WNCC

WOKING'S NEW CINEMA CLUB

Director	Richard Fleischer
Producer	Robert Fryer
Photography	Richard Kline
Screenplay	Edward Anhalt
	(based on the book of the same name by Gerold Frank
Editor	Marion Rothman

STARRING
TONY CURTIS · HENRY FONDA · GEORGE KENNEDY
CO STARRING
Mike Kellin Murray Hamilton

Cast

Albert DeSalvo	Tony Curtis
John S. Bottomley	Henry Fonda
Phil DiNatale	George Kennedy
Julian Soschink	Mike Kellin
Terence Huntley	Hurd Hatfield
Frank McAfee	Murray Hamilton
John Asgeirson	Jeff Corey
Dianne Cluney	Sally Kellerman
Mary Bottomley	Leora Dana
Irmgard DeSalvo	Carolyn Cornwell
Cloe	Jeanne Cooper
Dr Nagy	Austin Willis
Eugene T. O'Rourke	William Hickey

Police detectives are baffled by the strangling of a number of elderly women living in Boston and places nearby. When the strangler turns to younger victims, the Attorney General assigns his Assistant, John Bottomley, to direct the operations of the "Strangler Bureau", specially created to co-ordinate all information available.

The split film technique which is used in tonight's film to simultaneously show women's faces, hands bolting doors, and the person walking down a corridor, came at the time that device had been popularised by *The Thomas Crown Affair.* The tension is heightened by the cameraman, Richard Kline, employing a hand held camera to shoot at oddly high and low angles throughout.

The film also has other interesting elements - you do not see the killer until 45 minutes have gone. The film has no music, a device utilised in every film these days to both heighten the audiences senses and also to try and sell a soundtrack.

Tony Curtis was born on 3 June, 1925 as Bernard Schwartz. He first film was *Criss Cross* in 1948, in which he was on screen for 2 minutes. However even that brief time produced fan letters to the Universal studio, to whom he was under contract, and from then on they groomed him for stardom.

Many critics put down Tony Curtis throughout his career, frequently recalling his portrayal of a cultured English knight in the 1954 film *The Black Shield of Falworth*, in which he proclaimed (in an inimitable Bronx accent) "Yonder lies the castle of my fadder".

Incidentally, that was the only film in which he and Janet Leigh appeared. It was also the first Universal film in CinemaScope.

His career took a giant leap (no pun intended) when he starred with Burt Lancaster and Gina Lollobrigida in *Trapeze* (1956 - dir. Carol Reed). He was good, so Lancaster astutely cast him as the unprincipled Sidney Falco in *Sweet Smell of My Success.*

He was now on a role, and his next 2 films cemented his popularity - *The Vikings* (1958 dir. Richard Fleischer - he also directed tonight's film) and *The Defiant Ones* (1958 - dir. Stanley Kramer).

After another two films he appeared in my all time favourite film - *Some Like It Hot*, about which I suspect I need say nothing.

By the time of tonight's film, the total gross of his movies was about sixty million dollars, however his pictures in this period were a personal disappointment. He considered that his career was losing momentum and that he needed a new challenge.

To quote from his autobiography:

> "In December 1967 I heard that Robert Fryer, the producer, was looking everywhere for the man to play the title character. Dozens and dozens of guys were tested - big names, little names, no names. I wanted that part badly, and the director, Dick Fleischer. Wanted me too. But Dick Zanuck at Twentieth Century-Fox didn't think I could play it. He thought I was too recognizable.
>
> So one day I took some putty and built myself a big nose. I changed my eyelashes, eyebrows, and hair. I had this Leica 35mm camera, and I took pictures of myself - profiles and front views - and had two dozen eight by tens printed on grainy paper. I gave them to Dick Fleischer, who went into Zanuck's office, threw them on the table, and said "Here's your strangler." Zanuck said "Yeah, that guy could be him. I like that look - who is it?" Fleischer said "Tony!" and that's how I got the part."

According to Curtis, he and Henry Fonda never got together personally or socially, however as he himself suggests, perhaps this was just as well considering the two characters they portrayed.

