

A Milestone release

Presented by Jonathan Demme and Dustin Hoffman

Gillo Pontecorvo's

THE WIDE BLUE ROAD

(La Grande Strada Azzurra)

Starring Yves Montand, Alida Valli and Francisco Rabal

"I fell madly in love with *The Wide Blue Road*, an early Gillo Pontecorvo movie filmed in spectacular color and starring Yves Montand (what a hunk!). Because this is such a great movie, enormously gripping and entertaining, as well as being early undeniable proof of Pontecorvo's and Montand's greatness, I have gone ahead to help find the film its long overdue American release. I am extremely proud to present *The Wide Blue Road* in conjunction with Milestone Films."

— Jonathan Demme

Produced by MALENO MALENOTTI • Directed by GILLO PONTECORVO
Written by FRANCO SOLINAS, ENNIO DE CONCINI, GILLO PONTECORVO
Based on FRANCO SOLINAS' NOVELLA SQUARCIÒ • Cinematography by MARIO MONTUORI
Music by CARLO FRANCI • Editing by ERALDO DA ROMA
In conjunction with CORAL INTERNATIONAL and COMPASS FILM SRL
Restoration by STUDIO CINE SRL, Rome
WITH SUPPORT FROM TURNER CLASSIC MOVIES

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Gillo Pontecorvo's

THE WIDE BLUE ROAD

(La Grande Strada Azzurra)

1957. Italy. In Italian with English Subtitles.

Premiere: XI Festival di Karlovy Vary (1958)

Running Time: 99 minutes. Aspect Ratio: 1.66:1.

Release dates:

France..... Un Dénomé Squarciò (July 30, 1958, Paris)

Yugoslavia..... Veliki plavi put (1958)

West Germany..... Leben ohne Gnade (April 21, 1961)

United States..... The Wide Blue Road (June 6, 2001, Film Forum, New York City)

Credits

Production Company- G.E.S.I. Cinematografica (Roma), Play-Art (Paris). Eichberg Film (Monaco), Triglav Film (Lubiana)

Produced by..... Maleno Malenotti

Directed by..... Gillo Pontecorvo

Written by..... Franco Solinas, Ennio De Concini, Gillo Pontecorvo

Based on..... Franco Solinas' novella Squarciò

Director of Photography..... Mario Montuori

Music by..... Carlo Franci

Production Director..... Tone Hoian

Production Supervisor..... Baccio Bandini

Editing by..... Eraldo Da Roma

Scenic Design..... Piero Gherardi and Mirho Lipuzic

Assistant Directors..... Enzo Alfonsi, Giuliano Montaldo, Serge Witt, Jane Kavcic

Camera..... Alfio Contini

Hairdresser..... Gustavo Sisi

Costumes..... Lucia Mirisola

Film Stock..... Superscope-Ferranicolor

Negative & Positive Film Lab..... Technostampa

English Subtitles..... Jennifer Stone, University of Massachusetts

Cast:

Squarciò..... Yves Montand

Rosetta..... Alida Valli

Salvatore..... Francisco Rabal

Gaspare, 1st Coast Guard Officer..... Umberto Spadaro

Riva, 2nd Coast Guard Officer..... Peter Carsten

Diana..... Federica Ranchi

Renato..... Mario Girotti

Bore..... Ronaldino Bonacchi

Tonino..... Giancarlo Soblone

With:

Josip Batistic

Stane Potokar

Angelo Zanolli

Giorgio Kuru

Janez Verhovc

Milutin Jasnici

Angela Sarlone

Pasquale Campagnola

Synopsis

This is the best season for fish. In September the fish leave the depths and run close to the shore where the water is still warm and the seaweed is tender and sweet. These are my islands. I know them well... every reef, every cove... every inch of the ocean bottom. Only one man in the village knows how to fish like me — Salvatore! We grew up together, then he went on fishing with nets. Not me!

There was another boy we grew up with — Gaspare. How our lives went separate ways! He signed up for the Coast Guard. He has a uniform, state pay. But I like what I do and I've something they don't.

Squarciò, a fisherman, lives with his family on a small island off the Dalmatian coast of Italy. Like his fellow villagers, Squarciò struggles against harsh living conditions, a scarcity of fish in nearby waters and exploitation by the local fish wholesaler. But while the other fishermen continue to use nets, he goes out to the open sea to fish illegally with bombs. Although the villagers think Squarciò is an outlaw and an outsider, they respect him because he tries to help the other fishermen — men he has known since childhood — negotiate a fair price from the greedy wholesaler, Natale. Also, Squarciò never uses his explosives near shore where they would destroy fishing for the men who use nets.

Squarciò's teenaged daughter Diana has fallen in love with Domenico, a young man who works in the local quarry. When her thirteen-year-old brother Tonino interrupts Diana and Domenico in a passionate embrace, the lovers swear that they plan to marry. Tonino and his ten-year-old brother Bore work with their father on the boat, setting explosive charges and harvesting the stunned and dead fish. To Squarciò, his children represent the future and as they are healthy and strong, he knows it will be bright. He names his boat, Speranza, which means hope.

Unaware of his daughter's love for the young man, Squarciò jokes with Domenico about selling him explosives from the mine, under the table. The honest young man always refuses. But when the quarry is closed for good, Domenico needs money to marry Diana and decides to steal the explosives. He hides them on a rocky beach, hoping to get them to Squarciò the next morning.

Gaspare, the Coast Guard commander, a childhood friend of Squarciò's, is determined to catch the bomb fisherman in the act. After discovering the box of explosives, Gaspare assumes they are Squarciò's and stays on the beach all night, hoping to catch his friend. In the morning, he sees a man taking the box. He calls out "Halt!" but the man starts to run and, to Gaspare's horror, the explosives detonate. When he examines the dead man, he discovers not his friend, but Domenico. Saddened by the boy's death, Gaspare resigns his post.

The new Coast Guard commander, Riva, has a fast motorboat and uses it to enforce the law strictly. Squarciò's illegal fishing makes him a prime target for the unsympathetic officer. In a bold move, Squarciò goes into debt to buy a new motor that can outrun the police boat. He knows that with his earnings from bomb fishing, he can pay off the promissory notes.

Squarciò's old friend and fellow bomb fisherman, Santamaria, is estranged from his son, Salvatore. Salvatore despises his father's methods and thinks that the only way his fellow fishermen can prosper is to start a Co-op and buy their own refrigerator. This way, they can sell their fish directly to the mainland and break Natale's monopoly. But Santamaria is desperate to make a living and continues

to bomb. One day, an explosion is heard on the bay. Squarciò rushes to the scene and finds that Santamaria has had an accident — the old man has maimed his right arm.

This incident makes Riva more determined to stop the bomb fishing and he sets out to catch Squarciò in the act. When Squarciò is almost captured with the incriminating bombs on board, he is forced to sink his boat — sending the expensive outboard motor to the bottom of the sea.

Now, he cannot fish. And without income, he can't make the payments for the costly motor. Squarciò repeatedly tries and fails to rescue the sunken motor. The company sends collectors to inventory and seize the family's few possessions. Although she allows them to count her table, radio and cast iron stove, Squarciò's wife Rosetta begs them not to take her sewing machine. They are given two weeks to make the payments.

