

# THE GLORY AND INFLUENCE OF WORLD CINEMA



When I wrote the article: THE TEN BEST FILMS EVER MADE and listed a number of favorites under Honorable Mentions, I came to realize the vast amount of films that were missing (as many of you let me know). And how virtually none of my choices were comedies, a problem that I share with the Academy of Motion Pictures Arts and Sciences which almost never awards Oscars to anything but dramatic films and performances, even though any actor (Lawrence Olivier among them) will tell you comedy is much harder to perform. So I am here to try to re-clarify and add some very note-worthy films for your added enjoyment.

Though I don't review from a strictly Catholic point of view, the fact is that is what I am. A daily communicant who also recites the Rosary daily, I often found myself very lonely in the world of Hollywood where I was an actor for over twenty years. Too conservative for most liberals and too liberal for most conservatives, I treasure Vatican II and it's teachings, but wish the Blessed Sacrament was on the main altars in the majority of Catholic Churches, particularly in the United States, where the parishes are little more than social halls for many who practice a type of lukewarm Catholicism or cafeteria style Catholicism. Relegating the Blessed Sacrament to a side altar (which often times is hard to find) is the equivalent of relegating the owner of the house to the basement, to quote my Polish priest friend, Leszek.

Now that you know where I am coming from, the following list is to help you navigate the immense world of social media and all the options available for your entertainment needs. I often times regret that young people today will never know the sheer pleasure of attending a film as a Reserved Seat Engagement, where the film was presented as a stage play (no previews shown) often times with an overture and intermission, with programs sold in the lobby. Please bear in mind that some of these films may not necessarily be suitable for all family members, but all are chosen with the utmost care.

The following is a list of films to look up when there is nothing of real interest for you at your local cinema. And though I am a strong proponent of seeing a movie in a communal setting with other people, sometimes we can thank God that the DVD and Blu-Ray player exist. Most of these films are readily available and often times appear on Turner Classic Movies (TCM) and NETFLIX worldwide.

FAR FROM HEAVEN – 2002 Todd Haynes' film tribute to the films of Douglas Sirk surpassed his inspiration by actually involving topics that really mattered and would have been taboo in 1950's Hollywood. Julianne Moore giving one of the greatest film performances of all time was supported by a sterling cast that included Patricia Clarkson, Dennis Haysbert and Dennis Quaid. Not since MY

FAIR LADY had the melding of visuals (shot in the glorious fall of New England/New Jersey) and a truly glorious score by Elmer Bernstein (he should have won the Oscar) been brought together so beautifully.

THE WAGES OF FEAR-1953 Henri-Georges Clouzot's film starring Yves Montand is one of the most thrilling adventure films ever committed to celluloid. I promise you that no amount of CGI (computer generated imagery) can compare to the suspense and plain old good story telling that this film delivers.

THE LIST OF ADRIAN MESSENGER – 1963 John Huston's murder mystery starring George C. Scott and Kirk Douglas will have you guessing till the final curtain call, where what you thought you were seeing wasn't that at all.

CITY LIGHTS-1931 Charlie Chaplin's silent film with sound is glorious film making in every sense of the word. If you are not acquainted with the films

of Mr. Chaplin, then I recommend starting off with this one.

THE EMIGRANTS-1971 & THE NEW LAND LAND-1972- Jan Troell's films were actually shot as one, but because of length, were released as two separate films. Starring Liv Ullman and Max Von Sydow these motion pictures embody the emigrants' experience in the United States, as few have ever done.

THAT MAN FROM RIO-1964- Philippe de Broca's film starring Jean-Paul Belmondo is a grand comedy thriller and worth every effort in trying to see.

IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE-1946- Frank Capra's film starring Jimmy Stewart and Donna Reed is a beautiful treatise on what we often feel is failure, but in the eyes of God is miraculous.

OPEN CITY-1945- Roberto Rossellini's film started production the day after the Nazi's left Rome in 1945. This film chronicles the lives of Resistance fighters during the Second World War and is told in a very cinema verite sense of style. This is the film that made Anna Magnani an international star.

ROMEO AND JULIET-1968- Franco Zeffirelli's film of a play by William Shakespeare was extraordinary in that it was cast with actual teenagers and for the first time made Shakespeare palpable for the mass world audience. A beautiful, remarkable film that should be used as an introduction of Shakespeare for young people with remarkable performances by Olivia Hussey and Leonard Whiting.

THE TAMING OF THE SHREW-1967- Franco Zeffirelli's film of a play by William Shakespeare again was remarkable in how it made iambic pentameter so understandable and wildly entertaining. A glorious comedy with the luminous Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton in roles that could have been written for them had Shakespeare been around in the 1960's.

A PLACE IN THE SUN-1951- George Steven's film adaptation of Theodore Dreiser's AN AMERICAN TRAGEDY is just that, but what an

extraordinary piece of filmmaking with superb performances from Montgomery Clift, Elizabeth Taylor and Shelley Winters. George Steven's won an Oscar for his direction.

LUST FOR LIFE-1956- Vincente Minnelli's film starring Kirk Douglas as Vincent Van Gogh (who should have won the Oscar) and Anthony Quinn as Paul Gaughin who did (Best Supporting Actor). This Technicolor production will knock your socks off in its execution and the vividness of the colors. YOURS, MINE AND OURS-1968- Melville Shavelson's film starring Lucille Ball and Henry Fonda is one of the most entertaining comedy dramas ever made with the dining table sequence again proving why Lucy is one of the greatest actress' of all time. When I was twelve I actually fell on the floor of the Four Star Theatre in San Francisco from laughing so hard. Ms. Ball should have been awarded an Oscar for the performance which was so different from the Lucy Ricardo character we are all so acquainted with.

DRIVING MISS DAISY-1989- Bruce Bereford's film based on the Pulitzer Prize winning play with a screenplay by its' author Alfred Uhry, is a simple, poignant and magnificent film. Though Lucille Ball was sought for the role originally and would have been excellent, sterling performances were delivered by Jessica Tandy and Morgan Freeman. This film won numerous Oscars including Best Actress for Ms. Tandy, Best Adapted Screenplay for Mr. Uhry and Best Picture of the Year.

