

SEPTEMBER 20, 2000

THE BUFFALO FILM SEMINARS

CONVERSATIONS ABOUT GREAT FILMS WITH BRUCE JACKSON & DIANE CHRISTIAN

PRESENTED BY THE UNIVERSITY AT BUFFALO AND THE MARKET ARCADE FILM AND ARTS CENTER

NOTORIOUS (1946)

RKO/Vanguard, 1946, 101 minutes

DIRECTOR **Alfred Hitchcock**

SCRIPT **Ben Hecht**

PRODUCER **Alfred Hitchcock (uncredited), Barbara Keon**

SECOND UNIT DIRECTOR **Gregg Toland**

MUSIC **Roy Webb**

CINEMATOGRAPHER **David Tetzlaff**

EDITOR **Theron Warth**

COSTUME DESIGN **Edith Head**

Cary GrantT.R. Devlin
Ingrid BergmanAlicia Huberman
Claude Rains....Alexander Sebastian
Louis Calhern....Capt. Paul Prescott
Leopoldine KonstantinMadame Sebastian
Reinhold SchünzelDr. Anderson
Moroni OlsenWalter Beardsley
Ivan TriesaultEric Mathis
Alex MinotisJoseph
Wally BrownMr. Hopkins
Charles MendlCommodore
Ricardo CostaDr. Barbosa
Eberhard KrumschmidtEmil Hupka
Fay BakerEthel

ALFRED HITCHCOCK (13 August 1899, London—29 April 1980, Los Angeles, liver failure and heart problems) was nominated for 5 Academy Awards but the only one he ever got was the Thalberg Award in 1980. That was a very good year for him: he also received a Legion of Honor from the French government and a knighthood from the queen. Directors Eric Rohmer and Claude Chabrol wrote of him, "Hitchcock is

one of the greatest inventors of form in the history of cinema. Perhaps the only filmmakers who can be compared with him in this respect are Murnau and Eisenstein. . . . Here, form does not merely embellish content, but actually creates it." François Truffaut wrote that Hitchcock had "a unique ability to film the thoughts of his characters and make them perceptible without resorting to dialogue," and that he was "almost unique in being able to film directly, that is, without resorting to explanatory dialogue, such intimate emotions as suspicion, jealousy, desire, and envy." (*Notorious* was Truffaut's favorite Hitchcock film.) Critic Andrew Sarris wrote, "What has been most disturbing in Hitchcock's films—the perverse ironies, the unresolved ambiguities, the switched protagonists—now marks him as a pioneer in the modern idiom in which nothing is what it seems on the surface." Hitchcock left nothing to chance, not even that famous image of him as the plump solemn joker with a taste for the macabre: that was the product of a PR company he set up in the 1930s. Hitchcock began in film as a title designer and art director and he claimed he storyboarded (made scene and motion sketches) for every shot in every one of his 62 films. Some of his films are *Frenzy* 1972, *The Birds* 1963, *Psycho* 1960, *North by Northwest* 1959, *Vertigo* 1958, *The Man Who Knew Too Much* 1956, *To Catch a Thief* 1955, *Rear Window* 1954, *Dial M for Murder* 1954, *Rope* 1948, *Spellbound* 1945, *Lifeboat* 1944, *Suspicion* 1941, *Rebecca* 1940, *The Lady Vanishes* 1938, *The 39 Steps* 1935, *The Man Who Knew Too Much* 1934 *Blackmail* 1930 (the first British talkie), and *The Lodger* 1926).

