

The UNH Italian Studies Program and The Music Hall

present



March 5 - 8, 2021

**Il Cinema
Ritrovato**

**on
tour**

in New Hampshire



THIRD EDITION - VIRTUAL



LUCI DEL VARIETÀ (Variety Lights)

Federico Fellini and Alberto Lattuada, Italy, 1950, 100'

Starring Giulietta Masina, Peppino de Filippo, Carla del Poggio, John Kitzmiller

After Fellini's screenwriting successes working with Rossellini, Germi and Lattuada, Lattuada convinced him to try his hand at directing. The felicitous product of this directorial debut was *Variety Lights*, a tragicomic tale of a struggling vaudeville troupe and its philandering, washed-up capocomico (company leader) played by Peppino De Filippo (brother of the celebrated playwright Eduardo). Lattuada notes that while he himself took on the more technical tasks, Fellini worked closely with the actors, and remembers the collaboration as a wonderful experience. Ennio Flaiano, who would go on to co-write some of Fellini's best-known films such as *La Strada* and *La Dolce Vita*, praises the film for treating what could have become a cliché in an original way: 'One of the qualities of Lattuada and Fellini's film seems to be its indifference towards old, worn-out dramatic solutions. Near the end there is a short scene where the female protagonist, finally half-naked on stage (as she has always dreamed), displays her gratitude for the audience's applause with tears in her eyes: it is a cruel apotheosis, crowning a whole series of observations on the nature of the performers, on their idea of success and art, which makes this a unique film (although not without its faults) and places it above the "pleasant" side of the genre.'

Variety Lights offers an interesting window onto Fellini's early career and artistic circle, and reunites several actors who had previously worked together with both Fellini and Lattuada. Giulietta Masina, Fellini's wife and muse, stars as the capocomico's long-suffering wife Melina. Carla del Poggio, Lattuada's real-life wife, also appears in the film as an ambitious young performer, Liliansa, who desperately wants to become a star. The two actors had already worked with the American actor John Kitzmiller in 1948's *Senza pietà* (*Without Pity*), directed by Lattuada and co-written by Fellini. Kitzmiller, a chemical engineer who had remained in Italy to pursue an acting career after serving in World War II, became the first Black actor to win a Best Actor award at the Cannes Film Festival (1957). In *Variety Lights*, Kitzmiller appears briefly in the role of Johnny, a trumpet player who represents true dedication to his art as opposed to the more superficial quest for showbiz fame.

Restored in 4K by Cineteca di Bologna in collaboration with Museo Nazionale del Cinema, Turin at L'Immagine Ritrovata laboratory, with funding provided by MiBACT, within the Fellini 100 project promoted by Cineteca di Bologna, CSC - Cineteca Nazionale and Istituto Luce-Cinecittà.



RISATE DI GIOIA (The Passionate Thief)

Mario Monicelli, Italy, 1960, 106'

Starring Anna Magnani, Totò, Ben Gazzara

Filmed on 40 consecutive nights in Rome, *The Passionate Thief* presents one adventurous night—New Year's Eve—in the lives of two struggling performers and a less-than-stellar pickpocket. Directed by the maestro of Commedia all'Italiana, Mario Monicelli, the film unites an arresting Anna Magnani and her frequent stage partner, the brilliant comic actor Totò, for the first time together on screen. The city of Rome, with its monumental fountains, winding streets, swanky restaurants and strange revelers, plays a starring role, echoing *La Dolce Vita* while also telling the story of the less-glamorous crowd. Cinecittà, the famed movie studio from the Hollywood on the Tiber era, even makes an appearance.