BREAKING AWAY-1979- Peter Yates' (an Englishman) film from an Oscar winning screenplay by Steve Tesich (a Yugoslav emigrant) is about as American a film can be, proving that sometimes a foreigner has a much better sense of what our country is really all about. This film contains my favorite film performance of all time, Dennis Christopher's portrayal of Dave Stoller, a young man infatuated with Italians and their love of bicycle racing. This is what movies are all about,

SHEER ENJOYMENT with a great supporting cast lead by Barbara Barrie and Paul Dooley as Dave's loving but confused parents.

CHARIOTS OF FIRE-1981- Hugh Hudson's beautiful true story of two athletes in the 1924 Olympics, Eric Liddell, a devout Scottish Christian who runs for the glory of God and Harold Abrahams, an English Jew who runs to overcome prejudice. An absolutely beautiful film with a glorious score by Vangelis that won the Oscar for Best Picture of the Year.

OUT OF AFRICA-1985- Sydney Pollack's film of the life of Karen Blixen who wrote under the pseudonym of Isak Dinesen and whose autobiography this film is based on. A thrilling, heart breaking story with incredible cinematography that should only really be seen on a very large screen. A grand film with a luminous performance by Meryl Streep and a somewhat miscast, though good, Robert Redford, won the Oscar for Best Picture.

ISLANDS IN THE STREAM-1977- Franklin J. Schaffner's film of an unfinished novel by Ernest Hemingway (completed by his wife, Mary Hemingway using notes the author had left behind) is a fantastic piece of filmmaking with a dazzling performance by George C. Scott.

BABETTE'S FEAST-1987- Gabriel Axel's film is an allegory of the Last Supper with a beautifully modulated performance by Stephane Audran. This picture won the Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film and is definitely worth seeing. Based on a book by Isak Dinesen, this is one of Pope Francis' favorite films.

LA STRADA-1954- Federico Fellini's film starring Giulietta Masina, Anthony Quinn and Richard Basehart is what Fellini has called "a complete catalogue of my entire mythological world, a dangerous representation of my identity that was undertaken with no precedent whatsoever." Despite a tortuous production schedule that was capped off with a nervous breakdown suffered by Fellini and a far from rapturous opening at the Venice Film Festival, "this is still one of the most influential films ever made," according to the American Film Institute. Winner of the Oscar for Best Foreign Language Film, Pope Francis has claimed this to be his favorite film of all time.

BEING THERE-1979- Hal Ashby's film based on a novella and screenplay by Jerzy Kosinski with Peter Sellers, Shirley MacLaine and Melvyn Douglas (Oscar Winner/Best Supporting Actor). An absolutely brilliant, hilarious film of mistaken identity and what we perceive genius to be.

BELLA-2006- Alejandro Monteverde's beautiful, sensitive film is virtually never seen or made anymore in the United States. A real jewel of a film which details the preciousness of life, stars Eduardo Verastegui and Tammy Blanchard .

BEN-HUR-1959- William Wyle's film is what grand, old fashioned Hollywood filmmaking is all about. Winner of a record (at the time) eleven Academy Awards Including Best Picture of the Year, with a stellar cast headed by Charlton Heston who won the Oscar as Best Actor.

SISTER ACT-1992 -Emile Ardolino's film is just plain old fashioned fun, wholesome entertainment with a wonderful story of redemption and the power of love with great performances from Whoopi Goldberg, Maggie Smith, Kathy Najimi and Mary Wickes. And what about those 60s' pop tunes turned into religious anthems. Pope John Paul II even makes an appearance at the end (with an actor's help).

SHANE-1953- George Steven's film is one of the best westerns of all time with Alan Ladd, Jean Arthur Jack Palance and Brandon deWilde. Filmed on location in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, it's a feast for the eyes as well.

GHOST-1990- Jerry Zucker's film is a wonderfully dramatic, funny and exciting piece of filmmaking with an Oscar winning performance by Whoopi Goldberg (Best Supporting Actress), detailing the power of love, the afterlife and how our loved ones never really leave us.

THE LONG WALK HOME-1990- Richard Pierce's film is virtually forgotten today, but this is a great film detailing the true story of the relationship between a Southern white woman played by Sissy Spacek and her relationship with her maid played by Whoopi Goldberg and the lengths these woman go for human rights. GREAT FILMMAKING!

HEREAFTER-2010- Clint Eastwood's beautiful film on the hereafter is a superb, supernatural thriller fantasy with lovely performances by Matt Damon and Cecile de France.

THE DIARY OF ANNE FRANK-1959- George Steven's film adaptation of the play based on Anne Frank's autobiography is somewhat stagebound but beautifully done nonetheless. Shelley Winters won an Oscar for Best Supporting Actress for her portrayal of Mrs. Van Daan with Millie Perkins as Anne Frank.

THE PASSION OF THE CHRIST-2004- Mel Gibson's film is probably the second best film on Jesus Christ ever made. Though it only covers primarily the last twelve hours of the life of Christ, it's a stunning piece of work. It depicts the Passion of Jesus largely according to the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John and on pious accounts such as the visions of Maria Valtorta. Jim Caviezel gave a great performance as Jesus Christ, a role that should have won him an Academy Award as Best Actor.

AN AMERICAN IN PARIS-1951- Vincente Minnelli's grand, beautiful musical with Gene Kelly and Leslie Caron won the Oscar as Best Film of the Year. An extremely impressive film capped off with a twenty minute ballet sequence that is absolutely thrilling to watch.

LOST HORIZON-1937- Frank Capra's film version of James Hilton's glorious fable of Shangri-La is as true today as when the book was first published in 1933. If you haven't seen it, you'll be surprised at how few things have changed in our world and its many conflicts. Beautiful performances are given by Ronald Colman, Jane Wyatt and Sam Jaffe.

THE TURNING POINT-1977- Herbert Ross' film of the life of a world famous ballerina (Anne Bancroft) and her rival (Shirley MacLaine) who left it all behind to raise a family. A first class soap opera, but gloriously acted by all involved and a true treat for ballet lovers. With Mikhail Baryshnikov, Tom Skerritt and Leslie Brown, with Ms. Bancroft who was not a ballet dancer, a particular stand out.

