Castro and Mannoni again told her he was choking, she ordered them out of the room. Mannoni called Fellini’s doctor, Professor Turchetti, and told him to come immediately. After 15 minutes, according to Mannoni, another doctor arrived. Fellini was choking. The doctor yelled “Heart attack! Heart attack” and began giving him heart massage. When Da Castro, his production director, were with him. Da Castro called a doctor and two nurses into the room and told them Fellini was choking. The doctor yelled “Heart attack! Heart attack” and began giving him heart massage. When Da Castro and Mannoni again told her he was choking, she ordered them out of the room. Mannoni called Fellini’s doctor, Professor Turchetti, and told him to come immediately. After 15 minutes, according to Mannoni, another doctor arrived with a resuscitator and other instruments, and a few minutes later Turchetti got there. But by then Fellini was dead.

Marcello Mastroianni .... Marcello Rubini
Anita Ekberg .... Sylvia
Anouk Aimée .... Maddalena
Yvonne Furneaux .... Emma
Magali Noël .... Fanny
Alain Cuny .... Steiner
Annibale Ninci .... Marcello’s father
Walter Santesso .... Paparazzo
Valeria Ciangotti .... Paola
Audrey McDonald .... Sonia
Polidor .... Clown
Lex Barker .... Robert
Count Ivonda Dobrzensky .... Giovanni (uncredited)
Desmond O’Grady .... Steiner’s Guest (uncredited)
Prince Eugenio Ruspoli di Poggio Suasa .... Don Eugenio Mascalchi (uncredited)

MUSIC Nino Rota
CINEMATOGRAPHER Otellor Martelli
EDITOR Leo Cattozzo
COSTUME DESIGN Piero Gherardi

FEDERICO FELLINI (20 January 1920, Rimini, Italy—31 October 1993, Rome) is best-known as a director of films he wrote, and deservedly so, but before he started directing he co-scripted some of the great films of the Italian neo-realist era, among them Roberto Rossellini’s Roma, città aperta (Rome, Open City 1946) and Paisà (Paisan, 1946). Fellini directed 24 films, some of which are La Voce della luna 1989, Ginger e Fred 1986, Casanova 1976, Amarcord 1974, Roma 1972, I Clowns 1971, Satyricon 1969, Giulietta degli spiriti 1965, 8½ 1963, Notti di Cabiria 1957, and I Vitelloni 1953. He was nominated for 11 writing and directing Oscars (including both for La Dolce Vita) but won none of them. Four of his films received the Best Foreign Language Film award: La Strada, Notti di Cabiria, 8½ and Amarcord. He received the Academy’s Lifetime Achievement Award in 1993. His death could have been a scene from one of his movies: While recovering from difficult heart surgery he choked on half a mozzarella ball. Enza Da Castro, his production secretary, and Roberto Mannoni, his production director, were with him. Da Castro called a doctor and two nurses into the room and told them Fellini was choking. The doctor yelled “Heart attack! Heart attack” and began giving him heart massage. When Da Castro and Mannoni again told her he was choking, she ordered them out of the room. Mannoni called Fellini’s doctor, Professor Turchetti, and told him to come immediately. After 15 minutes, according to Mannoni, another doctor arrived with a resuscitator and other instruments, and a few minutes later Turchetti got there. But by then Fellini was dead.

Academy, then went to Princeton but left to become an actor, for which his high society family disowned him. Barker played Tarzan five times, then became something of an international actor, playing in 50 films made in Brazil, Germany, Spain, Yugoslavia, Italy, Lebanon, and France, helped no doubt by his linguistic ability—he was said to speak French, Spanish, Italian and German. He enlisted in WWII as a private and mustered out as a major. **Desmond O’Grady** is an Irish poet perhaps most famous for the night he dove out of his Harvard window stark naked, his room afire, claiming to police that the IRA was clearly responsible; the police suggested smoking in bed as the more probable culprit; we have no idea how Desmond got into this movie.