Desperate, Squarciò and his sons, for the first time, bomb fish from shore. Salvatore and a group of other fishermen hear the explosions and sail in to confront them. Rather than run away, Squarciò faces the men. The fishermen demand the catch from the bomb fishing and a brawl breaks out. Squarciò is knocked out and the boys try to continue the fight. Salvatore tells them that their father is wrong and leaves the fish by the fallen Squarciò.

Squarciò tries once more to raise the precious engine. Without a diver in the village, he must make the attempt without help or diving gear. Stripped to the waist, bloodied by the extreme depths and almost out of breath, he finally manages to loosen the bolts holding engine onto the boat and to attach a rope to raise it up. However, he still has no boat.

After his accident, Santamaria's boat is confiscated and there is an auction to sell it off. The other fishermen, who have by now formed the Co-op, come to support Santamaria. When the boat is auctioned, the villagers refuse to bid on it, no matter how low the price drops. Only Salvatore bids, trying to return the vessel to his father. But Squarciò, in a moment of supreme desperation, borrows money from Natale and bids again and again — winning the boat and earning the contempt and rejection of his fellow fishermen.

Diana has found a new love in Salvatore's son, Renato. Although he knows she has had a prior lover, he attempts to court her. But Salvatore forbids his son from ever seeing her again. One night, the village holds a dance to celebrate the founding of the Co-op and the purchase of a new refrigerator. Although he is away, Squarciò forbids Diana from attending. Tonino decides otherwise. Concluding that his papa is wrong, he orders Diana to get dressed. Proud and defiant, the brothers escort her to the dance. In a change of heart, Salvatore takes Diana's hand and asks for a dance. Halfway through, he dances over to Renato, and hands her to him. Salvatore reconciles with Squarciò for the sake of their children's marriage. Squarciò is happy for the first time in a long while, but asks that the wedding be delayed, so he can make money for a grand celebration.

As Squarciò and his sons prepare to sail early the next morning, Rosetta tells her husband that she is pregnant again. Elated, he tells her that he and his three sons will man a trawler that will reach the coast of Africa. The next day Squarciò, Tonino and Bore sail Santamaria's boat out beyond the local waters to bomb-fish again. As the boat sails past, the net fishermen jeer at Squarciò. Tonino and Bore are silent for the rest of the journey.

They anchor the boat on a rocky outcropping in the middle of the sea and Squarciò works to chisel open an anti-aircraft projectile to harvest the TNT inside. He is troubled by Tonino's shamed

silence and is thinking only about earning his sons' respect. Distracted from his dangerous job, Squarciò's chisel slips. There is a tremendous explosion. Tonino is bleeding and barely conscious and Squarciò is terribly wounded. He calls Bore to him and tells the young boy that he must pilot the boat to the village to take Tonino to the hospital. Bore manages to move his older brother into the boat. Squarciò tells Bore to write down what he says, but the boy admits he doesn't know how. His father tells him to listen carefully and remember to tell Rosetta: Santamaria's boat must be returned to him. Tonino and Bore should keep the motor and help Diana when she marries Renato. Finally, he tells his son that Salvatore is right — the Co-op will solve everything — like bomb fishing, only better. As he watches the boat sail off, the dying Squarciò thinks what a fine day it is for fishing.

Background

The *Wide Blue Road*, shot in 1957 off the Dalmatian coast of Italy and Yugoslavia, was Pontecorvo's first feature film and he found the experience challenging. "I directed *The Wide Blue Road* in difficult times and with a very limited budget. I worked always in a dilemma: the intense love that one always has in making his first film; and, also, with the frustration of not being able to do exactly what I wanted."

Pontecorvo wanted to shoot the film in black and white, like Luchino Visconti's Neorealist masterpiece *La Terra Trema*. The producers insisted on color for commercial reasons. Pontecorvo wanted a cast of real fishermen whose faces were worn by weather and labor; instead he got Yves Montand and Alida Valli. Interestingly, the professionalism and personal histories of the cast helped the inexperienced Pontecorvo and may have made for a better film. Montand grew up in poverty and his father experienced the same kind of tragedy that Squarciò faces. Hoping for a brighter future, his father borrowed money to expand his broom business. The depression hit, however, and his father went into enormous debt. And by all accounts, the color created a vivid impression on viewers. In the end, the clash between the studio and the director still produced a film that carried Pontecorvo's indelible signature. Today, as the perfectionist that he is and not completely satisfied with any of his movies, Pontecorvo is now happy with the film and is greatly excited about the new release and its reception in the United States.

There were, as always, unforeseeable difficulties. Montand, the son of Italian immigrants, had no trouble with the language. But the man who grew up in the seaport town of Marseilles had another challenge. Pontecorvo talked to biographer Irene Bignardi about "Montand's problem:"

Not that the great actor was a difficult person; on the contrary, he was delicious, fascinating and a great storyteller. Simply, the first time he was supposed to go in the water and play his part, Montand, a little bit embarrassed, said he could not do it. Yves Montand didn't know how to swim! So the ingenious Yugoslavian technicians designed a rope so that it would be invisible, and Montand, with his heart in his throat, faked to swim to get from one boat to the other.

The *Wide Blue Road* presents the daily reality of a small community of fishermen in postwar Italy. The film captures the texture of the villagers' daily lives, but intensifies this naturalistic portrait with — for the time — innovative operatic overtones. Like Visconti's *Rocco and His Brothers*, *The Wide Blue Road* was the start of a genre that has become popular decades later, thanks to Italian-American directors Martin Scorsese (*Mean Streets*) and Francis Ford Coppola (*The Godfather*), who were themselves inspired by this earlier Italian operatic realism. Pontecorvo's *The Wide Blue Road* can now be recognized as a masterpiece of cinema — unfairly forgotten for decades — and a document of social commitment, narrative innovation and cinematic beauty.

Today, with headlines about impoverished workers and dangerous factory conditions in Third World countries, the film takes on a deeper resonance. More than forty years after *The Wide Blue Road* was made bomb fishing is still a major problem in many countries, including Guam, Indonesia, and Thailand. While fishing with explosives is an effective way to harvest a great quantity of fish quickly, the technique can damage fragile coral reefs — home to complex and diverse ecosystems. In one second, a bomb can destroy a reef that took 1,000 years to form. The explosions also destroy nests, preventing fish from breeding and jeopardizing future catches. And of course, the powerful blasts are dangerous to fishermen and scuba divers as well. There are two main types of bombs used: “beer bombs,” which destroy anything within 10 feet and gallon-sized bombs that take out anything within 33 feet.

As also happened with two other Milestone’s releases, *Mamma Roma* and *I am Cuba*, the complete lack of an initial American release has sent *The Wide Blue Road* unjustly to the far corners of film history for over forty years. Milestone’s theatrical premiere of the film offers fans of great filmmaking the opportunity to discover Pontecorvo’s unique blend of cinematic styles and strongly charged political statements — elements that make *The Wide Blue Road*, like his other films, a landmark in the history of 20th-century cinema. Milestone and the Studio Cine lab in Rome have painstakingly restored the film’s original camera negative and soundtrack (For more information on this process, please see the section “The Restoration of *The Wide Blue Road*” below).