BEN HECHT (28 February 1894, New York—18 April 1964, thrombosis): reporter, novelist, playwright, screenwriter. Credited with stories or screenplays for 70 films, and an uncredited writer on 40 more. Author of 35 books. Some of his best work was in collaboration with Charles MacArthur, most notably the Broadway plays *The Front Page* 1928 and *Twentieth Century* 1934. His credits were removed from films shown in Britain for many years because of his ardent Zionism and his criticism of British policy in Palestine. He got a rare credit in compensation: one of the illegal immigrant ships was named for him. "Writing a good movie brings a writer about as much fame as steering a bicycle," he wrote. "It gets him, however, more jobs. If his movie is bad it will attract only critical tut-tut for him. The producer, director and stars are the geniuses who get the hosannas when it's a hit. Theirs are also the heads that are mounted on spears when it's a flop." Some of his films (uncredited marked by *) are: *Casino Royale** 1967, *Cleopatra** 1963, *Mutiny on the Bounty** 1962, *Walk on the Wild Side** 1962 *A Farewell to Arms* 1957, *The Man with the Golden Arm** 1955, *Guys and Dolls** 1955, *The Miracle of the Bells* 1948, *Portrait of Jennie** 1948, *Rope** 1948, *The Paradine Case** 1947, *Kiss of Death** 1947, *Duel in the Sun** 1946, *Gilda** 1946, *Spellbound* 1945, *Lifeboat** 1944, *The Outlaw** 1943, *His Girl Friday** 1940 (based on *The Front Page*), *Gone with the Wind** 1939, *Wuthering Heights**

1939, *Stagecoach** 1939, *The Prisoner of Zenda** 1937, *A Star Is Born** 1937, *Queen Christina** 1933, and *Scarface* 1932.

CARY GRANT (Archibald Alexander Leach, 18 January 1904, Bristol, Gloucestershire, England—29 November 1986, Davenport, Iowa, stroke) was in four Hitchcock films, every one of them memorable: *North By Northwest* 1959, *To Catch a Thief* 1955, *Notorious* 1946, and *Suspicion* 1941. Hitchcock saw in him a dramatic edge few other directors were able to utilize or control. Grant did some important dramatic work away from Hitchcock, but with a few exceptions his best other work was in comedy. Some of his other films are *Charade* 1963, *Indiscreet* 1958, *An Affair to Remember* 1957, *I Was a Male War Bride* 1949, *Mr. Blandings Builds His Dream House* 1948, *The Bishop's Wife* 1947, *Night and Day* 1946, *Arsenic and Old Lace* 1944, *Destination Tokyo* 1943, *His Girl Friday* 1940, *Only Angels Have Wings* 1939, *Gunga Din* 1939, and *Topper* 1937.

INGRID BERGMAN (29 August 1915, Stockholm—29 August 1982, London, cancer) started out wholesome. David O. Selznick saw some of her Swedish films and brought her to Hollywood, where he set her to playing nice girls. When he lent her to another studio for *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* 1941, she insisted in playing the prostitute. Audiences loved her as a more complex woman. The following year she starred in the film for which she is perhaps best known, *Casablanca* with Humphrey Bogart. She had another great role the following year, with Gary Cooper in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* 1943. The year after that, she won her first Oscar for *Gaslight* (1944). She had a number of great starring roles over the next 15 years, but things got rocky when she left her husband, Dr. Peter Lindstrom, for Italian director Roberto Rossellini. Sanctimonious Hollywood punished her for going public: she didn't get a Hollywood movie for 7 years. In 1956, Buddy Adler and Anatole Litvak starred her in *Anastasia*, for which she won her second best actress Academy Award. She won best supporting actress Oscar for *Murder on the Orient Express* 1974. Her last major role, completed the year of her death, was as Golda Meir in the made for tv film, "A Woman Called Golda," for which she won an Emmy. Some of her other films are *Stromboli* 1949, *Joan of Arc* 1948, *Arch of Triumph* 1948, *Saratoga Trunk* 1945, *The Bells of St. Mary's* 1945, *Spellbound* 1945, *Gaslight* 1944, and *Intermezzo* 1939.

CLAUDE RAINS (10 November 1889, London—30 May 1967, Laconia, New Hampshire, intestinal hemorrhage) was a stage actor for decades before his role in *Invisible Man* made him a Hollywood star. Some of his other films were *The Greatest Story Ever Told* 1965, *Lawrence of Arabia* 1962, *Caesar and Cleopatra* 1946, *Angel on My Shoulder* 1946, *Phantom of the Opera* 1943, *Casablanca* 1942, *Here Comes Mr. Jordan* 1941, *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* 1939, and *They Won't Forget* 1937. He also did a great deal of tv work, appearing in such series as "Dr. Kildare," "Rawhide," "Wagon Train," "Alfred Hitchcock Presents," "Naked City," "The Alcoa Hour," and "Kaiser Aluminum Hour." Rains won a best actor Tony in 1961 for his portrayal of Rubashov in *Darkness at Noon* on Broadway.

