

# Some interesting films on US television, June 12-June 18

Marty Jonas (MJ), David Walsh (DW)  
12 June 1999

## Video pick of the week--find it in your video store

*Das Boot* (1982)—Life on board a German submarine in World War II. Claustrophobic and harrowing, the film (directed by Wolfgang Petersen) follows the daily life of the crew as the vessel becomes the hunted as well as the hunter. Amazing sound editing. With Jurgen Prochnow. Best seen with subtitles in the wide-screen version. (MJ)

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, June 12

7:30 a.m. (AMC)—*Finian's Rainbow* (1968)—Petula Clark sings beautifully, Fred Astaire is miscast as her dreamy dad, and Tommy Steele quickly wears out his welcome as the broad-smiling, hyperactive leprechaun in Francis Copplola's flat version of the hit populist Broadway musical. In the course of this unrelentingly upbeat film, a tobacco-growing commune struggles for survival and a bigoted Southern senator is turned into an African-American. However, the songs by E.Y. Harburg retain their charm. (MJ)

8:30 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)

\*9:00 a.m. (IFC)—*I Shot Jesse James* (1949)—Samuel Fuller's remarkable film—done mostly in close-ups—about the shooting of Jesse James by Robert Ford, "that dirty little coward." With Reed Hadley and John Ireland. (MJ)

10:10 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)

12:00 p.m. (TNT)—*Coal Miner's Daughter* (1980)—Sissy Spacek, who did her own singing, is excellent in this slightly sanitized biography of country singer Loretta Lynn, born in poverty in Kentucky. Tommy Lee Jones as her husband, Beverly D'Angelo as Patsy Cline and Levon Helm as her coal miner father also stand out. Directed by Michael Apted. (DW)

\*12:15 p.m. (Encore)—*Touch of Evil* (1958)—One of Orson Welles's greatest films. He plays a corrupt police chief in a border town who plants evidence to convict the "guilty"—in this instance a hapless young Mexican. A tale of moral, physical and political corruption that is rich in every way. With Charlton Heston, Janet Leigh, Joseph Calleia and Akim Tamiroff, and uncredited cameos by Joseph Cotten, Marlene Dietrich and Mercedes McCambridge. (MJ)

\*2:30 p.m. (AMC)—*My Fair Lady* (1964)—George Cukor's beautiful film of the Lerner and Loewe musical adapted from Shaw's *Pygmalion*. Memorable costumes and sets by Cecil Beaton. Starring Rex Harrison and Audrey Hepburn (whose singing is actually done by Marni Nixon). (MJ)

5:00 p.m. (TMC)—*Five Easy Pieces* (1970)—(TMC)—Jack Nicholson's film that helped define his sardonic screen persona. He plays a concert pianist from a wealthy family who opts to work on an oil rig. Watch for the memorable scene in the diner between Nicholson's character and a waitress. Directed by the underappreciated Bob Rafelson. With Karen Black, Billy "Green" Bush and Susan Anspach. (MJ)

\*4:30 p.m. (TMC)—*Chinatown* (1974)—The best example of modern film noir. A convoluted tale of incest, corruption, and the fight over access to southern California water. Jack Nicholson plays the private detective. With Faye Dunaway, John Huston. Directed by Roman Polanski. (MJ)

5:00 p.m. (TNT)—*Lone Star* (1996)—John Sayles wrote and directed this well-done, politically astute film about the ethnic divisions in Texas. Unfortunately, it suffers from a contrived, hard-to-believe ending. With Chris Cooper and Elizabeth Pena. (MJ)

5:15 p.m. (TCM)—*The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner* (1962)—One of the prime examples of Britain's "neo-realist" cinema of the 1960s, directed by Tony Richardson. The story of a young man (a remarkable Tom Courtenay) in a reform school, who takes up running. An uneven work, but it has stirring moments. With Michael Redgrave. (DW)

10:35 p.m. (Starz)—*Austin Powers: International Man of Mystery* (1997)—See 10:10 a.m.

1:00 a.m. (TCM)—*The Milagro Beanfield War* (1988)—Robert Redford directed this story of a conflict between a poor farmer and a rich land developer in New Mexico. With Chick Vennera, Richard Bradford, Ruben Blades and Sonia Braga. From the novel by John Nichols. (DW)

1:40 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)

1:45 a.m. (Starz)—*Frantic* (1988)—Roman Polanski's failed attempt to make a Hitchcock-type suspense film. With Harrison Ford. (MJ)

\*3:35 a.m. (Encore)—*Touch of Evil* (1958)—See 12:15 p.m..

