

Lincoln Center Pays Tribute to Anna Magnani

i. l. (May 05, 2016)



A special series dedicated to the film work of iconic Italian actress Anna Magnani, May 18 – June 1. The 24-title retrospective will screen entirely on 35mm and 16mm.

[The Film Society of Lincoln Center](#) [2] and Istituto Luce Cinecittà have announced the lineup for La Magnani, a series dedicated to the film work of iconic Italian actress Anna Magnani, May 18 – June 1. The 24-title retrospective will screen entirely on 35mm and 16mm.

Anna Magnani's blend of fiery passion, earthy humor, and unvarnished naturalism made her the symbol of postwar Italian cinema. Launched to worldwide superstardom through her indelible turn in Roberto Rossellini's *Rome Open City*, she represented something startlingly new to audiences



accustomed to movie-star glamour: here, in all its raw, gritty glory, was life. Equally adept at drama and comedy, she could harness her explosive emotional intensity to move an audience to laughter, tears, or both at once.

La Magnani highlights the actress's illustrious international career, including powerhouse performances for directors like Rossellini, Luchino Visconti (*Bellissima*), Pier Paolo Pasolini (*Mamma Roma*), Federico Fellini (*L'amore e la morte*), Sidney Lumet (*The Fugitive Kind*), George Cukor (*Wild Is the Wind*), William Dieterle (*Volcano*), Mario Monicelli (*The Passionate Thief*), and Jean Renoir (*The Golden Coach*).

This diverse survey of Magnani's filmography also features a number of the actress's rarely screened early performances, including her third-ever on-screen appearance, as a scheming maid opposite a young Vittorio De Sica in Mario Mattoli's *Full Speed*; as a gold-digging showgirl in De Sica's *Doctor, Beware*; showing off her distinctive vocal style as an enchanting nightclub performer in Carlo Ludovico Bragaglia's *La vita è bella*; as well as her final roles in Alfredo Giannetti's historical drama *1870*—the only time she appeared opposite Marcello Mastroianni—and Fellini's *Roma*, her farewell to film.

The series is the first stop of a traveling retrospective organized by Istituto Luce Cinecittà that will continue at film institutions around the United States, including the Gene Siskel Film Center in Chicago, the Berkeley Art Museum and Pacific Film Archive, the Castro Theatre in San Francisco, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and The Wexner Center in Columbus.

Co-presented by the Film Society of Lincoln Center and Istituto Luce Cinecittà. Organized by Florence Almozini and Dan Sullivan, the Film Society; and by Camilla Cormanni and Paola Ruggiero, Luce Cinecittà. Presented in association with the Ministry of Culture of Italy.

Tickets go on sale Thursday, May 5. See more for less with a 3+ Film Package or an All Access Pass.



FILMS

1870 / Correva l'anno di grazia 1870

Alfredo Giannetti, Italy, 1972, 35mm, 116m

Italian with English subtitles

In her final starring role, Magnani was cast alongside legendary leading man Marcello Mastroianni for the only time. Set amid the upheaval of the Risorgimento era, this stirring historical drama stars Mastroianni as an Italian nationalist who is imprisoned for his opposition to the church, leaving his wife (Magnani) to join the rebel cause. Though originally made for television, there is nothing small-screen about 1870, which boasts impressive attention to period detail, an Ennio Morricone score, and, of course, mighty performances from two icons of Italian cinema. 35mm print from Istituto Luce Cinecittà.

Monday, May 30, 4:00pm

Wednesday, June 1, 6:30pm

L'amore

Roberto Rossellini, Italy, 1948, 35mm, 69m

Italian with English subtitles

Roberto Rossellini's twin tribute to Magnani offers a one-two punch of tour-de-force performances from the actress. In the first part, adapted from a theatrical monologue by Jean Cocteau, she's a woman hanging on the telephone line for dear life as she pleads with a lover who has just ended their relationship—a veritable aria of desperation and despair. In the second, a story by Federico Fellini, she stars as a peasant who has a vision of Saint Joseph—and then finds herself mysteriously pregnant. When it was released in New York, the latter was condemned as “sacrilegious,” leading to a landmark censorship battle that went all the way to the Supreme Court. Far from blasphemous, it's a luminous statement of faith and spirituality, featuring one of Magnani's most moving performances. 35mm print from Istituto Luce Cinecittà.