LOUIS CALHERN (Carl Henry Vogt, 19 February 1895, Brooklyn—12 May 1956, Tokyo, heart attack while filming *The Teahouse of the August Moon*) appeared in *High Society* 1956, *Blackboard Jungle* 1955, *The Student Prince* 1954, *Executive Suite* 1954, *Julius Caesar* 1953, *The Asphalt Jungle* 1950, *Annie Get Your Gun* 1950 (as Buffalo Bill), *Heaven Can Wait* 1943, *Duck Soup* 1933, *20,000 Years in Sing Sing* 1932, and 63 other films.

Hitchcock said:

"[*Murnau's*] *The Last Laugh* was almost the perfect film. It told its story . . . entirely by the use of imagery and that had a tremendous influence on me. . . . My models were forever after the German filmmakers of 1924 and 1925. They were trying hard to express ideas in purely visual terms."

"Cinema is the orchestration of shots."

"Staircases are very photogenic."

"I don't believe in mystifying an audience. I believe in giving them all the information and then making them sweat."

"I'm not interested in content. It disturbs me when people criticize my films because of their content. It's like looking at a still life and saying 'I wonder whether those apples are sweet or sour.' Cinema is form."

[About showing detail:] "If you free the spectator to choose, you're making theater, not cinema."

"I'd compare myself to an abstract painter. My favorite painter is Klee."

"You know, people say that you can cut a film and make it go fast. I don't believe that. Speed is preoccupation. In *The 39 Steps* there was no dead footage, so the audience's absorption creates the impression of speed."

"Some films are slices of life. Mine are slices of cake."

"We've substituted the language of the camera for dialogue."

“The more successful the villain, the more successful the picture.”

“The story of *Notorious* is the old conflict between love and duty. Cary Grant’s job—and it’s a rather ironic situation—is to push Ingrid Bergman into Claude Rains’ bed. One can hardly blame him for seeming bitter throughout the story, whereas Claude Rains is a rather appealing figure, both because his confidence is being betrayed and because his love for Ingrid Bergman is probably deeper than Cary Grant’s. All of these elements of psychological drama have been woven into the spy story.”

Hitchcock once said that he migrated to the US as a kind of cultural exchange, only nobody knows what was sent in return because, he said, "they are afraid to open it."

Ingrid Bergman, trying to make Hitchcock help her understand the motivation for the feelings of her character told Hitchcock: “I don’t feel like that, I don’t think I can give you that kind of emotion.” Hitchcock replied: “Ingrid: fake it.”

"Actors are cattle."

"I didn't say actors are cattle. What I said was, actors should be treated like cattle."

To crew complaints that Tallulah Bankhead's habit of not wearing underpants was creating camera angle problems in shooting *Lifeboat*: "I don't know if this is a matter for the costume department or the hairdresser."

"When an actor comes to me and wants to discuss his character, I say, 'It's in the script.' If he says, 'But what's my motivation?', I say, 'Your salary.'"

"Disney has the best casting. If he doesn't like an actor he just tears him up."

To a woman who complained that the shower scene in *Psycho* so frightened her daughter that the girl would no longer shower: "Then, Madam, I suggest you have her dry cleaned."

"Always make the audience suffer as much as possible"

"The length of a film should be directly related to the endurance of the human bladder"

"If I were to make another picture set in Australia I'd have a policeman hop into the pocket of a kangaroo and yell, Follow that car!"

"Drama is life with the dull bits left out."

"There are several differences between a football game and a revolution. For one thing, a football game usually lasts longer and the participants wear uniforms. Also there are more injuries at a football game."

"There is no terror in the bang, only in the anticipation of it."

"I understand the inventor of the bagpipes was inspired when he saw a man carrying an indignant, asthmatic pig under his arm. Unfortunately, the manmade sound never equaled the purity of the sound achieved by the pig."

Join us next week for Bette Davis in *All About Eve*....for cast and crew info on almost any film: imdb.com/search.html or allmovie.com...for information on major American films, including detailed plot summaries: www.filmsite.org.... email Bruce Jackson: bjackson@buffalo.edu...email Diane Christian: engdc@acsu.buffalo.edu...for the series schedule, links and updates: www.buffalofilmseminars.com... for the weekly email informational notes, send an email to either of us.

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