## Sunday, June 13

\*6:00 a.m. (TCM)—*The Trial* (1962)—Orson Welles's delirious, over-the-top version of the Franz Kafka novel, much of it shot in an abandoned railroad station. Hard to take at times, but its Expressionist paranoia and terror are fascinating. (DW)

6:30 a.m. (TNT)—*Coal Miner's Daughter* (1980)—See Saturday at 12:00 p.m..

\*7:30 a.m. (AMC)—*My Fair Lady* (1964)—See Saturday at 2:30 p.m..

8:00 a.m. (HBO)—*Contact* (1997)—An intelligent, refreshingly non-xenophobic film on the search for extraterrestrial intelligence. Jodie Foster plays the single-minded astrophysicist in this adaptation from the novel by the late Carl Sagan. Unfortunately, toward the end the film becomes mushy-minded and tries to make its peace with religion. (MJ)

8:00 a.m. (TCM)—*The Clock* (1945)—A charming wartime story set in New York City. Robert Walker, a soldier on two-day leave, meets and falls for Judy Garland. They spend the day and night (innocently)

together. Vincente Minnelli directed with extraordinary style. (DW)

10:00 a.m. (Showtime)— *Young Frankenstein* (1974)—One of Mel Brooks' funnier and more coherent parodies, this time of the classic horror film by James Whale. Particularly effective because it uses many of the original sets. With Peter Boyle (as the monster) and Gene Wilder (as Dr. Frankenstein). (MJ)

11:00 a.m. (USA)— *Dead Again* (1991)—Visually exciting film (with debts to Hitchcock and Welles) set in Los Angeles is a murder mystery in which reincarnation is the key. Kenneth Branagh directed and plays two roles, as does Emma Thompson. (MJ)

3:00 p.m. (USA)— *Red Rock West* (1993)—Modern attempt at film noir, only partially successful, with Nicholas Cage, Dennis Hopper and the late (great) J.T. Walsh. Directed by John Dahl. (DW)

\*3:30 p.m. (HBO)— *Last Action Hero* (1993)—Arnold Schwarzenegger vehicle that proves to be a delight. A boy goes to a movie theater and meets his idol—an action hero—who steps out of the screen and takes him back in. A good action film that spoofs the genre and plays with the tension between movies and reality. It also includes hilarious send-ups of Olivier's *Hamlet* and Bergman's *The Seventh Seal*. Directed by John McTiernan. (MJ)

3:30 p.m. (Showtime)— *Saturday Night Fever* (1977)—A hardware store salesman in Brooklyn becomes a champion disco dancer at night. This is the film that launched John Travolta's film career, and he is a marvel as a dancer. Music by the Bee Gees. Directed by John Badham. (MJ)

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

6:30 p.m. (HBO)— *Contact* (1997)—See 8:00 a.m.

8:00 p.m. (TCM)— *What's New, Pussycat?* (1965)—Silly, but sometimes very funny film directed by Clive Donner and written by Woody Allen (in his first such effort), about fashion editor Peter O'Toole who goes to psychiatrist Peter Sellers for advice. Mayhem ensues. (DW)

11:50 p.m. (Encore)— *All That Jazz* (1979)—Choreographer/director Bob Fosse's overwrought autobiographical film about his mental and physical crackup. Not strictly speaking a musical, but it is filled with musical numbers—including a bizarre one occurring during the main character's open-heart surgery. With Roy Scheider and Ben Vereen. (MJ)

#### **Monday, June 14**

8:55 a.m. (TMC)— *Duel in the Sun* (1946)—King Vidor's intense Western psychodrama. Jennifer Jones, a "half-breed," is caught between two brothers (Gregory Peck and Joseph Cotten). With Lionel Barrymore, Lillian Gish, Herbert Marshall, Charles Bickford and Walter Huston. (DW)

9:30 a.m. (HBOP)— *Ishtar* (1987)—One of the most famous failures in recent Hollywood history, Elaine May directed this \$40 million picture, which stars Warren Beatty and Dustin Hoffman. Interesting as an historical curiosity. (DW)

10:00 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)

10:00 a.m. (TCM)— *Brigadoon* (1954)—Vincente Minnelli's rendition of the Lerner and Loewe musical about two hikers (Gene Kelly and Van Johnson) in Scotland who happen upon a village that comes to life every 300 years. Colorful and charming, but suffers badly from being shot on an obvious Hollywood soundstage. Also starring Cyd Charisse. (MJ)

12:00 p.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)

2:45 p.m. (Cinemax)— *Gattaca* (1997)—In this future capitalist society,

your place in the productive process is determined by your genetic makeup—which is mapped at birth and stays with you as your main ID for life. One man rebels against the system. Andrew Niccol wrote and directed this intelligent film, highly derivative of the fiction of Philip K. Dick. (MJ)

6:00 p.m. (TCM)— *The Citadel* (1938)—King Vidor's moving and insightful adaptation of the A. J. Cronin novel about an idealistic doctor who experiences a few disappointments in a mining village and opts to treat the wealthy and hypochondriacal instead. With Robert Donat and Rosalind Russell. (DW)

\*7:00 p.m. (HBOF)— *Last Action Hero* (1993)—See Sunday at 3:30 p.m..

