

THE MUSEO ITALO AMERICANO PRESENTS

**ITALIAN
AMERICAN**

Cinema

**FROM CAPRA
TO THE COPPOLAS**





Rudolph Valentino and Hungarian actress Vilma Banky in *The Son of the Sheik* (1926). Courtesy of United Artists/Photofest.
OPPOSITE: Exhibit author and co-curator Joseph McBride (left) with Frank Capra, 1985. Courtesy of Columbia Pictures.

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Francis Ford Coppola on the set of *One from the Heart* (1982). Courtesy of Columbia Pictures/Photofest.

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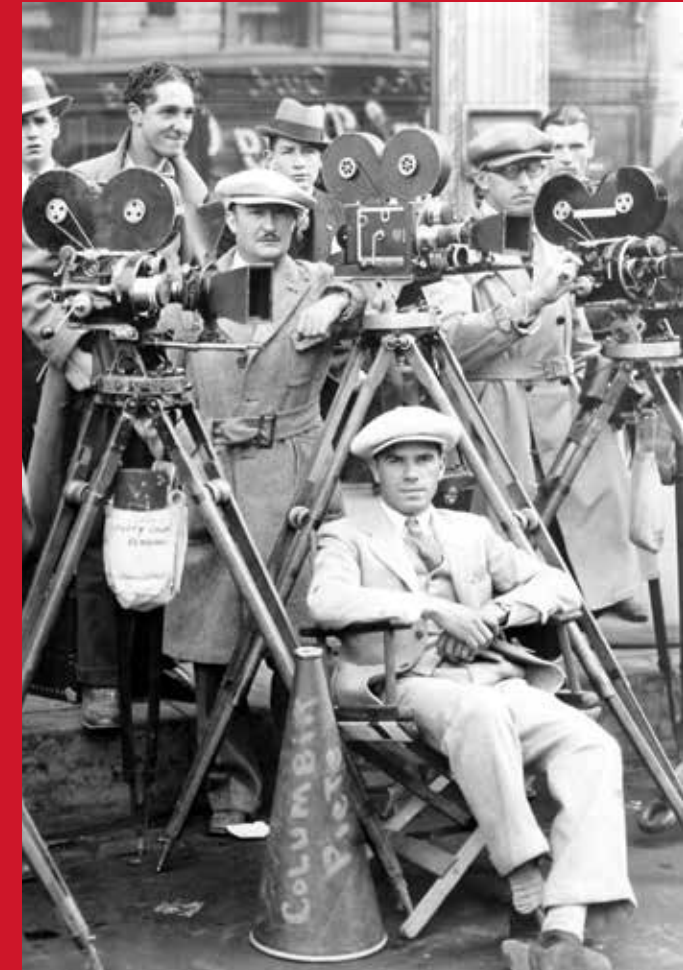
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Director Frank Capra (seated), 1927. Courtesy of Columbia Pictures/Photofest.

ITALIAN AMERICAN CINEMA

FROM CAPRA TO THE COPPOLAS

The story of Italian American cinema is integral to the story of this country and our shared national heritage.

American cinema, from its inception, has played a major role in shaping our perceptions of ourselves and our country, as well as the way other countries see us. American movies initially were made for largely working-class and often immigrant audiences and often shaped by filmmakers strongly identified with their ethnic groups. Italian Americans have long been one of the most important and influential groups represented onscreen, and many major American filmmakers and stars are of Italian descent. From the heartwarming *Rocky* and *Marty* to such chilling dramas as the *Godfather* trilogy and *Raging Bull*, their work has reflected the Italian American experience in this country and shaped the overall society's perceptions and sometimes misperceptions of this ethnic group's identity.

The themes upon which Italian American filmmakers have concentrated are among the central pillars of our culture—Family, Community, Immigration, Assimilation—and they have dealt with these topics with great complexity and nuance. Their films explore the American Dream in all its ramifications and contradictions. What are the consequences, good and bad, of the drive toward socioeconomic success in America? How have Italian Americans maintained their cultural heritage while also defining their identity as unhyphenated Americans?

Italian American filmmakers from Frank Capra, Vincente Minnelli, and Ida Lupino to Francis Ford Coppola, Martin Scorsese, and Penny Marshall have taken differing approaches to these themes. Some have avoided direct identification with ethnicity, dealing more generally with social themes, while others, especially in recent times, have made films capturing important aspects of the ethnic experience. Many Italian American actors—from Rudolph Valentino, Frank Sinatra, Lou Costello, and Anne Bancroft to Robert De Niro, Al Pacino, Liza Minnelli, and Leonardo DiCaprio today—have also enhanced our national cinema with their talents, charisma, and charm, in dramas as well as comedies and musicals.

We celebrate the rich talents of all these people and explore their great contributions to our country and its multiethnic traditions.

THIS PAGE TOP: Sylvester Stallone stars as Rocky Balboa in the 1976 film *Rocky*, which he also wrote. Courtesy of United Artists/Photofest. Photographer: Elliott Marks. BOTTOM: Leonardo DiCaprio plays Jordan Belfort in *The Wolf of Wall Street* (2013), a biographical black comedy directed by Martin Scorsese. Courtesy of Paramount Pictures/Photofest. OPPOSITE: Oreste Baldini plays the young Vito Andolini (later known as Don Corleone) arriving at Ellis Island in Francis Ford Coppola's 1974 film *The Godfather Part II*. Courtesy of Paramount Pictures/Photofest.



FOUNDATIONS: THE PIONEERS



Italia Almirante-Manzini as a princess in the Italian silent film *Cabiria* (1914), which inspired D. W. Griffith's *The Birth of a Nation* and *Intolerance*. Courtesy of Photofest.

The birth of cinema coincided with the great wave of Italian immigration to the United States, but it took a while for American movies to catch up with the cultural implications of that influx. Although the Lumière Brothers brought their pioneering films to Italy in 1896, and immigrants made up most of the patrons of the early nickelodeons in the U.S., the image of Italian Americans in cinema was mostly created by people of other descent in those formative years of the medium.

The groundbreaking director D. W. Griffith, a Southerner of Anglo-Welsh ancestry, made some short films on Italian themes, including *Pippa Passes* and *The Violin Maker of Cremona*. Griffith's subsequent epics *The Birth of a Nation* and *Intolerance* were directly inspired by Giovanni Pastrone's 1914 Italian spectacle, *Cabiria*. The 1915 American silent feature *The Italian*, a Thomas H. Ince production starring George Beban, is a respectful, well-crafted account of the title character's immigrant journey from his native land to a difficult life in New York. But it was not until Italian immigrant Rudolph Valentino made his spectacular breakthrough into film stardom in 1921, becoming the prototype of the "Latin Lover" and "The Sheik," that the public consciousness of Italian Americans in movies erupted.

Otherwise the ethnic image from the beginnings through the 1930s involved mostly stereotypical comical or violent characters. This was typified by Chico Marx (a non-Italian whose routines involved whimsical piano riffs and broken-English dialogue mocking immigrant speech) and the plethora of gangsters who became staples of the screen from the 1920s onward. Not all movie gangsters were of Italian descent—the Irishman James Cagney was a standout in that genre—but Edward G. Robinson's *Little Caesar* and Paul Muni's *Scarface* helped connect Italian Americans with crime.

Few early silent directors were Italians, but Frank Borzage, the creator of ethereal cinematic love stories, won the first directing Oscar for drama in 1929 for his popular romance *7th Heaven*. By then, the young Italian immigrant Frank Capra was starting to make a name for himself as well; he was on his way to becoming the leading American film director of the 1930s.

THE LONG EARLY JOURNEY



BACKGROUND: Henry Armetta (1888–1945) was one of the most familiar Italian American faces in movies during the Golden Age. A native of Sicily, he appeared in more than 150 films, often in stereotypically comical but endearing roles as a barber, grocer, or restaurateur. In this scene from Frank Borzage's 1928 film *Street Angel*, set in Naples, Armetta's character, Mascetto, is confronted by policemen (Guido Trento and Alberto Rabagliati). Courtesy of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. INSET: Poster for the landmark 1914 film epic *Cabiria*, directed by Giovanni Pastrone; Gabriele D'Annunzio helped write it. Courtesy of the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C.



A LANDMARK FILM: **THE ITALIAN**

The first major feature film to treat Italian immigrants to the U.S. with at least as much serious drama as stereotyping, *The Italian* is a Thomas H. Ince production starring George Beban, who persuaded Ince and cowriter C. Gardner Sullivan to change the film's title from *The Dago*. Remarkably sophisticated in its cinematography and relatively restrained in its acting style, at least for its first half, *The Italian* has been chosen for preservation in the National Film Registry by the Library of Congress.

Beban's Pietro (Beppo) Donnetti emigrates from Venice, where he works as a gondolier but doesn't have enough money to marry the woman he loves. He hopes to make his fortune in America first, but she follows him, and their child dies because Beppo is too poor to afford healthy milk. Beppo's desperate reactions carry emotional authenticity, even if the acting becomes overwrought as the film tips over into painting him as the clichéd "hot-blooded" Italian. The scenes set in New York's Lower East Side were actually filmed in the Italian neighborhoods of San Francisco, Beban's hometown before he went on the New York stage. Reginald Barker directed this remarkable early film.



An accomplished stage and film actress, Rafaela Ottiano (left), a native of Italy, had a remarkable range. Here she reprises her stage role of Russian Rita, a crooked entertainer, opposite Mae West in the 1933 film *She Done Him Wrong*. Courtesy of Paramount Pictures/Photofest.



MAIN: Frank Capra, 1930s. Courtesy of Columbia Pictures/Photofest. INSET: On the set of *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939). From left: James Stewart, Jean Arthur, director Frank Capra. Courtesy of Columbia Pictures/Photofest.

“CAPRAESQUE”

“Maybe there really wasn't an America, maybe it was only Frank Capra.” That comment by John Cassavetes sums up the heartwarming appeal of the vision of America brought to the screen by Italian immigrant director Frank Capra, as well as the somewhat illusory nature of these “Capraesque” films. Capra's portrait of America was not entirely heartwarming, but a complex and often dark vision of his adopted land.

The populist heroes of *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* and *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* are persecuted for their idealism, and George Bailey in *It's a Wonderful Life* would commit suicide if it weren't for angelic intervention. Capra's films are often mistaken as

simply sentimental, but their happy endings, while hard-earned, often seem precarious.