Friday, May 27, 9:15pm



Saturday, May 28, 2:00pm

...And the Wild Women / Nella città l'inferno

Renato Castellani, Italy/France, 1959, 35mm, 106m

Italian with English subtitles

Sparks fly as Magnani plays opposite another legend of Italian cinema—Giulietta Masina—in this explosive women-in-prison drama. Masina is the naïve young innocent wrongly convicted, Magnani the volatile hardened convict who corrupts her. Despite its title, the film is less an exploitation shocker than a gripping character study, with the interplay between Magnani's livewire intensity and Masina's gentle guilelessness generating real dramatic tension. Each woman gets ample opportunity to shine, but the best moment belongs to the electrifying Magnani. The sight of her shimmying down a cellblock while shouting "rock and roll!" is worth the price of admission alone. 35mm print from Istituto Luce Cinecittà.

Friday, May 20, 9:00pm

Sunday, May 22, 2:00pm

Angelina / L'onorevole Angelina

Luigi Zampa, Italy, 1947, 35mm, 90m

Italian with English subtitles

Magnani delivers a powerhouse performance in this rousing, up-with-the-people slice of neorealism. She stars as a slum-dwelling mother of five who is thrust into the spotlight when she leads a band of women against a black-market peddler who is withholding their food rations. From there she finds herself the instigator of an all-out, female-powered political revolution that pits her against a coterie of capitalist fat cats. Fascinating for the way it flirts with proto-feminist politics, Angelina gives Magnani a role tailor-made for her brand of fiery magnetism and for which she was rewarded with a Best Actress award at the Venice Film Festival. 35mm print from Istituto Luce Cinecittà.

Sunday, May 22, 6:45pm



Thursday, May 26, 2:30pm*

*Venue: Elinor Bunin Munroe Film Center, 144 West 65th Street

The Bandit / Il bandito

Alberto Lattuada, Italy, 1946, 35mm, 78m

English, Italian, and German with English subtitles

Magnani is a fierce femme fatale in this striking neorealist noir. Upon returning to Italy from the war, ex-POW Ernesto (the “Italian Errol Flynn” Amedeo Nazzari) takes stock of the shattered pieces of his life in bombed-out Turin. When he’s unwittingly implicated in a murder, he’s taken in by a crime ring presided over by Magnani’s glamorous gangster’s moll. But Ernesto’s idealism—he fashions himself a gun-toting Robin Hood, stealing from the rich and giving to the poor—doesn’t sit well with the rest of the outfit. Director Alberto Lattuada imbues this socially conscious crime saga with a shadowy style and a foreboding fatalism. Memorable set piece: a nightclub robbery set to a drum solo. 35mm print from Istituto Luce Cinecittà.

Monday, May 30, 9:15pm

Wednesday, June 1, 4:45pm

Bellissima

Luchino Visconti, Italy, 1952, 35mm, 108m

Italian with English subtitles

This early gem from melodrama maestro Luchino Visconti deftly blends showbiz satire with heart-tugging pathos. When Cinecittà Studios puts out a casting call for a new child actress, they’re flooded with starry-eyed stage mothers and their talentless tots, among them Magnani’s working-class Roman nurse who becomes obsessed with making her (rather indifferent) daughter a star. As in similar Hollywood-plays-itself melodramas (*The Bad and the Beautiful*, *Sunset Boulevard*), *Bellissima* both romanticizes the power of celluloid dreams while delivering a cuttingly cynical takedown of the movie industry. It ultimately achieves real poignancy through Magnani’s affecting performance as a



mother whose desperate drive to succeed is outweighed only by her love for her child. 35mm print from Istituto Luce Cinecittà.

