

The Museum of Modern Art

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417

Through the courtesy of Joseph E. Levine, President of Embassy Pictures and an internationally active producer and distributor, The Museum of Modern Art Film Library has received a major gift of seven films which will be shown at the Museum from October 25 through the 31st. The films add to the Museum Collection a large sample of the best of contemporary film making, with special emphasis on the work of today's outstanding Italian directors. Richard Griffith, Curator of the Film Library, says in his foreward to the brochure*being published by the Museum describing the gift:

"Mr. Levine's gradual emergence in each of his several roles is the newest instance of something that the film industry has benefited from before - the successful intervention in what is often regarded as an assembly-line process of an individual who has a new view of the medium's possibilities and, even more important, a new view of the audience, actual and potential." Mr. Griffith says, "In receiving the gift of these seven films, The Museum of Modern Art has tangible reason to be grateful to Mr. Levine. It is our opinion that film lovers in general have perhaps less tangible but none the less definite reason to be grateful to him for his increasing contributions to the art of the motion picture."

The seven films, to be screened beginning October 25, are: TWO WOMEN; THE SKY ABOVE - THE MUD BELOW; DIVORCE ITALIAN STYLE; LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT; "8 1/2"; YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW; and MARRIAGE ITALIAN STYLE. The illustrated booklet being published by the Museum contains notes by Eileen Bowser, Assistant Curator of the Film Library, on each of the films.

A producer and distributor, who at one time was responsible for the New England distribution of a number of important foreign films, Mr. Levine ventured into the

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*A MAJOR GIFT: SEVEN FILMS ACQUIRED THROUGH THE COURTESY OF JOSEPH E. LEVINE, with an introduction by Richard Griffith. 12 page leaflet with 8 illustrations. Price: 35 cents. Published by The Museum of Modern Art, New York.

realm of what was once known as the "art film," but is currently called the "specialty film" in the motion picture industry, by presenting Vittorio De Sica's TWO WOMEN and THE SKY ABOVE - THE MUD BELOW in 1961. In the following year he distributed an American art film, the independently produced LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT, and a major Italian film, Pietro Germi's DIVORCE ITALIAN STYLE. In 1963 he imported Federico Fellini's "8 1/2", and in 1964 in cooperation with Carlo Ponti, he produced two memorable films by Vittorio De Sica: YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW and MARRIAGE ITALIAN STYLE.

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Excerpts from Eileen Bowser's comments on the films:

TWO WOMEN - "an extraordinarily powerful emotional experience This was the film that emphatically changed Sophia Loren's reputation from that of a "sexpot" successor to Gina Lollabrigida, to that of capable actress."

THE SKY ABOVE - THE MUD BELOW - "Sarthre's excellent photography emphasizes the exotic and the bizarre Taken as a whole, the film is a study in ironic contrasts The modern inventions of radio and airplane made this exploration possible, but they did not make it easy The magic of the motion picture makes it possible for the rest of us to accompany the adventurers in comfort."

DIVORCE ITALIAN STYLE - "... a satiric comedy based on an article of the Italian law which exacts a light penalty for those who murder in defense of the family honor The plot that develops this idea is related in a highly sophisticated style with all the visual wit and irony of the late Ernst Lubitsch The Lubitsch comedy was usually based on an artificial premise; because Germi's comedy is based on existing mores it also becomes a harsh indictment of the Sicilian way of life."

LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT - "Of all the filmed plays that crowd the history of the cinema ... this version of Eugene O'Neill's thinly-disguised autobiography about his family is surely the most respectfully and faithfully reproduced. No scriptwriter

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was engaged to adapt the play for the screen, and if a few lines were cut none were added If we are willing to grant a film a subsidiary function as a high fidelity recording instrument ... we can grow absorbed in the superb performance of a famous play."

YESTERDAY, TODAY AND TOMORROW - "... a tour de force for Sophia Loren and Marcello Mastroianni, who play three roles each in as many vignettes that cut across the social strata of contemporary Italy. The title of the film seems a misnomer; the subject matter of the sequences is the life-affirming poor of Naples, the rich industrial class of Milan, and the religion-dominated middle class of Rome."

MARRIAGE ITALIAN STYLE - "Sophia Loren's Filomena, the uneducated mistress of a wealthy and egotistical man, who is determined to get what she wants from life, is a master creation - possibly the greatest in a growing line of memorable performances that reveal Miss Loren to be among the most sensitive actresses on the screen today Mastroianni's performance is equally convincing, for no matter how much a heel Domenico Soriano is he remains attractive and virile enough to justify Filomena's love for him De Sica's beautiful camera movements and the richness of the shots make this a film to be seen more than once."

"8 1/2" - "The movement [of the camera] forces the spectator (to resist is to become dizzy as in riding on a roller coaster) to take the role of the protagonist and to feel physically what it is like to be a celebrity who is surrounded by countless demands and pressures. The spectator shares the entire vision of the film director - not only seeing the surface reality in front of his eyes, but also experiencing what passes before his mind's eye."

Catalogs, stills and additional information available from Elizabeth Shaw, Director, Department of Public Information, The Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, New York, N. Y. 10019. Circle 5-8900.