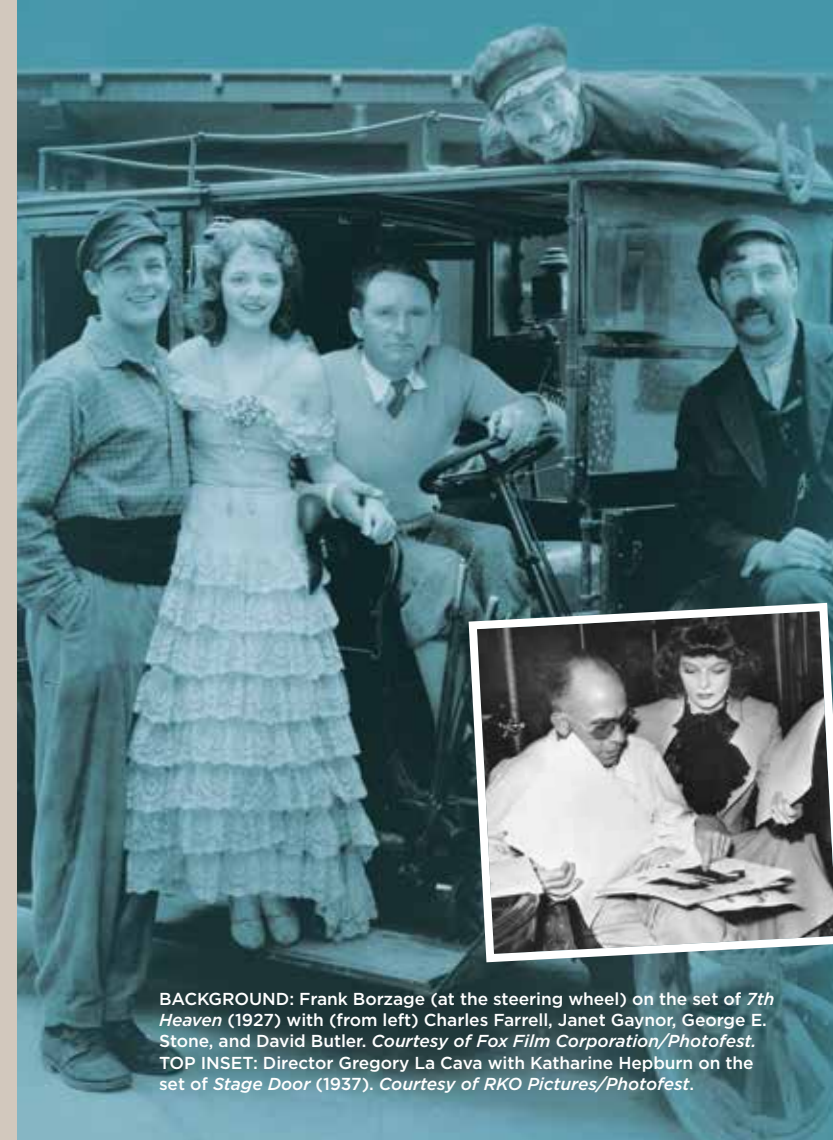
After emigrating with his family from Sicily to Los Angeles in 1903, Capra earned a college degree and after a long apprenticeship in film (partly in San Francisco), he became the most successful American director of the 1930s, winning three Oscars. In that time when the “melting pot” attitude reigned, Capra downplayed his ethnic background. He served his adopted country as an Army propagandist in World War II, but after the war he found his loyalty questioned. Capra's subsequent work showed a rapid decline, but he was later rediscovered by young audiences.

THE LATIN LOVER OF THE ROARING TWENTIES

The Latin Lover, The Sheik, The Sex Idol of the Roaring Twenties — all these romantic titles were held by Rudolph Valentino, an Italian immigrant, devastatingly handsome, who vaulted to superstardom with his erotic tango in *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* (1921). Valentino had struggled to break free of stereotypical Italian gangster roles until he found his niche playing other kinds of exotic foreigners, such as his Argentine dancer and Arab sheiks. He made women's hearts flutter and men envious in *The Sheik*, *Blood and Sand*, and *The Son of the Sheik* before his untimely death at age thirty-one in 1926. Valentino would have many imitators but no equals.

Perhaps the most moving tribute paid to Valentino came from the journalist H. L. Mencken, whom Valentino had sought out for his advice shortly before his death when he was accused in the press of causing the effeminization of the American male. Mencken wrote that Valentino was a true “gentleman” but “a curiously naive and boyish young fellow...thrown into a situation of intolerable vulgarity.... Here was a young man who was living the daily dream of millions of other young men. Here was one who was catnip to women. Here was one who had wealth and fame, both made honorably and by his own effort. And here was one who was very unhappy.”

BACKGROUND: Rudolph Valentino's celebrated tango with Virginia Warwick in *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* (1921). Courtesy of Metro Pictures/Photofest. INSET: Valentino as Don Alonzo Castro, from the lost film *A Sainted Devil* (1924). Courtesy of Photofest.



CAPRA'S CONTEMPORARIES

The winner of the first Academy Award for best director of a drama was the Italian American Frank Borzage (at that 1929 ceremony, another Oscar was awarded for comedy directing). One of the most romantic directors in film history, Borzage won for his silent classic *7th Heaven*, starring Janet Gaynor and Charles Farrell as a struggling young couple in Paris, a prostitute and a sewer worker who strive for better lives.

Borzage, the son of an Italian immigrant stonemason, began as an actor in early silents and had a career as a director that stretched from 1915 through 1961. Known for his ethereal visual style and ability to draw intensely moving performances from his players, Borzage also made such noteworthy films as *Street Angel*, *The River*, *Man's Castle*, and *Moonrise*.

Another prominent early director of Italian American descent was Gregory La Cava. Starting as an animator, he moved into two-reel silent comedies with W. C. Fields and others. La Cava made his most enduring films in the romantic comedy and screwball genres, including *My Man Godfrey*, *She Married Her Boss*, and *Stage Door*. He also directed the offbeat 1933 political film *Gabriel Over the White House*.



BACKGROUND: Frank Borzage (at the steering wheel) on the set of *7th Heaven* (1927) with (from left) Charles Farrell, Janet Gaynor, George E. Stone, and David Butler. Courtesy of Fox Film Corporation/Photofest. TOP INSET: Director Gregory La Cava with Katharine Hepburn on the set of *Stage Door* (1937). Courtesy of RKO Pictures/Photofest.

BANKING ON THE MOVIES

The Bank of America, founded in San Francisco in 1904 as the Bank of Italy, played a large role in the early development of the movie industry by investing in that medium before it became a somewhat respectable commodity in the business world. A. H. (Doc) Giannini, the bank's head of Hollywood lending, had been backing films since Charlie Chaplin's 1921 smash hit *The Kid*. Later head of the independent studio United Artists, Doc was the brother of A. P. Giannini, founder of the Bank of Italy, long known as the bank for “the little fellow” and immigrants.

But in the depths of the Great Depression, the Bank of America was in danger of collapse, along with many other American banking institutions. Hollywood owed the bank a big favor during the early 1930s. Columbia Pictures, one of the smaller Hollywood studios, depended largely on funding from the Bank of America. Columbia president Harry Cohn responded to the worsening banking crisis of the pre-Roosevelt era

by assigning screenwriter Robert Riskin to go see Doc Giannini. Riskin wrote an inspirational screenplay, *Faith*, about a maverick banker who takes chances on people by lending on their potential.

The film was made in 1932 as *American Madness*, with Walter Huston starring and Frank Capra directing. Its depiction of a run on a bank and the banker's success in restoring confidence provided a stirring metaphor for how Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal would help the country survive the Depression. The Bank of America reciprocated that favor by helping fund Capra's *It's a Wonderful Life*, as well as continuing its vital role in helping keep Hollywood not only solvent but thriving.

LOWER INSET: Doc Giannini with Vivien Leigh on the set of the 1939 classic *Gone With the Wind*. Courtesy of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.



Prolific Italian American director Robert G. Vignola, born Rocco Giuseppe Vignola in Italy, started as an actor in silents with the pioneering gangster film *The Black Hand* (Biograph, 1906). Vignola then worked for Kalem Studios in New York and eventually went to Hollywood. He directed many films between 1911 and 1937, including the Marion Davies vehicle *When Knighthood Was in Flower* (1922), *The Scarlet Letter* with Colleen Moore (1934), and *Seventeen* (1916), in which Rudolph Valentino is an extra. Courtesy of the State Archives of Florida.



LITTLE RICO & BIG TONY

“Mother of Mercy! Is this the end of Rico?” — Well, it was the end of Edward G. Robinson’s Caesar Enrico Bandello, a gangster modeled on Chicago crime lord Alphonse (Al) Capone, in *Little Caesar* (1931). The gangster genre dates back to the silent days, but *Little Caesar* brought it to new heights of popularity. The following year, Howard Hawks directed one of the finest films in the genre, another Capone takeoff called *Scarface, Shame of a Nation*, with Paul Muni as Tony Camonte.

Although both films starred Jewish actors, they helped cement the linkage moviemakers and moviegoers perceived between Italian Americans and organized crime. American history shows that organized crime is an equal-opportunity occupation,

in which Italian Americans have played a notable but not dominant part, yet the stereotype has caused a great deal of social harm over the years. It has persisted with the hit TV series *The Untouchables* (1959–63) and *The Sopranos* (1999–2007), and with Robert De Niro playing Capone in the 1987 feature version of *The Untouchables*, directed by Brian De Palma. De Palma also directed a 1983 remake of *Scarface* with the character played by Al Pacino but turned into a Cuban refugee.

MAIN: Caesar Enrico (Rico) Bandello, played by Edward G. Robinson (center), is honored at a “Palermo Club” banquet in *Little Caesar* (1931). Courtesy of Warner Bros./Photofest. INSET: Lobby Card for *Scarface*, the 1932 Howard Hawks/Howard Hughes gangster film. Courtesy of United Artists/Photofest.

FROM ELLIS ISLAND TO THE SUBURBS

The early years of movies coincided with the great influx of immigrants to America. The movies were regarded as a largely working-class form of entertainment in the early 1900s (the nickelodeon era) before they became more “respectable.” By then the millions of immigrants were beginning to edge their way into the middle class, having helped legitimize the new art form as they, in turn, became more accepted as Americans.

Among the five and a half million Italians who emigrated to the U.S. between 1820 and 1920, the majority came in the years when the movies were young. They followed the earlier wave of Irish immigrants, who, like the Italians, were imported to serve as the work force for the industrial revolution. Other ethnic groups, including Asians and Russian Jews, also were let into the country as cheap labor before the Golden Door slammed mostly shut with nativist restrictions on immigration in the 1920s.

By then, Italian Americans were firmly established in many areas of American life, although they still had to battle forms of prejudice, not least of which was the stereotyping that dominated the movies’ portrayals of ethnic groups. But as the years went on, and many Italian Americans achieved great success, the movies showed their positive influence more and more through the work of filmmakers such as Frank Capra, Frank Borzage, and Vincente Minnelli and the myriad of popular actors of Italian descent.

The World War II years and beyond brought far greater assimilation to Italian Americans as they moved out of their crowded “Little Italy” urban surroundings into the suburbs. That trend carried its own peril of a loss of identity, but the new trend of ethnic pride in the 1960s and beyond helped make Italian Americans more willing to openly embrace their cultural roots. That helped spur the many modern films and television shows dealing in complex ways with the Italian American heritage.

TOP: An immigrant waits at the registration desk on Ellis Island, circa 1910. Courtesy of the George Grantham Bain Collection, Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C. CENTER: Mulberry Street, Little Italy, New York City, circa 1900, (colorized photo). Courtesy of the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C. BACKGROUND: Immigrants with their luggage arrive at Ellis Island, New York, circa 1900. Courtesy of the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, Washington, D.C.



FROM THE STUDIOS TO THE STREETS: 1940s–1960s



The popular opera-singing movie star Mario Lanza in the title role of Enrico Caruso in *The Great Caruso* (1951). Courtesy of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM)/Photofest.

Not only is Italian culture celebrated for its spectacular range of musical talent, that tradition has carried over into motion pictures. Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Mario Lanza, Liza Minnelli, and Madonna are among many Italian Americans who have captivated movie audiences with their vocal talents, and some have also made the crossover into major dramatic acting roles. Many of the most popular songs of the Golden Age of movie musicals were written by three-time Oscar-winning composer and lyricist Harry Warren, an Italian American who was born Salvatore Guaragna.