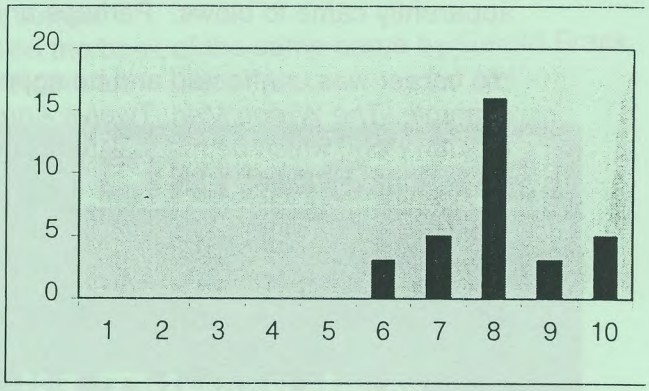
Fonda had created a screen image of a noble, honest man of conscience. However 1968 was an important year in his career as in addition to tonight's film, he appeared as a callous villain, gunning down children, in Sergio Leone's *Once Upon a Time in the West.*

He was born in Grand Island, Nebraska on 16 May 1905 and began his career as a stage actor. He made his first Hollywood film in 1938 (*The Farmer Takes a Wife).* Having grown up on the prairie and never having lost either his Nebraska twang or his rolling plains walk, it is perhaps unsurprising that he made several excellent Westerns and a large percentage of his movies were in the cowboy/pioneer mould. He had a long association with the director John Ford including *Young Mr Lincoln, Drums Along the Mohawk, The Grapes of Wrath, My Darling Clementine, The Fugitive, Fort Apache.*

Reactions Report

The African Queen (28/1/99)

32 Reactions, average score **8.06**



Comments

Bogart at his very best.

Good old fashioned fun.

Music a bit intrusive.

Still excellent – even on seeing it 4 times before!

One of my favourite films.

As much fun as it was 40 years ago.

Titanic eat your heart out!

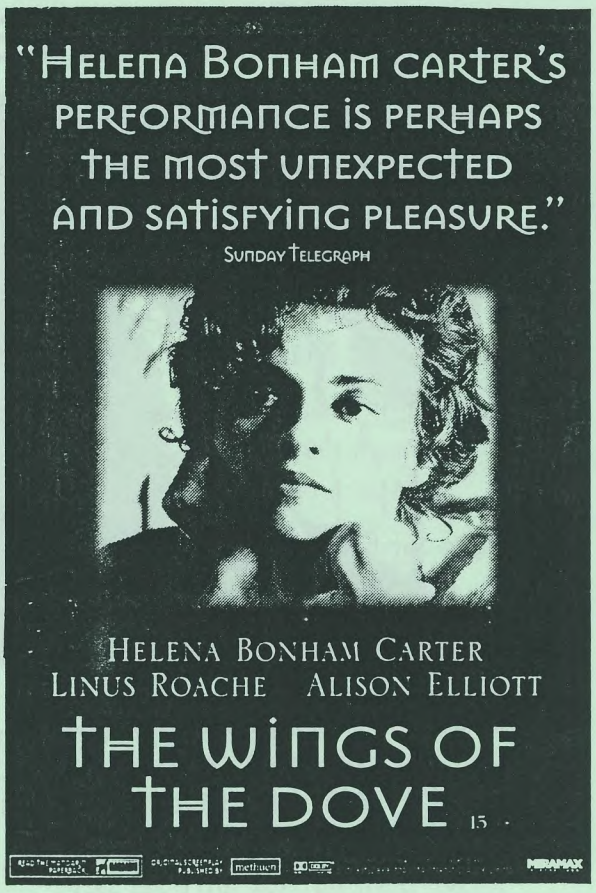
The perfect couple in the greatest film.

Rapids ahoy shipmates!!

Helen Sayers

Forthcoming Attractions

25th February



Programme ends at 10.10 pm (approx)

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After the war he returned to stage work and after 3 years on Broadway with *Mister Roberts*, was persuaded to return to Hollywood to star in the film version to be directed by Ford. However they quarrelled over the interpretation, and indeed apparently came to blows. Perhaps unsurprisingly, they never worked again.

His career was unaffected and he appeared in several memorable films, for example, *The Wrong Man, Twelve Angry Men, The Tin Star.* His final film was *On Golden Pond* which he made with his daughter in 1981. It finally won him an Oscar. He died the following year.

Albert DeSalvo was stabbed to death in his prison cell in Walpole, Massachusetts on 26 November, 1973.

This film is an absorbing drama, which sees Curtis giving a startling performance. The complex multi-screen technique gets lost on a television screen, which is why this film is rarely screened. Tonight you will see it at its Cinemascope best.

Finally, I leave you with the tag line on the film poster:

"Come in".
He did.
Thirteen times.

Iain McGlashan
Chairman

News & Views

Vintage Film Posters

Our first Vintage Film Poster auction of the year will include titles from the most popular film genres: Hitchcock, film noir, westerns, horror, science fiction and musicals as well as a substantial section devoted to Ealing Studios.

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VIEWING: 19 March 1999 10am–5pm
21 March 1999 12 noon–4pm
22 March 1999 9am–1pm

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The Ladykillers, 1955, Ealing Studios, British Quad, 30 x 40 in. (76.2 x 101.6 cm.)
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