THE PARTY-1968- Blake Edwards' hilarious film about a Hindu (Peter Sellers) at a Hollywood party. This is really funny and classic Blake Edwards who also wrote the screenplay himself as he often did with most of his films. A real favorite of my mother's, who found this to be one of the funniest films she'd ever seen.

WEST SIDE STORY-1961- Robert Wise's and Jerome Robbins' film of the hit Broadway musical by Leonard Bernstein (music), Stephen Sondheim (lyrics) and book by Jerome Robbins and Arthur Laurents. Ernest Lehman really opened up the story with a wonderful screenplay based on Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet. This was the Oscar winner for Best Picture of the Year and one of the finest musical adaptations of a Broadway show of all times.

THE SOUND OF MUSIC-1965-Robert Wise's film version of the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical took full advantage of its' locations to glorious effect. This film was beautifully cast with superb performances from Julie Andrews, Christopher Plummer, Eleanor Parker, Peggy Wood and a cast of extraordinary child actors. This won the Oscar for Best Picture of the year and features extraordinary music and lyrics with a wonderful screenplay by Ernest Lehman.

STAR!-1968-Robert Wise's film on the life of Gertrude Lawrence is the one film that he made that feels was never given its' due. I was first introduced to the songs of George and Ira Gershwin and the English stage and screen star Gertrude Lawrence through this film. Julie Andrews playing against type as Gertrude Lawrence did a marvelous job as did Daniel Massey as Noel Coward. This film is especially popular with actors and entertainers and my favorite Julie Andrews movie.

PHILOMENA-2013-Stephen Frears' film based on the autobiography of Philomena Lee. This film embodies what it truly means to be a Roman Catholic Christian with its' theme of forgiveness and true Christian piety. Judy Dench and Steve Coogan gave great performances of resounding clarity.

AU REVOIR, LES ENFANTS-1987-Louis Malle's autobiographical film was also written and produced by him as well. A beautiful, heartbreaking true story of life in World War II France and life at a Catholic boy's boarding school, it stars child actors Gaspard Manesse and Raphael Fejto.

JOYEUX NOEL-2005-Christian Carion's extraordinary film based on a true story of the World War I Christmas truce of December 1914, depicted through the eyes of French, Scottish and German soldiers and using the three languages as they apply. An extraordinary story that shows our inner connectedness, is all the more remarkable because it actually happened.

LES CHORISTES (THE CHOIR)-2004-Christophe Barratier's film about a French boarding school for troubled boys and the teacher who changes their lives with the establishment of a boy's choir. There are two beautiful performances by Gerard Jugnot and Maxence Perrin along with many others.

MISTER ROBERTS-1955-Directed by John Ford, Mervyn LeRoy and an uncredited Joshua Logan, this is an adaptation of the smash Broadway play by Thomas Heggen (who wrote the novel) and Joshua Logan. It stars Henry Fonda, James Cagney, William Powell and Jack Lemmon (Oscar winner for Best Supporting Actor). Though a bit stagebound this is nevertheless a great film and worth investing the time to watch.

LIFE WITH FATHER-1947-Michael Curtiz's film based on the wildly popular Broadway play by Howard Lindsay and Russel Crouse, is one of the funniest, most enjoyable films ever made. Starring William Powell and Irene Dunne, it's a real shame they don't make them like this anymore.

TERMS OF ENDEARMENT-1983-James L. Brooks' film and screenplay based on a book by Larry McMurtry and starring Shirley MacLaine (Oscar winner-Best Actress), Debra Winger and Jack Nicholson (Oscar winner-Best Supporting Actor). A heartbreaking, very funny film about family and the circumstances that unite us all. This film won the Oscar for Best Picture of the Year.

MY LEFT FOOT-1989-Jim Sheridan's beautiful film based on the true story of Christy Brown, born

with cerebral palsy who learns to paint and write with his only controllable limb, his left foot. Daniel Day Lewis gave one of the greatest performances in film history and won just about every award there is including the Oscar with phenomenal support from Brenda Fricker, also an Oscar winner for Best Supporting Actress. A truly inspiring film and great human interest story for all.

CHINATOWN-1974-Roman Polanski's brilliant neo-noir film is simply stunning in its execution. Notable for a "perfect screenplay" by Robert Towne who won the Oscar for Best Original Screenplay because it beautifully ties up all plot points by its conclusion. There are brilliant performances by Jack Nicholson and Faye Dunaway among a large cast of characters.

AS GOOD AS IT GETS-1997-James L. Brooks' film with a screenplay by Mark Andrus and Mr. Brooks is brilliant in that it shows that just when you think you've got someone figured out, you find that you've got it all wrong. A beautiful story with Oscar winning performances from Jack Nicholson (Best Actor), Helen Hunt (Best Actress) and lovely support from Greg Kinnear.

THE DOLLMAKER-1984-Daniel Petrie's deeply religious film based on a novel by Harriette Arnow is a must for anyone who is close to God and craves truly great filmmaking. Originally filmed for television, this film won Jane Fonda an Emmy Award for Best Actress. HIGHLY RECOMMENDED!

I HEARD THE OWL CALL MY NAME-1973-Daryl Duke's film adaptation of a book by Margaret Craven details the story of a young priest sent to a native American village in British Columbia, Canada, where he learns of faith and humanity, while watching their culture being decimated by outer society. Originally filmed for television, this film stars Tom Courteney as the young priest and Dean Jagger as his bishop.

THE HOMECOMING: A CHRISTMAS STORY-1971-Fielder Cook's film written by Earl Hamner Jr., was the basis for the television series THE WALTONS and starred Patricia Neal and Richard Thomas. A beautiful, heartwarming story

about the love of family aided by beautiful location shooting evoking a cold Christmas eve in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia.

**THE HEART IS A LONELY HUNTER-1968-** Robert Ellis Miller's film version of a novel by Carson McCullers and starring Alan Arkin as a deaf/mute and Sondra Locke evoking the angst of being a teenage girl in a small Southern town. A heartbreaking story beautifully told with Mr. Arkin delivering one of the great film performances of all time as a Christ like figure changing the lives of so many people and nobody noticing until it is too late.

