

## Toronto Flick Picks: Summer in Italy, My One Demand at Luminato and more

BY PAUL HANTIUK

Published: Friday, Jun. 26, 2015, 01:26 PM



IMAGE: MAFIOSO (COURTESY OF RIALTO PICTURES)

It's not the first time TIFF has taken a summer getaway with the Italian masters but that's no reason not to rejoice at the chance to see some of these marvelous films again. As always, there are plenty of gems to uncover from this rich period in the Italy's golden age of cinema.

The big names of neorealism are all here, with the exception of *Bicycle Thieves* heavyweight Vittorio De Sica who is receiving his own retrospective this summer at the Lightbox. Most film buffs will have seen flicks like Luchino Visconti's adaptation of Giuseppe di Lampedusa's *The Leopard*, Michaelangelo Antonioni's *Red Desert* (July 21), Bernardo Bertolucci's *The Conformist* (August 27) and Federico Fellini's *La Dolce Vita* (August 1) and *Amarcord* (June 30) but there's a good chance to see some of those same directors lesser known stuff here.

You get Antonioni's terrific take on James M. Cain's *The Postman Always Rings Twice* titled *Story of a Love Affair* (July 19) - Visconti also took a stab at that same material with his *Ossessione* and it's a toss up as to which is better in my eyes), a black and white film starring Claudia Cardinale called *Sandra* (July 9) that Visconti made right after the epic colour film *The Leopard*, and an early Fellini called *Il Bidone* (August 9) which stars Broderick Crawford as an increasingly pathetic ageing conman and just slightly teases at the imagination that Fellini would unfurl in his later work.

Roberto Rossellini is another of the major directors of the era and his best film, at least of this "new wave" era spanning the 50s to mid 60s, is *Rome, Open City* (June 27) starring Anna Magnani. It's compelling for it's emotional performances as well as it's inimitable locations in post Second World War Rome. You also get four of the collaborations between the couple that begat Isabella Rossellini when director Rossellini teamed up with Hollywood star Ingrid Bergman. *Stromboli* (August 28), *Europa '51* (August 30), *Viaggio in Italia* (Sept 5) are fairly well known, but you also get the last film they made together *The Fear*. The only one missing is a filmed version of a Joan of Arc oratorio which is unseen by me.

What stands out for me are the less canonical classics (not that the above aren't all terrific if you haven't had the chance to see them). Several of the films deal with the division between the more urbanite northerner's living in cities like Milan and Rome with the southern Sicilians. You can see that in Ermanno Olmi's *The Fiances* (July 18) which is like a watchable Alain Renais film using some of the same jump cutting and dreamy, opaque voice-over narrations as something like *Hiroshima Mon Amour* to a more emotionally satisfying end. The plot covers a couple that is separated when a man (Carlo Cabrini) chooses to take a job in the south.

You also get hints of this in Alberto Lattuada's terrific *Mafioso* (August 15) which starts as a bit of a comedy with local boy made good (Alberto Sordi) in an auto factory up north coming back home to Sicily to see the folks and pay his respects to the local Don Vincenzo. It takes a dark turn and features a sequence as tense as the one in *The Godfather* where Michael (Al Pacino) chooses to knock off Capt. McCluskey (Sterling Hayden), but I shouldn't say more.

I also would highly recommend *Il Sorpasso* (July 3) which stars Vittorio Gassman and Jean-Louis Trintignant in a road movie that heavily influenced Alexander Payne and *Sideways*, as well as *Big Deal on Madonna Street* (August 20) which you could liken to a neorealist *Ocean's Eleven*, in that it's a star-studded heist movie, with Gassman again, Marcello Mastroianni, Claudia Cardinale, and even comedic icon Totò, all in the fray.

There's much more to say about these films and I have high praise for nearly all of them. Listings and ticket info can be had, [right here](#).

### ***My One Demand* at Luminato**

The U.K. film art troupe [Blast Theory](#) kicked off the first of three live screening/streaming simulcasts of their interactive film experience *My One Demand* last night as part of Luminato.

The concept is to shoot a film as it happens, live to screen, in one long continuous take around the city of Toronto. Ticket holders can watch it unfold two more times, each unique, tonight and Saturday at the TIFF Bell Lightbox.

It's certainly an interesting concept. The group's co-founder Ju Row Farr says they're always interested in "fusing the live with the mediated."

"It doesn't feel like an experiment rather a form that is new and also partly a step into the unknown. We see it somewhere between documentary and fiction, imaginary and live action. We will see how it goes but our plan is to build out from this experience and work with this project and/or this form again. It's very exciting," said Farr in an email.

The cast includes Toronto stalwarts like Julian Richings and the film, at least as envisaged, deals in themes of unrequited love while trying to grapple with the world post-2008 Wall Street collapse. The 90 minute tracking shot starts in Toronto General Hospital and follows the characters through various landmarks in the city at sunset.

The group acknowledges in the press materials that any number of things could go wrong, but the hope is to create a communal experience where the audience is invested in the diegetic material but also rooting for the thing to hold together.

Spectators can even answer questions that pop up on the screen using their cell phones. The final two screenings are tonight and Saturday June 27, both at 8 p.m. Purchase [tickets here](#).