Wednesday, May 18, 4:15pm

Sunday, May 29, 8:30pm

Doctor, Beware / Teresa Venerdi

Vittorio De Sica, Italy, 1941, 35mm, 92m

Italian with English subtitles

Before he went neorealist a few years later, Vittorio De Sica brought his compassionate sensibility to this sweetly romantic screwball farce. He stars as a harried pediatrician (his prescription for any and all ailments: castor oil) juggling a failing medical practice with the advances of three women: an airheaded heiress (Irasema Dilián), a lovesick orphan (Adriana Benetti), and a gold-digging showgirl (Magnani). Though she only appears in a handful of scenes, Magnani handily steals them all (witness her sleepwalking disdainfully through a ridiculous dance number). De Sica himself called it the actress's "true first film." 35mm print from Istituto Luce Cinecittà.

Sunday, May 29, 6:30pm

Monday, May 30, 2:00pm

Down with Misery / Abbasso la miseria!

Gennaro Righelli, Italy, 1945, 35mm, 90m

Italian with English subtitles

Released the same year as Magnani's international breakthrough, *Rome Open City*, this tenderhearted comedy charts the mayhem that ensues when an honest truck driver (Nino Besozzi) unwittingly gets mixed up in black-market smuggling and winds up adopting a streetwise orphan—much to the chagrin of his no-nonsense wife (Magnani). Something like a neorealist fairy tale, *Down with Misery* roots its charming wisp of a story in the none-too-rosy economic reality of postwar Italy to create a bittersweet look at downtrodden people striving for a better tomorrow.



35mm print from Istituto Luce Cinecittà.

Saturday, May 21, 6:30pm

Tuesday, May 24, 2:30pm

Fellini's Roma

Federico Fellini, Italy/France, 1972, 35mm, 128m

English, Italian, French, German, Spanish, and Latin with English subtitles

Magnani's farewell to film was this fitting send-off from Federico Fellini, a sprawling, kaleidoscopic tribute to the city that the actress embodied. Told in a delirious, stream-of-consciousness rush, it's a hallucinatory trip through the director's memories and fantasies, the whorehouses, palazzi, and catacombs of Rome both past and present. Among the dazzlingly surreal images: an epic nighttime traffic jam filmed through the gauzy wash of rain-streaked windshields; an outré Catholic fashion show of au courant papal wear; and a haunting journey into the ancient tunnels of a vanished Roman Empire. What emerges is a funny, outrageous, mystical portrait of a city both ever-changing and eternal.

Friday, May 27, 6:30pm

Saturday, May 28, 3:45pm

The Fugitive Kind

Sidney Lumet, USA, 1960, 35mm, 121m

Magnani's second encounter with Tennessee Williams after her triumph in *The Rose Tattoo* is a torrid psychodrama of lost souls and raging passions. Based on Williams's play *Orpheus Descending*, *The Fugitive Kind* stars Marlon Brando as a guitar-playing ex-con (nicknamed Snakeskin after the jacket he wears) who drifts into a godforsaken Louisiana town where his sexual magnetism inflames the desires of a wild-child nymphomaniac (Joanne Woodward) and a vile store owner's world-weary, long-suffering wife (Magnani). The trio of heavyweight dramatic performances—Brando smolders, Woodward simmers, and Magnani boils over—propel this Southern Gothic shocker.



Friday, May 20, 6:30pm

Sunday, May 22, 4:15pm

Full Speed / Tempo massimo

Mario Mattoli, Italy, 1934, 35mm, 78m

Italian with English subtitles

This comedic charmer is a sparkling example of the stylishly sophisticated entertainment that Italy produced prior to World War II. An elegant young Vittorio De Sica stars as a bookish academic, who, when a vivacious, sports-mad socialite (the single-monikered Milly) crash-lands (literally) into his life, experiences both joie de vivre and romantic complications. In one of her earliest screen appearances, Magnani—looking less like Mamma Roma and, with bobbed hair and penciled eyebrows, more like an MGM starlet—makes a strong impression as a scheming maid; even in a relatively small role the force of her irrepressible personality shines through. The cherry on top is the film's delightful climax, an inventive, sight gag-filled homage to silent slapstick. 35mm print from Istituto Luce Cinecittà.