In 1999 the Film Society of Lincoln Center presented “Documented Fictions: The Films of Gillo Pontecorvo.” The programmer at the time wrote: “He is an artist of conscience who works the dialectic of exploited and exploiter, rebel and ruler, with remarkable visual and intellectual rigor, Pontecorvo’s Neorealist-tinged vision dramatizes political complexities without ever falling into simplistic black-and-white polarities.”

Gillo Pontecorvo (1919–)

Director Gillo Pontecorvo was born on November 19, 1919, in Pisa, Italy, one of ten children of a wealthy Jewish industrialist. Describing his youth, Pontecorvo has said, “When I was young, I was ignorant politically, as one would expect in a fascist country where slogans on the walls said ‘No politics discussed here.’ No one knew anything.” Like his brothers, Pontecorvo studied science and graduated from the University of Pisa with a degree in chemistry. While at the university he first came in contact with anti-Fascist students and professors.

After leaving school, he fled the severe anti-Semitic laws of Italy and moved to France, where he continued his music studies (he participated in the music for all of his films) and took courses in journalism. He worked at Agence Havas and as a Paris correspondent for the Italian newspapers *Republica* and *Paese Sera*. While covering a mining strike in Northern France, Pontecorvo recognized the power of images to convey the truth of a story and became interested in photojournalism. Living in Paris, Pontecorvo’s worldview was widened by meeting Pablo Picasso, Igor Stravinsky and Jean-Paul Sartre. It was here that Pontecorvo first realized the importance of politics and truly found himself. When many of his Parisian friends left to fight in the Spanish Civil War, it was another lesson in his political education.

In 1941, Pontecorvo joined the Communist Party. His work for the Party took him to northern Italy where he helped organize a network of anti-Fascist partisans and participated in the Garibaldi brigade’s guerilla activities. Under the pseudonym Barnaba, he was a leader of the Italian Resistance

in Milan from 1943 until the Liberation in 1945. After WWII, he continued to work full-time for the Communists, serving in the leadership of the youth movement Fronte della Gioventù and helping prepare newsreel materials for the Party archives.

In 1950, Pontecorvo's brother, Bruno, a world-famous nuclear physicist working in England, made headlines when he defected to the U.S.S.R. After the ruthless Soviet intervention in Hungary in 1956, Pontecorvo broke ties with the Communist Party, although he did not renounce to his commitment to Marxism. Reflecting on his personal ideology, Pontecorvo has said, "I am not an out-and-out revolutionary. I am merely a man of the Left, like a lot of Italian Jews. I come from Pisa and I lean that way naturally."

Pontecorvo's life changed forever in 1946 when he first watched Roberto Rossellini's *Paisà* — he has compared the experience to "being struck by a lightning bolt." Pontecorvo has written about his filmmaking: "My model is three quarters Rossellini, one quarter Russian: Eisenstein, Pudovkin, Dovzenko. I feel myself to be Rossellini's son, not Neorealism's son." What makes Rossellini's films so powerful, he has written, is that they embody "absolute truth."

After deciding to leave journalism for filmmaking, Pontecorvo bought a 16mm camera and started shooting documentaries. He worked as an assistant to Yves Allegret, Mario Monicelli and other directors, and made his first documentary shorts in 1953. Pontecorvo usually funded these short films himself and his early work showed signs of Rossellini's influence. In 1956, he filmed an episode in Joris Ivens and Alberto Cavalcanti's women's rights film *Die Windrose*, which was produced in East Germany.

From the beginning, Pontecorvo believed in the importance of research and preparation to build up a persuasive reportage atmosphere in his films. He would spend months, sometimes years, creating the necessary material to support the backbone of his films. All of his films reflect an ongoing attempt to reconstruct reality using non-professional actors and location shooting. Like the filmmakers who created the Italian Neorealism movement of the 1940s, Pontecorvo believed in making films that give an account of an immediate social reality.

In 1957 Pontecorvo launched his career as a feature director with *The Wide Blue Road*, based on a novella by Franco Solinas. The film received a mixed critical response, although it did earn Pontecorvo the award for the Best Director at Karlovy Vary. His second film, *Kapò*, a concentration camp story, was released in 1960. The film, which was received more warmly, garnered only a modicum of notoriety for the filmmaker. In 1966, he made his best-known film, *The Battle of Algiers*, a gripping and realistic recreation of the Algerian rebellion against the French. The film, which was subsidized by the Algerian government, was awarded the Golden Lion at the Venice Film Festival, and established Pontecorvo as a world-class director. Pontecorvo's masterpiece was nominated for the Academy Awards® for Best Director, Best Foreign Film and Best Screenplay (along with Franco Solinas) in 1968.

Pontecorvo directed only two more films, *Burn!* (1969, starring Marlon Brando) and *Ogro* (1979, about Basque terrorism). In 1996, Pontecorvo told an interviewer "Rossellini recognizes the importance of showing the human emotions in a realist film ... Looking back on my films, I certainly do find that there are things which have been constant features, recurring not in a planned way, but as I said, quite naturally — in particular, their human warmth."

In later years, Pontecorvo turned his efforts to the Venice Film Festival — he was appointed director of the festival in 1992 — and the direction of Cinecittà's archives. Now retired from these endeavors, he lives in Rome with his wife and three children. Pontecorvo has said that he has not directed films in recent years in protest to the current decline of cinema, which aims solely to entertain an ever-younger audience: "I say 'No' when to say 'Yes' would be irresponsible. It is my way of objecting to the situation. But then, I like the process of gestation and I am also a little lazy." In an interview on England's Channel Four, he was more revealing: "I've always made very few films. Six years between films — it's a character defect, it's psychological. Even when I like a story, I start work on it with the scriptwriter... and after a bit, I'm seized by the tragic question, 'Why should this film be made?' Then obviously, I don't make it. This is a character defect, like impotence."

Pontecorvo Filmography

Documentary films: *I sole sorge ancora* (1946), *I miracoli non si ripetono* (1951), *Missione Timiriachev* (1953), *Porta Portese* (1954), *Cani dietro le sbarre* (1954), *Festa a Castelluccio* (1955), *Uomini del marmo* (1955), *Pane e zolfo* (1956)

Feature films: *Die Windrose* ("Giovanna" Episode) (1956), *La Grande Strada Azzurra* (*The Wide Blue Road*) (1957), *Kapò* (1960), *The Battle of Algiers* (1966), *Burn!* (1969), *Ogro* (1979)

Franco Solinas, author (1927–1991)

Franco Solinas was born on January 19, 1927 in Caligari, and grew up on the island of Maddalena, one of the seven islands in the tempestuous straits of Bonifacio. He attended the University of Rome, where he graduated with a degree in jurisprudence. He worked his way through school by various trades; laborer, salesman, and as a journalist for several newspapers. Solinas started writing for films in 1950. From his short novel, he and the director Gillo Pontecorvo wrote the screenplay for *The Wide Blue Road*, which started a lifelong friendship and working relationship. Solinas was nominated for an Oscar® for Best Screenplay in 1968 for *The Battle of Algiers*. Famed for his dramas with strong political themes, Solinas' best-known scripts include *The Savage Innocents* (with Nicholas Ray), *Salvatore Giuliano* (directed by Francesco Rosi), *State of Siege* (with the director, Costa-Gavras), *Burn!* (with Pontecorvo) and *Mr. Klein* (directed by Joseph Losey). Solinas died on September 14, 1982 in Fregene, Italy. In 1986, Italy established the Solinas Prize in his honor, an annual award to the best un-produced screenplay. His daughter, Francesca Solinas Maria and Gillo Pontecorvo oversee the award.