**THE MIRACLE WORKER-1962-** Arthur Penn's film adaptation of a play and screenplay by William Gibson based on the early life of Helen Keller as detailed in her autobiography **THE STORY OF MY LIFE**. Helen Keller has been rendered both deaf and blind when still a baby due to scarlet fever. Unable to communicate, she's turning into a wild animal until her parents hire Annie Sullivan (herself going blind) from the Perkins School for the Blind. What ensues is a battle of the wills as Annie breaks down Helen's walls of silence, isolation and darkness through tireless persistence, love and sheer stubbornness. Extraordinary performances from Anne Bancroft (Annie Sullivan) and Patty Duke who both originated their roles on the Broadway stage. It should be noted that both actresses won the Academy Award (Bancroft/Best Actress and Duke/Supporting Actress honors) with Ms. Bancroft also winning a Tony Award on stage. An extraordinary piece of filmmaking made all the more compelling because it was all true.

**BRIDGE OVER THE RIVER KWAI-1957-** David Lean's remarkable film based on a novel of the same name by Pierre Boulle. Though originally meant as a star vehicle for William Holden it was Alec Guinness who stole the show, winning the Oscar as Best Actor of the Year as well as winning the Oscar for Best Picture. Great filmmaking in the first sense of the word!

**SOPHIE'S CHOICE-1982-** Alan Pakula's film version of a novel by William Stryon may just be the saddest movie ever made with a truly great film performance by Meryl Streep who won her second

Oscar for this film as Best Actress. What's remarkable about this film is that the scenes in Poland are spoken in Polish, the scenes in Auchwitz in German and the scenes in America in English. It should be noted that Ms. Streep who learned to speak both Polish and German for this film, speaks Polish with no hint of an American accent, speaks German with a Polish accent and of course English with a Polish accent. It has one of the great scores of all time by Marvin Hamlisch and the supporting cast headed by Kevin Kline and Peter MacNicol are extraordinary. It's a story all too familiar to those living in eastern Europe during the Second World War and though painful to watch at times is a reminder of how horrific the consequences of war are and how we must never forget.

**SCHINDLER'S LIST-1993-** Steven Spielberg's film version of the book **SCHINDLER'S ARK** by Thomas Keneally is a reminder that one person can make a difference in affecting the lives of many. A true story of Oscar Schindler who saved the lives of more than a thousand mostly Polish Jewish refugees during the Holocaust by employing them in his factories and essentially buying them back from the Nazis at the end of the war by decimating his personal fortune. It won seven Academy Awards including Best Director and Best Picture of the Year.

**THE SAPPHIRES-2012-** Wayne Blair's film version of a play and screenplay by Tony Briggs details how the Australian government didn't even consider the Aboriginal population in Australia even human, classifying them as part of the flora and fauna. This is a true story of a singing group of young Aboriginal woman who went to Vietnam to entertain the American troops during the war. This film is wildly entertaining with wonderful performances by Chris O'Dowd as the group's manager, Deborah Mailman, Jessica Mauboy, Shari Sebbens and Miranda Tapsell as the Sapphires singing group.

**THE DECENDANTS-2011-** Alexander Payne's film version of a novel by Kauai Hart Hemmings is a joy to behold and shows the universality of the family experience. Brilliant performances are delivered by George Clooney, Shailene Woodley,

Judy Geer, Beau Bridges, Matthew Lillard & Robert Forster. A compelling story of love and the power of forgiveness.

**THE SHOES OF THE FISHERMAN-1968-** Michael Anderson's film version of a novel by Morris West, set during the height of the Cold War, details the story of Kiril Pavlovich Lakota (Anthony Quinn) the Metropolitan Archbishop of Lviv, who is released after twenty years of being in a Siberian labor camp by his former jailer, Piotr Ilyich Kamenev (Laurence Olivier), now the Premier of the Soviet Union. Sent to Rome, he is elevated to the Cardinalate. When the Pope suddenly dies, he is very unexpectedly elected as Pope as a compromise candidate after seven ballots of deadlock. A wonderful piece of filmmaking with an international cast, this was Pope John Paul II's favorite film.

**STEEL MAGNOLIAS-1989-**Herbert Ross' film version of a play and screenplay by Robert Harling was brilliantly opened up as film, considering the entire play took place in the confines of the beauty shop, which in the film serves more as a focal point for the characters. Notable for the fact that none of the six lead female actors were short shifted in their roles, providing six fully rich characterizations . Extraordinary performances from Sally Field, Olympia Dukakis, Shirley MacLaine, Darryl Hannah, Dolly Parton, and a newly introduced Julia Roberts. They should have all been given Academy Awards as a brilliant ensemble performance.

**KNIFE IN THE WATER-1962-**Roman Polanski's first feature film features three characters in a story of rivalry and sexual tension aboard a yacht. This film brought Polanski his first bout of international fame as a very promising filmmaker. It stars Leon Niemczk, Jolanta Umecka and Zygmunt Malanowicz and is an excellent piece of filmmaking.

**THE MAN WHO KNEW TOO MUCH-1955-** Alfred Hitchcock's remake of a film he'd directed in 1934, is not only superior to the original but boasts perhaps Doris Day's finest piece of dramatic acting. A first class piece of suspenseful, thriller filmmaking, with added support from James

Stewart.

**CHARLY-1968-**Ralph Nelson's film version of the novel **FLOWERS FOR ALGERNON** by Daniel Keyes is notable for an Oscar winning performance by Cliff Robertson with added support from the luminous Claire Bloom. A heartbreaking story of a genetically life changing operation with a limited period of lasting permanence. A beautifully executed story remade from a previous television presentation.

**THE LION IN WINTER-1968-**Anthony Harvey's film is based on a play and screenplay by James Goldman and details the true life relationship between Eleanor of Aquitaine and King Henry II. Notable for some of the funniest lines ever to appear in a historical drama, this film won Katherine Hepburn her third Oscar. The cast is extraordinary with Peter O'Toole as Henry II and featuring Anthony Hopkins in his film debut as Richard the Lionhearted. It should be noted that though the background and the eventual destinies of the characters are historically accurate, this film is fictional; none of the dialogue or action is historical, but what an entertaining time it provided.

