

Some interesting films on US television, February 20-26

Marty Jonas (MJ), David Walsh (DW)
20 February 1999

Asterisk indicates a film of exceptional interest. All times are EDT.

A&E=Arts & Entertainment, AMC=American Movie Classics, FXM=Fox Movie Channel, HBOF=HBO Family, HBOP=HBO Plus, HBOS=HBO Signature, IFC=Independent Film Channel, TCM=Turner Classic Movies, TMC=The Movie Channel, TNT=Turner Network Television

Saturday, February 20

*7:45 a.m. (HBOS)-- *Barry Lyndon* (1975)--An intelligent adaptation of William Thackeray's novel about an eighteenth-century scoundrel, directed by Stanley Kubrick. (DW)

8:00 a.m. (AMC)-- *Julia* (1977)--Vanessa Redgrave won an Oscar for her performance as the anti-fascist Julia based on Lillian Hellman's autobiographical work, *Pentimento*. With Jane Fonda, Jason Robards; directed by Fred Zinnemann. (DW)

*12:00 p.m. (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. (DW)

*12:30 p.m. (TCM)-- *Henry V* (1989)--Kenneth Branagh's exuberant production of the great Shakespeare historical play about Britain's warrior-king. "He which hath no stomach to this fight,/Let him depart ..." (DW)

2:00 p.m. (AMC)-- *Land of the Pharaohs* (1955)--Howard Hawks's historical epic is full of the typical Hollywood hokum, but the scenes of the building of the pyramids are truly impressive. William Faulkner helped write the screenplay. With Jack Hawkins and Joan Collins. (MJ)

2:00 p.m. (Bravo)-- *Jane Eyre* (1944)--Robert Stevenson directed this version of the Charlotte Bronte classic about a poor governess thrown into a mysterious household. Joan Fontaine is Jane and Orson Welles an unforgettable Rochester. (DW)

*5:00 p.m. (TCM)-- *On the Waterfront* (1954)--Elia Kazan's famed film, with Marlon Brando as an ex-boxer working on the docks, Rod Steiger as his crooked brother, Lee J. Cobb as a corrupt union boss, Karl Malden as a crusading priest, Eva Marie Saint as Brando's girlfriend. Kazan was seeking to justify his role as an informant to HUAC; a good movie made for the wrong reasons. (DW)

6:00 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. (DW)

*8:00 p.m. (TCM)-- *Dark Passage* (1947)--Bizarre film, with Bogart as an escaped convict who undergoes plastic surgery and then tries to uncover a murderer. Directed by Delmer Daves. (DW)

8:30 p.m. (AMC)-- *River of No Return* (1954)--Otto Preminger directed this interesting, relatively somber story. Robert Mitchum rescues a man (Rory Calhoun) and a woman (Marilyn Monroe) from drowning. Calhoun promptly steals his horse and takes off. Vengeful Mitchum, with his

young son, and Monroe pursue him by raft. (DW)

12:00 a.m. (AMC)-- *Friendly Persuasion* (1956)--see 6:00 p.m.

2:30 a.m. (AMC)-- *River of No Return* (1954)--See 8:30 p.m.

Sunday, February 21

6:00 a.m. (Sundance)-- *Touch* (1987)--Interesting but disappointing film written and directed by Paul Schrader about faith healing in the South. With Christopher Walken and Bridget Fonda. (MJ)

7:35 a.m. (AMC)-- *Artists and Models* (1955)--An extravagant Frank Tashlin cartoon, with Jerry Lewis, Dean Martin, Dorothy Malone and Shirley MacLaine. (DW)

8:00 a.m. (TCM)-- *Executive Suite* (1954)--A power struggle erupts after the death of a major executive. Interesting to compare the corporate culture of the 1950s (and Hollywood myths about them) with today's. With William Holden, Barbara Stanwyck, June Allyson, Fredric March, Walter Pidgeon. Robert Wise directed. (DW)

9:30 a.m. (AMC)-- *Breaking Away* (1979)--Intelligent story of group of "townies" in Bloomington, Indiana, home of Indiana University. Directed by Peter Yates. (DW)