From *State of Siege*, Screenplay by Franco Solinas, New York: Ballantine Books, 1973.

I write scenarios which generally deal with political themes because in my opinion politics is a fundamental matter. I'm not interested in psychological stories; I have no use for literature in the traditional sense... If politics is approached not in the traditionally pejorative sense but in its precise sense as a science that allows us to interpret humanity's problems, then it is the most important and necessary subject of our time. Politics gets to the bottom of problems, doing it through real events... If one makes a movie about a hungry man or an unemployed worker, people say that it is old hat, worn out, theoretical, etc. But at the same time, it is true that there are conditions which cause such situation.

Mario Montuori, Cinematographer (1920–)

Mario Montuori was born on May 1, 1920 in Rome. He started his career as a camera operator on *The Bicycle Thief*. Montuori is mostly known for his work with Roberto Rossellini on *Love at 20* (1962), *Cosimo de Medici* (1973), *Year One* (1974) and *The Messiah* (1978).

Yves Montand, Squarciò (1921–1991)

Born Ivo Livi on October 21, 1921 in Monsummano Alto, Italy, Yves Montand was the son of anti-Fascist peasants. It has been widely and falsely reported that he was born Jewish, probably because Livi is similar to a Jewish name, Levi. While his father, Giovanni, was an early member of the Italian Communist Party and an atheist, his mother, Giuseppina, was a devout Roman Catholic. In November 1921, Giovanni was ambushed and beaten by followers of Benito Mussolini. Throughout the region, Mussolini's Black Shirts targeted "red towns" and tortured local left-wing leaders. One night, the Livi family awoke to discover that the broom-making workshop in their yard was ablaze. Giovanni, his wife, and the three children escaped unharmed. In 1924, Giovanni paid a smuggler to get him across the border to France. He soon found work and sent for the family.

Montand grew up in Marseilles. After his family rejoined him, Giovanni started his broom-making business again. The work was hard and the family was very poor. Soon Giuseppina and Montand's brother Julien and sister Lydia were working in the business, too. In 1931, Giovanni decided to expand the business and invested in expensive equipment. But the shock waves from the U.S. stock market crash finally reached France in 1931. Giovanni was soon losing two francs on every broom he produced. In 1932 he declared bankruptcy with debts of 32,000 francs.

Lydia, who had left school at thirteen to work in the broom factory, came to the family's rescue. She started a small hair salon, which eventually employed her mother and brothers. At eleven, Montand quit school and went to work for her. Later, he earned his barber's license and worked at a shop frequented by prostitutes. As a teenager, Montand was gawky, virginal and passionate about only one thing, the movies. While his father and brother were actively involved in the Communist movement, he spent his free time watching American films and imitating Fred Astaire.

At seventeen, he made his singing debut at a local weekly talent show under his new stage name, Yves Montand, which was an approximation of his mother's voice calling him home for dinner: "Ivo, montaaaa! [Ivo, come up!]" His act consisted of popular French songs and imitations. Montand also co-wrote a song about the Hollywood westerns he loved, "Les Plaines du Far West."

From the start, Montand was extraordinarily driven and disciplined. He rehearsed tirelessly to achieve the illusion of complete effortlessness on stage. In order to appear more graceful, he took ballet lessons from a Russian dance teacher and continued to practice at the barre all his life. During the period of Marshall Pétain's Vichy government, Montand found work on the Marseilles docks. He was caught by the local officials, however, and forced to have the mandatory stay in a French youth labor camp. Upon release, Montand returned to singing.

In 1942, Germany occupied the southern zone of France and began harsh measures against Jews and immigrants. Giovanni helped fugitives and used the Livi home as a safe house. In 1943, the German and French police stepped up the hunt for young men dodging compulsory labor in Germany. Just as it seemed time for Montand to join the Resistance, his manager produced a contract for the singer to appear at the ABC: he would hide out on the stage of the most prestigious music hall in Paris.

Montand's Paris debut was a triumph, although his Americanisms, including references to gangsters, bubble gum and skyscrapers, drew the notice of the German censors. Montand also caught the eye of chanteuse Edith Piaf. As the protégé and lover of the famous "Little Sparrow," Montand rose to stardom. In 1946, he appeared with Piaf in the film *Étoile Sans Lumière*. Even after their break-up that year, Montand's singing career continued to soar.

Although Montand's follow-up roles in Marcel Carné's *Les Portes de la Nuit* and Danielle Godet's *L'Idole*, did not impress critics, they did catch the eye of Hollywood. In early 1947 Montand signed a contract with Warner Brothers. After he had the document translated, Montand realized that he would be totally owned by the studio and tried to break the contract. He was sued for breach of contract, but the parties soon settled out of court. In 1951, Montand married the talented French actress Simone Signoret.

While Montand continued to work in films, his singing attracted wider and wider audiences. He presented his first one-man show in Paris at the Théâtre de L'Étoile in 1951. In 1953, Montand starred in Henri-Georges Clouzot's thriller, *Wages of Fear* (*La Salaire de la Peur*). Montand's convincing performance in this internationally acclaimed film brought the actor more movie offers. He starred in many memorable French and international films, including Alain Resnais' *La Guerre est Finie*, Claude Lelouch's *Vivre Pour Vivre*, and Costa-Gavras' *Z*. Between films, he toured the world with his one-man show. He also broke box office records in Paris — twice in the early 1950s he performed in six-month runs to sold-out houses. When Montand toured the Soviet Union, Russian filmmakers captured his performances. The film, *Yves Montand Chante*, played in Paris cinemas in 1960.

For many years Montand and Signoret were "fellow travelers": non-Communists who generally followed the Party position. In 1956 the couple visited the U.S.S.R., where they attended a private dinner with top members of the Soviet government. In later years, Montand came to a painful realization of the many crimes of Communism and publicly broke with the Party. However, he remained a lifelong advocate for freedom of expression and human rights.

Although Montand grew up in love with American films, his own career in the Hollywood was delayed because the U.S. government would not issue a visa to such a well-known leftist. In 1959, a New York music promoter booked Montand for a one-man show on Broadway and used his connections to get the couple visas. The show was a triumph. Just as he was getting ready to tour Japan, Montand was summoned to Hollywood to star opposite Marilyn Monroe in George Cukor's *Let's Make Love*. During the filming, Montand and Monroe had an affair that made headlines around the world. Despite this, and other less-public liaisons, Montand and Signoret remained married until her death from cancer in 1985 at age 64.

Under contract to Fox, Montand also filmed *Sanctuary*, *Good-bye Again* and *My Geisha* (the last with Shirley MacLaine). In 1960, he returned to Europe, where his acting career again blossomed. After several international successes, Montand next worked in Hollywood in 1968 — opposite Barbra Streisand in Vincente Minnelli's *On a Clear Day You Can See Forever*. In 1986, Montand's career was revitalized by his work in Claude Berri's films *Jean de Florette* and *Manon of the Spring*. Montand was held in such regard by fellow countrymen that he was seriously considered for the presidency of France in the late 1980s. When he died on November 9, 1991 in Senlis, France, the national mourning was unprecedented.

