

Some interesting films on US television, November 20-26

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

Video pick of the week—find it in your video store

Finders Keepers (1984)—The underrated Richard Lester directed this hilarious farce involving a chase after stolen money. The pace is frenetic, as it was in his other films, *A Hard Day's Night* and *The Ritz*. With David Wayne, Beverly D'Angelo and Michael O'Keefe. (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, November 20

*5:25 a.m. (Encore)—*Barry Lyndon* (1975)—An intelligent adaptation of William Thackeray's novel about an eighteenth century scoundrel, directed by Stanley Kubrick. (DW)

6:00 a.m. (TCM)—*I Remember Mama* (1948)—George Stevens, in his first film after returning from war, directed this saga of Scandinavian immigrants in San Francisco. With Irene Dunne, Barbara Bel Geddes and Oskar Homolka, among others. (DW)

*8:40 a.m. (TMC)—*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)

12:30 p.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 Coppola'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)

*1:00 p.m. (TCM)—*Key Largo* (1948)—A brutal gangster (Edward G. Robinson) holds a group of people hostage in a hotel during a hurricane. Humphrey Bogart is a returning veteran. Based on Maxwell Anderson's play, script by John Huston (who directed) and Richard Brooks. With Claire Trevor. (DW)

1:30 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)

*3:45 p.m. (Cinemax)—*Last Action Hero* (1993)—See 8:40 a.m.

*4:00 p.m. (Starz)—*Last Action Hero* (1993)—See 8:40 a.m.

*5:00 p.m. (TCM)—*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)

6:15 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)

10:45 p.m. (HBOS)—*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)

12:00 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)

2:00 a.m. (TCM)—*Amarcord* (1974)—Fellini's semi-autobiographical work about a small town in Italy under Mussolini. An extraordinary film. (DW)

Sunday, November 21

6:00 a.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)

6:25 a.m. (Encore)—*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. (DW)

*12:00 p.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)

1:05 p.m. (Encore)—*Oklahoma!* (1955)—Fred Zinnemann's tepid film adaptation of the watershed 1943 Rodgers and Hammerstein musical. The performances (by Gordon MacRae and Shirley Jones) do not measure up to those of the original Broadway production, but the dance sequences are spectacular, especially the dream ballet choreographed by Agnes DeMille. (MJ)

6:00 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)

*6:00 p.m. (Encore)—*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. (DW)

7:20 p.m. (TMC)—*Twilight* (1998)—Crisp dialogue and good plotting carry this film about an elderly detective (Paul Newman) solving murders in Hollywood. Excellent cast also includes Gene Hackman, Susan Sarandon and James Garner. Many smart observations about growing old. Directed by Robert Benton, from a screenplay by Benton and novelist Richard Russo. (MJ)

8:00 p.m. (IFC)—*A Midnight Clear* (1992)—See 6:00 a.m.

10:00 p.m. (TCM)—*Dinner at Eight* (1933)—A collection of individuals from various social classes, all facing a crisis, prepare to dine at eight. George Cukor directed this MGM version of the George Kaufman-Edna Ferber play, with Jean Harlow, Marie Dressler, Wallace Beery and John Barrymore. (DW)

10:15 p.m. (AMC)—*A Shot in the Dark* (1964)—Blake Edwards directed the second of the Inspector Clouseau films, starring the inimitable Peter Sellers. With Elke Sommer, George Sanders and Herbert Lom. (DW)

12:00 a.m. (IFC)—*A Midnight Clear* (1992)—See 6:00 a.m.