Sinatra's crooning made him the nation's musical heartthrob from the early 1940s onward; he was an icon of American popular music until his death in 1998. After making his film debut in 1941, Sinatra starred in such popular movie musicals as *Anchors Aweigh*, *On the Town*, and *Guys and Dolls*. When his singing career temporarily faltered, Sinatra fought to play Maggio in *From Here to Eternity* (1953) and won an Oscar as best supporting actor. His other memorable acting roles included starring parts in *Some Came Running* and *The Manchurian Candidate*.

Martin (born Dino Crocetti), a member with Sinatra of the swinging "Rat Pack" in the fifties and sixties, was more "ethnic" in his crooning choices than Sinatra, and with great success. Martin also had a gift for deadpan comedy and parlayed that into movie stardom as Jerry Lewis's partner. Undaunted when that teaming broke up, Martin reinvented himself as a dramatic actor in *Some Came Running* and *Rio Bravo* but continued cultivating his comedic "cool" in many other films, including spoofing himself as "Dino" in Billy Wilder's *Kiss Me, Stupid*.

CROONING, ACTING, & RAT-PACKING



TOP: Prolific movie musical songwriter Harry Warren, 1930s. Courtesy of Photofest. BACKGROUND: Rat Packers Peter Lawford, Dean Martin, Sammy Davis Jr., and Frank Sinatra (as Danny Ocean) in *Ocean's Eleven* (1960). Courtesy of Warner Bros./Photofest.



THE MUSICAL MAN

Meet Me in St. Louis, the joyous 1944 MGM musical set at the time of the 1904 World's Fair, is one of the most conspicuous examples of how assimilated Italian American filmmakers were becoming when they helped celebrate American values in a time of war. Director Vincente Minnelli's most beloved film stars his soon-to-be-wife Judy Garland, who sings of her love for "The Boy Next Door" and also unforgettably sings "The Trolley Song" in this lavishly colorful tribute to American family solidarity.

Minnelli, born to a show business family in the Midwest, had Sicilian revolutionaries among his ancestors. The exotic young man went to New York and became a stage director. By 1940, Minnelli was in Hollywood working for producer Arthur Freed's musical unit.

Minnelli became known for his stylish, adventurous musicals, which also included *An American in Paris*, *The Band Wagon*, and *Gigi*. He branched out into dramas with such films as *Father of the Bride*, *The Bad and the Beautiful*, and *Some Came Running*, in which he directed Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin. Minnelli and Garland's daughter Liza starred in her father's 1976 musical fantasy film *A Matter of Time*, which takes place in Italy.

BACKGROUND: Minnelli showing daughter Liza the ropes in 1955. Courtesy of Photofest. INSET: Minnelli with his star Gene Kelly on the set of *An American in Paris* (1951). Courtesy of Movie Stills Database.



Born Dominic Amici in Kenosha, Wisconsin (his father was an Italian immigrant), the suave Don Ameche was a leading man in many films, notably Ernst Lubitsch's 1943 nostalgic comedy-drama with Gene Tierney, *Heaven Can Wait*. Courtesy of 20th Century Fox.



FUNNYMEN

"Heeeeeyyy, Abbott!" While in the early days of movies, Italian American characters were more laughed at than laughed with, that trend began changing in the 1940s as part of the assimilation process. The most popular Italian American comedian then was not especially regarded as "ethnic," just funny. Lou Costello was the short, rotund half of the team of Abbott & Costello. Bud Abbott was the quintessential straight man.

There's a lovable innocence to Costello that endures today along with the sheer hilarity of the team's shenanigans, even if their vehicles were not particularly distinguished cinematically. Costello (born Louis Cristillo in New Jersey) started in burlesque and vaudeville and teamed with Abbott in 1936. They

became radio stars (most indelibly for their "Who's on First?" baseball routine) and appeared in thirty-six films in a career stretching from 1940 to 1956, sometimes with their names in the titles.

Another enduringly popular Italian American comedian — also a singer and piano player — was Jimmy Durante, whose distinctive New York accent and prominent nose (his "Schnozzola") helped make him a beloved character. Durante was a star in vaudeville, recordings, radio, movies, and television. His biggest audiences came as a TV star in the 1950s.

MAIN: Lou Costello and Bud Abbott with Joan Valerie in *Rio Rita* (1942). Courtesy of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM)/Photofest. INSET: Jimmy Durante (as Nick Lombardi) stars with Frank Sinatra in the musical comedy *It Happened in Brooklyn* (1947). Courtesy of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM)/Photofest.



ONE OF A KIND

Since thirty American women directed films in the silent era, it remains something of a mystery why women were largely removed from the director's chair for decades. The only American woman to have a sustained career as a director from the late 1920s until 1943 was Dorothy Arzner.

Ida Lupino, restless over her acting assignments and increasingly involved in production chores, made the next breakthrough in 1949 when she replaced an ailing male director on *Not Wanted*. Lupino, a naturalized American citizen, came from a noted English acting family of Italian descent and starred in such American films as *They Drive by Night*, *High Sierra*, and *On Dangerous Ground*.

Lupino went on to direct a series of tough, socially conscious independent films in the 1950s, such as *Outrage*, *The Hitch-Hiker*, and *The Bigamist*, often exploring subjects male directors tended to avoid. Her directing career continued in features through *The Trouble with Angels* in 1966, and she kept doing occasional TV directing until 1968. It was not until 1971 that another American woman (Elaine May) had an opportunity to direct, and even today, only about nine percent of directing jobs on studio features go to women.

MAIN: Director Lupino working on location for *Outrage* (1950). *Courtesy of RKO Pictures/Photofest.* **INSET:** Ida Lupino stars with Humphrey Bogart in Raoul Walsh's gangster classic *High Sierra* (1941). *Courtesy of Warner Bros./Photofest.*

“WHADDYA WANNA DO TONIGHT, MARTY?”

In 1953, television history was made, but few people knew it. Paddy Chayefsky wrote a low-key, partly humorous, mostly dramatic slice of life called *Marty*, about a lovable but lovelorn Italian American butcher from the Bronx. Rod Steiger played the role with his trademark intensity; Nancy Marchand was memorable as the equally plain, sweet, shy woman Marty Piletti finally realizes he should marry.

The live broadcast was not seen by many people, but it attracted rave reviews. *Marty* did not draw a wide audience until it was transferred to the big screen in 1955. At the time, TV was regarded as an inferior medium, but now the movies were following its lead, and *Marty* even won the Oscar for best picture.

Delbert Mann encored as director, but Steiger was replaced by Ernest Borgnine, the Italian American actor who won his only Oscar for the role. Marty's sweetheart was played by pretty Betsy Blair, who conveys the shyness but not the desperate pathos brought to the role by Marchand. Nevertheless, *Marty* is an enduring movie classic. Borgnine's performance is so indelible that it is easy to call up images of his poignant, brave-hearted Marty.

Borgnine as Marty Piletti and Esther Minciotti as his mother in *Marty* (1955). *Courtesy of United Artists/Photofest.* **INSET:** Poster for *Marty* (1955). In addition to winning an Academy Award for Best Picture, the film enjoyed international success, becoming the first American film to win the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival. *Courtesy of United Artists/Photofest.*



Pop singer Connie Francis (born Concetta Rosa Maria Franconero in New Jersey) made a splash with her sweet and lively voice and presence on TV and in several movie musicals. Her most successful was *Where the Boys Are* (1960), the archetypal spring break musical in which she shares the screen with Frank Gorshin (pictured) and, among others, fellow Italian American Paula Prentiss. *Courtesy of MGM/Photofest.*

IMPORTED FROM ITALY

With Italian movies becoming more popular on American screens after World War II, due to their gritty neorealism and sensuality, the way was paved for leading Italian actresses to enter the Hollywood mainstream. Among them is Sophia Loren, who has appeared in a long list of

American-financed films in Europe or the U.S., including *The Pride and the Passion*, *Houseboat*, *Heller in Pink Tights*, *El Cid*, *Arabesque*, and *Grumpier Old Men*.

Loren made film history by becoming the first actress in a foreign-language film to win the Oscar, in Vittorio De Sica's 1960 World War II drama *La Ciociara/Two Women*.



Gina Lollobrigida also made her share of American-backed films, such as *Beat the Devil*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, and *Solomon and Sheba*, and Virna Lisi had a run of success in the 1960s in *How to Murder Your Wife* and *The Secret of Santa Vittoria*. The great Anna Magnani took home an Oscar for playing Serafina in the film version of Tennessee Williams's play *The Rose Tattoo* (1955) and also starred in *The Fugitive Kind* and *Wild Is the Wind*.

BACKGROUND: Sophia Loren in her Oscar-winning role as Cesira in Vittorio De Sica's *La Ciociara/Two Women* (1960). Courtesy of Embassy Pictures Corporation/Photofest. INSET: Anna Magnani in her Oscar-winning role as Serafina Delle Rose in the 1955 film of Tennessee Williams's *The Rose Tattoo*. Courtesy of Paramount Pictures/Photofest.

Victor Mature, whose father was an Italian immigrant named Marcello Maturi, was a king of beefcake and Bible movies in Hollywood, including Cecil B. DeMille's *Samson and Delilah*, with Hedy Lamarr (1949). Courtesy of Paramount Pictures/Photofest.



THE WESTERN ALL'ITALIANA

As the theatrical Western, long a Hollywood staple, started dying out in the 1960s, the genre was revived in an unexpected place—Italy. Sergio Leone and other Italian directors brought an operatic, parodistic, always larger-than-life style and bravura to their Westerns, as well as a plethora of violence that ensured box office success.

Although many international actors appeared in these “spaghetti Westerns” (known in Italy as the *western all'italiana*), the prototype was Clint Eastwood's *Man With No Name* in Leone's 1964 *Per un pugno di dollari/A Fistful of Dollars*. A ripoff of Akira Kurosawa's *Yojimbo*, it became an unexpected success at the U.S. box office in 1967. Eastwood, a minor American TV and movie actor, became a major movie star as a result of that and other spaghetti Westerns. Lee Van Cleef, Eli Wallach, Rod Steiger, and Woody Strode were among other American actors who found success in the subgenre.

Leone, internationally celebrated in his own right, made perhaps the masterpiece of spaghetti Westerns with his 1966 Eastwood-Wallach film *The Good, The Bad, and the Ugly*. Leone ventured into American filmmaking with *Once Upon a Time in the West* and his gangster epic *Once Upon a Time in America*. And the spaghetti Western genre is unthinkable without the riveting scores by the innovative Ennio Morricone, who has composed music for more than five hundred international films and TV shows.



BACKGROUND: *The Good, the Bad and the Ugly* (1966) aka *Il buono, il brutto, il cattivo*, directed by Sergio Leone. Courtesy of United Artists/Photofest. INSET: Sergio Leone (right) on the set of *Once Upon a Time in the West* (1968), aka *C'era una volta il West*, with Charles Bronson and Tunisian-born Italian actress Claudia Cardinale. Courtesy of Paramount Pictures/Photofest.

A WOMAN OF MANY PARTS

It's a safe guess that many filmgoers never realized the distinguished actress Anne Bancroft was Italian American, but her birth name was Anna Maria Italiano. The roles for which she is most remembered are Annie Sullivan in *The Miracle Worker* (1962), the teacher of Helen Keller (Patty Duke), and *The Graduate* (1967), as the seductive Mrs. Robinson, who leads callow Benjamin (Dustin Hoffman) astray. As those two roles show, Bancroft's range was remarkable, and her film career, which began in 1952, was unclassifiable.