Selected Montand Filmography

Étoile Sans Lumière (1946), Les Portes de la Nuit (1946), L'Idole (1948), Wages of Fear (1953), Tempi Nostri (1953), Uomini e Lupi (1957), The Crucible (1957), The Wide Blue Road (1957), The First Day of May (1958), Let's Make Love (1960), Sanctuary (1961), My Geisha (1962), Le Joli Mai (1963), The Sleeping Car Murders (1965), La Guerre est finie (1966), Is Paris Burning? (1966), Grand Prix (1966), Mister Freedom (1969), Z (1969), The Confession (1970), On a Clear Day You Can See Forever (1970), Delusions of Grandeur (1971), Tout va bien (1972), César and Rosalie (1972), State of Siege (1973), Vincent, François, Paul and the Others (1974), The Loneliness of the Long Distance Singer (1974), The Savage (1975), The Threat (1977), Clair de femme (1979), Choice of Arms (1981), Jean de Florette (1986), Manon of the Spring (1987), Trois places pour le 26 (1988), Netchaiev Is Back (1991), The Island of Pachyderms (1992), Montand (1994)

Alida Valli, Rosetta(1921–)

Alida Valli was born Alida Maria Altenburger on May 3, 1921 in Pola, Italy. Her father was a journalist of Austrian descent and her mother was Italian. After training at Rome's Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia, she started working in films at age fifteen. Her beauty and charm soon made her a star. Valli married pianist-composer Oscar de Mejo in 1944. When the Nazis entered Rome after Italy signed the armistice with the Allies, the re-constituted Nazi Party in Venice summoned her to come make films there. She refused and went into hiding. In 1945 Valli's mother was shot as a collaborator.

After the war Valli made several films in Italy before signing a contract with U.S. independent producer David Selznick. Although in Hollywood she worked with Alfred Hitchcock on *The Paradine Case*, it was Valli's performance in Carol Reed's *The Third Man* (opposite Orson Welles) that launched her as an international star. In 1954 Valli's career suffered a temporary setback as a result of her involvement in a drug, sex and murder scandal. Returning to Europe, she has played a wide range of romantic roles and character parts and has worked with some of world's greatest directors — including Michelangelo Antonioni, Claude Chabrol, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Bernardo Bertolucci and Margarethe von Trotta. Today, Valli lives in Italy and continues to work in movies and television.

Selected Valli Filmography

Il Cappello a tre punte (1934), I Due sergenti (1936), L'Ultima nemica (1937), Taverna rossa (1940), Schoolgirl Diary (1942), Two Orphans (1942), The Za-Bum Circus (1943), Life Begins Anew (1945), Giovanna (1945), Il Canto della vita (1945), Eugenia Grandet (1946), The Paradine Case (1947), The Miracle of the Bells (1948), The Third Man (1949), The White Tower (1950), The Wanton Countess (1954), Senso (1954), Il Grido (1957), The Wide Blue Road (1957), The Naked Maja (1959), The Horror Chamber of Dr. Faustus (1962), Eyes Without a Face (1959), Oedipus Rex (1967), The Spider's Stratagem (1970), Lisa and the Devil (1974), The House of Exorcism (1974), Flesh of the Orchid (1974), L' Anticristo (1974), Tender Dracula (1975), Cassandra Crossing (1976), 1900 (1977), Suspiria (1977), La Luna (1979), That House in the Outskirts (1979), Inferno (1980), The Long Silence (1993), Probably Love (1998), Il Dolce rumore della vita (1999)

Francisco Rabal, Salvatore (1925–)

Born Francisco Valera in Aguilas, Spain on March 8, 1925, Francisco Rabal moved to Madrid as a young man and worked as a street salesman, a laborer in a chocolate factory and an electrician at the Chamartin film studios. After appearing as an extra on several films, Rabal heeded the advice of poet Dámaso Alonso and studied stage acting. Director Luis Buñuel saw him in *Historias de la Radio* and cast him in the title role in *Nazarin*. As result of this performance, Rabal went on to star in films made not only in Spain, but also in Mexico, Italy, Argentina and France. Over the last fifty years, Rabal (who is known as “Paco”), has worked with many and international filmmakers, including Antonioni and Visconti. With the rise of post-Franco new Spanish cinema, Rabal worked with directors Carlos Saura, Miguel Picazo, Claudio Guerin, Pedro Almodovar, and Jorge Grau. In 1984, he was the co-winner of the Actor Prize at Cannes for his role in *The Holy Innocents*. Rabal recently appeared on U.S. screens as the star of *Goya in Bordeaux* and remains one of Spain’s greatest actors.

Selected Rabal Filmography

Don Quixote (1948), *I Was a Parish Priest* (1953), *The Wide Blue Road* (1957), *Five in the Afternoon* (1961), *Viridiana* (1961), *The Eclipse* (1962), *Autopsy of a Criminal* (1963), *Cervantes* (1966), *Belle de jour* (1967), *Simón Bolívar* (1968), *El 'Che' Guevara* (1968), *Goya, historia de una soledad* (1971), *Las Melancólicas* (1971), *The Nun* (1971), *The Stein Machinegun* (1975), *Stay as You Are* (1978), *El Buscón* (1979), *City of the Walking Dead* (1980), *The Beehive* (1982), *The Holy Innocents* (1984), *Luces de Bohemia* (1985), *Time of Silence* (1986), *Scent of a Crime* (1988), *Tie Me Up! Tie Me Down!* (1990), *La Taberna fantástica* (1991), *The Man Who Lost His Shadow* (1991), *Oedipus Mayor* (1996), *Airbag* (1997), *Pajarico* (1998), *Divine* (1998), *Goya in Bordeaux* (1999), *Speaking of Buñuel* (2000), *El Lazarillo de Tormes* (2000), *Tu que Harías por Amor* (2000), *Moonfish* (2000)

Umberto Spadaro, Gaspare (1904–1981)

Although Umberto Spadaro started to act in films at the late age of thirty-eight, he practically lived his entire life on the stage. Born in Ancona on November 8, 1904, he was the son of Sicilian actors Rocco and Rosalia Spadaro. At the age of six days, his father carried him onstage instead of the prop baby that was supposed to be used in the play. He got his first round of applause and the applause continued over the course of hundreds of plays and films including De Sica's *The Bicycle Thief*, Charles Vidor's *A Farewell to Arms* and Pietro Germi's *Seduced and Abandoned* (1964). Today in Sicily, there is a theatre named in his honor.

Ronaldo Bonacchi, (also known as Ronaldino Bonacchi) Bore

Bonacchi's career has few credits to his name, but he has acted for some of the great directors of our time including Federico Fellini (*Orchestra Rehearsal*, Bernardo Bertolucci's *La Luna*, 1979), Manoel de Oliveira (*Palavrae Utopia*) and of course, Gillo Pontecorvo.

