

DVD

Radiant 'Sunrise' sees new day

By Tim Page
Washington Post

Once every decade, Sight and Sound, the estimable monthly magazine of the British Film Institute, takes a poll of critics and directors around the world, asking them to list their 10 favorite movies of all time. As parlor games go, this is a pretty good one.

But most of the 2002 winners were predictable ("Citizen Kane," "8½," "Potemkin"), and some have been wildly popular for years ("The Godfather,"

VEWS

"Singin' in the Rain"). A curious viewer in search of some hitherto-unknown finds seemed likely to be disappointed by the list's sheer normality.

But then there was F.W. Murnau's "Sunrise" — a silent film released in 1927 just as talkies were changing the nature of cinema forever; a film that survives only in third- or fourth-generation prints (the negative burned in a flash fire in 1937); a film that was available to viewers only briefly and inadequately on videocassette and not at all for the past dozen years.

Indeed, it is likely that some of the 145 critics and 108 directors who took part in the survey might never have seen Murnau's film. Yet such is the passion "Sunrise" inspires in its devotees that it still managed to place seventh on a list of all the movies in the world — higher than anything by D.W. Griffith, Charles Chaplin, Ingmar Bergman or other indisputable film masters.

Its stock will likely climb further by the time the next poll rolls around in 2012 because 20th Century Fox finally has issued "Sunrise" on DVD as part of its Studio Classics line, permitting steady and universal access to this radiant and surpassingly tender work of art.

Fox has done the job right — selecting the best possible print,



George O'Brien and Janet Gaynor star in "Sunrise," a 1927 silent film that inspires such passion in its devotees that it placed seventh on one list of the best movies in the world. Now, 20th Century Fox has issued the rarely seen gem on DVD as part of its Studio Classics line.

File photo

enhancing it as far as technology will allow and then permitting the viewer to choose among the original soundtrack, a more recent score composed for a revival in the 1970s and a commentary by cinematographer John Bailey. The DVD also includes the complete original shooting script, a promotional trailer, 10 minutes of outtakes and a reconstruction, through drawings and still photographs, of yet another Murnau

film, "Four Devils," which dates from the same period as "Sunrise" but seems to have disappeared.

Simple yet all-encompassing, highly stylized yet urgently emotive, "Sunrise" is 100 minutes of pure feeling, a love story told with a minimal number of subtitles, a few sound effects and almost unbelievably affecting performances by George O'Brien and especially Janet Gaynor. Here, the silent film reached its apogee, in the same

year that it began to pass into history.

Murnau called "Sunrise" a "song of two humans" — and the musical analogy is apt.

The plot can be told in a few sentences: A poor farmer, infatuated with a sophisticated and seductive stranger, plans to drown his loving wife. In the end, his conscience does not permit him to carry out the deed, but his menacing behavior terrifies his partner, who flees into a bizarre and dehumanized city. The rest of the film is a study of crisis, reconciliation and, ultimately, the sweetest and most compassionate expression of forgiveness this side of "Le Nozze di Figaro."

At the first Academy Awards ceremony, "Sunrise" won three Oscars: Gaynor for best actress (in conjunction with her work in "Seventh Heaven" and "Street Angel"); Charles Rosher and Karl Struss for cinematography, and a special recognition for the film as a "unique and artistic production." It was the only time this last award was ever given — and the description stands.

Important note: "Sunrise" is now available only as a bonus to customers who mail in proof-of-purchase certificates for any three titles in the Studio Classics series, which includes "All About Eve," "The Day the Earth Stood Still," "How Green Was My Valley" and "The Song of Bernadette" (\$19.98 each). Costco stores reportedly are selling discount-priced four-packs of those movies that include "Sunrise." A separate release is planned for next year.

Meanwhile, the newest release in the Studio Classics series comes out today, the stately 1953 production of "Titanic" (Fox, \$19.98). Extras include two commentary tracks, the A&E documentary "Beyond Titanic," newsreel footage and comparisons with other movies about the ill-fated ship.

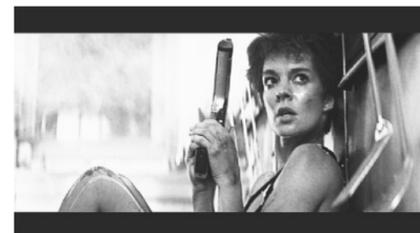
Staff writer Randy A. Salas contributed to this report.

WIDESCREEN 101

LESSON 6: HOW DO WIDESCREEN TVS WORK?

Widescreen TV sets have proportions that make them a better match for watching widescreen DVDs. Because they are optimized for viewing with anamorphic-widescreen DVDs, they also have better picture quality than most regular TV sets.

Widescreen sets often are called 16-by-9 TVs because they have a screen that is 16 units wide by 9 units high, or a ratio of 1.78:1. Widescreen movies shot in the common original aspect ratio of 1.85:1 would essentially fill the screen of a 16-by-9 set. (The difference in ratios isn't enough to create noticeable black space above and below the image.)



