

Some interesting films on US television, September 5-11

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5 September 1998

Asterisk indicates a film of exceptional interest

Saturday, September 5

7:00 a.m. (VH1)-- *The Last Waltz* (1978)--Martin Scorsese directed the filming of the last concert performance by The Band, with friends and colleagues Joni Mitchell, Neil Young, Bob Dylan, Van Morrison, Emmylou Harris, Ronnie Hawkins et al.

10:00 a.m. (AMC)-- *The Glenn Miller Story* (1954)--By no standard a great film--it is burdened with a sentimental and largely fictitious story, as well as insipid June Allyson as Miller's wife--but everything by Anthony Mann of this period is worth seeing. Beautifully done. James Stewart is fine as Miller.

*11:00 a.m. (TCM)-- *The Horse Soldiers* (1959)--Another classic John Ford western, with John Wayne as a cavalry officer leading Union troops into Confederate territory during the Civil War.

12:00 p.m. (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.

*2:00 p.m. (AMC)-- *Men in War* (1957)--The seriously underrated Anthony Mann directed this film about the Korean War. With a cast of stalwart character actors, including Robert Ryan, Aldo Ray and Vic Morrow (father of Jennifer Jason Leigh).

3:00 p.m. (Bravo)-- *Police* (1984) - Gerard Depardieu and Sophie Marceau star in this film about a brutal policeman who falls for Marceau, involved in the narcotics trade. Directed by talented French director Maurice Pialat.

3:00 p.m. (TCM)-- *The Beggar's Opera* (1953)--Laurence Olivier in something of an oddity, John Gay's eighteenth century work, brought to the screen by famed theater director Peter Brook (*Marat/Sade* et al). Play which inspired Brecht/Weill's *Threepenny Opera*.

4:00 p.m. (AMC)-- *The Crimson Pirate* (1952)--A swashbuckling adventure, with Burt Lancaster at his most athletic. The German emigré Robert Siodmak directed.

6:00 p.m. (AMC)-- *The Naked Jungle* (1954)--Above-average jungle adventure directed by Byron Haskin, with Charlton Heston and Eleanor Parker.

*7:00 p.m. (Bravo)-- *Alexander Nevsky* (1938)--Soviet director Sergei Eisenstein's famous film, about a thirteenth 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 p.m. (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.

10:30 (TNT)-- *Carrie* (1976)--Director Brian De Palma can never entirely restrain himself, but this film is more interesting than most of his others. Sissy Spacek plays a high school misfit, equipped with telekinetic

powers, who wreaks revenge on her tormentors. Piper Laurie, a fine actress, is memorable as her mother.

Sunday, September 6

12:00 a.m. (AMC)-- *The Naked Jungle* (1954)--See Saturday, at 6:00 p.m.

1:30 a.m. (TCM)-- *From Here to Eternity* (1953)--Fred Zinnemann directed this somewhat overrated work, based on the James Jones novel, about life on an army post in Hawaii on the eve of Pearl Harbor. With Burt Lancaster, Montgomery Clift, Deborah Kerr, Donna Reed, Frank Sinatra.

3:30 a.m. (AMC)-- *Heaven Can Wait* (1943)--Don Ameche stars as a dead man seeking entry to hell, who recounts in flash back what he thinks has been a life full of sin. With Gene Tierney and Charles Coburn. Directed by Ernst Lubitsch.

*8:00 a.m. (TCM)-- *Fury* (1936)--German director Fritz Lang's first US work, a powerful statement against injustice and mob hysteria. Spencer Tracy as a traveler in a small town, mistaken for a murderer and apparently lynched.

*10:00 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 Duruya.

*11:00 a.m. (Bravo)-- *Alexander Nevsky* (1938)--See Saturday, at 7:00 p.m.

*8:00 p.m. (TCM)-- *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.

9:00 p.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.