Mario Girotti (also known as Terence Hill), Renato (1939–)

Mario Girotti was born on March 29, 1939 in Venice, Italy. His father was a well-known actor, Massimo Girotti and his mother was German. As a child the family lived in Dresden, Germany where they survived the Allied fire bombings of World War II. When he was 12, Girotti was

“discovered” during a swim meet by Italian filmmaker Dino Risi, who cast him in *Vacanze col Gangster* (*Holiday for Gangsters* 1951). Throughout the 1950s, Girotti made occasional film appearances to pay for his education and his interest in motorcycles. After studying literature for three years at the University of Rome, he decided to become a full-time actor. He appeared in films ranging from *The Wonders of Aladdin* (1961) — the first Girotti film to reach the U.S., albeit a decade after its European release — and Luchino Visconti’s *Il Gattopardo* (*The Leopard* 1963). Girotti went on to make action films and westerns in Germany until 1967, when he returned to Italy and appeared in *Dio perdona... lo no!*

A tall handsome blonde, at the height of his popularity, Girotti was one of Italy’s highest paid stars. Until 1969 Girotti was billed under his birth name for his film performances. That year he changed his screen name to Terence Hill, a pseudonym he came up with by combining the name of the author of a Latin book, Terenzio, with the maiden name of his American wife Lori. Hill gained popularity when he co-starred with Bud Spencer in the comic spaghetti western *They Call Me Trinity* (1971) and its sequel *Trinity is Still My Name* (1972). Hill and Spencer worked together in some 19 films. Hill lives in Massachusetts and is a film producer, as well as talented and respected actor.

The Rediscovery and Acquisition of *The Wide Blue Road*

In January of 1999, the Film Society of Lincoln Center in New York presented a small series, “Documented Fictions: The Films of Gillo Pontecorvo.” Since the director had only created a handful of films and only one, *The Battle of Algiers*, is recognized by the general filmgoing public, it was ignored by the press — only the *Village Voice* ran a small review. But for one member of the audience, director Jonathan Demme, there was an astonishing discovery waiting for him — *La Grande Strada Azzurra*. Blown away by this unknown film, Demme became obsessed with getting it distributed in the U.S. He borrowed the print and set up a private screening, inviting acquisition heads at several distribution companies. With the screening date approaching and only a handful of RSVPs, Neda Armian, Demme’s assistant, contacted Martin Scorsese’s office to inquire about possible distributors. Margaret Bodde at Scorsese’s office, suggested Milestone Film & Video, a company that had worked with Scorsese to present the premieres of several “lost” classics, including *Rocco and His Brothers*, *Mamma Roma*, *I am Cuba* and *The Edge of the World*.

When Milestone’s vice-president Dennis Doros saw the film, he was struck by its beauty and humanism and by the remarkable performances of the cast. The film fit exactly in with Milestone’s mandate: to release great films that have been sadly and erroneously “lost” to history.

However, the condition of this print of *La Grande Strada Azzurra* indicated that the original source material was in need of restoration and the possible costs of such an undertaking were daunting. With the encouragement of Karen Cooper of New York’s Film Forum and independent programmer Fabiano Canosa, Milestone decided that they had to try to license the film, restore it and give *La Grande Strada Azzurra* its first — and long overdue — American theatrical release. Milestone promised Armian and Demme that the film would take only a few months to acquire and could be released before the end of the year. This was the first — and biggest — error.

Milestone contacted the Italian archive and studio Cinécitta, which had supplied the print for the Film Society of Lincoln Center’s retrospective. Cinécitta sent Milestone on to Stefano Libassi of Compass Film in Rome. Libassi informed Milestone that, unfortunately, the film rights had already been sold in perpetuity many years ago to Ziv International as part of a package of Italian films (including the spaghetti westerns of Klaus Kinski).

Milestone searched its files and found that the last-known address for Ziv International was in Miami. Unfortunately, Ziv had long ago gone bankrupt and disappeared. Milestone then remembered rumors that another company, Coral Pictures, had succeeded Ziv. After Milestone called, e-mailed and wrote to friends and colleagues around the country, Donald Chauncey of the Miami Beach Public Library came up with a phone number for Coral from an old Miami film production listing. From this lead, Milestone was able to trace Coral Pictures to their current address. However, when Milestone reached Jose Escalante of Coral, he received more bad news. Although Coral picked up the rights to the Ziv International collection, *La Grande Strada Azzurra* was no longer on their rights list!

There followed six months of absolute frustration. Coral was willing to renounce any rights to the film, but Compass (rightfully) was unwilling to license the North American rights to a film they did not own. Faxes and ideas flowed back and forth, but there was zero progress. Now desperate, Milestone went back Coral to find out exactly what had happened when they had bought the rights from Ziv. An important detail came up. When Coral acquired the rights to this collection, there were a large number of films that Ziv did not have materials on. Milestone had an inspiration. They asked that Escalante check the original contract versus the rights list they were currently using. Low and behold, there were many differences. Coral's current rights list included only the films for which there were materials. Years ago, the other titles had been removed from the computer because the company could not fulfill any sale on them. On inspection of the original contract, the rights to *La Grande Strada Azzurra* were now found!

By this time, Neda Armian had more good news. Knowing that Dustin Hoffman was a friend and fellow admirer of Gillo Pontecorvo and had seen the film, Jonathan Demme called the Oscar®-winning actor, who agreed that the film would now be a "Jonathan Demme and Dustin Hoffman Presentation."

With Escalante's help, Milestone was able to strike a deal with Coral Pictures. Unfortunately, the previous correspondence (rightfully) worried Compass Film and they now asked for proof of Milestone's claim to the film. Coral had to go back to their archives, but Milestone was able to mail more than 120 pages of documents to Italy, providing an extremely detailed chain of ownership. This did not convince them that there should be access to their materials, however, and several more months of negotiations followed. At last, after Pontecorvo personally interceded, an agreement was reached in which Milestone promised to pay for the restoration of the original film materials in return for access.

The Restoration of *The Wide Blue Road*

As the company was acquiring the rights to the film, Milestone already knew that the restoration of *The Wide Blue Road* would be an involved and costly process. The film was shot using an Italian color process known as Ferraniacolor. This was a Technicolor-like printing process, but in this case an original interpositive was then separated into three different negatives— representing yellow, cyan and magenta. The negatives were then sandwiched together at the lab to create the color. Fabiano Canosa remembered the original prints to look almost "3-D" in effect. On inspection of the original materials in Rome, however, it was discovered that the three negatives were in extreme disrepair and the color had faded badly. All seemed lost, until it was discovered that the original camera negative, still existed! Although the original opticals (the fades and dissolves) — as well as a few small replacement sections that were done over the years — used Eastmancolor stock that was now faded,

this negative was by far the best material available and its sharpness and color was stunning on the whole. It was decided that we would work from that.

The original materials were at Studio Cine in Rome, a well-regarded archival lab run by a former head of Haghefilm Labs, Johan Prijs. The lab had been responsible for the previous year's restoration of Federico Fellini's *Nights of Cabiria*. The process of restoring a film is usually extremely laborious and in many cases the lab technicians are the true — and almost always, unsung — heroes of any restoration. Even more fortunate, a friend of Milestone's Director of Acquisitions, Cindi Rowell, knew that her friend Giovanni Schiano was working at the Cineteca Nazionale in Rome. Schiano was a fellow graduate of the Jeffrey L. Selznick School of Film Preservation at the George Eastman House, and he immediately volunteered to oversee the restoration on Milestone's behalf. It was a tremendous undertaking, but Schiano was able to contribute valued assistance to Studio Cine. Milestone is indebted greatly to Prijs and Schiano for their fine work.