But 16-by-9 TVs don't completely solve the problem of watching wider-ratio movies at home because their screens still have fixed dimensions, just like regular sets. A movie shot at the wider 2.35:1 (the other common widescreen ratio) would still require black space above and below the image to preserve its original aspect ratio — as illustrated by this scene from "La Femme Nikita" on a 16-by-9 set. The black space, though, is much less severe than on a regular TV set.



Watching older movies and most TV programming on a widescreen TV creates a different problem. Black space must be added to the sides of the image to preserve the original aspect ratio, as shown by this scene from "The Wizard of Oz" on a 16-by-9 set. This is sometimes called a window-boxed presentation.

Randy A. Salas

Blackout might point to use of date-rape drug, readers say

Dear Abby: I had to write after reading your response to "Not Into Porn," the young woman who blacked out after drinking with her live-in boyfriend, and later discovered that he had videotaped them having sex. I'll bet you get more than 1,000 letters suggesting that you overlooked a serious possibility: She may have been given a date-rape drug.

The symptoms she described could be linked to GHB or Rohypnol. People who drink a combination of alcohol and these drugs commonly have "blackouts" lasting from one to 24 hours after consuming such a cocktail.

Saratoga, Calif., Reader

Abby says: You win the bet. I have received an avalanche of letters and e-mails numbering in the thousands. Read on:

Dear Abby: You told the young lady that drinking and blacking out could indicate a drinking problem. As a physician, and the father of two young women, I feel your advice was incomplete. The "problem" is her boyfriend. He may be a sexual predator and subject to prosecution. She may be the victim of the date-rape drug Rohypnol, and that's why she can't remember being videotaped.

Young women should be warned about this possibility and the need to watch their



Dear Abby

beverages carefully.

Peter S. Hacker, M.D., Hollis, N.H.

Abby says: I didn't consider the possibility of a date-rape drug — and neither did my staff — because of the length of time (five years) that she and her boyfriend have lived together. Read on:

Dear Abby: I had a similar experience, also with a trusted boyfriend. I had a couple of drinks and felt tipsy. He offered to take me home and take care of me. The next morning I awoke with a bruise at the top of my head, blurred vision and frighteningly awkward coordination. I remembered nothing. My boyfriend said I had passed out.

Later, several friends told me that he had bragged that he had laced my drink in order to fulfill a "personal fantasy." Please let your readers know this happens not only with strangers, but sometimes with people we think we can trust. I hope this helps someone. Thanks for letting me get it off my chest.

Jenny in N.D.

Abby says: Thank you for

writing. Your letter will not only help thousands of women, but it has also educated me.

Dear Abby: Regarding the jerk who not only had sex with his girlfriend after she had passed out, but then had the audacity to videotape the act: Sex with a woman who is not capable of consent is rape.

Another Man's View in Washington

Abby says: I agree. And to be safe, the young woman should call her local rape hot line and run the entire scenario by them. She may also need to be tested for STDs — because a man who would do this to her could easily be sexually violating other women.

Dear Abby: Under no circumstances should that video be destroyed. It should be taken to the police so it can be used as evidence in her boyfriend's prosecution! And as for you, it's time to drag out the wet noodle.

Horried in Houston

Abby says: No need for the noodle. I've already been flogged enough.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at <http://www.DearAbby.com> or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

Star Tribune KICKOFF PAYOFF CONTEST

**PICK UP THE SUNDAY PAPER.
PICK YOUR TEAMS.
PICK UP \$50,000!**

August 30 – December 26, 2003



To play, just purchase the Sunday Star Tribune newspaper from newsstands and retail outlets and look for the entry form in the Comics section. Then predict the winners of that week's games and the final score of the "featured game." Mail or drop off your picks for your chance to win THREE ways:

1. Correctly pick all scheduled games for that week and win \$5,000 cash if the entry form was in the final edition Sunday paper. Win \$7,500 if it was in the Sunday early edition, now available at most metro area stores on Saturdays at 7 a.m. If no one wins, the prize money rolls over to the next week. If more than one person picks all games correctly, one winner will be randomly selected.
2. Each week, one entry will be selected at random. If that person correctly predicted the featured game's final score, he or she wins \$50,000!
3. Other prizes, including merchandise and tickets, will be randomly awarded throughout the contest.

Must be 18 years or older. For complete rules, see entry form.

Star Tribune
www.startribune.com

CONTACT US

VARIETY EDITOR
Randy Miranda
rmiranda@startribune.com
612-673-7432

EVENTS
Fax at 612-673-4359
E-mail variety@startribune.com

CALENDAR
Items must be submitted 10 days prior to publication date.
Fax at 612-673-7872
E-mail culturecal@startribune.com
Write 425 Portland Av., Minneapolis, MN 55488

ONLINE
www.startribune.com/variety

ADVERTISING
612-673-7777

COMMENTS
Susie Hopper
Assistant Managing Editor/Features
shopper@startribune.com
612-673-4530

COMPLAINTS
Lou Gelfand, Reader representative
readerrep@startribune.com
612-673-4450

startribune.com

shopping

John Ewaldt shares the by and buy around town in Editor's Picks startribune.com/shopping

startribune.com is a registered trademark of The Star Tribune Company. ©2003/9/2