It was Monicelli's desire with this film to reveal Anna Magnani's comic talents to the world. Magnani was already an international star at the time but she was known by audiences for dramatic roles in films such as *Rome, Open City* (Rossellini, 1945), *Bellissima* (Visconti, 1951), and *The Rose Tattoo* (Mann, 1955) for which she won an Academy Award for Best Actress. Monicelli and his close collaborator, screenwriter Suso Cecchi d'Amico (well-known for her collaborations with many of the most famous directors and on many of the most acclaimed films in Italian cinema history),

had Magnani in mind as they worked on the script. Yet, while the onscreen result is delightful—funny, pathetic, even sentimental—memories from the set were less pleasant. Both Monicelli and d'Amico were disappointed with what they describe as Magnani's obsession with looking young and glamorous, which they believe affected her performance. Upon its release, *The Passionate Thief* was met with mixed critical reviews and modest box office success. Anna Magnani had regrets about making the film, primarily because of what she found to be a larger industry problem: the unfair blaming of actresses for box office flops. In recent years, *The Passionate Thief* has been restored, reissued, and reevaluated. In its restored format it is widely considered a masterpiece.

Restored in 4K by Cineteca di Bologna in collaboration with Titanus and RAI Cinema.

MEGHE DHAKA TARA (The Cloud-Capped Star)

Ritwik Ghatak, India, 1960, 127'

Starring Supriya Choudhury, Anil Chatterjee, Bijan Bhattacharya, Gita Dey, Gita Ghatak, Dwiju Bhawal, Niranjan Roy

The Cloud-Capped Star tells the story of a family uprooted by the Partition of India (1947) and dependent on their eldest daughter, the self-sacrificing Neeta (Supriya Choudhury). Compared at one point by another character to 'a cloud-capped star', Neeta watches helplessly as her own hopes and desires are pushed aside time and again by those of her siblings and parents, until all her chances for happiness evaporate, leaving her crushed and ailing. Experimenting with off-balance compositions, discontinuous editing, and a densely layered soundtrack, Ghatak devised an intellectually ambitious and emotionally devastating new shape for the melodrama, lamenting the tragedies of Indian history and the inequities of traditional gender roles while blazing a formal trail for the generations of Indian filmmakers who have followed him. (Criterion)

Of *The Cloud-Capped Star*, cinema and media studies scholar Sanghita Sen observes that the film 'iconically represents the angst of the Partition and affective impacts of the resultant refugee crisis on women. In this film, Ghatak politicised melodrama to embody the immensity of the loss incurred by such seismic events. It is the only film in his oeuvre that succeeded commercially and is deemed a classic of world cinema. [...] The repercussions of rupture are depicted through the daily life of a refugee family and its sole breadwinner Nita, the protagonist. Unshackling the colonized from exclusive colonial references, Ghatak inscribed the absent subject into history by reclaiming their precolonial past through appropriation of Indian folk and mythological traditions. [...] The soundtrack is sprinkled with agomani songs, traditional Bengali folk music, presenting the timeless yearning of a mother for her estranged married daughter who cannot freely visit her parents. Carefully crafted symbolism takes the film beyond its spatiotemporal restrictions and endows a sense of universality. Nita's swansong, therefore, becomes the resounding defiance of all refugees across geopolitical and temporal limits: "I wanted to live. I so love life, I shall live". Using the three tenses, Ghatak links the past to the future, creating a continuum in the experiences of the colonised. The use of first person restored her from anonymity of victimhood and recovered her agency.'

Restored in 2k in partnership with The Film Foundation's World Cinema Project and the Cineteca di Bologna, from elements preserved by the National Film Archive of India.

SHATRANJ-E BAAD (Chess of the Wind)

Mohammad Reza Aslani, Iran, 1976, 93'

Starring Fakhri Khorvash, Shohreh Aghdashloo, Shahram Golchin, Mohamad Ali Keshavarz, Hamid Taati, Akbar Zanjani

Chess of the Wind is not only a cinematic masterpiece in itself, but the film's turbulent history and the incredible story of its rediscovery only add to its appeal. In it, director Mohammad Reza Aslani portrays the tense relationships of an heiress with paraplegia,



played by Fakhri Khorvash, trying to maintain her independence and defend her fortune against a host of aggressively ill-willed family members. It is a historical drama set in the 1920s, but also speaks to the era in which it was made, immediately preceding the 1979 revolution.