*10:30 a.m. (Sundance)-- *The Purple Rose of Cairo* (1985)--Woody Allen combines Keaton's *Sherlock Jr.* and Fellini's *The White Sheik* to come up with a satisfying tale about a drab housewife (Mia Farrow) romanced by a character (Jeff Daniels) who literally steps out of the movie screen. (MJ)

11:00 a.m. (History)-- *The Left-Handed Gun* (1958)--Based on a television play by Gore Vidal, Arthur Penn directed this offbeat version of the Billy the Kid legend. (DW)

11:30 a.m. (TCM)-- *My Favorite Wife* (1940)--Amusing film, directed by Garson Kanin, with Irene Dunne, thought dead, returning to find husband Cary Grant married to another woman (Gail Patrick). Produced and co-written by Leo McCarey. (DW)

*12:00 p.m. (FXM)-- *Man Hunt* (1941)--Suspenseful film directed by Fritz Lang about a hunter who gets Hitler in his sights but doesn't pull the trigger; from that point on, he himself is hunted by the Nazis. With Walter Pidgeon, Joan Bennett and George Sanders. (MJ)

*1:00 p.m. (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. (DW)

1:30 p.m. (Sundance)-- *Touch* (1987)--See 6:00 a.m.

*3:00 p.m. (A&E)-- *Mean Streets* (1973)--Excellent, highly influential film by Martin Scorsese about growing up in New York's Little Italy. With Robert De Niro and Harvey Keitel, both very young. (MJ)

*5:00 p.m. (Sundance)-- *The Purple Rose of Cairo* (1985)--See 10:30 a.m.

6:00 p.m. (TCM)-- *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. (DW)

*8:00 p.m. (FXM)-- *How Green Was My Valley* (1941)--John Ford's powerful film about Welsh coal miners. With Walter Pidgeon, Maureen O'Hara, Donald Crisp and Roddy McDowall. (MJ)

*9:45 p.m. (Starz)-- *Deconstructing Harry* (1997)--Woody Allen's film is mean-spirited, misanthropic, bitter, cynical, crude, and foul-mouthed, but it is deliberately provocative, often funny, and one of his best films of recent years. A writer (Allen) confronts the friends and family members that he has cruelly featured in his novels, as well as their fictional representations. Also, Allen and his character confront their horror at growing old. Compare this film with the one preceding it, the light-hearted romantic musical *Everyone Says I Love You* (1996), which this film seems to rebut. (MJ)

*10:00 p.m. (TCM)-- *The Asphalt Jungle* (1950)--One of the best jewel heist films, and one of director John Huston's best. With Sterling Hayden and Louis Calhern (who has the best line: "Crime is nothing but a left-handed form of endeavor"). (MJ)

10:00 p.m. (Disney)-- *Treasure Island* (1950)--Robert Newton's enjoyably overdone portrayal of Long John Silver ("Har, har, Jim Horkins!") is the highlight of this Disney version of the Robert Louis Stevenson classic. With Bobby Driscoll as Jim Hawkins. (MJ)

10:45 p.m. (AMC)-- *Don't Bother to Knock* (1952)--Marilyn Monroe, in an early role, is a demented baby-sitter who threatens to kill the child in her care. With Richard Widmark, Anne Bancroft, Jim Backus. Directed by Roy Ward Baker. (DW)

11:00 p.m. (Sundance)-- *Touch* (1987)--See 6:00 a.m.

*2:00 a.m. (FXM)-- *Man Hunt* (1941)--See 12:00 p.m.

*3:30 a.m. (Sundance)-- *The Purple Rose of Cairo* (1985)--See 10:30 a.m.

4:00 a.m. (HBOS)-- *Modern Romance* (1981)--Occasionally amusing film, directed by and starring Albert Brooks as a neurotic film editor obsessed with Kathryn Harrold. (DW)

4:45 a.m. (AMC)-- *Don't Bother to Knock* (1952)--See 10:45 p.m.

4:55 a.m. (HBO)-- *Breakdown* (1997)--Suspenseful thriller in which the wife of a meek computer programmer (played by Kurt Russell) disappears during a cross-country trip. One of the last performances by the late, great character actor J.T. Walsh. (MJ)

Monday, February 22

7:30 a.m. (AMC)-- *Pete Kelly's Blues* (1955)--Underrated film about a jazz band in the 1920s and its fight against being taken over by the mob, as told by the trumpet player (Jack Webb, who also directed). Excellent jazz score. Director Webb made good use of the wide screen, so the film is best seen in letterbox format. With Peggy Lee (who won an Academy Award). (MJ)

*2:15 p.m. (HBOS)-- *Barry Lyndon* (1975)--See Saturday at 7:45 a.m.

