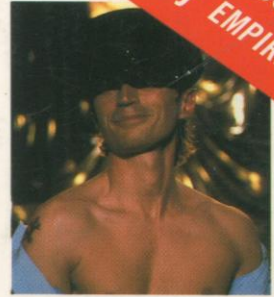


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PER (1937). Keaton is in rare form leading the haunt, rivaled by virtuoso Sidney as overloaded other side caseworker. Film won a much deserved Oscar for Best Achievement in Makeup.

BEFORE THE RAIN

(PO DEZJU)

1994 115m c Drama/War/Political ★★★★★
Vardar Film/Aim Productions/Noe Productions /15
(Macedonia/U.K./France)

Katrin Cartlidge (*Anne*), Rade Serbedzija (*Aleksandar*), Gregoire Colin (*Kiril*), Labina Mitevska (*Zamira*), Jay Villiers (*Nick*), Silvija Stojanovska (*Hana*), Phyllida Law (*Anne's Mother*), Josif Josifovski (*Father Marko*), Boris Delcevski (*Petre*), Dejan Velkov (*Mate*)

p, Judy Counihan, Cedomir Kolar, Sam Taylor, Cat Villiers; d, Milcho Manchevski; w, Milcho Manchevski; ph, Manuel Teran; ed, Nicolas Gaster; m, Anastasia; prod d, Sharon Lamofsky, David Munns; fx, Valentin Lozey, John Fontana, Vasil Dikov; cos, Caroline Harris, Sue Yelland

AAN Best Foreign Language Film

Billed as the first feature made in the newly declared republic of Macedonia, formerly a region of Yugoslavia, Milcho Manchevski's film is a glossy, mystical, ultimately pessimistic take on the worldwide ripples caused by the Balkan genocide.

In Manchevski's elliptical three-part narrative, a young monk (Gregoire Colin) shelters a Muslim girl (Labina Mitevska); a trendy Londoner (Katrin Cartlidge, *NAKED*) struggles with some unanticipated personal consequences of war; a Macedonian photographer (Rade Serbedzija) returns to the village of his childhood and finds it changed beyond recognition. *BEFORE THE RAIN* won the Golden Lion (Best Picture) award at the 1994 Venice Film Festival and was nominated for that year's best foreign-language film Oscar. Released theatrically in the US in 1995, it enjoyed wide critical acclaim and was sometimes compared to another Oscar nominee, *PULP FICTION*, which employed a similarly unconventional structure. Though the two films are completely divergent in theme and subject matter, both tell their stories out of chronological order. The circular structure of *BEFORE THE RAIN* adds to its impact. Near the end of the third segment, the viewer realizes that the three seemingly separate stories are interconnected, and that events are racing toward an inevitable, tragic conclusion.

Technically superior in every department, *BEFORE THE RAIN* features achingly beautiful Macedonian landscapes, lovingly exploited by cinematographer Manuel Teran. The visually stunning, vibrantly colorful Macedonian segments stand in stark contrast to the harsh, gray London settings. This disparity reiterates one of the film's messages: war in one region affects another, no matter how far removed geographically or culturally.

BEFORE THE REVOLUTION

(PRIMA DELLA RIVOLUZIONE)

1964 112m bw Drama ★★★
Cineriz/Iride Cinematografica (Italy) /X

Adriana Asti (*Gina*), Francesco Barilli (*Fabrizio*), Allen Midgette (*Agostino*), Morando Morandini (*Cesare—Teacher*), Domenico Alpi (*Fabrizio's Father*), Giuseppe Maghenzani (*Fabrizio's Brother*), Cecrope Barilli (*Puck*), Cristina Pariset (*Clelia*), Emilia Borghi (*Fabrizio's Mother*), Iole Unardi (*Fabrizio's Grandmother*)

d, Bernardo Bertolucci; w, Bernardo Bertolucci, Gianni Amico; ph, Aldo Scavardo; ed, Roberto Perpignani; m, Gino Paoli, Ennio Morricone

Bernardo Bertolucci's second film is a dense, semi-autobiographical coming-of-age tale about a 20-year-old named Fabrizio (Francesco Barilli) who's struggling between Marxist ideology and a more comfortable bourgeois life. Fabrizio rejects his middle-class background and his shallow fiancée Clelia to pursue a Marxist lifestyle under the guidance of his communist schoolteacher friend Cesare, and also has a brief affair with his attractive young aunt, but eventually becomes politically disillusioned and leaves the communist party, settling for a "normal" life with Clelia.

