Stewart and Margaret Sullavan are co-workers who, unbeknownst to themselves, have entered into a romance through letters. Marvelous Ernst Lubitsch film, occasionally precious, but deeply felt.

8:05 pm (AMC) - *Call Northside 777* (1948) - A solid, matter-of-fact drama about a reporter (James Stewart) righting a wrong: proving that a convicted killer is innocent. With Richard Conte and Lee J. Cobb.

10:00 pm (TCM) - *Anatomy of a Murder* (1959) - Otto Preminger directed this absorbing courtroom drama. James Stewart is the defense lawyer; Ben Gazzara, Lee Remick and Arthur O'Connell co-star. Duke Ellington wrote the score. Rather daring in its day.

10:30 pm (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.

### Thursday, May 21

\*1:00 am (TCM) - *The Naked Spur* (1953) - One of the best Westerns of the 1950s. James Stewart is a bounty hunter in post-Civil War US, bringing in Robert Ryan. Janet Leigh is Ryan's girl-friend. To Stewart, Ryan is simply a congealed amount of cash; apparently he will do anything for the money. Shot beautifully in the Rockies. Directed by Anthony Mann.

10:00 am (History) - *Reds* (1981) - Warren Beatty's account of the life and times of John Reed, American socialist and author of *Ten Days that Shook the World*, the authoritative chronicle of the October Revolution of 1917. With Diane Keaton and others. (Concludes 3:00 pm; also, 10:00 am and 3:00 pm, Friday)

12:40 pm (Bravo) - *Breaker Morant* (1980) - Australian film, directed by Bruce Beresford, about three soldiers in Boer War court-martialed for murdering prisoners. With Edward Woodward and Bryan Brown. (Also, 8:00 pm, Thursday; 2:00 am, Friday)

1:00 pm (AMC) - *The Best Years of Our Lives* (1946) - William Wyler's occasionally affecting drama about ex-servicemen in postwar America. With Fredric March, Dana Andrews, Myrna Loy, Virginia Mayo and Teresa Wright.

2:00 pm (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.

4:00 pm (TCM) - *Mr. And Mrs. Smith* (1941) - Alfred Hitchcock's somewhat misguided effort at screwball comedy. Robert Montgomery and Carole Lombard discover their marriage is invalid; mayhem ensues. At least one marvelous scene in a restaurant, in which Montgomery, attempting to impress Lombard, from whom he is now estranged, pretends to speak into the ear of a woman seated next to him.

6:00 pm (TCM) - *The Big Steal* (1949) - Crime drama, in which Robert Mitchum is chasing a payroll robber and is, in turn, chased by William Bendix. Jane Greer provides the love interest. Directed by Don Siegel.

8:00 pm (Comedy) - *Something Wild* (1986) - Melanie Griffith, in one her rare performances of

substance, turns out to be trouble for Jeff Daniels, an uptight businessman. Ray Liotta is her

psychotic boy-friend. Not a great film, but it has its moments. Directed by Jonathan Demme.

8:00 pm (TNT) - *The Dirty Dozen* (1967) - Twelve convicts, serving life sentences, are recruited for a suicidal commando raid in Robert Aldrich's film.

9:35 pm (AMC) - *Hombre* (1967) - Martin Ritt directed, from an Elmore Leonard story, this film about Indian-raised Paul Newman trying to survive in Arizona in the 1880s.

11:00 pm (Bravo) - *Vanya on 42nd Street* (1994) - Louis Malle directed this film, his last, about a group of actors rehearsing an adaptation of Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya*. Andre Gregory is the director; writer Wallace Shawn plays the lead character. (Also, 2:00 pm, Friday)

11:00 pm (TCM) - *Escape from Alcatraz* (1979) - Clint Eastwood plays a convict determined to

break out of Alcatraz, the supposedly inescapable prison. Based on a true story, the film

methodically follows Eastwood's efforts. Directed by Don Siegel.

11:00 pm (TNT) - *Gettysburg* (1993) - Ronald Maxwell's meticulous recreation of the great Civil War battle. With Tom Berenger, Jeff Daniels, Martin Sheen, Sam Elliott and many others.

#### **Friday, May 22**

\*3:30 am (TCM) - *The Big House* (1930) - Called by one critic 'the most powerful prison movie of all time,' the film, directed by George Hill, stars Wallace Beery and Chester Morris. Prisoners stage such a powerful revolt that army tanks have to be called in. The censors would never again allow 'such massive violence in the screen's penal system.'

6:00 am (AMC) - *Primrose Path* (1940) - An uneven, but occasionally affecting film, about a poor girl (Ginger Rogers), from a really dissolute family, who becomes involved with an ambitious young man (Joel McCrea). Gregory La Cava directed.

\*7:30 am (TCM) - *Pride and Prejudice* (1940) - Hollywood's version of the Jane Austen classic about five sisters in early 19th century England. Laurence Olivier is the standout as the proud Darcy; Greer Garson plays the 'prejudiced' Elizabeth Bennett. Robert Z. Leonard directed; Aldous Huxley helped write the screenplay.

9:30 am (TCM) - *The Beggar's Opera* (1953) - Laurence Olivier in something of an oddity, John Gay's 18th century work, brought to the screen by famed theater director Peter Brook (*Marat/Sade* et al). Play which inspired Brecht/Weill's *Threepenny Opera*.

\*11:00 am (AMC) - *Phantom Lady* (1944) - Unsettling *film noir*, perhaps emblematic of the genre, about a man convicted of a murder and the search for an elusive witness. With Franchot Tone, directed by Robert Siodmak.

12:30 pm (AMC) - *Monkey Business* (1952) - Cary Grant and Ginger Rogers in Howard Hawks' comedy about a chemistry professor who comes up with youth serum. Marilyn Monroe and Charles Coburn co-star.

6:00 pm (TCM) - *Count the Hours* (1953) - Don Siegel directed this modest melodrama about a migrant worker accused of a double murder. Macdonald Carey is his lawyer; Teresa Wright and Jack Elam co-star.

6:30 pm (AMC) - *Magnificent Obsession* (1954) - The first, and perhaps least ironic, of Douglas Sirk's extraordinary 1950s melodramas, starring Jane Wyman and Rock Hudson.

11:30 pm (TCM) - *The Great Gatsby* (1974) - A pallid, but occasionally interesting film, based on the F.Scott Fitzgerald novel about the 'careless' rich and their gangster friend, on Long Island in the 1920s. Robert Redford is too placid as Jay Gatsby, Mia Farrow too jittery as Daisy Buchanan.



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