2:15 p.m. (CX)-- *John Grisham's the Rainmaker* (1997)--Francis Coppola took a John Grisham potboiler and made it into an engrossing but pedestrian film. Nonetheless, it is rich in characters, with particularly good work by Danny DeVito and Mickey Rourke (in a surprising stand-out performance as an ultra-sleazy lawyer) Also starring Matt Damon, John Voight, and Claire Danes. (MJ)

2:15 p.m. (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. (DW)

4:00 p.m. (FXM)-- *At Long Last Love* (1975)--Burt Reynolds and Cybill Shepherd can neither sing nor dance--they are definitely not Astaire and Rogers. Still, it's fun to watch them mangle Cole Porter's beautiful music and lyrics. Peter Bogdanovich's glitzy, expensive film proves that a warm affection for 1930s film musicals is not enough. One of the great bombs. With Madeline Kahn (often funny, despite her material) and John

Hillerman. (MJ)

*6:00 p.m. (AMC)-- *Double Indemnity* (1944)--Billy Wilder's marvelous and sinister version of the James M. Cain novel about a wife (Barbara Stanwyck) who connives with an insurance agent (Fred MacMurray) to murder her husband. Devastating picture of greed and amorality. Scripted by Raymond Chandler. (DW)

8:00 p.m. (HBO)-- *The Devil's Advocate* (1997)--Satan (portrayed in an over-the-top performance by Al Pacino) runs a white-shoe law firm in New York City. Keanu Reeves, as an ambitious young lawyer, makes a Faustian bargain and suffers for it. A very funny horror film that trades on the public's distrust of the legal profession. (MJ)

*12:00 a.m. (AMC)-- *Double Indemnity* (1944)--See 6:00 p.m.

1:00 a.m. (CX)-- *Face/Off* (1997)--Hong Kong action director John Woo lets out all the stops in this exciting, humorous, and (of course) preposterous film about a government agent (John Travolta) and his terrorist nemesis (Nicolas Cage) exchanging faces. (MJ)

3:35 a.m. (HBO)-- *The Devil's Advocate* (1997)--See 8:00 p.m.

Tuesday, February 23

6:00 a.m. (Showtime)-- *Rebecca* (1940)--Alfred Hitchcock's first US-made film, with Joan Fontaine as the second wife of nobleman Laurence Olivier. The first wife's presence hovers over the place. Judith Anderson is memorable as the sinister housekeeper, loyal to the first wife. (DW)

6:00 a.m. (FXM)-- *At Long Last Love* (1975)--see Monday at 4:00 p.m.

9:05 a.m. (Starz)-- *Austin Powers: International Man of Mystery* (1997)--Mike Myers plays a double role in this consistently amusing send-up of James Bond movies and the manners and styles of the 1970s. (MJ)

12:30 p.m. (Bravo)-- *Julia* (1977)--See Saturday at 8:00 a.m.

*2:00 p.m. (IFC)-- *Rashomon* (1950)--Well-known work by Japanese master Akira Kurosawa. In medieval Japan, four people give differing accounts of violent attack by a bandit on a nobleman. With Toshiro Mifune. (DW)

2:15 p.m. (AMC)-- *Them!* (1954)--One of the extraordinary 1950s black-and-white science fiction films, products of Cold War paranoia and insecurity, among other things. This one is about giant ant mutations terrorizing the Southwest and ultimately Los Angeles. Directed by Gordon Douglas. James Whitmore and Edmund Gwenn co-star. (DW)

4:00 p.m. (AMC)-- *Captain Horatio Hornblower* (1951)--Raoul Walsh directed this sea epic set in the Napoleonic wars, based on the C.S. Forester novels, in his vivid, muscular style. Some remarkable sequences. The normally dull Gregory Peck is well cast as Hornblower. (DW)

6:00 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. (DW)

6:25 p.m. (Starz)-- *Austin Powers: International Man of Mystery* (1997)--See 9:05 a.m.