1:30 a.m. (TCM)—*My Favorite Year* (1982)—Richard Benjamin directed this uneven look at early television. In 1954 a young man has the job of chaperoning the star (Peter O'Toole) of that week's show. Joseph Bologna plays a Sid Caesar type. (DW)

2:40 a.m. (HBOS)—*Enemies, A Love Story* (1989)—Set in post-World War II Brooklyn and the Catskills, Paul Mazursky's faithful adaptation of Isaac Bashevis Singer's novel has Herman, a Jewish intellectual married to the Polish woman who sheltered him during the war, carrying on an affair with a seductive married woman. Then his first wife, presumed dead in Poland, appears at his door. Mazursky's film is humorous and, at the same time, sad, with superb performances by Ron Silver, Anjelica Huston and Lena Olin. (MJ)

3:10 a.m. (Encore)—*Endless Love* (1981)—Franco Zeffirelli made a very bad film out of Scott Spencer's very good novel. With Brooke Shields, Martin Hewitt, Shirley Knight and Richard Kiley. (MJ)

3:30 a.m. (TCM)—*Victor/Victoria* (1982)—Julie Andrews masquerades as a man to make a career for herself in Paris night-clubs in the 1930s. Director Blake Edwards wants to say something about sexual roles, but the results seem a little weak. With James Garner. Lesley Ann Warren is painful to watch. (DW)

3:45 a.m. (Cinemax)—*Carnival of Souls* (1962)—Effective very low-budget horror film shot with an unknown cast at a deserted amusement park in Lawrence, Kansas. Directed by Herk Harvey. (MJ)

Monday, November 22

6:00 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)

12:25 p.m. (TMC)—*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. (DW)

10:15 p.m. (AMC)—*The Spirit of St. Louis* (1957)—James Stewart, a little long in the tooth, plays Charles Lindbergh in this mediocre Billy Wilder film about the first transatlantic flight in 1927. (DW)

4:45 a.m. (AMC)—*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. (DW)

Tuesday, November 23

6:00 a.m. (TCM)—*Ah, Wilderness!* (1935)—Based on the relatively

lighthearted Eugene O'Neill play about turn-of-the-century small-town life. Directed by Clarence Brown, with Wallace Beery, Lionel Barrymore and Mickey Rooney. (DW)

*7:30 a.m. (Cinemax)—*Miller's Crossing* (1990)—The Coen brothers do their version of the *Red Harvest* (Dashiell Hammett) story: gangsters wage a civil war for control of a city. Overblown and self-conscious, but it holds one's attention. With Gabriel Byrne and Albert Finney. (DW)

7:45 a.m. (IFC)—*What's Up, Tiger Lily?* (1966)—Woody Allen's first film is actually a hilarious redubbing of an atrocious Japanese spy thriller. With music by the Lovin' Spoonful and the voices of Allen and Louise Lasser. (MJ)

9:00 a.m. (Showtime)—*The Naked Jungle* (1954)—Above-average jungle adventure directed by Byron Haskin, with Charlton Heston and Eleanor Parker. (DW)

10:40 a.m. (TMC)—*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. (DW)

*11:30 a.m. (TCM)—*A Midsummer Night's Dream* (1935)—Famed German theater director Max Reinhardt oversaw this oddity, with James Cagney as Bottom and Mickey Rooney as Puck in Shakespeare's magical play. (DW)

2:00 p.m. (TCM)—*Kiss Me Kate* (1953)—Vulgar, brassy production of Cole Porter musical, with Howard Keel and Kathryn Grayson, based on Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*. Directed by George Sidney. (DW)

2:45 p.m. (IFC)—*What's Up, Tiger Lily?* (1966)—See 7:45 a.m.