She started inconspicuously enough in formula pictures — including being carried off by the title character in *Gorilla at Large* — but she could tear your heart out, as in her Oscar-winning part in *The Miracle Worker* (a role she also had played onstage) and as the self-sacrificial Dr. Cartwright in John Ford's *7 Women*, or make you laugh uproariously when she acted for her husband, Mel Brooks, in *Silent Movie* and when they costarred in the 1983 remake of the Ernst Lubitsch classic *To Be or Not to Be*. Bancroft, who died in 2005, wrote and directed the 1980 comedy-drama *Fatso*, playing the sister of Dom DeLuise's obese title character.



A member of the Italian family that claimed credit for developing the vegetable broccoli (at least in its modern incarnation), producer Albert R. (Cubby) Broccoli, a son of immigrants, was born in New York but often worked in the UK. He is famous for producing seventeen James Bond films (sometimes with partners), from the first, *Dr. No* (1962) through *GoldenEye* (1995). Courtesy of United Artists/Photofest.



Although Americans fought Italians in World War II, the war also furthered the assimilation process for Italian Americans. The patriotically multiethnic platoons of American war movies included the requisite Italian American GI, helping bring many ethnic actors more into the mainstream. Frank Capra served his adopted country in a high position by making the propaganda series *Why We Fight* and other films for the U.S. Army. On both the battlefield and the home front, Italian Americans became more accepted in every stratum of society. After the war, the GI Bill and federal housing loans helped sons and daughters of Italian immigrants move more widely into American society, including into the previously homogenized suburbs.

Other Italian American filmmakers such as Vincente Minnelli, with his all-American musicals *Meet Me in St. Louis* and *The Band Wagon*, and actress Ida Lupino, who became the only woman director in American films between 1949 and 1968, were not only fully assimilated into the culture but aesthetic groundbreakers. Italian American performers such as Frank Sinatra and Dean Martin made their ethnicity popular in musicals and comedies, and they also made powerful transitions into dramatic acting with such postwar films as *From Here to Eternity*, *The Manchurian Candidate*, *Rio Bravo*, and *Some Came Running*. The long list of Italian American actors who became prominent in that era included Ernest Borgnine, Anne Bancroft, Sal Mineo, Paula Prentiss, Aldo Ray, Harry Guardino, Anthony Franciosa, and Ben Gazzara.

Although Italian Americans were dubiously represented on television in *The Untouchables*, which promoted gangster stereotypes, other actors such as Guy Williams, Richard Crenna, Vince Edwards, Annette Funicello, and Dick Van Patten were warmly embraced. Italian Americans were more often visible before and behind the camera as the studio system started coming to an end in the late 1960s.

THIS PAGE: TOP: Sal Mineo as the troubled Plato (left) with James Dean and Natalie Wood in Nicholas Ray's classic teenage drama *Rebel Without a Cause* (1955). Courtesy of Warner Bros./Photofest. CENTER: Italian Americans Annette Funicello and Frankie Avalon starred in the 1963 surprise hit *Beach Party*, which kicked off a popular series of teenage musical surf-and-sand movies. Courtesy of American International Pictures (AIP)/Photofest. BACKGROUND: Frank Sinatra (right) with Montgomery Clift in Fred Zinnemann's film of James Jones's 1941-set novel about U.S. Army life, *From Here to Eternity* (1953). Courtesy of Columbia Pictures/Photofest. OPPOSITE: TOP BACKGROUND: Anne Bancroft and Dustin Hoffman in *The Graduate* (1967). Courtesy of Embassy Pictures/Photofest. INSET: Bancroft (left) and Patty Duke in their Oscar-winning roles in *The Miracle Worker* (1962). Courtesy of MGM-UA/Photofest.



INTO THE MAINSTREAM



ANIMATED PEOPLE

THE GOLDEN AGE

Perhaps it is not surprising that a people who have contributed so much to the world of fine art in Italy have also made significant contributions to motion picture animation. Italians or Italian Americans have helped give us Pinocchio, Woody Woodpecker, Cinderella, and the Lion King, among many other classic characters and animated films from the Golden Age of Hollywood through today.



Pinocchio, one of the masterpieces of Walt Disney Studios animation, is based on the 1881–83 novel *Le avventure di Pinocchio/The Adventures of Pinocchio* by Italian author Carlo Collodi. The 1940 feature film brings life to the wood-cutter named Geppetto who creates the wooden boy of the title. One of the contributors to the screenplay was Aurelius Battaglia, an Italian American artist and writer who also

contributed to Disney's *Dumbo* and *Fantasia* and later made animated films for the influential UPA studio.

The same year that brought *Pinocchio's* release saw the birth of Woody Woodpecker, created by veteran animator Walter Lantz, whose Italian immigrant father's name had been Lanza. Lantz's other well-known characters included Oswald the Rabbit, Andy Panda, and Chilly Willy. He received an honorary Oscar in 1979.

Italian immigrant Clito Enrico (Clyde) Geronimi was a longtime Disney animator and prolific director. His 1941 *Lend a Paw* won an Oscar for best animated short. Among the Disney features on which Geronimi was a director were *Cinderella*, *Alice in Wonderland*, *Peter Pan*, *Sleeping Beauty*, and *101 Dalmatians*.

Joseph Barbera (son of Italian immigrants) and partner William Hanna were prolific producers of cartoons—notably the *Tom and Jerry* theatrical series—and later moved into TV series (including *The Flintstones* and *The Jetsons*), though they caused controversy with their minimalized animation. They won seven Oscars and eight Emmys.

THE MODERN ERA

Modern animated film has seen many major contributions by Italian Americans who follow in the grand tradition of the Golden Age animators.

Irene Mecchi, a San Francisco native, has been a screenwriter on such Disney animated features as *The Lion King*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, *Hercules*, and *Brave*. Mecchi also received a Tony nomination for cowriting the book for the highly successful stage musical version of *The Lion King*. She adapted James M. Barrie's play *Peter Pan* for the 2014 NBC musical TV special *Peter Pan Live!*



Jim Capobianco was one of the writers who earned a story credit on the film *The Lion King*. He also received story credits on *Hunchback* and *Ratatouille*. Capobianco has worked as a story artist on such films as *Fantasia/2000*, *Monsters, Inc.*, and *Finding Nemo*, and he directed the shorts *Your Friend the Rat* and *Leonardo*.

Also prominent in Disney animation is Roy Conli, a coproducer on *Hunchback* and a producer of *Treasure Planet*, *Tangled*, and *Big Hero 6*. The latter won Conli an Oscar for best animated feature of 2014.

Director Joe Dante started out wanting to be a cartoonist, and cartoons have always been a major influence on his films. Dante's creature horror comedies *Gremlins* and *Gremlins 2: The New Batch* resemble live-action animated films; his antiwar satire *Small Soldiers* deals with war toys; and his 2003 feature *Looney Tunes: Back in Action* includes a chase through the Louvre that puts Bugs Bunny and Daffy Duck into some of the world's greatest paintings.

Additionally, Paul and Gaëtan Brizzi, French twins of Italian descent, have directed celebrated animated films in both France (*Asterix Versus Caesar*) and the U.S. (including parts of *Hunchback* and *Fantasia/2000*).



THIS PAGE: Animator Walter Lantz (1900–94), shown in 1957 with his most famous character, Woody Woodpecker. Courtesy of ABC/Photofest. OPPOSITE: LEFT: *The Cat Concerto* (1946), directed by William Hanna and Joseph Barbera, was the 29th animated short in the *Tom and Jerry* series. Courtesy of MGM/Photofest. RIGHT: Joe Dante directs *Looney Tunes: Back in Action* (2003). Courtesy of Warner Bros.

THE MODERN ERA: 1970 TO TODAY

Sean Penn and Susan Sarandon, both of Italian descent on their maternal sides, costarred in *Dead Man Walking* (1995), about the relationship between a death-row inmate and a nun. Sarandon won the Academy Award for best actress, Penn was nominated for best actor, and the film's main track, "Dead Man Walkin'" by Bruce Springsteen—also Italian American on his mother's side—was nominated for best song. *Courtesy of Miramax Films/Photofest.*

"Everybody is Italian," writer-director Billy Wilder quipped in the 1970s, only half-jokingly. By that time, Italian Americans had come out of the cultural closet along with members of other ethnic groups, and they had become among the dominant forces in modern American filmmaking, both as directors and as actors.

With Francis Ford Coppola leading the way for the assault on the crumbling studio system by the new wave of young filmmakers in the late 1960s, the road was paved for other young Italian American directors such as Martin Scorsese, Brian De Palma, Michael Cimino, Joe Dante, Chris Columbus, Nancy Savoca, Penny Marshall, Sofia Coppola, and others to help reshape our cinema in the decades that followed. The celebrated Italian director Franco Zeffirelli made crossover films for Hollywood studios, and Dino De Laurentiis moved from a successful producing career in Italy to becoming a producing powerhouse in Hollywood. Carlo Ponti also produced successfully in both industries. Italian American producer Gary Lucchesi's prolific career has included being president of production at Paramount. Some filmmakers, as before, tended not to focus much on ethnic subject matter, but others explored their roots onscreen. The growing prominence of Italian Americans in all areas of American life—from politics and the arts to fashion and food—helped encourage this more directly autobiographical form of filmmaking.

Italian American stars such as Al Pacino, Robert De Niro, Liza Minnelli, John Travolta, Sylvester Stallone, Sean Penn, Susan Sarandon, Madonna, Marisa Tomei, Leonardo DiCaprio, John Turturro, and Bradley Cooper became the touchstones of dramatic, romantic, and comedic imagery in such popular and diverse films as the *Godfather* saga, *Cabaret*, *Taxi Driver*, the *Rocky* series, *Saturday Night Fever*, *Raging Bull*, *My Cousin Vinny*, *Dead Man Walking*, *Titanic*, and *American Sniper*. An amazingly rich array of character actors and actresses populated American movie screens, and others incarnated a suburban Mafia family in Italian American writer-producer-director David Chase's controversial hit series *The Sopranos*. The old stereotypes in some ways have stubbornly persisted, not only in portraying Italian Americans as criminals but often poking fun at their supposedly ethnic traits. But with Italian Americans pervading every area of the American consciousness, their influence on the cinema in the modern era has become increasingly mainstream and points toward even greater, more diverse influence in the future.