8:00 p.m. (Bravo)-- *Breaking Away* (1979)--See Sunday at 9:30 a.m.

*9:35 p.m. (IFC)-- *Brazil* (1985)--Brilliant, undisciplined satire by Terry Gilliam about a future dystopia that strangely resembles the Great Depression of the 1930s and other bleak periods of the recent past. Starring Jonathan Pryce and Michael Palin. (MJ)

*10:30 p.m. (TCM)-- *Alice Adams* (1935)--Katharine Hepburn as social-climbing girl in George Cukor's filming of Booth Tarkington's novel. Memorable dinner table scene, as Hepburn embarrassingly tries to impress wealthy Fred MacMurray. (DW)

11:00 p.m. (AMC)-- *Seven Sinners* (1940)--Lively film, with Marlene Dietrich and John Wayne, about the US sailors somewhere in the tropics. Dietrich is definitely one of the sinners. With an excellent supporting cast, including Broderick Crawford, Mischa Auer, Billy Gilbert. (DW)

*12:00 a.m. (IFC)-- *Amarcord* (1974)--Fellini's semi-autobiographical work about a small town in Italy under Mussolini. An extraordinary film. (DW)

2:30 a.m. (Bravo)-- *Breaking Away* (1979)--See Sunday at 9:30 a.m.

3:30 a.m. (AMC)-- *Seven Sinners* (1940)--See 11:00 p.m.

*3:35 a.m. (IFC)-- *Brazil* (1985)--See 9:35 p.m.

4:00 a.m. (TCM)-- *Here Comes Mr. Jordan* (1941)--Amusing tale of a boxer (Robert Montgomery) called to heaven too soon, who has to return to earth in another body. With Evelyn Keyes, Claude Rains, Edward Everett Horton. Confusingly, Warren Beatty and Buck Henry's 1978 *Heaven Can Wait* is a remake of this film and not Ernst Lubitsch's 1943 *Heaven Can Wait*. (DW)

Wednesday, February 24

*9:15 a.m. (IFC)-- *Rashomon* (1950)--See Tuesday at 2:00 p.m.

*10:45 a.m. (Showtime)-- *Spellbound* (1945)--Psychiatrist Ingrid Bergman attempts to unravel patient Gregory Peck's dilemmas. Has he committed a murder? Alfred Hitchcock directed. (DW)

12:15 p.m. (AMC)-- *Dallas* (1950)--A story set in post-Civil War Dallas, with Gary Cooper seeking revenge on those who wronged him. Ruth Roman and Steve Cochran co-star. Directed by Stuart Heisler. (DW)

2:00 p.m. (FXM)-- *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. (DW)

4:00 p.m. (Bravo)-- *Breaking Away* (1979)--See Sunday at 9:30 a.m.

*6:00 p.m. (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. (DW)

*8:00 p.m. (FXM)-- *The Day the Earth Stood Still* (1951)--A visitor from another galaxy visits our planet to issue a stern warning. Robert Wise's film is a liberal plea for peace and understanding; as such, it defied the McCarthyite xenophobia and bellicosity dominating Hollywood at the time. It stands up surprising well almost 50 years later. Starring Patricia Neal and Michael Rennie. (MJ)

8:00 p.m. (AMC)-- *Reap the Wild Wind* (1942)--Cecil B. DeMille directed this intriguing film about 19th century salvagers off the coast of Georgia. Ray Milland and John Wayne fight over Paulette Goddard, as a spirited Southern belle. (DW)

9:55 p.m. (Encore)-- *Everyone Says I Love You* (1996)--Woody Allen at his most romantic and artificial. In this, Allen's only musical, people break into song (not unnaturally) and seem to have a genuinely good time, in a cliquish kind of way. The locales are Venice, Paris, and (of course) the Upper West Side of Manhattan, and very quickly the upper-crust, smug liberal values of the jet set characters become insufferable. With Edward Norton, Goldie Hawn, and Alan Alda. (MJ)

*10:00 p.m. (A&E)-- *Cracker: True Romance* (1995) [Part 1]--One of the remarkable British-made series crime series starring Robbie Coltrane as "Fitz," a police psychologist whose own personal problems are vast. Coltrane is amazing in the role--incisive, often intuitive, but always on the mark in interrogation of a subject. (MJ)