**Fellini said:**

“For me, the artist is someone who is called by demons and must reply to this summons. Doing so he is cast into a kind of galaxy with which he has special, arcane relationships. The problem is to recognize the sounds, the colors, the signs that correspond to the voice that called him. Once this problem is resolved, he need do nothing except perform in extrasensory fashion. When I enter into this state of grace, it is not I who directs the film, but the film that directs me. A huge amount of sensitivity is always required: you have entered a city you don’t know but in which you must move with the lightness of a vampire, without ideas, ideologies, preconceptions, if not without everything. This is like the prologue, the atrium, the anteroom of creativity; only afterward do your practical experience, your craftsmanship and professionalism come in; in other words, the hard work of making creativity materialize. An artist does not do what he wants, but what he can: this tension is what constitutes art.”

“I’m not fascinated by theater; I’m fascinated by all forms of spectacle, theater, circus, cinema itself. These all contain congenial elements; when I show the atmosphere of show business, I speak of myself because my life is a show. I am a man wholly devoted to spectacle; I am one of those who tells stories to others.”

“Often I mix languages to express the truth of a situation.”

“I try to love everything in life, not only what we usually consider proper, honest, charming. I always like to show both sides of a thing.”

“I invented a non-existent Via Veneto, enlarging and altering it with poetic license until it took on the dimensions of a large allegorical fresco.”

“Cinema is an art of illusion and sometimes the illusion must show its tail.”

“Certain forced vocations make the organism show irregularities. Obligatory chastity, like that of a nun, can well bring such hair to the face.”

“I don’t want to see my old films; they are like diseases, the germs of my fantasy.”

“Realism is a bad word. In a sense everything is realistic. I see no line between the imaginary and the real.”

“Film is only images. You can put in whatever sound you want later and change and improve it.”

“La Dolce Vita was considered scandalous—all over the world! The police wanted to take my passport away; they wanted to kill me, to put me in prison.”

“The title of [La Dolce Vita] came to have a meaning exactly the opposite of what I intended. I told that story about Rome because I know Rome, but it could have taken place in Bangkok, Paris, Babylon, anywhere. The city is an internal city. I wanted the title to signify not “Easy Life” but “The Sweetness of Life.”

“Ekberg came from the North, she was young and as proud of her good health as a lioness. She was no trouble at all. She remained in the basin for ages, motionless, impassive, as if the water didn’t cover her nor the cold affect her, even though it was March and the nights made one shiver. For Mastroianni it was rather a different story. He had to get undressed, put
on a frogman’s suit and get dressed again. To combat the cold he polished off a bottle of vodka, and when we shot the scene he was completely pissed... It took eight or nine nights. Some of the owners of the surrounding houses would rent out their balconies and windows to the curious. At the end of each take the crowd would cheer. A show within a show. Every time I look at the picture of Ekberg in the Trevi Fountain, I have the sensation of reliving those magic moments, those sleepless nights, surrounded by the meowing of cats and the crowd that gathered from every corner of the city.”

“We change our accounts of events continually so as not to bore ourselves.”

“It’s absolutely impossible to improvise. Making a movie is a mathematical operation. It is like sending a missile to the moon. Art is a scientific operation. What we call improvisation is, in my case, just having an ear and an eye to things that occur during the time we are making the picture. The history of 4 months, 5 months of shooting is not only the private story of the director making the picture, it is also a story of a trip, of mutual relationships, of love, of enemies, of vanity. . . . If you see that the picture is suggesting something new, you have to be open to that kind of suggestion, because sometimes it is the picture that directs you when you work in an open and honest way. That is not improvisation, that is just being faithful to what you are doing.”

“All art is autobiographical. The pearl is the oyster’s autobiography.”


Join us next week for Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton in Mike Nichols’ WHO’S AFRAID OF VIRGINIA WOOLF?.... 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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