

Season 1
February to July, 2008



ADELAIDE CINÉMATHÈQUE

THE SOUTH AUSTRALIAN FILM SOCIETY DEVOTED TO SCREEN CULTURE

POPEYE

DIRECTOR: Robert Altman
WRITER: Jules Feiffer, E. C. Seger (comic)
PRODUCER: Robert Evans, Scott Bushnell, C. O. Erickson
CINEMATOGRAPHER: Giuseppe Rotunno
EDITOR: John W. Holmes, David Alan Simmons
ORIGINAL MUSIC: Harry Nilsson
CAST: Robin Williams, Shelley Duvall, Ray Walston, Paul Dooley, Paul L. Smith, Wesley Ivan Hurt.
PRODUCTION COMPANY: Paramount Pictures
YEAR OF RELEASE: 1980
RUNNING TIME: 114mins
FORMAT: 35mm

RECOMMENDED READING:

RECOMMENDED LINKS:



AWARDS:

In the early stages of his career, director Robert Altman learned the importance of perseverance. After being a co-pilot during World War II, Altman tried to break into Hollywood as a writer, with little success. By 1950 he was back with his family in Kansas City, ready to start again. He found employment first as a writer but later as a director for the Calvin Company, a producer of industrial films. It was here that Altman developed and honed his technical film-making skills. It was also here that he developed a skill for working fast and working cheap, a habit that would serve him well in the future. Several times during his Calvin Company years Altman would quit to pursue a Hollywood career again, but each time he would return to the steady Company job.

Altman got his break with the exploitation film *The Delinquents*, which got him noticed by Alfred Hitchcock and got him a job on the famous director's television show. Altman became a prolific television director, helming episodes for over 25 series including *Maverick*, *Bonanza*, and *Route 66*. It was the iconic war-comedy *MASH* that launched Altman to critical and financial success.

In 1980 he tried his hand at the movie musical with an adaptation of the classic *Popeye* cartoons. The film was generally derided upon release, and is remembered as a financial failure (though it did make its money back). The film's poor reception was a blow to Altman's career, but as he had done many times in the past, he persevered and he continued to work, finding universal acclaim once more with 1992's *The Player*.

Robert Altman died in 2006 at age 81. He directed over 30 films.

NEW YORK, NEW YORK

DIRECTOR: Martin Scorsese
WRITER: Earl Mac Rauch, Mardik Martin
PRODUCER: Robert Chartoff, Gene Kirkwood, Irwin Winkler.
CINEMATOGRAPHER: László Kovács
EDITOR: Bert Lovitt, David Ramirez, Tom Rolf.
ORIGINAL MUSIC: John Kander & Fred Ebb
CAST: Liza Minnelli, Robert De Niro.
PRODUCTION COMPANY: United Artists
YEAR OF RELEASE: 1977
RUNNING TIME: 155mins
FORMAT: 35mm

RECOMMENDED LINKS:

RECOMMENDED READING:



AWARDS:

Martin Scorsese's *New York, New York* is probably best known now for introducing the title song to the world. It became a signature tune for star Liza Minnelli, and again for Frank Sinatra when he recorded a cover version several years later. Interestingly, Kander and Ebb's original theme for the film was rejected by actor Robert De Niro as "too weak", prompting them to create the new tune that has since come to define the city.

In addition to Martin Scorsese and Robert De Niro, *New York, New York* featured another important member of the 1970's American film community. Cinematographer László Kovács arrived in the United States in 1957 with friend Vilmos Zsigmond and 30,000 feet of film the pair had surreptitiously shot of the 1956 revolution in their native Hungary. They planned to sell the footage but by this time interest in the uprising had waned, and a buyer was hard to find. Eventually it would screen on a documentary for the CBS television network. Kovács shot a variety of films through the 1960's, but it was the breakout success of Dennis Hopper's *Easy Rider* in 1969 that shot Kovács to prominence amongst the film-makers of the 1970's "American new wave". Kovács would go on to shoot such films as Robert Altman's *That Cold Day in the Park*, Peter Bogdanovich's *Paper Moon*, and of course Martin Scorsese's *New York, New York*.

New York, New York was not Kovács' only musical. He shot *At Long Last Love* for Bogdanovich, and was amongst several camera operators on Scorsese's concert film *The Last Waltz*. Very early in his American career, he also contributed to the self-proclaimed "first monster musical", *The Incredibly Strange Creatures Who Stopped Living and Became Mixed Up Zombies!!?*

Kovács passed away in 2007 at age 74. His final credit was for the documentary *Torn from the Flag* about the 1956 Hungarian Revolution, featuring the footage he and Zsigmond shot during the uprising.



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