The soundtrack by groundbreaking composer Sheyda Gharachedaghi contributes to the film's tension and is notable for its blending of such genres as traditional Iranian music and jazz. Some critics have found parallels in the film's style and tone with international writers and filmmakers such as Edgar Allan Poe, Luchino Visconti, and Pier Paolo Pasolini. Now that it has been rediscovered, one hopes it will fulfill its potential to impact international cinema.

The filmmaker's daughter, Gita Aslani Shahrestani, who played a central role in rediscovering the film, writes the following: 'Shatranj-e Baad might be one of the most emblematic films in the history of Iranian cinema, even though its visibility was limited to a disastrous preview at Tehran International Film Festival in 1976. Due to an artistic conflict between Aslani and the festival curator, the projection was sabotaged, its reels were disrupted and projector malfunctioned. The critics walked out during the screening, as did the jury who pulled the film out of the competition. Instantly deemed elitist, the film was refused by all the distributors. Discouraged, the producer didn't bother sending the film to the international festivals. In subsequent private showings, Henri Langlois, Roberto Rossellini and Satyajit Ray had the opportunity to see the film in proper condition and congratulated the young director. After that, Shatranj- e Baad, was never screened again. Following the establishment of the Islamic government in 1979, the film was banned because of its non-Islamic content and the reels were subsequently declared lost. There was only a censored VHS, of very poor quality, circulating through informal channels. Although the film rested in obscurity for a long time, its aesthetic value was rediscovered in 2000 by a new generation of critics and cinéphiles who classed it as one of Iran's lost cinematic masterpieces. Shatranj-e Baad is a singular film, at the confluence of the aesthetics of Visconti and Bresson. The influence of painting can be found in each shot and the careful screenplay toys with multiple plot twists. It was only in 2015 that Aslani found the negatives of Shatranj-e Baad, quite by chance at a flea-market for vintage film costumes and accessories. He bought the reels and immediately sent them to France where they could safely be restored. Now we can fully rediscover all the originality and modernity of this fascinating film, which has spent almost 45 years in the shadows.'

Restored in 2k in partnership with The Film Foundation's World Cinema Project and the Cineteca di Bologna, from elements preserved by the National Film Archive of India.



DOCUMENTEUR

Agnès Varda, France, 1982, 63'

Starring Sabine Momou and Mathieu Demy

Varda explores the relationship between documentary and fiction in this short poetic film, starring her own son, about a French woman writer in Los Angeles after the end of her marriage. Varda herself reflects: 'This film expresses well the project I began with *La Pointe courte*, *L'Opéra-Mouffe*, and *Cléo*: filming passersby like in a documentary but using the images in a fictional work to make viewers feel – through the strangers filmed – the heroine's emotions. Here, the people, the fishermen, the women waiting, and the mysterious neighbors describe what this woman and her young son do not know how to put into words.' In the year of its release Danièle Dubroux described *Documenteur* as a film about 'solitude and loneliness,' 'like filming absence.'

While many of Varda's films take place in France, California was also influential to her body of work. Varda, associated with the French New Wave and its experimental attitudes and techniques, was attracted to California counterculture beginning in the 1960s. She made a number of documentaries and fictional films about life in California, from *Lions Love (... and Lies)* (1969), which explores love, stardom and politics from its setting in the Hollywood Hills, to *Black Panthers* (1970), focused on a demonstration

in Oakland against the imprisonment of Huey P. Newton, to *Mur Murs* (1981), a celebration of the diverse murals in different communities in Los Angeles. In *Documenteur*, a quieter companion piece to *Mur Murs*, Varda continues to use Los Angeles as a backdrop for her protagonist's reflections and self discovery.