Thursday, May 26, 9:00pm*

Wednesday, June 1, 3:00pm

*Venue: Elinor Bunin Munroe Film Center, 144 West 65th Street

The Golden Coach / Le carrosse d'or

Jean Renoir, France/Italy, 1952, 35mm, 103m

English version

Jean Renoir's exquisite love letter to the stage stars Magnani as an actress in a touring commedia dell'arte troupe. While traveling through 18th-century Peru, she finds herself receiving romantic advances from three men: a faithful Spanish soldier (George Higgins), a dashing bullfighter (Riccardo Rioli), and a wealthy Viceroy (Duncan Lamont), who possesses the dazzling carriage of the title. Renoir's real interest, though, is in the "show must go on" magic of the stage, the mysterious art of



acting, and the interplay between fantasy and reality. The combination of elegant comedy, gorgeous color cinematography, and exquisite art direction yields what François Truffaut called “the noblest and most refined film ever made.”

Saturday, May 28, 6:30pm

Sunday, May 29, 2:00pm

Tuesday, May 31, 6:30pm

Mamma Roma

Pier Paolo Pasolini, Italy, 1962, 35mm, 110m

Italian with English subtitles

In one of her defining roles, Magnani is a coarse ex-streetwalker who tries to start a new, better life in Rome for the sake of her teenage son (Ettore Garofolo)—but struggles to keep him from falling into a life of crime. Pasolini’s shattering working-class tragedy treats earthily realistic subject matter with a cool formal classicism, replete with Baroque music and visual references to Renaissance religious paintings (including a haunting re-creation of Andrea Mantegna’s Lamentation of Christ). The result is a subversive mix of the sacred and the profane that pushed neorealism in bold new directions.

Wednesday, May 18, 8:45pm

Saturday, May 21, 2:00pm

The Passionate Thief / Risate di gioia

Mario Monicelli, Italy, 1960, 35mm, 106m

Italian with English subtitles

Magnani’s funny side gets perhaps its finest showcase in this freewheeling, snap, crackle, and pop comedy. Donning a platinum-blond wig (“you look like Kim Novak,” remarks her companion), she tears her way gloriously through the role of a two-bit movie actress stepping out for a New Year’s



Eve night on the town. En route to a party, she meets up with an old friend (comedy legend Totò) who, little does she know, is assisting a suave thief (Ben Gazzara) as he picks the pockets of revelers. Over the course of one wild night, the trio tramps all over Rome, with Magnani and Totò improvising a musical number, a send-up of La Dolce Vita's Trevi Fountain romp, and romantic tensions building along the way. It ultimately leaves a poignant lasting impression thanks to director Monicelli's humanistic worldview. 35mm print from Istituto Luce Cinecittà.

Saturday, May 28, 8:45pm

Sunday, May 29, 4:15pm

The Peddler and the Lady / Campo de' fiori

Mario Bonnard, Italy, 1943, 35mm, 95m

Italian with English subtitles

Two years before they starred opposite each other in Rome Open City, Magnani and Aldo Fabrizi headlined this bittersweet comedy. He plays a humble fishmonger in Rome's Campo de' Fiori marketplace who winds up way out of his league when he begins wooing a beautiful young woman (Caterina Boratto) who's not all she seems. Meanwhile, Magnani—in the first of the earthy everywoman roles she would become known for—provides emotional gravitas as the brash, secretly-in-love-with-him fruit seller who pulls him back down to earth. The simple premise is lent nice depth by Magnani and Fabrizi, both nimbly balancing humor and heartstring-plucking poignancy. 35mm print from Istituto Luce Cinecittà.

Saturday, May 21, 8:30pm

Tuesday, May 24, 4:30pm

Mamma RomaMamma Roma

Peddlin' in Society / Abbasso la ricchezza!

