Some interesting films on US television, August 15-21

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15 August 1998

Asterisk indicates a film of exceptional interest

Saturday, August 15

12:00 am (TCM) -- *Pat and Mike* (1952) -- Katharine Hepburn and Spencer Tracy play a leading female athlete and her manager, respectively, in this lightweight piece. Directed by George Cukor.

*2:00 am (TCM) -- *Death in Venice* (1971) -- To Gustav Mahler's music, Dirk Bogarde, a writer in pre-World War I Venice, considers art, beauty and death. Luchino Visconti's film, based on the Thomas Mann novella, is perhaps self-indulgent, but it is beautiful and sad. Bogarde is a great actor.

*9:00 am (TCM) -- *My Man Godfrey* (1936) -- A millionaire invites a tramp (William Powell) to be his butler in this Gregory LaCava screwball comedy. Carole Lombard is the millionaire's daughter.

1:00 pm (TCM) -- *The Late Show* (1977) -- An amusing twist on the private eye film, with Art Carney as an aging detective, who has to take a bus to get around, hooked up with Lily Tomlin as a slightly loopy client. Robert Benton directed, with Bill Macy.

*2:00 pm (Bravo) -- *A Midnight Clear* (1992) -- Strong anti-war film about a squad of US soldiers in France near the end of World War II. Ethan Hawke, Peter Berg, Kevin Dillon, Gary Sinise starred. Directed by Keith Gordon, from William Wharton's novel.

4:00 pm (A&E) -- *D.O.A.* (1950) -- Rudolph Maté directed this *film noir* about a man (Edmond O'Brien) who discovers he has been poisoned and attempts to find out why and who has done it in the time he has left. With Pamela Britton, Luther Adler.

5:00 pm (TCM) -- *Cape Fear* (1962) -- Robert Mitchum is the best thing about this film, playing a menacing ex-convict in a Southern town who blames lawyer Gregory Peck for his jailing, and plots revenge. Directed by J. Lee Thompson; with Polly Bergen and Martin Balsam. Based on a John D. MacDonald novel, music by Bernard Herrmann.

6:00 pm (AMC) -- *A Night to Remember* (1958) -- Well-made film about the sinking of the Titanic, directed by Roy Ward Baker. With Kenneth More, David McCallum, Jill Dixon, Laurence Naismith. Novelist Eric Ambler wrote the script based on the book by Walter Lord.

*7:00 pm (Bravo) -- *Alexander Nevsky* (1938) - Soviet director Sergei Eisenstein's famous film, about a 13th century Russian prince (Nikolai Cherkassov) who leads an army that repels Germanic invaders, obviously paralleling the contemporary situation. Some brilliant moments, but the Russian nationalism is hard to take.

*8:00 pm (TCM) -- *The Awful Truth* (1937) - Classic screwball comedy. Cary Grant and Irene Dunne divorce, and plan to re-wed. Each does his or her best to interfere in the other's life. Ralph Bellamy is memorable as Dunne's would-be Oklahoman of a husband. Perhaps Leo McCarey's best film.

Sunday, August 16

*7:30 am (AMC) -- *I Was a Male War Bride* (1949) -- Cary Grant is a French officer marrying a WAC (Ann Sheridan) and encountering a series of dilemmas. The film is very funny, and it also provides director Howard Hawks an opportunity to examine sexual roles, and subvert them.

*11:00 am (Bravo) -- *Alexander Nevsky* (1938) -- See Saturday, at 7:00 pm.

6:00 pm (TCM) -- *King Kong* (1933) -- Beauty and the Beast story, with Fay Wray as the former and an animated ape as the latter. Last ten minutes are worth waiting for. Directed by Merian C. Cooper and Ernest B. Schoedsack.

8:05 pm (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.

9:30 pm (TCM) -- *The Misfits* (1961) -- The last film of both Marilyn Monroe and Clark Gable. John Huston directed this sour tale, written by Arthur Miller, of divorcee Monroe and some unhappy cowboys. With Montgomery Clift, Thelma Ritter, Eli Wallach.

Monday, August 17

*12:00 am (TCM) -- *The End of St. Petersburg* (1927) -- Soviet director Vsevelod Pudovkin's film about a peasant from the provinces swept by the great events of 1917. With Ivan Chuvelov, Vera Baranovskaya, A.P. Christiakov.

*1:00 am (AMC) -- *Imitation of Life* (1959) -- Douglas Sirk directed this work, 'A big, crazy film about life and death. And a film about America.' Lana Turner is a career-driven actress; Juanita Moore is her black maid. Moore has a daughter (Susan Kohner) who wants to pass for white. The characters' thoughts, wishes and dreams 'grow directly out of their social reality or are manipulated by it' (R.W. Fassbinder).

*3:15 am (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.

*5:00 am (AMC) -- *Force of Evil* (1948) -- The principal film effort of director Abraham Polonsky, soon to be blacklisted. A parable about American capitalism. John Garfield plays the lead, a crooked lawyer from the wrong side of the tracks, who faces a moral crisis over a Fourth of July holiday. With Thomas Gomez and Beatrice Pearson.

6:30 am (TCM) -- *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* (1939) -- Not a great, but a remarkable, sensual and disturbing film. Charles Laughton is Victor Hugo's Quasimodo, the deformed bell-ringer. Maureen O'Hara is unforgettable, in her US film debut, as Esmerelda.

*8:00 am (History) -- *Why We Fight: The Nazis Strike* (1942) -- The first part of the series of propaganda films directed or produced by Frank Capra for showing to the armed forces in World War II. Subsequent parts each day at 8:00 am.

8:30 am (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.