**GOODBYE MR. CHIPS-1969-**Herbert Ross' film adaptation is based on a novel by James Hilton that had been previously adapted for the screen in 1939. This is a musical version (music and lyrics by Leslie Bricusse) that I found absolutely charming with an extraordinary screenplay by the playwright Terrance Rattigan with brilliant performances by Peter O'Toole (he felt perhaps his best) and Petula Clark.

**FIDDLER ON THE ROOF-1971-**Norman Jewison's film version of the Jerry Bock, Sheldon Harnick musical based on the novel **TEVYE AND HIS DAUGHTERS** by Sholem Aleichem. A beautiful film version of a classic Broadway play filmed on location in Yugoslavia and interiors in England. Mr. Jewison's controversial move to forgo casting stage star Zero Mostel in a role that he had originated, but instead a much younger (he was aged for the film) Topol, proved an excellent move, since Mr. Mostel was felt by the director to be too overpowering for this role on film and that

audiences would not be able to grasp the essence of the Tevye character.

**THE KING AND I-1956-**Walter Lang's film version of the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical was a glorious transfer from the stage, winning Yul Brynner an Oscar for Best Actor and a Tony for Best Featured Actor in a Musical on stage. Deborah Kerr and Rita Moreno rounded out a very large cast in this film based on the book *Anna and King of Siam* by Anna Leonowens, which was later turned into a play and film *ANNA AND THE KING OF SIAM* which starred Rex Harrison and Irene Dunne.

**THE ELEPHANT MAN-1980-**David Lynch's film version based on two books based on the life of Joseph Merrick (John Merrick in the film) a severely deformed man in 19th century London. A beautiful film detailing everyone's quest for dignity and respect. There are extraordinary performances by John Hurt, Anthony Hopkins and Anne Bancroft among others.

**THE GOODBYE GIRL-1977-**Herbert Ross' film version of an original screenplay by Neil Simon was a wonderful exploration of the vagueries of love and commitment. There are wonderful performances by Marsha Mason and Richard Dreyfuss who won an Oscar for Best Actor.

**DAYS OF HEAVEN-1978-**Terrence Malicks's film based on his original screenplay is an amazing film about a pair of vagabonds and the wealthy landowner they try and dupe into a false marriage. A visual treat with fine performances from Richard Gere, Brooke Adams, Linda Manz and Sam Shepherd.

**BIG EDEN-2001-**Thomas Bezucha's film based on his original screenplay is a very entertaining film exploring the true meaning of love. An exceptional cast toplined by Arye Gross, Louise Fletcher, Tim DeKay, George Coe and Eric Schweig.

**PAY IT FORWARD-2000-**Mimi Leder's film based on a novel by Catherine Ryan Hyde is a deeply religious themed story. Working under the premise that we improve our own lives by selflessly helping others and paying it forward without any thought to our own well being. Exceptional

performances were given by Kevin Spacey, Helen Hunt, Haley Joel Osment and Jim Caviezel.

**THE SIXTH SENSE-1999 -M.**

Night Shyamalan's film based on his original screenplay is a supernatural thriller of the first order. With a surprise denouement in the last ten minutes, that proves just when you thought you knew what was going on, you're made to re-evaluate everything that you've just seen. This film had exceptional performances from Bruce Willis, Toni Collette and Haley Joel Osment.

**AUNTIE MAME-1958 -Morton DaCosta's** film based on a play by Jerome Lawrence and Robert E. Lee which in turn was based on a novel by Patrick Dennis. This is considered Rosalind Russell's finest performance, and though nominated for an Academy Award she lost to Simone Signoret for *ROOM AT THE TOP* (an excellent performance).

**A MAJORITY OF ONE-1961 -**

Mervyn LeRoy's film based on a play and screenplay by Leonard Spigelgass, is a gentle love story concerning a Japanese businessman and widower (Alec Guinness) and a Brooklyn widow (Rosalind Russell). Hollywood routinely use to cast Caucasian actors to play minorities before political correctness made a stand and corrected this.

**THE TROUBLE WITH ANGELS-1966 -Ida Lupino's** film based on a novel by Jane Trahey and a screenplay by Blanche Hanalis is one of the funniest films from my childhood. The story centers around the adventures of two girls in an all-girls Catholic convent school headed by Rosalind Russell as the Mother Superior and Haley Mills and June Harding as a couple of very mischievous students. There is also a very genuine dramatic and religious storyline which lends this film a sense of true worth.

**COOL HAND LUKE-1967-** Stuart Rosenberg's film based on an original screenplay by Donn Pearce and Frank Pierson starring Paul Newman as a prisoner in a Florida prison camp who refuses to submit to the system. George Kennedy lends support as a fellow prisoner in a role that won him

the Oscar for Best Supporting Actor. A great film with superb performances.

THE VERDICT-1982 -Sidney Lumet's film of a screenplay by David Mamet based on the novel by Barry Reed is perhaps Paul Newman's finest performance. A captivating story of a truly good man down on his luck and how fate comes to shine in his life. A remarkable piece of work.

THE STING-1973 -George Roy Hill's film based on an original screenplay by David S. Ward involving a complicated plot by two professional grifters (Paul Newman and Robert Redford) trying to con a mob boss (Robert Shaw) in 1936 Chicago. This film which is really more a comedy than a drama won the Oscar for Best Picture of the Year.

AMERICA, AMERICA-1965 -Elia Kazan's film based on his own book and screenplay which in turn was based on the life of his Uncle coming to America. Though the bulk of this film takes place in Turkey with only the final scenes taking place in America it chronicles the life of the immigrant experience beautifully and explains why so many risk so much to come to the United States. Filmed with relatively unknown actors it proved a hit with audiences and critics alike.

ON THE WATERFRONT-1954 -Elia Kazan's film based on an original screenplay by Budd Schulberg, is a crime drama about union violence and corruption among longshoremen. Brilliantly executed with Oscars awarded to Marlon Brando (Best Actor), Eva Marie Saint (Best Supporting Actress), Elia Kazan (Best Director) and Best Picture of the Year.