10:30 (TCM)-- *High Noon* (1952)--Gary Cooper stars in this Fred Zinnemann-directed Western about a sheriff who, on his wedding and retirement day, has to confront a gunman seeking revenge. With Grace Kelly, Thomas Mitchell, Lloyd Bridges, Katy Jurado, et al.

Monday, September 7

*12:00 a.m. (TCM)-- *The Birth of a Nation* (1915)--D.W. Griffith directed this film about events before and after the Civil War. The film, impossibly racist, revolutionized Hollywood filmmaking. With Lillian Gish.

*3:15 a.m. (TCM)-- *The Scarlet Letter* (1926)--Lillian Gish is memorable as Hester Prynne, punished for her adulterous affair, in early Swedish director Victor Seastrom's version of the Nathaniel Hawthorne novel about Puritan New England.

10:00 a.m. (TCM)-- *Annie Hall* (1977)--Woody Allen's first serious effort, a semiautobiographical film about his life and loves, likes and dislikes. Diane Keaton memorably plays his girlfriend.

12:00 p.m. (TCM)-- *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.

*4:00 p.m. (TCM)-- *An American in Paris* (1951)--Classic MGM musical directed by Vincente Minnelli and built around its Gershwin score; Alan Jay Lerner wrote the screenplay. Gene Kelly is an artist torn between gamine Leslie Caron and wealthy Nina Foch. With the irrepressible Oscar Levant.

*4:45 p.m. (Bravo)-- *Ran* (1985)--Akira Kurosawa's epic version of Shakespeare's *King Lear*, about a warlord who provokes a conflict between his sons by handing over power to the eldest.

*6:00 p.m. (TCM)-- *Singin' In the Rain* (1952)--Is there anyone who hasn't seen this film by now? Anyway, it's a remarkable musical, with Gene Kelly, Debbie Reynolds, Donald O'Connor, about the days of silent film. Stanley Donen and Kelly directed.

*8:00 p.m. (Bravo)-- *White Balloon* (1995)--Iranian filmmaker Jafar Panahi directed this beautiful film about a little girl determined to buy a goldfish on New Year's Day. Fellow filmmaker Abbas Kiarostami wrote the script.

8:00 p.m. (TCM)-- *West Side Story* (1961)--Robert Wise and Jerome Robbins co-directed this screen version of the remarkable Leonard Bernstein-Stephen Sondheim musical. Natalie Wood and Richard Beymer are dull, Rita Moreno, Russ Tamblyn and George Chakiris are memorable. Romeo and Juliet set in New York City of the 1950s.

9:30 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.

11:00 p.m. (TCM)-- *Tootsie* (1982)--Dustin Hoffman is amusing as an actor who can't find work as a man, but finds great success as the female star of a television soap opera. Sidney Pollack directed; with Jessica Lange, Teri Garr, Dabney Coleman.

Tuesday, September 8

1:15 a.m. (TCM)--2001: *A Space Odyssey* (1968)--Stanley Kubrick's science fiction epic. A space vehicle heads for Jupiter in search of aliens. One critic, somewhat unfairly, called it a project 'so devoid of life and feeling as to render a computer called Hal the most sympathetic character in a jumbled scenario.' Despite silly ending, the film is worth seeing.

*2:05 a.m. (Bravo)-- *White Balloon* (1995)--See Monday, at 8:00 p.m.

3:45 a.m. (Bravo)-- *Burnt by the Sun* (1994)--See Monday, at 9:30 p.m.

4:00 a.m. (A&E)-- *Night Train to Munich* (1940)--Rex Harrison is a British intelligence operative sent to rescue Czech scientist who has attempted to escape Nazi grasp. With Margaret Lockwood and Paul Henreid. Directed by Carol Reed.

6:00 a.m. (AMC)-- *Seven Chances* (1925)--Buster Keaton has until seven o'clock that evening to find a bride if he wants to inherit a fortune. He ends up being pursued by thousands of women. Some famous sequences in this silent film, directed by Keaton.