10:00 p.m. (AMC)— *People Will Talk* (1951)—Odd film, directed by Joseph L. Mankiewicz, with Cary Grant as a philosophizing doctor, married to Jeanne Crain. He is accused of malpractice and has to defend himself. (DW)

\*10:35 p.m. (Encore)— *A Clockwork Orange* (1971)—Stanley Kubrick's brilliant but thoroughly nasty film about a sadistic young street thug (Malcolm McDowell) in the near future turned into a passive, spiritless citizen by means of a cruel form of aversion therapy. In the process, he also loses his ability to enjoy Beethoven. Kubrick adapted this from the novel by Anthony Burgess, and Burgess always hated the result. (MJ)

\*4:00 a.m. (TCM)— *The Roaring Twenties* (1939)—James Cagney and Humphrey Bogart as rival crime bosses in this Raoul Walsh classic. Script is clichéd, but action and finale are not. (DW)

4:30 a.m. (AMC)— *People Will Talk* (1951)—See 10:00 p.m..

\*4:35 a.m. (Cinemax)— *Taxi Driver* (1976)—Paul Schrader wrote and Martin Scorsese directed this bleak, obsessive classic that looks at the underside of New York City. Starring Robert De Niro, Jody Foster and Harvey Keitel. Great score by Bernard Hermann. (MJ)

#### **Tuesday, June 15**

6:45 a.m. (HBOS)— *A Place in the Sun* (1951)—See Saturday at 8:30 a.m.

10:00 a.m. (FXM)— *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)

10:45 a.m. (AMC)— *The Naked Jungle* (1954)—Above-average jungle adventure directed by Byron Haskin, with Charlton Heston and Eleanor Parker. (DW)

\*12:00 p.m. (TCM)— *On the Town* (1949)—Memorable MGM musical—three sailors with 24 hours' leave in New York City. Based on the show by Betty Comden-Adolph Green-Leonard Bernstein, with Gene Kelly, Frank Sinatra, Vera-Ellen and Betty Garrett. Directed by Stanley Donen and Kelly. (DW)

\*2:00 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. (DW)

10:30 p.m. (TCM)— *National Velvet* (1944)—Elizabeth Taylor is dazzling as teenager determined to enter her beloved horse in the Grand National Steeplechase. With Anne Revere, Donald Crisp and Mickey Rooney; directed by Clarence Brown. (DW)

12:00 a.m. (FXM)— *Julia* (1977)—See 10:00 a.m.

#### **Wednesday, June 16**

8:00 a.m. (Showtime)— *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. (DW)

8:15 a.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. (DW)

11:30 a.m. (HBO)— *Contact* (1997)—See Sunday at 8:00 a.m.

\*12:00 p.m. (TCM)— *A Day at the Races* (1937)—Marx Brothers' foolishness. Set in a sanatorium where rich and hypochondriacal Margaret Dumont is the most prominent patient. Directed by Sam Wood. (DW)

\*2:00 p.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. (DW)

2:15 p.m. (Showtime)— *Young Frankenstein* (1974)—See Sunday at 10:00 a.m.

5:45 p.m. (AMC)— *Band of Angels* (1957)—A remarkably complex look at black-and-white relations in Civil War America. Clark Gable plays a Southern gentleman with a past as a slave trader, Yvonne DeCarlo is a Southern belle who discovers she has black ancestors and Sidney Poitier is an educated slave. Directed by Raoul Walsh, from the novel by Robert Penn Warren. (DW)

\*5:45 p.m. (HBOS)— *Last Action Hero* (1993)—See Sunday at 3:30 p.m..

\*8:00 p.m. (Bravo)— *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie* (1972)—Described by one critic as famous Spanish director Luis Bunuel's "most completely achieved fusion of satire, comedy, fantasy and (controlled) emotion." (DW)

\*10:15 p.m. (AMC)— *12 Angry Men* (1957)—Gripping film that takes place in only one room as 12 jurors struggle to reach a verdict. During the process each reveals his character. Great cast headed by Henry Fonda, Lee J. Cobb and E.G. Marshall. Directed by Sidney Lumet. (MJ)

\*2:30 a.m. (Bravo)— *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie* (1972)—See 8:00 p.m..

\*4:30 a.m. (AMC)— *12 Angry Men* (1957)—See 10:15 p.m..