10:00 am (History) -- *War and Peace* (1956) (Part 1) -- An intelligent, if not inspired, version of Tolstoy's masterwork about Russian society,

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directed by King Vidor. With Audrey Hepburn, Henry Fonda and Mel Ferrer.

10:00 am (TCM) -- *This Land is Mine* (1943) -- One of French director Jean Renoir's weaker Hollywood efforts, the story of a mild-mannered schoolteacher (Charles Laughton) who becomes a hero under the Nazi occupation. With Maureen O'Hara, George Sanders.

12:00 pm (AMC) -- *The Razor's Edge* (1946) -- An overlong film, with 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.

12:00 pm (TCM) -- *The Fallen Sparrow* (1944) -- John Garfield and Maureen O'Hara star in a pro-Loyalist film about a Spanish Civil War veteran tracked by Nazis in New York City. Richard Wallace directed; with Walter Slezak.

*2:00 pm (TCM) -- *Rio Grande* (1950) -- One of John Ford's great cavalry films. John Wayne is an officer with family problems. Claude Jarman, Jr., is his son, Maureen O'Hara his wife.

3:00 pm (History) -- *War and Peace* (1956) (Part 1) -- See Monday, at 10:00 am.

Tuesday, August 18

*8:00 am (History) -- *Why We Fight: Battle of Britain* (1943) -- See Monday, at 8:00 am.

10:00 am (History) -- *War and Peace* (1956) (Part 2) -- See Monday, at 10:00 am.

1:00 pm (Bravo) -- *Repulsion* (1965) -- Catherine Deneuve starred as a sexually repressed girl who goes homicidal when her sister leaves her on her own in an apartment for a few days. Startling at the time, it seems dated today. Directed by Roman Polanski.

2:15 pm (TCM) -- *Four Daughters* (1938) -- The Lane Sisters star, with Claude Rains as their musical father, in this film about small-town life. The four young women have their lives changed by four young men. Directed by Hungarian émigré Michael Curtiz.

3:00 pm (History) -- *War and Peace* (1956) (Part 2) -- See Monday, at 10:00 am.

*4:00 pm (TCM) -- *Little Women* (1933) -- George Cukor's film version of the Louisa May Alcott classic, perhaps the best of the lot. Four sisters growing up in Civil War America, with Katharine Hepburn and Joan Bennett.

*6:30 pm (AMC) -- *Winchester '73* (1950) -- Remarkable Western, directed by Anthony Mann, about a man (James Stewart, in the first of his films with Mann) tracking down a stolen Winchester rifle and the man who took it. The gun is the connection between the different episodes. With Shelley Winters, Dan Duryea and Stephen McNally. Script by Robert L. Richards and Borden Chase.

10:00 pm (Bravo) -- *Repulsion* (1965) -- See Tuesday, at 1:00 pm.

Wednesday, August 19

12:00 am (TNT) -- *King Kong* (1933) -- See Sunday, at 6:00 pm.

*1:00 am (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.

2:00 am (Bravo) -- *Repulsion* (1965) -- See Tuesday, at 1:00 pm.

2:30 am (TNT) -- *Mutiny on the Bounty* (1935) -- Charles Laughton is memorable as the abominable Captain Bligh on board a British ship bound for the South Seas. Clark Gable is Fletcher Christian. Directed by Frank Lloyd.

*8:00 am (History) -- *Why We Fight: Battle of Russia* (1944) -- See Monday, at 8:00 am.

11:15 am (AMC) -- *Love Letters* (1945) -- Joseph Cotten plays a soldier writing letters to his friend's fiancée, Jennifer Jones. Later he cures her amnesia. Directed by William Dieterle. Ayn Rand wrote the script!

*5:00 pm (Bravo) -- *The Third Man* (1949) -- Carol Reed directed this sharp look at life in post-World War II Vienna, impoverished and corrupt, where the Cold War is beginning to take shape. Orson Welles plays the mysterious Harry Lime and, one suspects, contributed to the overall feel of the film. Score, played on the zither by Anton Karats, is justly famous.

8:00 pm (AMC) -- *The Far Country* (1955) -- James Stewart, Ruth Roman, Walter Brennan and John McIntire co-star in this Anthony Mann western about a cattleman who brings his herd to Alaska and encounters many difficulties. As always with Mann, the Albert Bierstadt of movie directors, the exteriors are magnificent.

Thursday, August 20

3:15 am (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*).

4:00 am (USA) -- *Canadian Bacon* (1995) -- To divert attention from domestic problems the US president (Alan Alda) and his advisers cook up a scheme to launch a war against a most unlikely enemy, Canada. John Candy has several marvelous moments as a red-blooded American patriot, but, all in all, Michael Moore's script and direction are too buffoonish.

*8:00 am (History) -- *Why We Fight: Battle of China* (1944-45) -- See Monday, at 8:00 am.

8:00 am (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.

10:00 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.

*11:00 am (Bravo) -- *The Third Man* (1949) -- See Wednesday, at 5:00 pm.

2:00 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.

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

Friday, August 21

4:00 am (A&E) -- *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 am (History) -- *Why We Fight: War Comes to America* (1945) -- See Monday, at 8:00 am.

8:30 am (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.

2:00 pm (TCM) -- *Ride the High Country* (1962) -- Sam Peckinpah directed this anti-Western, with Randolph Scott and Joel McCrea, as two aging gunfighters guarding a gold shipment shipped from a remote mining town.

*8:00 pm (TCM) -- *Grand Hotel* (1932) -- The story of a luxury hotel in Berlin and the cast of characters who reside or work there: Greta Garbo as a ballerina, John Barrymore as a jewel thief, Joan Crawford as an ambitious secretary, etc. Edmund Goulding directed.

10:00 pm (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

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Cukor directed.

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