Gennaro Righelli, Italy, 1946, 35mm, 85m

Italian with English subtitles



The marvelous Magnani struts, dances (hilariously), and sings her way through this delightful satirical farce. She stars as a nouveau riche former fruit vendor who, having made a fortune on the wartime black market, leases the elegant villa of a dashing Count (Vittorio De Sica) in need of cash. But her newfound fortune and provincial naïveté make her an all-too-easy target for a parade of unscrupulous con artists. The follow-up to Gennaro Righelli's *Down with Misery*, this riches-to-rags tale plays like that film in reverse, with political and class tensions never far from the surface. 35mm print from Istituto Luce Cinecittà.

Wednesday, May 18, 2:15pm

Wednesday, June 1, 9:00pm

Rome Open City / Roma città aperta

Roberto Rossellini, Italy, 1945, 35mm, 103m

Italian, German, and Latin with English subtitles

The film that announced both Italian neorealism and Magnani as major forces in international cinema, *Rome Open City* sent shock waves through the world upon its release. By taking his camera onto the rubble-strewn streets of Nazi-occupied Italy, Rossellini captured the horrors of life during wartime with an urgent, hitherto unseen immediacy, while Magnani—defiantly unglamorous, raw, and real—became the symbol of a new naturalism. She plays a mother and bride-to-be who is among a cross section of working-class Italians caught in a Nazi dragnet as the SS scours Rome for a leader in the resistance movement. More than 70 years after its arrival, *Rome Open City* retains its devastating power. 35mm print from Istituto Luce Cinecittà.

Wednesday, May 18, 6:30pm

Saturday, May 21, 4:15pm

The Rose Tattoo

Daniel Mann, USA, 1955, 117m

English and Italian with English subtitles



Magnani as a Tennessee Williams heroine yields heavy-duty dramatic fireworks in this seething saga of sexual repression. The playwright wrote the role of Serafina Delle Rose—a pious but volatile Sicilian wife and mother living in the American South—with her in mind. Enamored with a husband who is cheating on her, Serafina goes into a state of shock and denial when he dies suddenly. Her unlikely white knight is an impetuous, overgrown man-child (Burt Lancaster), and the two make as mismatched a pair of misfits as ever graced the screen. In her first Hollywood film, Magnani unleashed her hundred-proof emotional intensity in full force and was rewarded with the Best Actress Oscar. Also receiving an Academy Award was the luscious black-and-white cinematography courtesy of the great James Wong Howe. 35mm print courtesy of UCLA Film & Television Archive.

Thursday, May 19, 6:30pm

Friday, May 20, 4:00pm

La sciantosa

Alfredo Giannetti, Italy, 1971, 35mm, 92m

Italian with English subtitles

In one of four tour-de-force historical dramas Magnani made for Italian television in the early 1970s (all directed by Alfredo Giannetti, the Oscar-winning screenwriter of *Divorce Italian Style*), she dazzles as a washed-up cabaret star who receives an invitation to perform for soldiers fighting on the front lines of World War I. What the faded diva imagines to be a comeback engagement becomes a transformative experience when she is confronted with the realities of war. Magnani's status as the living symbol of her country is concretized in the powerful image of her delivering a tear-stained rendition of the Neapolitan ballad "O surdato 'nnammurato." 35mm print from Istituto Luce Cinecittà.

Tuesday, May 24, 8:45pm

Friday, May 27, 2:00pm

The Secret of Santa Vittoria

Stanley Kramer, USA, 1969, 35mm, 139m



This rollicking World War II comedy, based on the best-selling novel by Robert Crichton, is a satirical look at life in Italy under the occupation. Following the fall of fascism in 1943, the bumbling, blustery peasant Bombolini (Anthony Quinn) is installed as mayor of the small village of Santa Vittoria (one constituent whose respect he doesn't have: his strong-willed wife, played by Magnani). At first, the not-so-bright Bombolini seems like a lame-duck politician. But when the Nazis march into town, he mobilizes the citizens to protect Santa Vittoria's most precious asset: its copious supply of wine. Beautifully shot on location outside Rome, *The Secret of Santa Vittoria* combines suspense and humor in a spirited ode to resistance. 35mm print courtesy of UCLA Film & Television Archive.