THE MEN-1950 -Fred Zinnemann's film based on an original screenplay by Carl Foreman is the story of a World War II lieutenant (Marlon Brando in his feature film debut), who is seriously injured in combat and the struggles he faces as he attempts to re-enter society. A very powerful and beautiful film.

THE SEARCH-1948 -Fred Zinnemann's film based on an original screenplay by a quintet of writers headed by Richard Schweizer, David Wechsler, Paul Jarrico, Montgomery Clift and Betty Smith.

This is the story of a young Auschwitz survivor and his mother who search for each other across post World War II Europe. Montgomery Clift plays a young American GI who tries to help this young boy find his mother. Ivan Jandl as the young boy was presented with a Special Oscar for his performance.

GIANT-1956 -George Stevens' film version of Edna Ferber's great novel of social and political change in the lives of a wealthy Texas family who made their fortune in the oil and cattle business. Edna Ferber always challenged the mores of the times in her work and I believe helped bring about much social and civil rights changes in the United States. There are extraordinary performances to be had by Rock Hudson, Elizabeth Taylor and James Dean in his final film role.

THE GREATEST STORY EVER TOLD-1965- George Stevens' film version of the life of Jesus Christ with a screenplay by James Lee Barrett and George Stevens based on the four Gospels. This film is notable because of the extraordinary performance by Max Von Sydow as Jesus. A truly spectacular film in all its' 70mm widescreen glory.

AUTUMN SONATA-1978 -Ingmar Bergman's film based on his original screenplay which tells the story of a celebrated concert pianist (Ingrid Bergman) who is confronted by her neglected daughter (Liv Ullmann). It should be noted that this is the only time that Ingrid Bergman and Ingmar Bergman ever worked together and was Ingrid Bergman's last major theatrical feature film.

CLEOPATRA-1963 -Joseph L. Mankiewicz's film based on his screenplay assisted by Ranald MacDougall and Sidney Buchman. Though this film nearly bankrupted 20th Century Fox it is truly spectacular while still remaining a character study of Queen Cleopatra, Julius Caesar and Marc Anthony. It also features thousands of extras and some of the most amazing sets ever built in cinema history. A real treasure and worth the four hours running time.

ALL ABOUT EVE-1950 -Joseph L. Mankiewicz's film based on his original screenplay is considered to be the finest back stage drama ever produced.

Bette Davis, Anne Baxter, George Sanders and Celeste Holm round out the cast of a film that won the Oscar for Best Picture of the Year and two Oscars to Mr. Mankiewicz for his direction and screenplay.

THE YEARNING-1946 -Clarence Brown's film with a screenplay by Paul Osborn based on a novel by Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings is a treasure to behold in all its' Technicolor glory. A truly great family film that sugar coats nothing but at the same time has such a sense of real family devotion. It starred Gregory Peck and Jane Wyman as the parents and Claude Jarman Jr. as their son, Jody (who was given a special Oscar for his performance).

HEIDI-1937 -Allan Dwan's film of the classic story by Johanna Spyri with a screenplay by Julien Josephson and Walter Ferris. This is really one of Shirley Temple's best films, in a career that featured many beautiful performances. Highly recommended for the whole family.

TOP HAT-1935 -Mark Sandrich's film based on the plays SCANDEL IN BUDAPEST and A GIRL WHO DARES, this is one of the best of the Fred Astaire and Ginger Rodgers films. Though many of the plots were somewhat similar when they danced there was true magic that happened on the screen. Five screenwriters worked on this film, Allan Scott, Dwight Taylor, Ben Holmes Ralph Spence and Karoly Noti so a real effort was made to keep the dialogue fresh and sophisticated.

THE DEPARTED-2006 -Martin Scorsese's film based on a screenplay by William Monahan based on the novel INFERNAL AFFAIRS by Alan Mak and Felix Chong. This is the only Scorsese film that I've ever truly loved, believing his films are often times saturated with too much violence and foul language (and when there not, they're just plain dull), but with this film everything came together beautifully. A spectacular cast which includes Leonardo DiCaprio, Jack Nicholson, Matt Damon, Mark Wahlberg and Martin Sheen. This film won Oscars for Best Picture and Best Director of the Year, an award that had eluded Mr. Scorsese for his entire career.

NORMA RAE-1979 -Martin Ritt's film based on an original screenplay by Harriet Frank, Jr. and Irving Ravetch is a drama about a factory worker from North Carolina who becomes involved in the labor union activities at the textile factory where she works. A truly inspiring film that won Sally Field the first of her two Oscars for Best Actress.

SYBIL-1976 -Daniel Petrie's film based on the book and true story by Flora Rheta Schreiber with a screenplay by Stewart Stern. This is a fascinating study of multiple personality disorder and the psychiatrist who tries to help the young woman involved. A career changing performance by Sally Field (Emmy Award winner for Best Actress) with great support from Joanne Woodward as her doctor.

TO SIR, WITH LOVE-1967 -James Clavell's film is based on a novel by E.R. Braithwaite with a screenplay by James Clavell, about a young teacher from the Caribbean coming to teach at an inner city London school and how he deals with the social and racial issues of the day. A great film starring Sidney Poitier, with some wonderfully young English actors, including Judy Geeson, Lulu, Christian Roberts and Suzy Kendall. This also has a very infectious score with a couple of great songs.

LONELY ARE THE BRAVE-1962 -David Miller's film based on a novel by Edward Abbey and a screenplay by Dalton Trumbo details the urbanization of the west and its' effects on a cowboy played by Kirk Douglas. Purportedly Mr. Douglas's favorite film with a wonderful supporting cast headed by Gena Rowlands and Walter Matthau. A true gem of a film.

THE MUSIC MAN-1962 -Morton DaCosta's film based on the Meredith Wilson Broadway musical with a screenplay by Marion Hargrove. This is cinema paradise with a glorious score and lyrics by Mr. Wilson and sterling performances by Robert Preston, Shirley Jones, Ronny Howard, Buddy Hackett, Hermione Gingold, Pert Kelton and Paul Ford.