Made when Bertolucci was 22, (who, like Fabrizio, is also from Parma) the film already shows the key themes which would dominate his later work, specifically the concepts of an idealistic young dilettante and his spiritual and intellectual mentor, and the ultimate rejection of radicalism in favor of a safe, but stifling, bourgeois life (both of which are echoed in *THE CONFORMIST*, among others). The film is much more abstract in its structure than Bertolucci's later works, with the "plot" merely alluded to in a series of moody and atmospheric vignettes in which music is prominently featured. Time and again, Bertolucci uses poetic sounds and images rather than plot to communicate emotions and ideas, such as in the disturbing final scene where Fabrizio and Clelia's wedding is intercut with Cesare reading "Moby Dick" to a class of youngsters, as a tearful Gina hugs and kisses Fabrizio's much younger brother, indicating that the cycle is bound to repeat itself all over again. Cinematically, the film is technically accomplished, but shows Bertolucci still developing his distinctive style, assimilating the long, sensuous tracking shots of Alain Resnais, the whispered voice-overs and jagged jump-cuts of Jean-Luc Godard, the architectural compositions of Michelangelo Antonioni, the romantic realism of Robert Rossellini, and the social and political concerns of Pier Paolo Pasolini.

BEGGAR'S OPERA, THE

1952 94m c Musical ★★★
Imperadio (U.K.) /U

Laurence Olivier (*Capt. MacHeath*), Stanley Holloway (*Lockit*), George Devine (*Peachum*), Mary Clare (*Mrs. Peachum*), Athene Seyler (*Mrs. Trapes*), Dorothy Tutin (*Polly Peachum*), Daphne Anderson (*Lucy Lockit*), Hugh Griffith (*The Beggar*), Margot Grahame (*The Actress*), Denis Cannan (*The Footman*)

p, Laurence Olivier, Herbert Wilcox; d, Peter Brook; w, Denis Cannan, Christopher Fry (based on the comic opera by John Gay); ph, Guy Green (Technicolor); ed, Reginald Beck; m, Arthur Bliss

Eclectic, thoughtful, but not an unmitigated smash. The esteemed Brook made his film directing debut with *THE BEGGAR'S OPERA*, an attempt at re-creating John Gay's original play on film. (It was also done as *The Threepenny Opera* with a score by Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill.) The music in this version is by Sir Arthur Bliss, with lyrics by Christopher Fry (*The Lady's Not For Burning*) as well as some additional dialogue for the Cannan screenplay. Olivier stars as MacHeath, with Holloway as Lockit, Griffith as the Beggar, and the wonderful Seyler (who gave one of the funniest performances in *any* comedy in *MAKE MINE MINK* and for years specialized in classical stage work) as Mrs. Trapes. Olivier provides a play-within-a-play as a prisoner in Newgate who creates an opera based on his own life.

It's all very complex and may have been better done in *MAN OF LA MANCHA*. This is an ambitious project that never quite comes off. Olivier and Holloway did their own singing, but the others were dubbed. Olivier is no Howard Keel and lacks the inherent sexiness to play MacHeath; he did well to stay out of musicals, unless doing character singing like *THE ENTERTAINER*. Bold attempt failed at the box office, but, for film enthusiasts, it remains an interesting curiosity.

BEING THERE

1979 130m c Comedy ★★★★★
Lorimar (U.S.) PG/15

Peter Sellers (*Chance*), Shirley MacLaine (*Eve Rand*), Melvyn Douglas (*Benjamin Rand*), Jack Warden (*President Bobby*), Richard Dysart (*Dr. Robert Allenby*), Richard Basehart (*Vladimir Skrapinov*), Ruth Attaway (*Louise*), David Clennon (*Thomas Franklin*), Fran Brill (*Sally Hayes*), Denise DuBarry (*Johanna Franklin*)

p, Andrew Braunsberg; d, Hal Ashby; w, Jerzy Kosinski (based on his novel); ph, Caleb Deschanel (Technicolor); ed, Don Zimmerman; m, Johnny Mandel; art d, James Schoppe

AAN Best Actor: Peter Sellers; AA Best Supporting Actor: Melvyn Douglas

Deft fable of innocence's wisdom. Jerzy Kosinski's modern fable gets a terrific translation to the screen due to his tight screenplay, capable direction by Ashby, and a marvelous performance by Sellers, one unlike any other in his career. Simpleton becomes wealthy and famous, but