12:00 p.m. (TCM)-- *Tennessee Johnson* (1942)--Van Heflin plays US President Andrew Johnson, who became president upon the assassination of Lincoln and came into conflict with Congress, in this biopic. With Lionel Barrymore, Ruth Hussey, Marjorie Main; directed by William Dieterle.

1:45 p.m. (Bravo) -- *Burnt by the Sun* (1994)--See Monday, at 9:30 p.m.

3:00 p.m. (AMC)-- *Nothing Sacred* (1937)--Fredric March is a cynical reporter who sets out to make headlines with the story of a Vermont girl (Carole Lombard) supposedly dying from radium poisoning. Ben Hecht wrote the script and William Wellman directed.

*4:00 p.m. (Bravo)-- *White Balloon* (1995)--See Monday, at 8:00 p.m.

6:00 p.m. (TCM)-- *The Wings of Eagles* (1957)--John Ford directed this biographical film about Frank 'Spig' Wead (John Wayne), an aviator who turned to screenwriting (for Ford and others) after an accident. With Maureen O'Hara, Dan Dailey, Ward Bond.

*8:00 p.m. (TCM)-- *They Were Expendable* (1945)--An extremely well-

done film: the story of an American PT boat squadron, directed by John Ford. John Wayne and Robert Montgomery are the squadron's officers, but equally memorable is Donna Reed, as a nurse in love with Wayne's character.

8:00 p.m. (TNT)-- *Tootsie* (1982)--See Monday, at 11:00 p.m.

10:00 p.m. (TBS)-- *The Dirty Dozen* (1967)--Twelve convicts, serving life sentences, are recruited for a suicidal commando raid in Robert Aldrich's film. With Lee Marvin and a dozen others.

Wednesday, September 9

2:00 a.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 Havilland as the poor, neglected heroine, Ralph Richardson as her monstrous father, and Montgomery Clift as her fortune-hunting suitor. Score by Aaron Copland.

2:45 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.

4:05 p.m. (AMC)-- *Artists and Models* (1955)--An extravagant Frank Tashlin cartoon, with Jerry Lewis, Dean Martin, Dorothy Malone and Shirley MacLaine.

*5:00 p.m. (Bravo)-- *Rosa Luxemburg* (1986)--Margarethe von Trotta's evocative, if sometimes a little pat, biographical portrait of the great Polish Marxist and cofounder of the German Communist Party, murdered in 1919. With Barbara Sukowa.

6:30 p.m. (AMC)-- *Don't Bother to Knock* (1952)--Marilyn Monroe, in an early role, is a demented babysitter who threatens to kill the child in her care. With Richard Widmark, Anne Bancroft, Jim Backus. Directed by Roy Ward Baker.

*8:00 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 the Patricia Highsmith novel, co-scripted by Raymond Chandler.

*8:00 p.m. (Bravo)-- *Life is Sweet* (1990)--Allison Steadman and Jim Broadbent are a British suburban, working class couple in Mike Leigh's moving, occasionally irritating film. Jane Horrocks is remarkable as their self-loathing daughter; Claire Skinner is her sister.

*8:00 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.

10:30 p.m. (TCM)-- *A Fistful of Dollars* (1964)--In the first of Sergio Leone's Italian Westerns Clint Eastwood, in the role that made him a star, plays the Man With No Name. The story, a remake of Kurosawa's *Yojimbo*, involves warring families in a border town. Ennio Morricone's score is striking. With Gian Maria Volonté and Marianne Koch.

Thursday, September 10

*2:00 a.m. (Bravo)-- *Life is Sweet* (1990)--See Wednesday, at 8:00 p.m.

2:30 a.m. (TCM)-- *I Want to Live!* (1958)--Susan Hayward is prostitute-crook Barbara Graham, framed up, according to the movie, and sent to the gas chamber. A remarkable anti-death penalty film made at a time when opposition to capital punishment was gaining strength in the US. Directed by Robert Wise.