The general public's understanding about of film restoration is vague and often incorrect. Based on archivists' tales of mystical journeys and celebratory newspaper articles, most people don't know that the process is often unglamorous, time-intensive, and highly technical. Here listed below are the steps taken by Studio Cine in the restoration of *The Wide Blue Road*:

- (1974) Create a technical report on the negative elements
- (1975) Repair perforation and/or tears
- (1976) Synchronization check
- (1977) Negative picture rejuvenation
- (1978) Intermediate negative rejuvenation to duplicate sequences
- (1979) Negative soundtrack cleaning
- (1980) Strike check print from negative picture
- (1981) Strike 35mm color print paper to paper printing from intermediate negative
- (1982) Manual cleaning negative picture after 'check print' control
- (1983) Strike intermediate positive paper to paper from intermediate negative of the sequences to substitute
- (1984) Create intermediate positive print
- (1985) Edit new sequences into intermediate positive
- (1986) Create intermediate negative print
- (1987) Positive soundtrack two sides (wet printing)
- (1988) Positive soundtrack single side (wet printing)
- (1989) Sound restoration including re-recording to DAT, digital sound restoration, re-recording from restored DAT to optical 35mm negative
- (1990) Processing restored negative soundtrack
- (1991) Sync picture and sound
- (1992) Answer print from intermediate negative and restored soundtrack
- (1993) Strike projection prints
- (1994) Newly translate the Italian title list to English subtitles
- (1995) Laser subtitles struck on new projection prints

This costly restoration process — normally beyond the financial scope of a small independent distribution company — was in jeopardy when an old friend came through at a critical moment. A part of the restoration costs of *The Wide Blue Road* was underwritten by the generous support of Turner Classic Movies in return for future television rights. Milestone is extremely thankful to TCM and its Vice President of Programming, Charlie Tabesh. Milestone paid for the balance of the restoration costs.

An Interview with Gillo Pontecorvo

Milestone: What is the first image or feeling that comes to your mind when you think about *The Wide Blue Road* more than forty years after you made the film?

Gillo Pontecorvo: When I remember *The Wide Blue Road* I think about a story on the collective effort of a group of fishermen fighting to overcome the difficult living situation they must endure everyday. I think also of the individual effort of a fisherman, a poacher, who fights for his family and the confrontation, the clash, between these two ideas — the collective versus the individual in rough living conditions.

I also think about the image of the sea since I love the sea, and I go fishing myself pretty often. Thus, the idea of making this film was very attractive to me. The title of it comes from this image: a boat, in late afternoon, drawing a line in the sea, a trail. That is the wide and long blue road.

Milestone: It seems that there are a few changes in the film in relation to Franco Solinas' novel. For instance, the fishermen's cooperative doesn't exist in the novel and it is a key element to outline the politics of film. How did you work with Solinas to make these changes?

Pontecorvo: The effort of the individual, the extreme circumstances he has to face and try to overcome to keep his or her life going on — that was in the novel. The clash between the individual and the collective was part of Solinas' novel and we tried to push that forward to capture the climate of that time in Italy.

Milestone: *The Wide Blue Road* has been unfairly forgotten partly because of the belief that you do not like the film. What can you say about that?

Pontecorvo: That's not true. I've never said I didn't like the film. What is true is that it is a film, like any first film by a director, in which I made concessions. I was very scared. I had a tremendous fear deep inside me. I had to renounce certain things that were important. And when one thinks about those things, sometimes they seem to be too serious — for instance, Alida Valli. She was a fantastic actress, but I wouldn't have chosen her for this film. She looked more like an aristocrat than a fisherman's wife. Her face was definitely too smooth, too beautiful. Nevertheless, she was so brave and such a good actress that she did a great job. Montand was perfect for what I wanted — he had that rough, robust face that I really liked — to portray a simple man. I have to say that both of them were extraordinary. They helped me as much as they could. They felt that I was young and I didn't have much experience making films; they felt my fear and they made it so easy for me.

Milestone: And what can you tell us about Francisco Rabal?

Pontecorvo: We understood each other very well. He is a natural actor without any of the vices that other actors acquire in acting schools or things like that. I liked him a lot. At the time, I was very satisfied with his performance in *The Wide Blue Road*.

Milestone: Is it true that Yves Montand didn't know how to swim?

Pontecorvo: Yes! The funny thing is that Montand, who was supposed to play “the man of the sea” didn’t know how to swim. So we had to take all these little precautions so that nothing bad would happen to him.

Milestone: You have said repeatedly that you feel you are a “late son of Neorealism”. Would you agree with the idea that Italian Neorealism, rather than a stylistic film movement, was a reaction to the particular historical moment that Italy was living under after the end of WW II? Would it be accurate to say that the concept that brings the Neorealist auteurs together is the idea of capturing that reality in the Italy of the 1940s?

Pontecorvo: Absolutely. There was a great change in Italy. We had gotten rid of the disaster of Fascism and we were looking forward to change the country. There was a great participation and an enormous interest in the construction of a new country. Neorealism tried to express this idea through films, a feeling of social will to change the rough transition from Fascism to freedom after WWII. There was a desire to change that reality and, at the same time, to represent it as it was.

Milestone: In this context, we can talk about Rossellini’s influence in your career as a filmmaker.

Pontecorvo: Yes. I was a journalist and I had an intense passion for the “image.” I always tried to convince the director of the news agency where I worked to do work related to photography. In my opinion, photography is a way to get closer to reality. I had a great curiosity, interest and passion to dig as deep as I could in order to understand reality. You can feel this in *La Grande Strada Azzurra*. Then I saw Rossellini’s *Paisà* and it was such a tremendous shock for me. Rossellini had that extraordinary capacity to transform into truth all he portrayed in his films. When I got out of the theater I decided to buy a small 16mm camera and start doing films on my own, short documentaries. That’s the way I started as a filmmaker. Then some of my friends watched my films and liked them. [Maleno] Malenotti told me that if I wanted to make a film he would produce it for me. That was *The Wide Blue Road*.

Returning to Rossellini, I especially admired his capacity to render the essence of the real. The capacity to understand and love reality; that was Rossellini. I was very influenced by his work. We became really good friends and when I told him he was this kind of “King Midas” of reality, that everything he touched he could transform it into reality, he said that he couldn’t think of a better compliment someone could give him.

You can see this idea of capturing the essence of reality in my films. Especially after *The Wide Blue Road* — in *Kapò* and *The Battle of Algiers*. The title of a documentary the BBC did on my work is “*La Dittadura de la Verità*” (The Dictatorship of Truth) and I wanted precisely that. Nothing but truth. If there was something that could distort this dictatorship of reality, I would eliminate it immediately. For instance, in *The Battle of Algiers* there is a sequence in which three women have the mission of placing a bomb in three different places in the city. We tried to use a kind of film stock and editing style that would create in the viewer’s mind the impression to be in front of a real event, in front of a frame of reality.

Milestone: Rossellini said once that looking back at his films, he found certain constant ideas and things that were not intended beforehand but came naturally, and, in particular, “human warmth.” For him, the Neorealist film has this quality. Would you agree with this?

Pontecorvo: In Neorealist films, a common characteristic is the affection for the human being due to the hardness of the living conditions individuals must endure — the interest and the affection for humans which stems from the consideration of the hardness of human condition. There is a concern for the human being attempting to overcome the difficulties he or she must face.