*10:30 p.m. (HBO)-- *The Ice Storm* (1997)--Excellent film by Ang Lee of aimlessness and disillusionment in the 1970s. As the middle class disintegrates in suburbia, we see the disintegration of the White House playing out in the background as the Watergate crisis runs its course. The fine cast includes Kevin Kline, Sigourney Weaver, Joan Allen, Jamey Sheridan and Christina Ricci. (MJ)

*11:05 p.m. (TMC)-- *The Boys in Company C* (1978)--One of the better realistic films about the Vietnam War. Avoids the cliches of most other war films. With James Whitmore, Jr. and Stan Shaw. Directed by Sidney J. Furie. (MJ)

*12:00 a.m. (TCM)-- *Citizen Kane* (1941)--Orson Welles's classic work, the tragic story of a newspaper tycoon with delusions of grandeur. Based loosely on the life of millionaire William Randolph Hearst, the film was essentially suppressed when it came out. (DW)

Sergeant Rutledge (1960)--See 6:00 p.m. (AMC)--

1:35 a.m. (HBOS)-- *A Place in the Sun* (1951)--A George Stevens film based on Theodore Dreiser's *An American Tragedy*. Not very faithful to the book, but valuable in its own right. Elizabeth Taylor is extraordinary as Montgomery Clift's dream girl. (DW)

*2:00 a.m. (A&E)-- *Cracker: True Romance* (1995) [Part 1]--See 10:00 p.m.

*2:15 a.m. (TCM)-- *Cat People* (1942)--The first of the Val Lewton-produced horror films, directed with considerable elegance by Jacques Tourneur. Extraordinary moments of psychological terror. (DW)

3:00 a.m. (AMC)-- *Reap the Wild Wind* (1942)--See 8:00 p.m.

*3:30 a.m. (TCM)-- *The Curse of the Cat People* (1944)--Not a horror film at all, this is the story of a lonely girl who conjures up a vision of her father's mysterious first wife (Simone Simon from *Cat People*). Val Lewton produced, Robert Wise made his directorial debut. (DW)

4:00 a.m. (FXM)-- *The Razor's Edge* (1946)--See 2:00 p.m.

Thursday, February 25

7:30 a.m. (TCM)-- *The Cincinnati Kid* (1965)--Norman Jewison directed this film about a big poker game in New Orleans. The performances of Steve McQueen, Tuesday Weld and Edward G. Robinson are the best things in the film. (DW)

*10:00 a.m. (Sundance)-- *The Purple Rose of Cairo* (1985)--See Sunday at 10:30 a.m.

*12:30 p.m. (Bravo)-- *Z* (1969)--Fictionalized story of the assassination of Greek liberal politician Gregorios Lambrakis and the government cover-up. Director Costa-Gavras has made this into an ominous, sinister political thriller. Music by Mikos Theodorakis. With an all-star French and Greek cast headed by Yves Montand. (MJ)

*1:30 p.m. (Showtime)-- *Hamlet* (1996)--Kenneth Branagh starred in and directed this long, unabridged film of Shakespeare's play. It is exciting and lucid, and it dispenses with the oedipal nonsense of other recent versions. Branagh is strong in the part, and Derek Jacobi is the definitive Claudius. Also starring Julie Christie and Kate Winslet. (MJ)

1:45 p.m. (TCM)-- *Marnie* (1964)--Tippie Hedren is a woman who can't stop stealing and Sean Connery is her employer, and admirer, who is trying to figure out why. The story traces her problem to psychological trauma. Alfred Hitchcock directed. (DW)

*5:00 p.m. (Sundance)-- *The Purple Rose of Cairo* (1985)--See Sunday at 10:30 a.m.