4:00 p.m. (FXM)—*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. (DW)

6:00 p.m. (AMC)—*Tucker: The Man and His Dream* (1988)—The pioneer automaker (played by Jeff Bridges) and his company are destroyed by the giants of the auto industry. Director Francis Coppola obviously meant this as a parable about the independent artist versus the film industry, with Tucker standing in for Coppola. The whole thing seems oversimplified. Good performance by Martin Landau. (MJ)

9:30 p.m. (FXM)—*Wall Street* (1987)—Oliver Stone directed this film about Wall Street sharks and their comeuppance with his usual subtlety and restraint. With Charlie Sheen, Martin Sheen and Michael Douglas. (DW)

*1:15 a.m. (TCM)—*Olympia* (1936)—Nazi propagandist Leni Riefenstahl, under official commission from Hitler and Goebbels, made this massive documentary about the 1936 Berlin Olympics. Despite its obscene origins and its flattering shots of Hitler, the film remains a brilliant paean to the human body. (MJ)

Wednesday, November 24

6:00 a.m. (TCM)—*Gaslight* (1944)—Charles Boyer tries to drive Ingrid Bergman mad in George Cukor's period thriller. (DW)

6:00 a.m. (FXM)—*Heaven Can Wait* (1943)—See Tuesday at 4:00 p.m.

7:30 a.m. (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. (DW)

8:00 a.m. (TCM)—*Dark Victory* (1939)—Bette Davis is a socialite who learns she has a terminal illness. George Brent is her brain surgeon husband. Directed by Edmund Goulding. (DW)

*8:30 a.m. (AMC)—*My Darling Clementine* (1946)—John Ford directed this Western about the lead-up to the gunfight at the O.K. Corral. Henry Fonda is Wyatt Earp and Victor Mature Doc Holliday. With Ward Bond, Tim Holt, Walter Brennan. (DW)

12:30 p.m. (Cinemax)—*The Wanderers* (1979)—Philip Kaufman's film

is an excellent adaptation of Richard Price's fine novel about youth gangs in the Bronx in 1963. With Ken Wahl. (MJ)

2:00 p.m. (TCM)—*Adam's Rib* (1949)—One of the stronger Spencer Tracy-Katharine Hepburn films, in which the two find themselves on opposing sides in the court case of a woman (the wonderful Judy Holliday) who has shot and wounded her philandering husband (Tom Ewell). Ruth Gordon and Garson Kanin wrote the script; George Cukor directed. (DW)

*5:15 p.m. (Starz)—*Last Action Hero* (1993)—See Saturday at 8:40 a.m.

5:25 p.m. (TMC)—*At Long Last Love* (1975)—Burt Reynolds and Sybill 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. (HBOS)—*The Ice Storm* (1997)—See Saturday at 10:45 p.m.

*6:00 p.m. (TCM)—*Rancho Notorious* (1952)—A Western like no other, except possibly *Johnny Guitar*. Arthur Kennedy gets work at a ranch, really a bandit hideout, run by Marlene Dietrich, to find his girlfriend's killer. With Mel Ferrer. (DW)

12:00 a.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)

*1:05 a.m. (HBOS)—*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)

3:50 a.m. (HBOP)—*The Ice Storm* (1997)—See Saturday at 10:45 p.m.

Thursday, November 25

10:25 a.m. (Encore)—*Carousel* (1956)—Hollywood turned a great dark Broadway musical into a perky feel-good film. Most of the Rodgers and Hammerstein songs are intact, however. Starring Gordon MacRae and Shirley Jones. Directed by Henry King. (MJ)

11:45 a.m. (TCM)—*National Velvet* (1944)—See Sunday at 6:00 p.m.

12:30 p.m. (FXM)—*Carousel* (1956)—See 10:25 a.m.

1:20 p.m. (Cinemax)—*The Cotton Club* (1984)—Richard Gere stars in Francis Coppola's sometimes successful attempt to capture the music and gangster violence of Harlem in the 1930s. The production was riddled with problems and the often-rewritten screenplay is by novelists William Kennedy and Mario Puzo. (MJ)

2:00 p.m. (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. (DW)

*2:00 p.m. (FXM)—*All About Eve* (1950)—Joseph Mankiewicz wrote and directed this classic about back-stabbing in the world of the theater. The dialogue is nonstop witty and incisive. Memorable performances by George Sanders and Bette Davis. (MJ)

3:15 p.m. (Encore)—*Oklahoma!* (1955)—See Sunday at 1:05 p.m.