EVERYBODY IS ITALIAN



TOP: Bradley Cooper, whose mother is of Italian ancestry, and Robert De Niro play an Italian son and father, Pat Solatano Jr. and Sr., in *Silver Linings Playbook* (2012), directed by David O. Russell and coproduced by Donna Gigliotti. *Courtesy of Miramax Films.* CENTER: Working on *Snake Eyes* (1998) are Nicolas (Coppola) Cage and director Brian De Palma. *Courtesy of Buena Vista Pictures/Photofest.* BACKGROUND: From left to right: Italian American actor Max Casella, Italian TV and radio personality Fiorello, an unidentified woman, and director John Turturro in a scene from Turturro's critically acclaimed film *Passione*, a 2010 documentary chronicling the rich Neapolitan musical heritage. *Courtesy of Skydancers/Photofest.*



WISEGUYS, PALOOKAS, & BUFFOONS



ABOVE: Shown on the set of *Goodfellas*, the 1990 gangster film directed by Martin Scorsese, are (from left to right) Italian Americans Ray Liotta, Robert De Niro, Paul Sorvino, Scorsese, and Joe Pesci. *Courtesy of Warner Bros./Photofest.* BACKGROUND: Joe Pesci (center) is Vincent Gambini in the heartwarming comedy *My Cousin Vinny* (1991). Vinny is a lawyer fighting with the help of his fiancée, Lisa (Marisa Tomei), to save two clients (Mitchell Whitfield and Ralph Macchio) who have everything against them—including the fact that Vinny has never been in a courtroom before. *Courtesy of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.*

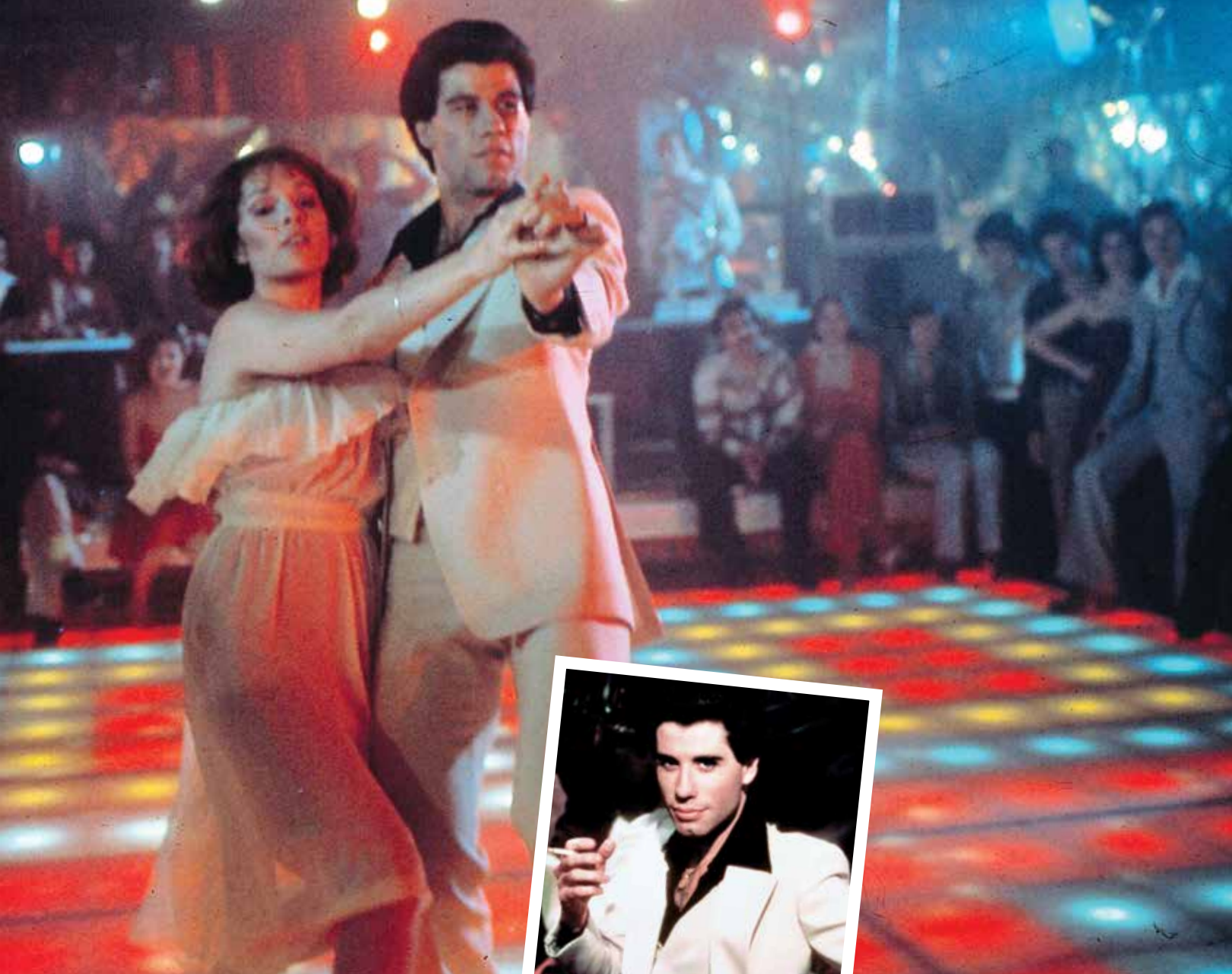
Of all ethnic groups portrayed in American films, the only ones shown in a worse light than Italian Americans through most of the twentieth century were the African Americans and the Native Americans. Italian Americans were subjected to a variety of mockery and denigration, as criminals most of all, but also as knuckleheaded “palookas” or as clowns and tricksters with “funny” ways of talking, constant hand gesticulations, volatile emotions, and a penchant for breaking out into schmaltzy love songs or opera music.

These stereotypes originated outside the cinema but, like all such imagery, also played a role in limiting the perceptions of the larger society toward Italian Americans. Viewers were encouraged to assume that most members of that group resembled the “wiseguys” or wisecrackers or wildly overwrought minor characters shown onscreen, speaking Pidgin English and being quick to resort to gunplay and other forms of violence. Middle-class or professional Italian Americans were relatively rare onscreen in the so-called Golden Age of American filmmaking, in which Chico Marx (a Jewish comedian with a fast line in wacky patter and piano-playing) seemed to epitomize the Italian American image as much as the Little Caesar types (played by actors of varying ancestry, but usually identified as of Italian descent) who machine-gunned their way through New York or Chicago. And though Italian Americans were widely dispersed throughout the United States, few were shown in movies living outside those two big cities, which were depicted as teeming with crime and other forms of desperate struggling for a living.

In the modern era, conditions for Italian Americans onscreen have somewhat improved. Enrico Salvatore (Ratso) Rizzo may have been a small-time crook, and he was played by a non-Italian actor, Dustin Hoffman, but Ratso won audiences’ hearts in *Midnight Cowboy*, the 1969 Oscar winner for best picture. In subsequent decades, Italian American stars such as Robert De Niro, Al Pacino, Leonardo DiCaprio, and others have been able to play a wider range of roles not limited to their ethnicity. Italian Americans are more often shown in films or on television running legitimate businesses or serving as lawyers, doctors, teachers, honest cops and politicians, and other professionals. But with many younger filmmakers feeling more free to emphasize their ethnic roots onscreen, and with violence taking more extreme forms onscreen, “wiseguys” continue to play a disproportionately large role in what passes for Italian American life.



Stanley Tucci (left) and Tony Shaloub play Italian immigrant brothers trying to attain the American Dream in the 1996 film *Big Night*. Written by Joseph Tropiano and Tucci, the film was directed by Tucci and Campbell Scott. The directors won the New York Film Critics Circle Award for best first film, and the writers won the Independent Spirit Award for best first screenplay. *Courtesy of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.*



A VALENTINO FOR THE SEVENTIES

The white-suited disco dancer John Travolta strutting sexily down New York streets in *Saturday Night Fever* (1977) is one of the most iconic movie images of that period. Travolta's cocky but endearing charm in the role of Tony Manero, the teenaged Italian American disco king from Brooklyn who wants to make it big as a Broadway dancer, vaulted the former TV star (*Welcome Back, Kotter*) into stardom and made him virtually a new Valentino.

Tony's drive, ambition, and talent drew from the tradition of archetypal second-generation ethnic success stories. Moviegoers of all backgrounds couldn't resist his energy and boyish enthusiasm

in a film that caught the disco craze in full swing, even if that moment in music (with its huge hit soundtrack by the Bee Gees) soon evaporated into parody. And while Travolta's stardom continued, his career would have many ups and downs. But for anyone who saw *Saturday Night Fever* when it came out, Tony Manero remains an enduring happy memory in this fable of how improbable showbiz dreams can help someone escape to a better life.

MAIN: Tony Manero (John Travolta) and Stephanie Mangano (Karen Lynn Gorney) do the "tango hustle" in *Saturday Night Fever* (1977). Courtesy of Paramount Pictures/Photofest. INSET: Travolta in iconic pose as Tony Manero in *Saturday Night Fever*. Courtesy of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.



Leading American theater and film singer/actress Bernadette Peters is seen here in her acclaimed role as the schoolteacher-turned-prostitute in the 1981 musical film *Pennies from Heaven*. She was born Bernadette Lazzara in Queens to a Sicilian American family. The foremost interpreter of the work of composer Stephen Sondheim, she has won two Tony Awards and has appeared in many Broadway shows. Her frequent TV work includes her regular role in the Internet TV series *Mozart in the Jungle*, from a pilot written by Roman Coppola, Jason Schwartzman, and Alex Timbers. Courtesy of MGM/Photofest.



Life has turned out to be a box of chocolates for Italian American director Robert Zemeckis, seen here working with Tom Hanks on the 1994 megahit *Forrest Gump*, which won Oscars for both as well as the best picture award. Zemeckis's other work includes the three *Back to the Future* films. Courtesy of Paramount Pictures/Photofest.



HEIRS TO THE *GODFATHER*

Between 1968 and 1970, two young Italian American actors were beginning to make people pay attention to their special talents. Al Pacino's breakthrough was in the Israel Horowitz play *The Indian Wants the Bronx*, for which he won an Obie Award; Robert De Niro caught people's eyes in a trio of irreverent comedy films directed by Brian De Palma, *Greetings*, *The Wedding Party*, and *Hi, Mom!*.

Heirs to Marlon Brando's Method style, De Niro and Pacino would lead their own generation of actors to new heights. Although their styles are strikingly individual, they share a nerdy, witty intensity and have played a wide variety of roles from the tragic to the raucously comic. Both rose to superstardom thanks to the *Godfather* films. Pacino was cast as

Michael Corleone in *The Godfather* and repeated the role in the two sequels. De Niro filled Brando's shoes as young Vito Corleone in *The Godfather Part II* (1974), for which he won a supporting actor Oscar. Over the following decades, De Niro and Pacino have become mainstays of American cinema, and Pacino, who won a best-actor Oscar for *Scent of a Woman*, also has maintained a fertile and innovative New York stage career.

MAIN: Pacino dances with Gabrielle Anwar in *Scent of a Woman* (1992). This is a remake of Dino Risi's 1974 Italian film *Profumo di donna*, starring Vittorio Gassman and based on the novel *Il buio e il miele/Darkness and Honey* by Giovanni Arpino. Courtesy of Universal Pictures/Photofest. INSET: Robert De Niro won an Oscar for best actor for his role as Jake LaMotta in Martin Scorsese's *Raging Bull* (1980). The film features several other Italian American actors, including Joe Pesci, Nicholas Colasanto, Theresa Saldana, and Frank Vincent. Courtesy of United Artists/Photofest. Photographer: Christine M. Loss.