Monday, May 30, 6:30pm

Tuesday, May 31, 8:45pm

La vita è bella

Carlo Ludovico Bragaglia, Italy, 1943, 35mm, 76m

Italian with English subtitles

This enchanting bit of wartime-era escapism follows the fortunes of an impecunious count (Alberto Rabagliati) who has gambled away his funds and is contemplating suicide. He gets a new lease on life when a medical doctor strikes a strange bargain with him: stay alive for one more week in exchange for money—but the deal comes with a catch. Playing an aspiring singer, Magnani is provided ample opportunity to display the distinctive vocal style she honed early in her career as a nightclub performer, for which she was dubbed “the Italian Édith Piaf.” 35mm print from Istituto Luce Cinecittà.

Sunday, May 22, 8:45pm

Thursday, May 26, 4:30pm*

*Venue: Elinor Bunin Munroe Film Center, 144 West 65th Street

Volcano / Vulcano



William Dieterle, Italy, 1950, 35mm, 106m

Italian with English subtitles

While Magnani's ex-lover Roberto Rossellini was shooting *Stromboli* with his new Hollywood girlfriend Ingrid Bergman, the Italian actress was filming this rival neorealist drama—also about a woman stranded on a hostile volcanic island—just a few miles away. The result was tabloid gold, as well as a genuinely fascinating movie in which Magnani plays a prostitute banished from Naples and forced to return to the hardscrabble island of her childhood. There, she is shunned by the community's moralistic denizens as she tries to save her younger sister (Geraldine Brooks) from being seduced by a shady deep-sea diver (Rossano Brazzi). Helmed by German emigré Hollywood director William Dieterle, *Volcano* is a delirious blend of neorealist tropes—a gritty working-class milieu, sunlit location shooting, docu-realist fishing scenes—and juicy melodrama involving sunken treasure, sex trafficking, murder, and that volcano just waiting to erupt. 35mm print from Istituto Luce Cinecittà.

Tuesday, May 24, 6:30pm

Friday, May 27, 4:00pm

Wild Is the Wind

George Cukor, USA, 1957, 16mm, 114m

English and Italian with English subtitles

A torrid tale of lust and betrayal plays out against the backdrop of the American Southwest in this full-throttle melodrama. Anthony Quinn, the rare actor who could match Magnani's explosive presence, plays a Nevada sheep rancher who, haunted by the death of his wife, marries her Italian sister (Magnani) and brings her back to America to live with him. But his controlling nature and the inescapable shadow of his first marriage (echoes of Hitchcock's *Rebecca*) drive her into the arms of a young ranch hand (Anthony Franciosa). For her second American film, Magnani jumped at the chance to work with George Cukor, under whose direction she earned a Best Actress Oscar nomination. Said Cukor: "No actress possesses the magic and the fire of Anna." Print courtesy of the Academy Film Archive.

Thursday, May 26, 6:30pm*



*Venue: Elinor Bunin Munroe Film Center, 144 West 65th Street

Woman Trouble / Molti sogni per le strade

Mario Camerini, Italy, 1948, 35mm, 84m

Italian with English subtitles

The Italian title of this neorealist seriocomedy translates as “The Street Has Many Dreams,” a more fitting name for a poignant, slice-of-life road movie. Magnani stars as a domineering Roman wife and mother along for the ride as her husband (Massimo Girotti, the hunky leading man of Visconti’s *Ossessione*) tries, unbeknownst to her, to ditch a car he stole in a moment of desperation. *Woman Trouble* moves deftly between compassionate social realism and breezy comedy as it delves into the hopes and fears of postwar, working-class Italians. The silvery cinematography is courtesy of Nights of Cabiria DP Aldo Tonti and the music by the great Nino Rota. 35mm print from Istituto Luce Cinecittà.

Thursday, May 19, 9:00pm

Friday, May 20, 2:00pm

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