



The Fugitive Kind

First film in our

Sidney

Lumet

Season

Oct 3rd 2017
at 8.15pm
Eden Court
Cinema

Film Notes
compiled from
reviews - by
Neil MacInnes
(InFiFa)

USA 1960 Drama, B&W, runs 119mins

Director: Sidney Lumet.

Writers: Tennessee Williams , Meade Roberts

Starring: Marlon Brando, Joanne Woodward ,Anna Magnani

Musical Score: Kenyon Hopkins

The Fugitive Kind began life as *Battle of Angels*, a never-produced 1939 play by a young Tennessee Williams. Nearly 20 years later, Williams refined this rough-hewn theatrical effort into *Orpheus Descending*, which enjoyed a respectable Broadway run.

The renamed film version stars Marlon Brando as Valentine "Snakeskin" Xavier, a trouble-prone drifter who wanders into a deliciously Williamsesque Mississippi town. Here he becomes involved in the problems of alcoholic Carole Cutrere (Joanne Woodward) and unhappily married Lady Torrence (Anna Magnani) and also runs afoul of Torrence's vicious husband (Victor Jory). Sexual symbolism abounds in this tempestuous drama, which offers Brando at his most inscrutable and Magnani at her earthiest. Maureen Stapleton, in real life one of Brando's best friends and severest critics, plays an avant-garde artist.

(Hal Erickson, Rovi)

From the reviews:

1. *Bosley Crowther (The New York Times)* described the film as a "piercing account of loneliness and disappointment in a crass and tyrannical world . . .

[Sidney Lumet's] plainly perceptive understanding of the deep-running skills of the two stars, his daring with faces in close-up and his out-right audacity in pacing his film at a morbid tempo that lets time drag and passions slowly shape are responsible for much of the insistence and the mesmeric quality that emerge . . .

Mr. Brando and Miss Magnani . . . being fine and intelligent performers . . . play upon deep emotional chords . . . Miss Woodward is perhaps a bit too florid for full credibility . . . But Miss Stapleton's housewife is touching and Victor Jory is simply superb as the inhuman, sadistic husband . . .

An excellent musical score by Kenyon Hopkins, laced with crystalline sounds and guitar strains, enhances the mood of sadness in this sensitive film."



2. "Unfortunately, director Sidney Lumet, who's often out of his element when he leaves New York, seems positively baffled by the gothic south and doesn't know quite what to do with the overlay of Greek myth either."

Jonathan Rosenbaum (Chicago Reader)



3. Too good for America!

This story flopped as a play and as a film. That's too bad because that happens to be Tennessee Williams' most revealing play about the dark underbelly of racism, violence, vigilantes, lynchings and social injustice in the Deep South.

Be warned: This ain't "Gone With the Wind". Its subject matter couldn't have been very popular with American audiences at any time or any place. Even today, Jabe (Hades), the king of the Underworld, where he keeps his Persephone/Eurydice (Lady) prisoner, sounds an awful lot like what George W. Bush will probably sound like in his declining years, uttering curses and maledictions against life, knowledge, science, progress, social change and uppity Negroes.

I think the film works because it makes no concession to realism and frankly asserts the story's mythological elements.

Lumet, Magnani, Brando, Jory, Stapleton, Armstrong and Woodward make it work and deliver a film and performances that are bigger than life and worthy of the best European art films of the period. Kudos for the set design, the art direction, the music (by Kenyon Hopkins) and the photography.

This is a film you can't help but watch in absolute awe at the guts it took.

Benoît Racine , Toronto



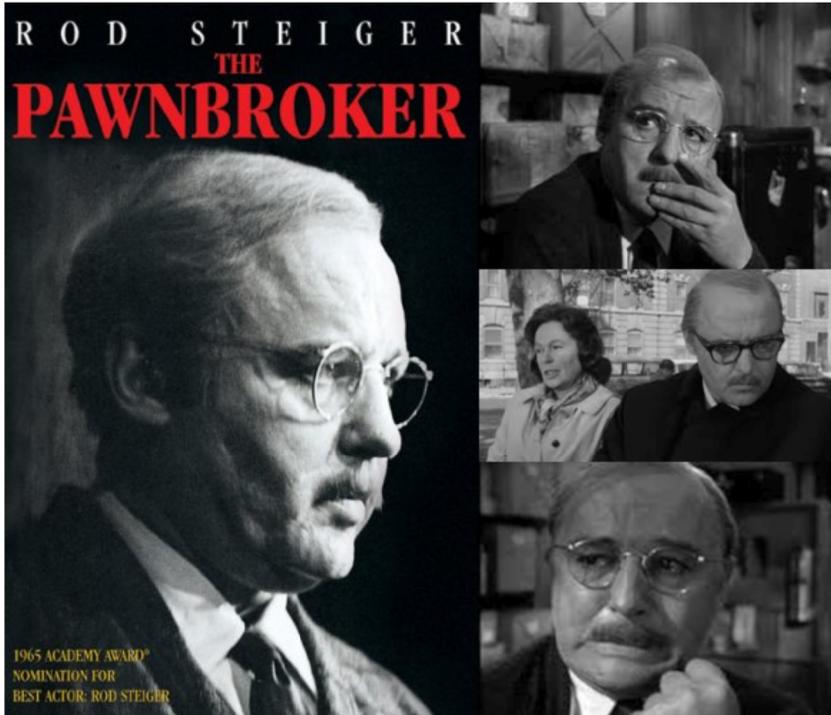
4. A different view -to stimulate discussion!

Despite its stellar credentials, just about everything is wrong with this adaptation of Tennessee Williams' play *Orpheus Descending*. Brando plays a mysterious drifter who ignores a local tramp (Woodward doing her well-practised degenerate shtick) in favour of a lady of maturer years with a cancer-ridden husband. Magnani, with her unintelligible English, is not much worse than Brando, who undergoes the ultimate indignity of having to sing through another man's voice (for this role he became the first actor to be offered a million dollars, which he needed badly to cover his debts on *One-Eyed Jacks*). Lumet's direction is either ponderous or pretentious, and he failed to crack the problem of the florid stage dialogue and a dangerously weak role for Brando.

The Time Out, London

Our next screening.... **The Pawnbroker**

The last film in our.... **Sidney Lumet Season**



One of the first of films to deal with the effects of Nazi Germany's concentration camps on their survivors. Rod Steiger plays the manager of a 1960s pawn shop and a concentration camp survivor. He faces a horrid internal conflict, engulfed in a New York ghetto environment,



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Tuesday 17th
October 2017
at 8.15pm

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