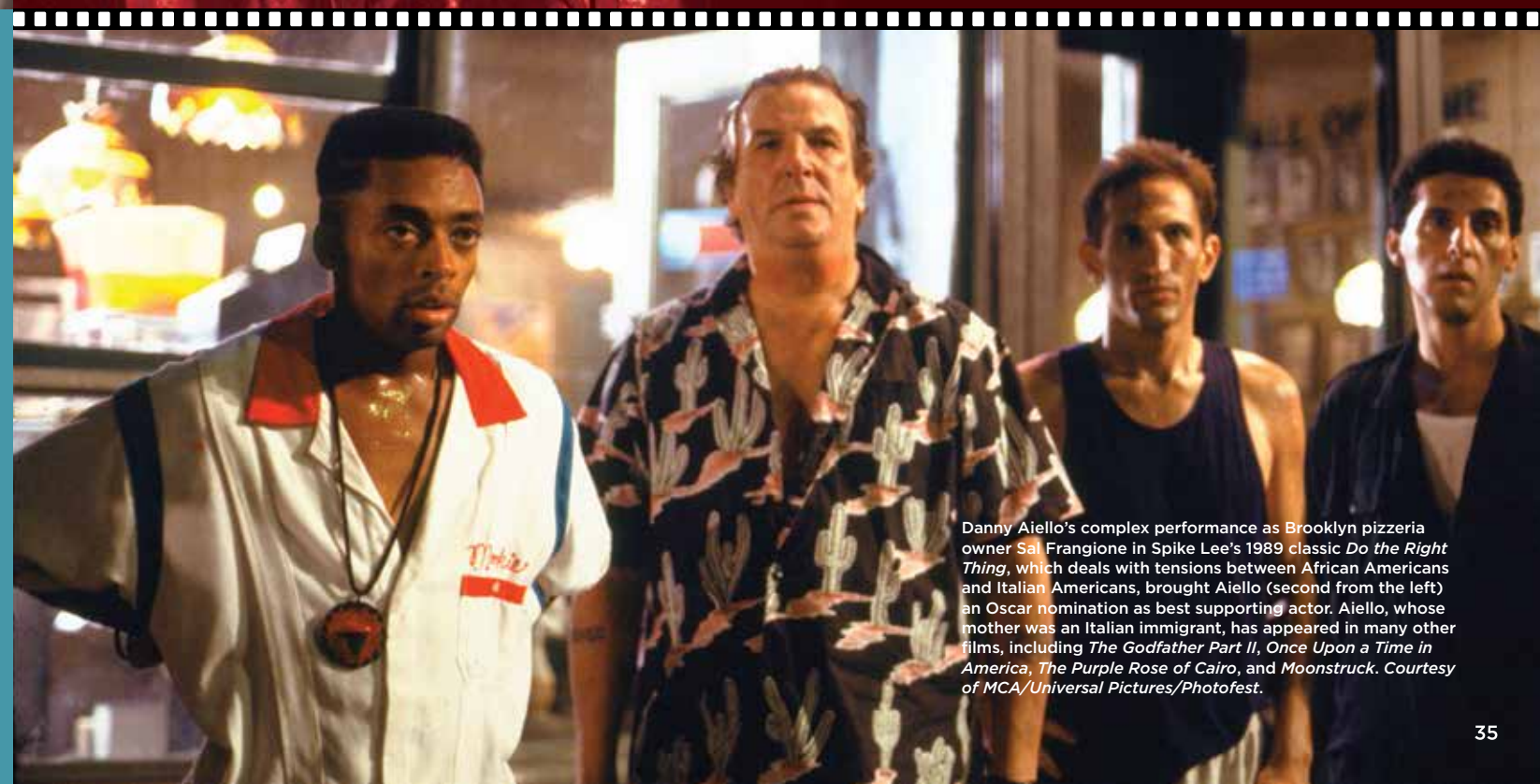
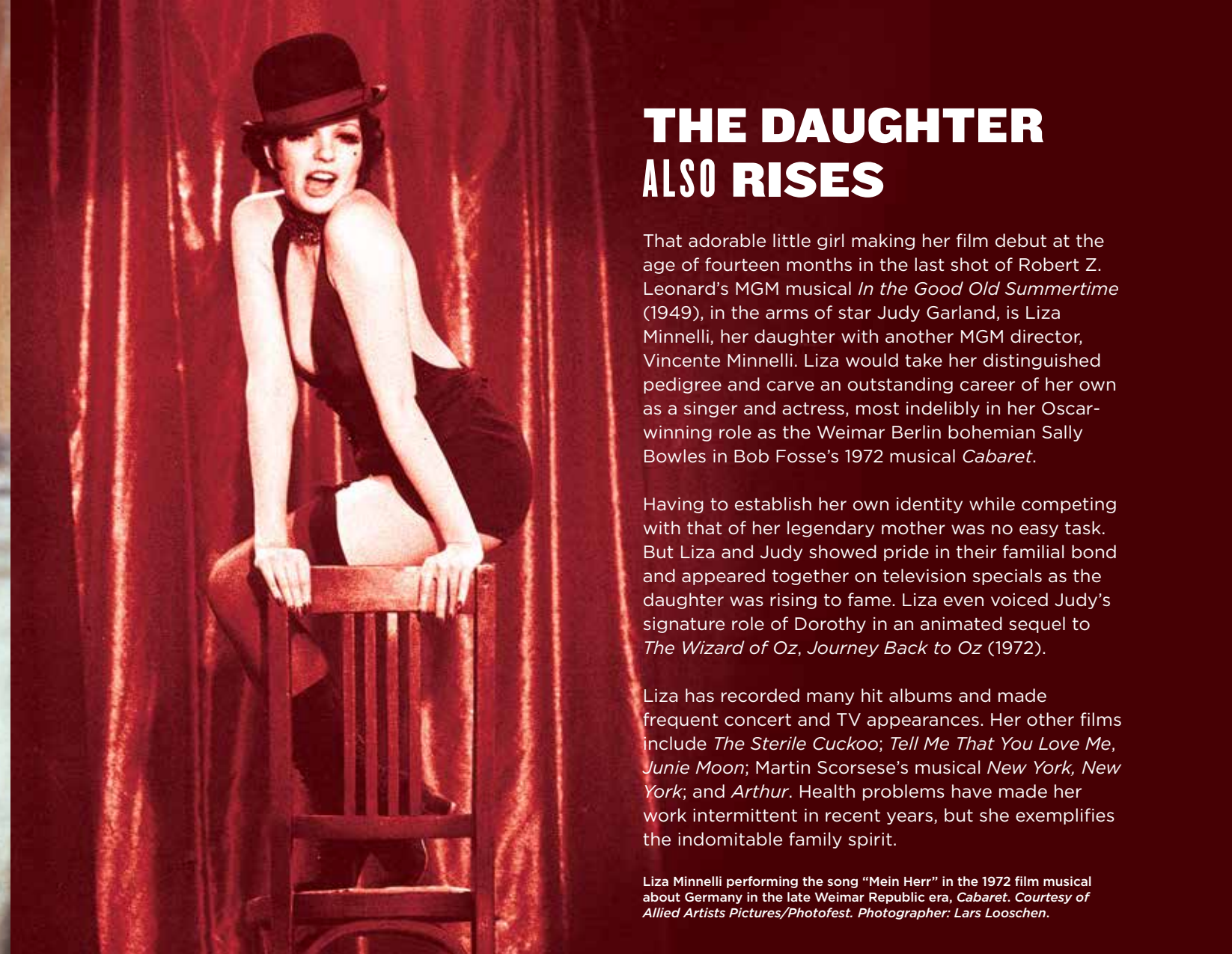
THE DAUGHTER ALSO RISES

That adorable little girl making her film debut at the age of fourteen months in the last shot of Robert Z. Leonard's MGM musical *In the Good Old Summertime* (1949), in the arms of star Judy Garland, is Liza Minnelli, her daughter with another MGM director, Vincente Minnelli. Liza would take her distinguished pedigree and carve an outstanding career of her own as a singer and actress, most indelibly in her Oscar-winning role as the Weimar Berlin bohemian Sally Bowles in Bob Fosse's 1972 musical *Cabaret*.

Having to establish her own identity while competing with that of her legendary mother was no easy task. But Liza and Judy showed pride in their familial bond and appeared together on television specials as the daughter was rising to fame. Liza even voiced Judy's signature role of Dorothy in an animated sequel to *The Wizard of Oz*, *Journey Back to Oz* (1972).

Liza has recorded many hit albums and made frequent concert and TV appearances. Her other films include *The Sterile Cuckoo*; *Tell Me That You Love Me*, *Junie Moon*; Martin Scorsese's musical *New York, New York*; and *Arthur*. Health problems have made her work intermittent in recent years, but she exemplifies the indomitable family spirit.

Liza Minnelli performing the song "Mein Herr" in the 1972 film musical about Weimar Republic era, *Cabaret*. Courtesy of Allied Artists Pictures/Photofest. Photographer: Lars Looschen.



Danny Aiello's complex performance as Brooklyn pizzeria owner Sal Frangione in Spike Lee's 1989 classic *Do the Right Thing*, which deals with tensions between African Americans and Italian Americans, brought Aiello (second from the left) an Oscar nomination as best supporting actor. Aiello, whose mother was an Italian immigrant, has appeared in many other films, including *The Godfather Part II*, *Once Upon a Time in America*, *The Purple Rose of Cairo*, and *Moonstruck*. Courtesy of MCA/Universal Pictures/Photofest.

