

Il Bello Marcello: A Celebration of an Italian Icon

Kayla Pantano (May 17, 2017)



A 28-film retrospective starring Italy's most iconic actor, Marcello Mastroianni, is coming to New York from May 17-31 at the Walter Reade Theater.

Coined the “Latin lover,” the late actor, [Marcello Mastroianni](#) [2], epitomized onscreen masculinity and was the symbol of postwar Italian cinema for over fifty years. Though he made his screen debut in 1947, it was not until 1960 with the premiere of Fellini’s [La Dolce Vita](#) [3] when he gained international stardom. This role as a womanizing tabloid reporter played into his raunchy reputation that he humbly denied for years.

Nonetheless, he continued to allure audiences with the many diverse roles he embodied, from a scheming cuckold in [Divorce Italian Style](#) [4](1961) to a gay man living in Mussolini’s Italy in [A Special Day](#) [5] (1977). In fact, he was nominated for an Academy Award for both, even winning a Golden Globe for the former. He was also nominated for an Academy Award for [Dark Eyes](#) [6] (1987), which won him the best actor prize at Cannes. And this achievement is not an unfamiliar one for him, previously winning it in 1970 for [The Pizza Triangle](#) [7]. To this day he remains one of only three actors to win this award twice.

Mastroianni’s much-heralded career spanned 160 films, in which he often starred alongside the likes



of [Brigitte Bardot](#) [8], [Sophia Loren](#) [9], [Yves Montand](#) [10], and [Jack Lemmon](#) [11]. Though he was a [Fellini](#) [12] regular, he also gave singular performances for international auteurs like [Michelangelo Antonioni](#) [13], [Marco Bellocchio](#) [14], [Vittorio De Sica](#) [15], [Luchino Visconti](#) [16], [Jacques Demy](#) [17], [Raúl Ruiz](#) [18], and [Robert Altman](#) [19].

More than 20 years after his death from pancreatic cancer, [The Film Society of Lincoln Center](#) [20] is honoring his excellence in a 28-film retrospective, entitled [Il Bello Marcello](#) [21], running from May 17-31. Presented in association with the [Ministry of Culture of Italy](#) [22] and organized by Florence Almozini and Dan Sullivan and by Camilla Cormanni and Paola Ruggiero of [Istituto Luce Cinecittà](#) [23], all screenings will take place at the [Walter Reade Theater](#) [24] (165 W 65th Street). Opening with [Hungry for Love](#) [25] (1960), see the highlights below, or click [here](#) [26] for the full schedule.

Il Bello Marcello: Marcello Mastroianni Career Retrospective

[Big Deal on Madonna Street](#) [27] (1958)

May 17, 9:00pm and May 20, 1:00pm

This raucously entertaining caper comedy is the original—and arguably greatest—heist spoof (like a boisterous Italian *Rififi* played for laughs). Mastroianni is one among a ragtag group of petty criminals—including Vittorio Gassman as a washed-up boxer and Totò as the lone professional in the group—who hatch a seemingly foolproof plan to rob a pawnshop. But the gang proves better at cracking wise than at cracking safes. From the impeccably tossed-off one-liners to the hilariously botched break-in climax, this is commedia all'italiana at its very best.

[La Dolce Vita](#) [28](1960)

May 20, 3:15pm and May 29, 3:30pm

Fellini's intoxicating portrayal of social and cultural decadence in postwar Rome is at once a lavishly picaresque romp and a jarringly wistful fable about the spiritual complications that follow from extravagant pleasure, casual vice, and proximity to fame. Mastroianni is nothing short of iconic in the role of tabloid journalist Marcello Rubini, who, in the narrative span of a week, seems to glide effortlessly from party to party, social scene to social scene, woman to woman, in and out of love, heeding the paired siren calls of professional ambition and personal indulgence. Boasting Oscar-winning costumes, a timeless score by Nino Rota, a vividly memorable cast of supporting characters, and a potent blend of comedy, tragedy, and unbridled sensuality, *La Dolce Vita* remains a bracing, timely masterwork whose singular emotional impact is inextricably linked to the magnetism of its leading man.

[8 ½](#) [29](1963)

May 20, 6:45pm and May 27, 4:00pm

In Federico Fellini's monumental landmark of Italian cinema, Mastroianni anchors an irresistible mélange of behind-the-scenes farce, marital tragicomedy, surrealist theological vignettes, poeticized flashbacks, and elaborate projections of private fantasies. Mastroianni plays hotshot filmmaker Guido Anselmi, struggling to get his latest passion project off the ground, while juggling relationships with various women. Notable for its bracing formal modernism and wry self-awareness, *8½* is at its heart a compassionate tribute to the wrenching aches and pains, and ephemeral ecstasies, of the creative process.

[Il bell'Antonio](#) [30] (1960)

May 21, 4:30pm and May 30, 2:00pm

Mastroianni daringly subverts his suave, Euro-lover image in this caustic, black-comic critique of church, state, and masculinity. He stars as a handsome, seemingly irresistible ladies' man, who, behind his carefully cultivated playboy image, is concealing a secret shame: he is, in fact, impotent. When word of his condition gets out, it sends everyone around him—including his parents, in-laws, priest, and new wife (Claudia Cardinale)—into an existential panic. Scripted by arch iconoclast Pier Paolo Pasolini, *Il bell'Antonio* plays on the knife's edge of satire and florid melodrama—all leading to a profoundly ironic ending worthy of Sirk.



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