Restored in 2012 by Ciné-Tamaris, Foundation Groupama Gan pour le Cinéma e Fondation Technicolor pour le Patrimoine du Cinéma

GRAND TOUR ITALIANO

A compilation of silent shorts from 1905-1914

Narrated by Gian Luca Farinelli (Director, Cineteca di Bologna), translated by Frank Dabell, musical accompaniment by Stephen Horne. Event produced by the San Francisco Silent Film Festival, 2019, 70'

This special event, deemed 'an illustrated lecture' by its creators, presents a compilation of rarely seen silent shorts from 1905-1914 preserved in the Cineteca's collections, with narration by Gian Luca Farinelli, director of the Cineteca. Farinelli provides insightful commentary on early cinema technology and style, historical events, and cultural context. Cinematic snapshots of life in early-20th-century Italy include the canals of Venice, candy making, a small-town festival, and workers in the salt flats of Trapani, Sicily. English translation is provided by art historian Frank Dabell with musical accompaniment by acclaimed accompanist Stephen Horne. Horne's primary instrument is the piano but he is also known for incorporating multiple instruments into his performances.

From the creators of the San Francisco Silent Film Festival program:

"Over a century ago, a few years after the birth of the Italian nation and the birth of the new art form of cinema, early camera operators were alert to the potential of documenting the beautiful new country for the international cinema-going market and burgeoning tourist industry. Filmmakers from Germany and France flooded in to join Italian cineastes in documenting the landscapes and customs of far-flung Italian locales from Sicily to Venice."

THE FORGOTTEN FRONT

Paolo Soglia and Lorenzo K. Stanzani, Italy, 2020, 77'

We are thrilled to present the U.S. premier of *The Forgotten Front*, a documentary film about the Anti-Fascist Resistance during World War II in Bologna. The film's title, *The Forgotten Front*, recalls the phrase used by *The New York Times* on December 11, 1944, when the Allied advance in Italy stopped for many months leaving the Resistance to shoulder the responsibility of combating the Nazi-Fascists occupiers while the Anglo-American and Soviet forces moved quickly toward Berlin and Eastern Europe.

The film recounts the activities of the Allied Forces on the Gothic Line between 1943 and 1945, the German occupation of Bologna during the Republic of Salò (the German puppet state created after the downfall of the Fascist Regime and the Nazi invasion of the northern part of the Italian peninsula, with Mussolini installed as its nominal leader), and the fight for liberation conducted by the Partisans and the Bolognese people who supported and sustained them.

Made in 2020 to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Italy from Nazi-Fascist occupation, the film contains precious and previously undiscovered and unpublished archival material, including photographs and films clips from the era, obtained from a rigorous research initiative. Historical context is provided through interviews with distinguished scholars.

All films in the original restored version with English subtitles.



a festival of rare and restored films



Each summer,
the Cineteca di Bologna,
one of Europe's most renowned centers

for film restoration — seat of the Charlie Chaplin and Pier Paolo Pasolini archives — presents a nine-day film festival featuring restored films, early silent cinema, and director portraits. During the festival, titled **Il Cinema Ritrovato** (*Rediscovered Cinema*), more than 500 titles are presented in six cinemas and on a giant screen at a free outdoor screening in the fifteenth century Piazza Maggiore, in Bologna, which turns into a 2,000-seat open air movie theater for the entire summer (*Sotto le Stelle del Cinema*). Il Cinema Ritrovato has been defined as ...

...*"pure heaven for cinéphiles."*

cinemaritrovatonh.weebly.com

tickets: cinema-ritrovatonh2021.eventive.org

Made possible thanks to the collaboration of Fondazione Cineteca di Bologna, The Music Hall, UNH College of Liberal Arts Dean's Office, UNH Center for the Humanities, UNH Italian Studies program, the UNH Department of Classics, Humanities, and Italian Studies

Special thanks to Gian Luca Farinelli, Guy Borlée, Andrea Meneghelli, Carmen Accaputo (Cineteca di Bologna); Janus Films; Rialto Pictures; The Film Foundation's World Cinema Project; Orso Rosso Film; the San Francisco Silent Film Festival