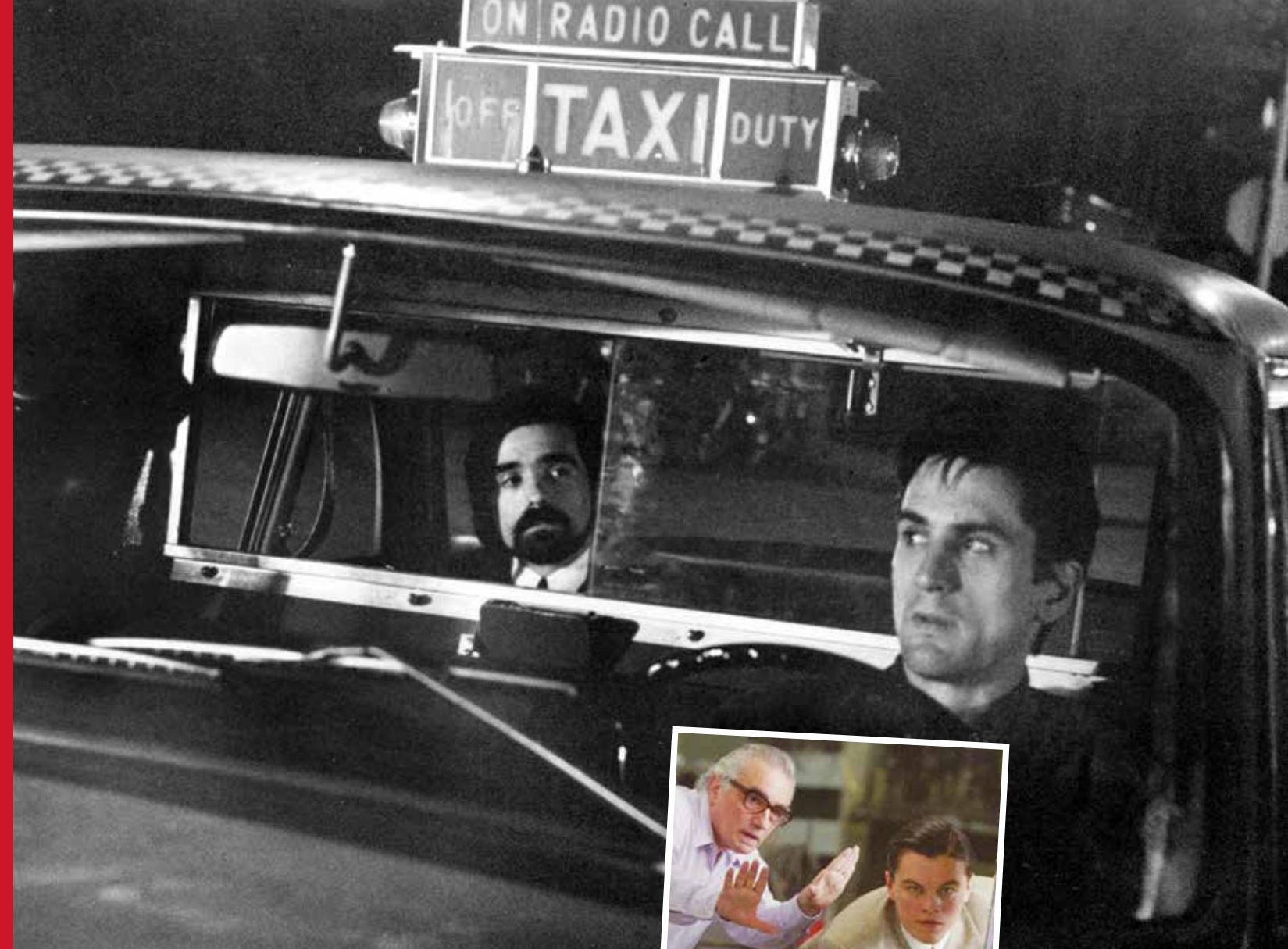


CINDERELLA MAN

A small-part actor from New York City named Sylvester Stallone was frustrated at being stuck in forgettable roles. So he wrote himself a starring part as a Philadelphia loan collector-turned-improbable boxing champ and insisted he wouldn't sell the script unless he could play the title role in *Rocky*. In one of those miracles made for the movies, Stallone not only played Rocky Balboa, but the 1976 film became a major critical and financial success (and winner of the best-picture Oscar) and has spawned five sequels. The role of the lovable palooka whose romantic partner is his neighborhood sweetheart, Adrian (played by Francis Coppola's sister, Talia Shire), made Stallone a crossover hit with all audiences even as he kept his urban and ethnic traits in the foreground of his persona.

While Stallone was making many other popular films as a writer and occasional director (such as the *Rambo* series of fantasy-adventure movies refighting the Vietnam War), he kept his hand in the *Rocky* franchise with films designated with Roman numerals II through V and then, after a long hiatus, the come-back saga *Rocky Balboa* (2006). The films have grossed more than \$1 billion and have created one of the American cinema's indelible heroes.

Stallone and Talia (Coppola) Shire as a romantic couple in the original *Rocky* (1976). Courtesy of United Artists/Photofest.



Son of actor Robert Alda, Alan Alda (born Alfonso D'Abruzzo) has had a distinguished career acting, writing, and directing in films, television, and theater. Alda is perhaps best known for his hit TV series *M*A*S*H*. His films include Martin Scorsese's *The Aviator* (pictured here), which brought Alda a supporting actor Oscar nomination; *Crimes and Misdemeanors*; *The Seduction of Joe Tynan*; and *Sweet Liberty*. Courtesy of Miramax/Warner Bros./Photofest.

THE OTHER MARTY

"My whole life has been movies and religion. That's it. Nothing else," Martin Scorsese has said. "...But once [his New York University professor] Haig Manoogian started talking about film, I realized that I could put that passion into movies, and then I realized that the Catholic vocation was, in a sense, through the screen for me."

Scorsese has always approached film with priestlike devotion, pouring his heart, soul, and guts into his work and spending a great deal of effort educating the public about film history and helping preserve the films he loves. Scorsese paid tribute to his roots with his 1974 documentary on his parents, *Italianamerican*, his favorite film. Catherine and Charles Scorsese worked in the garment industry in New York. Marty grew up in "Little Italy," near where he went to NYU and later filmed *Mean Streets* in 1973.

Although he started in low-budget, gritty street films and has frequently filmed "ethnic" subjects (such as ultraviolent gangster movies that have caused some controversy), Scorsese's work is largely unclassifiable, also encompassing such diverse films as *Taxi Driver*, *Raging Bull*, *The Last Temptation of Christ*, *Kundun*, and documentaries on Bob Dylan and the Rolling Stones.

MAIN: Director Martin Scorsese (in back seat of cab) made a cameo appearance in his 1976 film *Taxi Driver*, starring Robert De Niro (right). Written by Paul Schrader, *Taxi Driver* won the Palme d'Or at the 1976 Cannes Film Festival and is considered one of the most significant American films of the seventies. Courtesy of Columbia Pictures/Photofest. INSET: Scorsese behind the scenes of his 2004 film *The Aviator*, starring Leonardo DiCaprio as the legendary industrialist and film producer Howard Hughes. Courtesy of ABC/Photofest. © Miramax/Warner Bros. Photographer: Andrew Cooper.

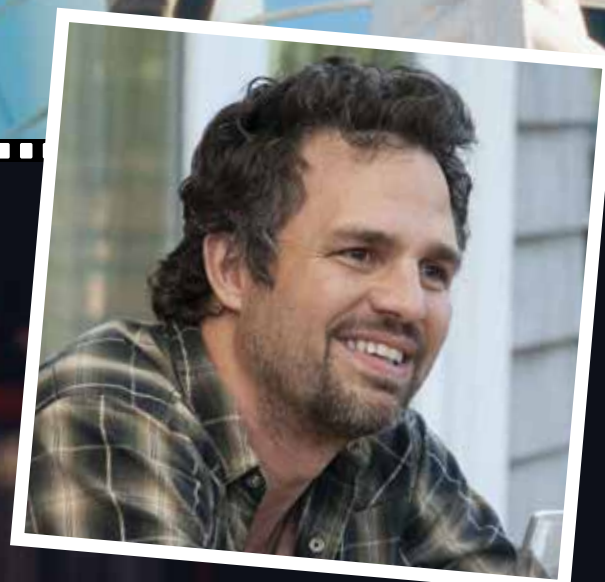
LEO THE LION

"I'm the King of the World!" shouts Jack Dawson, the artist/stowaway in *Titanic* as he rides the prow of the supposedly unsinkable ocean liner. It's a line writer-director James Cameron borrowed for his Oscar speech, and it captures DiCaprio's meteoric ascendancy to iconic status.

DiCaprio's acting career has been an improbable rise to success from humble beginnings in television and horror movies to his current superstardom. He has achieved fame while not abandoning his ethnic identity—he rejected an agent's attempt to change his name to Lenny Williams—but has played a wide variety of ambitious roles. His roles in 1993's *This Boy's Life* and *What's Eating Gilbert Grape* brought him the New Generation Award from the Los Angeles Film Critics Association.

Since playing Romeo in the popular 1996 Shakespeare adaptation *Romeo + Juliet* to starring opposite Kate Winslet in Cameron's smash hit, DiCaprio starred in Steven Spielberg's *Catch Me If You Can* and has become one of the regular leading men of Martin Scorsese. DiCaprio has appeared for that director in *Gangs of New York*, *The Aviator*, *The Departed*, *Shutter Island*, and *The Wolf of Wall Street*.

DiCaprio (left) as Jack Dawson, with Danny Nucci as Fabrizio, in James Cameron's megahit *Titanic* (1997). Courtesy of 20th Century Fox/Photofest.



MAIN: An icon of offbeat and independent American cinema and TV, Steve Buscemi has lent his distinctive presence to a wide variety of work from *Reservoir Dogs* and *Fargo* to *Ghost World* (left) and *Boardwalk Empire*. He was also a New York firefighter and showed up the day after 9/11 to return to duty. Courtesy of United Artists/Photofest. INSET: Mark Ruffalo has demonstrated his acting range by playing The Hulk in Joss Whedon's *The Avengers* (2012) and the sperm-donor father to a lesbian couple in *The Kids Are All Right* (2010, pictured). Ruffalo's films also include Martin Scorsese's *Shutter Island*, *Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind*, *Zodiac*, and *Foxcatcher*. Ruffalo directed the 2010 independent film *Sympathy for Delicious*, which won the Special Jury Prize at the Sundance Film Festival. Courtesy of Movie Stills Database.



THE REST OF THE LINEUP

Along with those giants Francis Ford Coppola and Martin Scorsese, several other Italian American filmmakers have contributed lustrous work to our cinematic history in the period since the old studio system began self-destructing in the late 1960s.

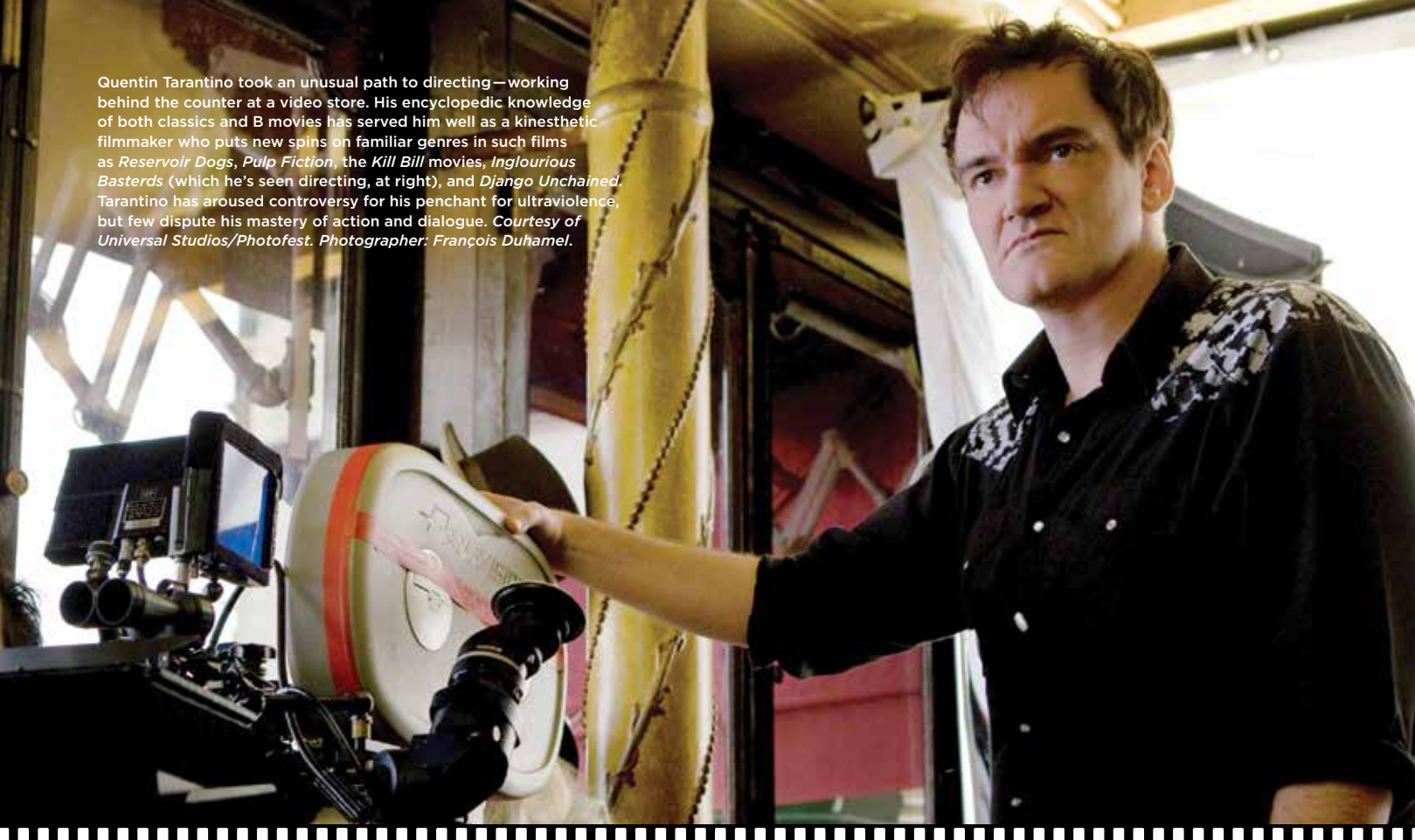
Brian De Palma began making iconoclastic low-budget satirical films in New York that gave Robert De Niro his early cinematic showcase; De Palma made his commercial breakthrough with *Carrie* and has gone on to carve out a cultish career as a maker of stylish, often gruesome horror, crime, and war films. Michael Cimino's spottier career is best known for the *Heaven's Gate* debacle (though that ruinously expensive film has its strong defenders), but he won the best director Oscar for *The Deer Hunter* (1979), also honored as best picture.