POLYANNA-1960 -David Swift's film is based on a novel by Eleanor Porter with a screenplay by David Swift and personally produced by Walt

Disney himself (though he remained uncredited). This is the film that introduced Haley Mills to most of the film going world and won her a Special Oscar as well. An extraordinary cast headed by Jane Wyman, Karl Malden, Richard Egan and Agnes Moorehead. A splendid, old fashioned story told with superior production values by Walt Disney Productions.

THAT CERTAIN SUMMER-1972 -Lamont Johnson's film based on a screenplay by Richard Levinson and William Link was the first film to truly deal sympathetically with homosexuality. Originally broadcast on ABC television this film has an extraordinary performance from Hal Holbrook with strong support from Martin Sheen, Scott Jacoby (Emmy Winner for Supporting Actor) and Hope Lange.

JENNY-1970-George Bloomfield's film based on a screenplay by Diana Gould, Martin Lavut, and George Bloomfield was a breakout role for Marlo Thomas as an unwed mother who chooses to keep her baby. Ms. Thomas proved herself an exceptional actress, having been previously known as an excellent comedienne for her TV series THAT GIRL, she should have been nominated for an Academy Award for this role. Major support was provided by Alan Alda as a man trying to avoid the draft and going to Vietnam. A truly beautiful film that is worth checking out.

THE PEOPLE-1972-John Korty's film based on a novella by Zenna Henderson and some of her other works, is a science fiction fantasy that is absolutely beautiful. Starring Kim Darby, William Shatner and Diane Varsi, this film is definitely worth watching though it is rather hard to find.

FINDING NEVERLAND-2004-Mark Forster's film based on the events surrounding J.M.Barrie and how he came to write his novel PETER PAN. A great screenplay by David Magee based on THE MAN WHO WAS PETER PAN by Allan Knee. A stunning film with beautiful performances from Johnny Depp, Kate Winslet and Freddie Highmore.  
LEON MORIN, PRIEST-1961-Jean-Pierre Melville directed his screenplay based on Beatrix Beck's novel THE PASSIONATE HEART. This is the story of a village priest during the German

occupation of France during the Second World War and how he must navigate the various needs and desires of the women in the village. He remains true to his vocation and is a testament to the Catholic priesthood. A couple of beautiful performances are provided by Jean Paul Belmondo and Emmanuelle Riva. I love this movie!

HIROSHIMA, MON AMOUR-1959-Alain Resnais' film with a screenplay by Marguerite Duras is a stunning piece of filmmaking, about a young actress filming a movie in Hiroshima and her affair with a Japanese man and the terrible effects that the atomic bomb had on the people of the city. A classic of French cinema that started the international career of Alain Resnais, it stars Emmanuelle Riva and Eiji Okada.

HANS CHRISTIAN ANDERSON- 1952-Charles Vidor's film with a screenplay by Moss Hart is simply a great Danny Kaye musical with an infectious score and lyrics by Frank Loesser and beautiful Technicolor cinematography by Harry Stradling. If you are not acquainted with the films of Danny Kaye you should watch this won and of course WHITE CHRISTMAS with Bing Crosby.

MARY POPPINS-1964-Robert Stevenson's film based on the MARY POPPINS books by P.L. Travers with a screenplay by Bill Walsh and Don DaGradi was a crowning achievement for producer Walt Disney who received an Oscar nomination for Best Picture of the Year (MY FAIR LADY won). A beautifully made film and exceptionally entertaining, it made Julie Andrews a huge film star and won her the Oscar for Best Actress reuniting her that night with Rex Harrison, her former co-star, when he won as Best Actor for MY FAIR LADY (The role of Eliza Doolittle in MY FAIR LADY which she'd originated on stage but had been denied to her because she was not a film star when filming had begun). Dick Van Dyke, David Tomlinson, Karen Dotrice, Matthew Garber and Glynnis Johns lent great support to the cast.

SINGING IN THE RAIN-1952-Stanley Donen's film with a screenplay by Betty Comden and Adolph Green is considered by many the best film musical ever made. It detailed the trauma felt by Hollywood with the advent of sound coming into

play and the anxiety felt by everyone whether they would pass the test. However this is not an angst ridden story, it's joyous, glorious fun with Gene Kelly, Debbie Reynolds, Donald O'Connor and Jean Hagen as a silent movie actress with a terrible speaking voice, all to hilarious effect.

MOONSTRUCK-1987-Norman Jewison's film with a brilliant screenplay by John Patrick Shanley is pure movie magic with a performance by Cher that even Meryl Streep would envy. This picture won Oscars for Cher (Best Actress), Olympia Dukakis (Best Supporting Actress) and John Patrick Shanley (Best Original Screenplay). Nicolas Cage and Vincent Gardenia lend tremendous support.

FUNNY GIRL-1968-William Wyler's film version of the hit Broadway musical that made Barbra Streisand a star and reminds us all why we fell in love with her in the first place. A fine screenplay by Isobel Lennert, and a beautiful score by Jule Styne and Bob Merrill and a sumptuous production detailing the rise to stardom of stage, film and radio star Fanny Brice. Considering Mr. Wyler had never directed a musical before he did a great job with an assist from some of the best technicians in the industry. Omar Sharif and Kay Medford lend great support as Fanny's husband, Nicki Arnstein and her mother, Rose. Barbra Streisand won her first Oscar as Best Actress an honor she shared with Katherine Hepburn who won for THE LION IN WINTER. Ms. Streisand won her second Oscar for writing the music to the song Evergreen from A STAR IS BORN (1976).

THE PRINCE OF TIDES-1991-Barbra Streisand's film version of the novel by Pat Conroy served to prove that she was definitely a great director as well as everything else. Starring Barbra Streisand, Blythe Danner, Kate Nelligan, Melinda Dillon and Nick Nolte in a career defining performance, proved that a great book can be brought to the screen successfully enough to please the fans of the book.

HELLO DOLLY!-1969-Gene Kelly's film version of the Broadway musical based on Thornton Wilder's play THE MATCHMAKER was a wonderful version of the stage show. Though it has a relatively slight book and filmed ironically on a very grand scale, it was never the less a lot of fun to

watch and get hooked on the glorious Jerry Herman songs sung to great effect by Barbra Streisand, who was playing Dolly Levi as a much younger character than was originally envisioned. Walter Matthau, Michael Crawford and Louis Armstrong all lend great support.