9:00 a.m. (AMC)-- *The Lodger* (1944)--John Brahm's atmospheric retelling of the Jack the Ripper story, with Merle Oberon and George Sanders, among others.

*11:00 a.m. (Bravo)-- *Rosa Luxemburg* (1986)--See Wednesday, at 5:00 p.m.

12:00 p.m. (TCM)-- *The Blackboard Jungle* (1955)--Glenn Ford is a high school teacher in an inner-city school in this social realist film. He deals with violence, racism and threats against his family. With Anne

Francis, Vic Morrow, Sidney Poitier, Louis Calhern, Richard Kiley; directed by Richard Brooks.

*1:00 p.m. (Bravo)-- *Life is Sweet* (1990)--See Wednesday, at 8:00 p.m.

2:15 p.m. (AMC)-- *Jane Eyre* (1944)--Robert Stevenson directed this version of the Charlotte Brontë classic about a poor governess thrown into a mysterious household. Joan Fontaine is Jane and Orson Welles an unforgettable Rochester.

5:00 p.m. (Bravo)-- *The Browning Version* (1951)--Michael Redgrave gives a remarkable performance as maligned teacher in Anthony Asquith's film.

6:00 p.m. (TCM)-- *Somebody Up There Likes Me* (1956)--Robert Wise directed this competent biography of New York-born boxing champion Rocky Graziano. Paul Newman plays Graziano; with Pier Angeli, Everett Sloane and, in his film debut, Steve McQueen.

*8:00 p.m. (AMC)-- *The Grapes of Wrath* (1940) - John Ford's version of the John Steinbeck classic novel, about the Joad family, driven from their home in the 1930s 'Dust Bowl.' Henry Fonda plays Tom Joad. With Jane Darwell, John Carradine.

10:00 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.

*10:15 (AMC)-- *Sergeant Rutledge* (1960)--Woody Strode plays a black US cavalry officer charged with rape and murder in post-Civil War America. John Ford directed. With Jeffrey Hunter, Constance Towers.

Friday, September 11

*12:15 a.m. (TCM)-- *A Night at the Opera* (1935)--Along with *Duck Soup*, one of the Marx Brothers' best efforts. Unfortunately, a silly, uninteresting love story occasionally gets in the way. Directed by Sam Wood; with the inimitable Margaret Dumont, also Kitty Carlisle and Alan Jones.

4:00 a.m. (TCM)-- *The Gay Divorcee* (1934)--One of the Fred Astaire-Ginger Rogers musicals. Not famous for its plot, but for its musical numbers, including 'Continental' and Cole Porter's 'Night and Day.' Directed by journeyman Mark Sandrich.

7:30 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.

7:30 a.m. (TCM)-- *Random Harvest* (1942)--Ronald Colman is a World War I veteran who loses his memory. Greer Garson is a music-hall entertainer who brings him back to life. Hard to take in parts, but it has perceptive moments. Directed by Mervyn LeRoy.

12:30 p.m. (Bravo)-- *The Browning Version* (1951)--See Thursday, at 5:00 p.m.

8:00 p.m. (Bravo)-- *Gas Food Lodging* (1992) - Amiable film about a waitress (Brooke Adams) at a diner in Laramie, New Mexico, trying to get by, with two daughters. Directed by Allison Anders; with James Brolin, Ione Skye, Fairuza Balk.

*8:00 p.m. (TCM)-- *Wild Strawberries* (1957)--The life, filled with disappointments, of an elderly professor (Victor Sjöström), told in flashbacks. One of Ingmar Bergman's most renowned works.

10:00 p.m. (TCM)-- *The Devil's Eye* (1960)--Somewhat heavy-handed comedy by Swedish director Ingmar Bergman. Upset by a woman's chastity, the devil sends Don Juan back to earth to win her affections. With Jarl Kulle, Bibi Andersson.



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