4:15 p.m. (Showtime)—*Sliding Doors* (1998)—See Saturday at 6:15 p.m.

8:00 p.m. (TCM)—*Oliver!* (1968)—Excellent, spirited film version of the musical based on Dickens's *Oliver Twist*. There is no pulling back on the harshness of life in Victorian England. Outstanding costumes, sets and choreography. With Oliver Reed, Ron Moody and Mark Lester. Directed by Carol Reed. (MJ)

*2:00 a.m. (Bravo)—*Foreign Correspondent* (1940)—Joel McCrea is the correspondent caught up in a spy intrigue in Alfred Hitchcock's film, with George Sanders, Robert Benchley, Herbert Marshall, Laraine Day. (DW)

Carousel (1956)—See 12:30 p.m.

(FXM)—

2:30 a.m. (TCM)—*David Copperfield* (1935)—W.C. Fields as Mr. Micawber and Basil Rathbone as Murdstone are highlights of this lavish film version of the Dickens novel. Freddie Bartholemew is the young David Copperfield. Directed by George Cukor. (DW)

3:20 a.m. (Encore)—*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)

*4:00 a.m. (FXM)—*All About Eve* (1950)—See 2:00 p.m.

*4:00 a.m. (Showtime)—*American Gigolo* (1980)—Paul Schrader wrote and directed this flawed but fascinating study of an upscale male prostitute. Starring Richard Gere. (MJ)

Friday, November 26

*7:30 a.m. (Cinemax)—*Casablanca* (1942)—The Michael Curtiz classic about life and love in wartime Morocco, with Humphrey Bogart and Ingrid Bergman. (DW)

*9:15 a.m. (Cinemax)—*Last Action Hero* (1993)—See Saturday at 8:40 a.m.

*10:30 a.m. (TCM)—*42nd Street* (1933)—Classic 30s musical, with Warner Baxter as ailing director and Ruby Keeler as the newcomer who is called on at the last moment when the star injures her ankle. With Dick Powell, directed by Lloyd Bacon. (DW)

*12:30 p.m. (Bravo)—*Foreign Correspondent* (1940)—See Thursday at 2:00 a.m.

*2:35 p.m. (Encore)—*Hannah and Her Sisters* (1986)—see Sunday at 6:00 p.m.

4:00 p.m. (HBOP)—*Enemies, A Love Story* (1989)—See Sunday at 2:40 a.m.

5:00 p.m. (TCM)—*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. (DW)

5:25 p.m. (TMC)—*Twilight* (1998)—See Sunday at 7:20 p.m.

8:00 p.m. (IFC)—*Tommy* (1975)—The Who's rock opera done with dazzling, overheated images that assault and often insult your eyes. Often hard to take, but for once director Ken Russell has found a work for which his often annoying style is suitable. Filled with stars such as Jack Nicholson, Tina Turner, Ringo Starr and Eric Clapton. (MJ)

10:00 p.m. (FXM)—*The Name of the Rose* (1986)—A murder mystery set in a medieval monastery (the MacGuffin is a lost book by Aristotle). Though lacking much of the rich detail of Umberto Eco's fine novel, the film stands well on its own. Sean Connery is perfect as the monk-detective, John of Baskerville. With Christian Slater, F. Murray Abraham and William Hickey. Directed by Jean-Jacques Annaud. (MJ)

12:00 a.m. (IFC)—*A Midnight Clear* (1992)—See Sunday at 6:00 a.m.

*2:00 a.m. (TCM)—*Scenes from a Marriage* (1973)—Essentially a soap opera, treating ten years in a relationship, from marriage through divorce and beyond. Ingmar Bergman directed Liv Ullmann and Erland Josephson and Bibi Andersson. (DW)

2:00 a.m. (IFC)—*Tommy* (1975)—See 8:00 p.m.

*2:30 a.m. (Bravo)—*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. (DW)



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