THE DREAMLIFE OF ANGELS-1998-Erick Zonca's film based on his original screenplay is a treatise on how difficult life can be for the young while still struggling to survive. Starring Elodie Bouchez and Natacha Regnier it won many international film awards. This film was always a favorite of my mothers'.

ORDINARY PEOPLE-1980-Robert Redford's film based on a book by Judith Guest with an Oscar winning screenplay by Alvin Sargent was a beauty to behold. Timothy Hutton as the suicidal son struggling to survive, Mary Tyler Moore playing against type as his rather cold mother who cares but doesn't know how to deal with the present situation, Donald Sutherland as the dad and Judd Hirsch as the psychiatrist all lend brilliant support. Timothy Hutton was awarded an Oscar for Best Supporting Actor for this role even though he was the film's lead. Unknown actors have a better chance at winning the lesser award against their better known rivals. This is a film role that I pursued for over two years only to be told I wasn't what they were looking for, and after having been consistently stopped at Universal Studios, (where I was a Tour Guide) asking if I was Jim Hutton's son (Tim actually was).

THE GARDEN OF THE FINZI-CONTINIS (1970)- This film directed by Vittorio de Sica and based on a novel by Giorgio Bassani of the same name won the Foreign Language Oscar in 1972. This film details the lives of a group of young friends in northern Italy in the late 1930's, where they are finding their lives being imposed upon by a rising tide of Fascism, which has placed increasingly anti-Semitic restrictions all around them. The film surrounds the wealthy Jewish family, the Finzi-Continis, whose lives seem to be completely innocuous to the changes happening all around them, much like their walled estate keeps out the reality of regular life. This film is beautifully acted by a group of actors too beautiful for words

(Lino Capolicchio, Dominique Sanda & Helmut Berger among others) and stunning direction and photography by Ennio Guarnieri. Though a story of this kind will inevitably have a tragic ending it is one of the most beautiful films ever made, making it worth every effort to see.

**SOMEWHERE IN TIME (1980)** - This wonderful film directed by Jeannot Szwarc was based on the novel *Bid Time Return* by Richard Matheson and starring the extraordinary trio of Christopher Reeve, Jane Seymour and Christopher Plummer. I always say that in order for a film to be truly great you must believe what you are seeing on screen is real even if it is a fantasy or else all is lost. This picture scores on all levels, with a compelling story of time travel, beautiful acting, direction, photography and one of the most beautiful scores ever composed for the screen by John Barry. It's also one of the most romantic films ever made with true hope lying in the hereafter. If you haven't seen it you should make every effort to do so.

**HOME COMING (1996)** - This beautiful film directed by Mark Jean and based on a novel of the same name by Cynthia Voigt which is very popular with today's teens. It tells a story of abandonment and renewal acted by a brilliant cast headed by Anne Bancroft and the brilliant Kimberlee Peterson and some extraordinary child actors. This is a film that shows just when you think life has dealt you a final blow, there can be unexpected renewal and great hope.

**I'LL FLY AWAY (1991-1993)** - I've decided to include a television series because of the extraordinary high quality of this drama which aired on NBC for two seasons and was capped with a TV movie which aired on PBS in Oct. of 1993. It detailed the lives of a black housekeeper, Lilly Harper (the brilliant Regina Taylor) who works for the family of the local district attorney Forrest Bedford (a wonderful Sam Waterston). The drama takes place during the late 1950's and early sixties as Lilly becomes increasingly involved with the Civil Rights movement and how the changing times affect the Bedford family as well. A beautiful and at times heartbreaking depiction of an era not so long ago, it is both entertaining and educational without ever purposely being so. A flawless piece of

filmmaking that everyone should make an effort to see.

**VICTOR/VICTORIA (1982)** - This is probably Blake Edwards best film, which he had based his screenplay on a 1933 German film *Viktor and Viktoria*. A beautiful lead performance by Julie Andrews, who was nominated for an Oscar as Best Actress, it has an extraordinary score by Henry Mancini, beautiful sets (including some amazing exteriors of Paris, all filmed inside soundstages at Pinewood Studios in London), and amazing costumes. There were career defining performances by Robert Preston and Leslie Ann Warren (both of whom should have won the Supporting Actor Oscars they were nominated for) and the hilarious James Garner.

Though this film may offend some because of its' liberal attitude towards homosexual individuals, it is an exemplary piece of filmmaking with songs that will stay with you for the rest of your life. \*\*\*\*\* (5 Stars)

**THE YOUNG VICTORIA (2009)** - This is magnificent filmmaking in every sense of the word headed by a career defining role by Emily Blunt that should have won her the Academy Award (she wasn't even nominated). It's a story directed by Jean-Marc Valle and written by the always estimable Julian Fellowes (*Downton Abbey*, of which he's written every episode) that details the young life of Queen Victoria and how she met and fell in love with Prince Albert (an excellent Rupert Friend) of Saxe-Coburg and Gotha. It has an impeccable cast that includes Paul Bettany, Miranda Richardson and Jim Broadbent. This is grand film on the highest level with excellent cinematography by Hagen Bogdanski, music by Ilan Eshkeri and Oscar winning costumes by Sandy Powell. \*\*\*\*\* (5 Stars)

**THE GRADUATE (1967)** - Mike Nichols direction won him the Academy Award for Best Director with a superb screenplay by Calder Willingham and Buck Henry. This is a film which really identified with the disenchanting youth of the sixties and is still as relevant today as it was then. A brilliant cast with a career creating role for Dustin Hoffman, it provided the luminous and brilliant Anne Bancroft with a plum peach of a role as the likeably

villainous Mrs. Robinson. The songs of Simon and Garfunkel only added to a brilliant piece of filmmaking that has gone down in history as a film that really connected with its' audience then as well as being extraordinarily relevant today. \*\*\*\*\* (5 Stars)

I hope I have provided you with a wide variety of choices to choose from and to reflect the many varied tastes that exist in our world. There have been so many extraordinary film experiences that I myself have had in my life and I hope that these provide some added enjoyment for you as well.

Ethan Nielson