#### Thursday, June 17

8:15 a.m. (AMC)— *You Can't Take It With You* (1938)—Frank Capra's version of the George S. Kaufman-Moss Hart comedy about the antics of an eccentric during the Depression. Starring James Stewart and Jean Arthur. (DW)

\*10:30 a.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. (DW)

\*10:45 a.m. (AMC)— *To Be or Not to Be* (1942)—Ernst Lubitsch's classic black comedy about an acting troupe in Nazi-occupied Warsaw. Jack Benny is superb as the conceited ham who heads the troupe, and Carole Lombard is his faithless wife. Not to be missed. (MJ)

\*11:40 a.m. (Encore)— *Touch of Evil* (1958)—See Saturday at 12:15 p.m..

12:00 p.m. (AMC)— *Band of Angels* (1957)—See Wednesday at 5:45 p.m..

\*12:30 p.m. (Bravo)— *The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie* (1972)—See Wednesday at 8:00 p.m..

\*12:45 p.m. (TMC)— *Five Easy Pieces* (1970)—See Saturday at 2:45 p.m..

3:45 p.m. (Cinemax)— *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)

6:00 p.m. (FXM)— *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. (DW)

8:00 p.m. (Comedy)— *Married to the Mob* (1988)—Michelle Pfeiffer is

the widow of a Mafia hitman, trying to change her life. Dean Stockwell is the crime boss who lusts for her. With Matthew Modine. A semi-amusing, semi-conformist film, directed by Jonathan Demme. (DW)

\*9:00 p.m. (Sci-Fi)— *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)

\*10:00 p.m. (FXM)— *Blood and Wine* (1996)—Jack Nicholson plays a bankrupt wine merchant pulling off a jewel heist with an over-the-hill, nerved-up safecracker (Michael Caine, in an unusual role as a murderous heavy). With Judy Davis and Stephen Dorff. Another neglected film by underrated director Bob Rafelson. (MJ)

\*11:10 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)

12:50 a.m. (Starz)— *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)

\*1:05 a.m. (Encore)— *Sorcerer* (1977)—Three trucks driven by desperate men run all kinds of hazards to bring volatile shipments of explosives to an oil field fire in Latin America. William Friedkin directed this underrated, highly suspenseful remake of the French classic *The Wages of Fear*. Starring Roy Scheider. (MJ)

\*1:30 a.m. (Sci-Fi)— *Brazil* (1985)—See 9:00 p.m..

\*1:50 a.m. (HBOF)— *Last Action Hero* (1993)—See Sunday at 3:30 p.m..

#### Friday, June 18

\*6:30 a.m. (Cinemax)— *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)

\*6:55 a.m. (TMC)— *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)

\*7:45 a.m. (IFC)— *The Steel Helmet* (1951)—Gene Evans stars in this Samuel Fuller war drama about US troops behind enemy lines in Korean War. (DW)

8:00 a.m. (AMC)— *Bright Leaf* (1950)—Michael Curtiz directed this interesting saga about the tobacco industry in the 19th century. Gary Cooper, seeking revenge on old enemies and old lovers, builds a cigarette empire. With Lauren Bacall, Patricia Neal, Jack Carson. (DW)

8:00 a.m. (FXM)— *Unfaithfully Yours* (1948)—see Thursday at 6:00 p.m..

\*12:05 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)

2:00 p.m. (HBOP)— *Breakdown* (1997)—see Saturday at 1:40 a.m.

2:00 p.m. (AMC)— *Niagara* (1953)—Marilyn Monroe is an adulterous wife planning to kill her husband (Joseph Cotten) on their honeymoon at Niagara Falls, in this somewhat overwrought, but tense film, directed by Henry Hathaway. (DW)

\*3:30 p.m. (IFC)— *The Steel Helmet* (1951)—See 7:45 a.m.

6:00 p.m. (Showtime)— *Saturday Night Fever* (1977)—See 3:30 p.m..

8:00 p.m. (TNT)—*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 Land theme park. The sequences with Imogene Coca are especially funny. Directed by Harold Ramis. (MJ)

8:00 p.m. (Showtime)—*Sliding Doors* (1998)—Charming, likable light comedy hinges on a gimmick that works well: the film shows the two paths the main character's life could take depending on whether or not she misses her train. A vehicle for the talented Gwyneth Paltrow, performing with a flawless British accent. (MJ)

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)

\*12:45 a.m. (TMC)—*Chinatown* (1974)—See Saturday at 4:30 p.m..

2:15 a.m. (TNT)—*Fast Times at Ridgemont High* (1982)—A lightweight film, but some lively performances by a remarkable group of young actors: Sean Penn, Jennifer Jason Leigh, Robert Romanus, Phoebe Cates, Forest Whitaker, Anthony Edwards, Nicholas Cage. (DW)

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



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