Milestone: Regarding the cinematic style of *The Wide Blue Road*, it is rather astonishing the almost absolute absence of close-ups and the constant use of medium and long shots. It is as though you were trying to represent the individual living in his/her space, his/her environment, becoming part of the landscape.

Pontecorvo: Absolutely. The integration of the characters in the landscape was a key concept for me. Close-ups are beautiful and they produce a very intense effect but they distort reality and I didn't want that.

Milestone: What can you tell me about the melodramatic overtones of your film? It seems that in *The Wide Blue Road*, there is a combination of political or educational cinema and melodrama. How did you reconcile these two ideas?

Pontecorvo: Certainly, it was one of the concessions I had to go through in my first film. Simply, I was afraid. I didn't have any pressure from the producers or anything like that. I just was very insecure and I wanted to make a film people would like. It was that fear that comes from inside you. That's why I decided to introduce the melodramatic elements in the film. *La Grande Strada Azzurra* was incredibly successful for what I expected. When one makes his first film, he is satisfied with just finishing. The film did very well in the box office and I won an award in Karlovy Vary Film Festival for Best Director.

Milestone: Squarçiò (Yves Montand) is dying and his small son goes away with the boat, drawing a wide blue road in the sea. You have repeatedly acknowledged this last shot of the film is your favorite. Why?

Pontecorvo: It's stylistically and emotionally the best shot of the film. This trail of water drawn by the boat in the sea is my *Strada*.

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Milestone Film & Video

“Since its birth 10 years ago, the Milestone Film and Video Co. has steadily become the industry’s foremost boutique distributor of classic and art films — and probably the only distributor in America whose name is actually a guarantee of some quality.” — William Arnold, *Seattle Post-Intelligencer*

Milestone is a boutique distribution company with over ten years experience in art-house film distribution. The company has earned an unparalleled reputation for releasing classic cinema masterpieces, new foreign films, groundbreaking documentaries and American independent features. Thanks to Milestone’s rediscovery, restoration and release of such important lost films as Mikhail Kalatozov’s award-winning *I am Cuba*, Pier Paolo Pasolini’s *Mamma Roma*, and F.W. Murnau’s *Tabu*, the company now occupies an honored position as one of the most influential independent distributors in the American film industry. In 1999, the *L.A. Weekly* chose Milestone as “Indie Distributor of the Year.”

Amy Heller and Dennis Doros started Milestone in 1990 to bring out the best films of yesterday and today. The company has released such remarkable new films as Bae Yong-kyun’s *Why Has Bodhi-Dharma Left for the East*, Luc Besson’s *Atlantis*, Yoichi Higashi’s *Village of Dreams*, Hirokazu Kore-eda’s *Maborosi*, the films of famed artist Eleanor Antin, the art documentaries of Philip Haas (director of *Music of Chance and Angels and Insects*), Edoardo Winspeare’s *Pizzicata*, and Takeshi Kitano’s *Fireworks (Hana-Bi)*.

Milestone’s re-releases have included restored versions of Luchino Visconti’s *Rocco and His Brothers*, Merian C. Cooper and Ernest B. Schoedsack’s *Grass and Chang*, Michelangelo Antonioni’s *Red Desert*, and Hiroshi Teshigahara’s *Woman in the Dunes* and Antonio Gaudí. Milestone is also working with the Mary Pickford Foundation on a long-term project to preserve, re-score and release the best films of the legendary silent screen star. In 1999, Milestone released restored versions of Roy and John Boulting’s anti-Nazi drama *Pastor Hall* (1940), Roland West’s *The Bat Whispers* (1930), Frank Hurley’s *South: Ernest Shackleton and the Endurance Expedition*, and Kevin Brownlow’s feature films, *It Happened Here* (1964) and *Winstanley* (1975).

Milestone is also known for rediscovering, acquiring, restoring and distributing unknown “classics” that have never been available in the US and Canada. These include Pier Paolo Pasolini’s *Mamma Roma*, Alfred Hitchcock’s “lost” WWII propaganda films, *Bon Voyage* and *Aventure Malgache*, *Early Russian Cinema* (a series of twenty-eight films from Czarist Russia from 1908–1919), *I am Cuba* and *Jane Campion’s Two Friends*.

Milestone celebrated its tenth anniversary in 2000 with the release of two great “lost” classics: Michael Powell’s *The Edge of the World* (1937), a Martin Scorsese presentation, and a stunning

restoration of Rolando Klein's Mexican classic, *Chac* (1976). The Milestone 10th Anniversary Tour is yet another project the company has scheduled for 2000–2001. This nationwide tour of Milestone's most famous releases premiered at the Film Society of Lincoln Center in New York in August. All revenues earned by Milestone from retrospective screenings will be donated to four major archives in the United States and England to help restore films that might otherwise be lost.

Scheduled so far for 2001, besides Gillo Pontecorvo's *The Wide Blue Road*, is the beautifully restored and tinted Lotte Reiniger's *The Adventures of Prince Achmed*, the first ever animated feature. This next year, 2002, promises to be an extremely exciting release schedule including two feature films by famed director Charles Burnett: *Killer of Sheep* and *My Brother's Wedding* and three of his short films, *The Horse*, *Several Friends* and *When It Rains*. Also in the pipeline is another feature by the team that created *I am Cuba*: Mikhail Kalatozov's *The Letter Never Sent*.

On video over the next year, Milestone will be releasing an important series of great silent films restored by the world's premiere film historians and preservationists, Photoplay Productions of London. These stunning restorations by the team of Kevin Brownlow, Patrick Stanbury and the late David Gill, have never before been available on video in the United States. They include the horror classic, *The Phantom of the Opera*; the first authorized release of F.W. Murnau's great vampire film, *Nosferatu*; woman film pioneer Lois Weber's magnificent *The Blot*, André Antoine's early "neo-realist" adaptation of Emile Zola's *La Terre*; the beautiful and hilarious *Clara Bow in It*; and an astonishing historical epic of Polish independence by Raymond Bernard, *The Chess Player*.

Milestone will also be premiering on video two amazing "lost" comedies — Buster Keaton and Fatty Arbuckle's *The Cook* along with Arbuckle's *A Reckless Romeo*. Milestone is also proud to announce the release of *Marching to A Different Toon*, a collection of animated films by John Canemaker, whose artistry (along with his erudition as a historian of animation) has earned him fans and friends worldwide. And continuing its animation series, Milestone will also release *Cut-Up: The films of Grant Munro* — a collection of films done at the National Film Board of Canada that will showcase Munro, one of the renowned animators (and documentarians) from that famed organization.

Milestone received a Special Archival Award in 1995 from the National Society of Film Critics for its restoration and release of *I am Cuba*. Seven of its preserved films — Charles Burnett's *Killer of Sheep*, *Tabu*, Edward S. Curtis' *In the Land of the War Canoes*, Mary Pickford's *Poor Little Rich Girl*, Clarence Brown and Maurice Tourneur's *The Last of the Mohicans*, Winsor McCay's *Gertie the Dinosaur* and *Grass* — are listed on the Library of Congress's National Film Registry.

Cindi Rowell joined the company in 1999 and is head of acquisitions.

"Milestone Film and Video [is] an art-film distributor that has released some of the most distinguished new movies (along with seldom-seen vintage movie classics) of the past decade."
— Stephen Holden, *New York Times*

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