*6:00 p.m. (Encore)-- *The Conversation* (1974)--A security specialist involved in bugging and other surveillance begins to have qualms about his profession. Francis Coppola's detailed, disturbing look at the milieu and practices of the security business is one of his best films. Starring Gene Hackman and the late John Cazale. (MJ)

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. (DW)

8:00 p.m. (Encore)-- *Apocalypse Now* (1979)--Overrated and overblown Vietnam war film by Francis Ford Coppola, based loosely on Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Special agent Martin Sheen is sent into Cambodia to find maverick US officer, played by Marlon Brando, and dispatch him. The film perhaps says more about Coppola and his circle than it does about Vietnam. Worth viewing. (DW)

*8:00 p.m. (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. (DW)

9:45 p.m. (IFC)-- *Riff Raff* (1991)--A Ken Loach film. The trials and tribulations of building workers in London, with Robert Carlyle (of *Full Monty*). Some moving moments and performances. (DW)

*10:00 p.m. (A&E)-- *Cracker: True Romance* (1995) [Part 2]--See Wednesday at 10:00 p.m.

12:05 a.m. (HBOS)-- *Marathon Man* (1976)--Exciting, convoluted spy thriller about stolen jewels, Nazis hiding out in the US, and the CIA. Starring Dustin Hoffman and Roy Scheider. Laurence Olivier is particularly effective as a sadistic Mengele-type dentist. Directed by John Schlesinger. (MJ)

12:45 a.m. (TNT)-- *This Boy's Life* (1993)--See 8:00 p.m.

*2:00 a.m. (A&E)-- *Cracker: True Romance* (1995) [Part 2]--See Wednesday at 10:00 p.m.

2:45 a.m. (IFC)-- *Riff Raff* (1991)--See 9:45 p.m.

4:00 a.m. (A&E)-- *The Sun Also Rises* (1957)--Star-filled adaptation of the Hemingway novel. Glossy and inadequate. Directed by Henry King. (MJ)

Friday, February 26

*4:00 p.m. (AMC)-- *Heaven Can Wait* (1943)--Don Ameche stars as a dead man seeking entry to hell, who recounts in flashback what he thinks has been a life full of sin. With Gene Tierney and Charles Coburn. Directed by Ernst Lubitsch. (DW)

7:00 p.m. (Family)-- *National Lampoon's Vacation* (1983)--Chevy Chase and Beverly D'Angelo star in this often hilarious low comedy about a quintessentially middle-class family's cross-country trip to the Wally World theme park. The sequences with Imogene Coca are especially funny. Directed by Harold Ramis. (MJ)

9:00 p.m. (Family)-- *Lost in America* (1985)--Yuppies, played by Albert Brooks (who also directed) and Julie Hagerty, give up their good corporate jobs to tour the country in an RV, with disastrous (and funny) results. (MJ)

9:45 p.m. (IFC)-- *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. (DW)

*10:00 p.m. (TCM)-- *Top Hat* (1935)--One of the finest of the Fred Astaire-Ginger Rogers musicals, directed by Mark Sandrich. The plot, for those who care, involves mistaken identity. It is the songs by Irving Berlin and the dance numbers that count here, including "Cheek to Cheek," "Isn't This a Lovely Day To Be Caught in the Rain," and "Top Hat, White Tie and Tails." (DW)

*11:45 p.m. (HBOS)-- *Sunset Boulevard* (1950)--Billy Wilder's classic about illusions hanging on, and the old Hollywood versus the new. A once-glamorous star of the silent screen living in a gothic Hollywood mansion takes a younger, cynical screenwriter as a lover. One of the great films. With Gloria Swanson, William Holden, Eric von Stroheim and Buster Keaton. (MJ)

*12:10 a.m. (Starz)-- *Wag the Dog* (1997)--Very timely. A US president hires a PR team to distract attention from a sex scandal by fabricating a war with Albania. Barry Levinson's film has bite, and the screenplay by David Mamet is sinister and funny. Great ensemble acting by Robert De Niro, Dustin Hoffman, Denis Leary and Anne Heche. (MJ)

4:00 a.m. (IFC)-- *A Midnight Clear* (1992)--See 9:45 p.m.

The Umbrellas of Cherbourg (1964)--Jacques Demy's masterpiece of both color and music. A young couple (Catherine Deneuve and Nino Castelnuovo) pledge lasting love to each other though he must go off to the Algerian War. He returns to find she has married someone else. The emotional musical score (by Michel Legrand, with lyrics by Demy) is sung through, with no spoken dialogue. Every frame of this film is perfect. Look for the recently restored version. (MJ)



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