Penny Marshall (whose father's name originally was Masciarelli) directed the first film by a woman to

gross more than \$100 million, *Big* (1988; \$152 million worldwide). Nancy Savoca has earned critical praise for such films as *True Love* and *Dogfight*. Writer-director Quentin Tarantino became a major name for his influential *Reservoir Dogs* and *Pulp Fiction*. Other important Italian American directors of recent vintage include Joe Dante, Abel Ferrara, and Stanley Tucci (best known as an actor). Chris Columbus, who began as a screenwriter on Dante's *Gremlins* (1984) and other films, has directed such hits as *Home Alone* (1990) and *Mrs. Doubtfire* (1993, with Robin Williams) as well as making three Harry Potter movies.

MAIN: Penny Marshall on the set of *Awakenings* (1990), which she directed, with costars Robert De Niro (right) and Robin Williams. The film about catatonia is based on neurologist Oliver Sacks's memoir. Courtesy of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. INSET: Director Chris Columbus (center) on the set of *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (2002) with Rupert Grint (left) and Daniel Radcliffe. Courtesy of Warner Bros./Photofest.

Quentin Tarantino took an unusual path to directing—working behind the counter at a video store. His encyclopedic knowledge of both classics and B movies has served him well as a kinesthetic filmmaker who puts new spins on familiar genres in such films as *Reservoir Dogs*, *Pulp Fiction*, the *Kill Bill* movies, *Inglourious Basterds* (which he's seen directing, at right), and *Django Unchained*. Tarantino has aroused controversy for his penchant for ultraviolence, but few dispute his mastery of action and dialogue. Courtesy of Universal Studios/Photofest. Photographer: François Duhamel.



Director Joe Dante with Stripe, the main antagonist of his 1984 film, *Gremlins*. Courtesy of Joe Dante.



Bridesmaid Yvonne (Kelley Cinnante) applies the finishing touches on Donna's (Annabella Sciorra) wedding day in *True Love*, a film about Italian-American marriage rituals in the Bronx. Nancy Savoca, whose father emigrated from Sicily to the Bronx, co-wrote and directed the 1989 film. *True Love* won the Grand Jury Prize at the Sundance Film Festival and was called one of the "50 Greatest Independent Films of All Time" by *Entertainment Weekly*. Courtesy of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences.



Italian American director David O. Russell (center) is shown with Bradley Cooper (also Italian American) and Amy Adams on the set of *American Hustle*. The film received ten Academy Award nominations, including for Best Picture, Best Director, Best Original Screenplay, and all four acting categories. Courtesy of Columbia Pictures/Photofest.



WHAT A BENCH!



ABOVE: Anjelica Huston, daughter of John Huston and Italian American prima ballerina Enrica (Ricky) Soma, is seen here in her Oscar-winning role as Maerose Prizzi in *Prizzi's Honor* (1985), directed by her father. Courtesy of Twentieth Century Film Corp./Photofest. Photographer: Gemma LaMana. BOTTOM: Shown from left in center frame: Paul Giamatti and David Morse, with Giamatti as the title character in the 2008 HBO miniseries *John Adams*. Giamatti is the son of the late A. Bart Giamatti, the first Italian American commissioner of baseball. Courtesy of HBO/Photofest. Photographer: Kent Eanes.

Perhaps the most telling sign that Italian Americans have become “normalized” in our cinema is the casting of Paul Giamatti as two American presidents. The seemingly ubiquitous Giamatti plays the title role of our second president in the 2008 HBO miniseries *John Adams*, and, remarkably, he is equally convincing as the voice of Theodore Roosevelt in Ken Burns’s 2014 documentary series *The Roosevelts: An Intimate History*. Fellow Italian American Frank Langella is compelling in his Oscar-nominated role as former President Richard Nixon in *Frost/Nixon*. And Gary Sinise memorably played President Harry S. Truman in the 1995 cable TV movie *Truman*. Such characterizations can help pave the way for the real thing, in this case, perhaps, the first actual president of Italian American descent.

Just as a baseball team depends largely on its bench, a film or television series depends greatly on character actors, the supporting players. While it’s remarkable how many major stars today are Italian Americans, it’s equally impressive what a rich range of character actors come from the same ethnic group (with some of them, like Giamatti and Langella, also playing occasional starring roles).

Our movies are populated with such brilliant actors as Joe Pesci, John Turturro, Danny Aiello, Paul Sorvino and his daughter Mira Sorvino, Anjelica Huston, Marisa Tomei, Steve Buscemi, Stanley Tucci, Mark Ruffalo, Alan Alda, and Danny DeVito. Television stars such as Penny Marshall, Daniel Travanti, Ray Romano, Lorraine Bracco, Edie Falco, and the late James Gandolfini have also shown great “crossover” appeal.



Isabella Rossellini, daughter of Italian director Roberto Rossellini and Swedish actress Ingrid Bergman, has dual Italian and United States citizenship and a career as a striking actress in such films as Stanley Tucci’s *Big Night* (1995, seen here) and David Lynch’s *Blue Velvet* (1986). Courtesy of Samuel Goldwyn Company/Photofest.

THE FILMMAKING FAMILY



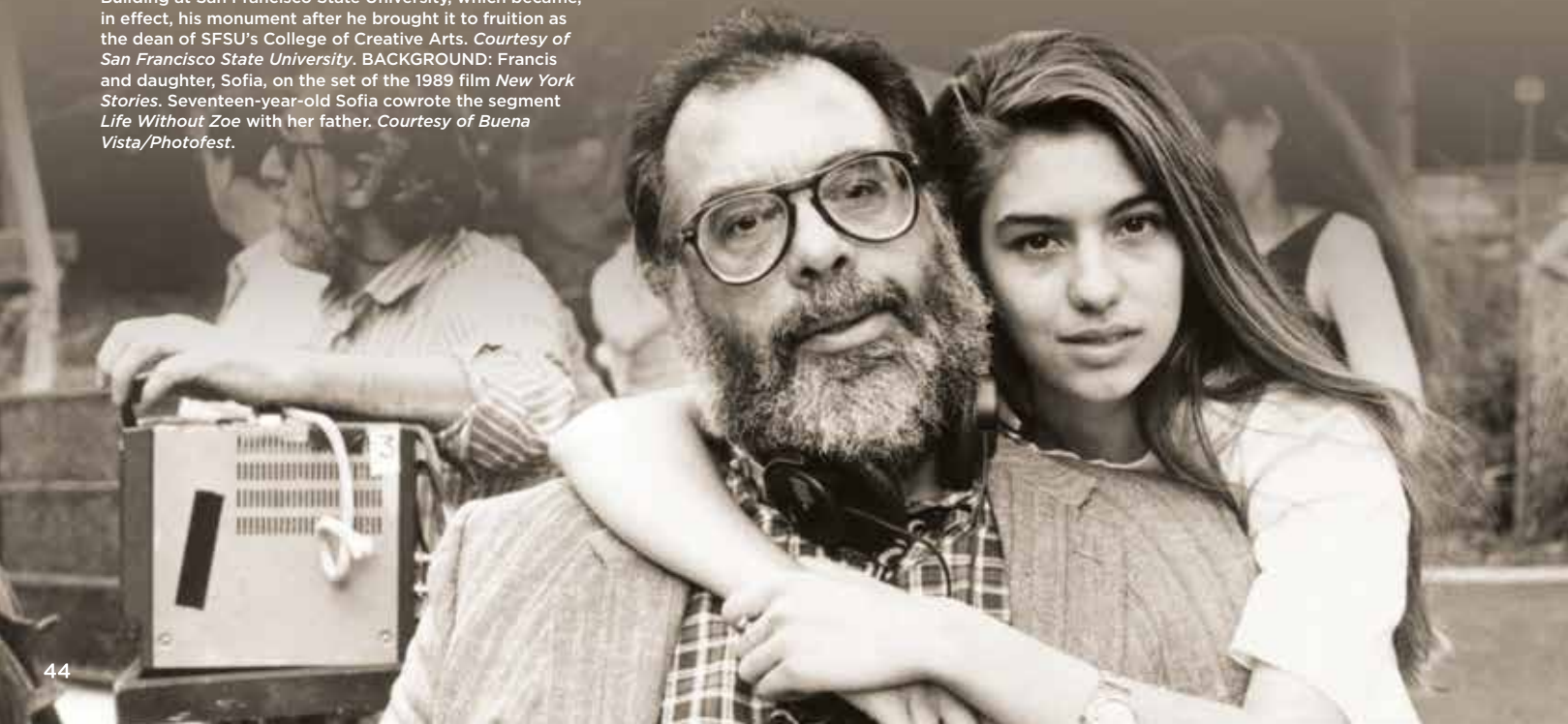
TOP: Francis Coppola on the set of his film *Bram Stoker's Dracula* (1992) with his son, Roman, who was the second-unit and visual effects director. Courtesy of American Zoetrope. CENTER: August Coppola, Francis's late older brother, supervising the construction of the Fine Arts Building at San Francisco State University, which became, in effect, his monument after he brought it to fruition as the dean of SFSU's College of Creative Arts. Courtesy of San Francisco State University. BACKGROUND: Francis and daughter, Sofia, on the set of the 1989 film *New York Stories*. Seventeen-year-old Sofia cowrote the segment *Life Without Zoe* with her father. Courtesy of Buena Vista/Photofest.

The film industry has produced some great families, including the Hustons and the Barrymores, but few as endlessly creative as the Coppolas. Francis Ford Coppola, whose base has long been the Bay Area, presides as the paterfamilias of the large multi-generational clan honored with eight Academy Awards (five of them his) and twenty-four nominations. Francis led the youth wave that took over Hollywood in the late 1960s and early '70s. He and his wife, Eleanor, have a daughter, Sofia, who became the first American woman to receive an Oscar nomination for best director, for 2003's *Lost in Translation*.

Francis's father, Carmine, was a flautist and composer who won an Oscar with Nino Rota for the score of *The Godfather Part II*. Carmine and his wife, the former Italia Pennino, whose father imported Italian films and owned a movie theater, had two other children, the late August, a dean of Creative Arts at San Francisco State University, and Talia Shire, Connie in the *Godfather* saga and Adrian in the *Rocky* films.

Francis's many landmark films, his failed but audacious attempt to run his own Hollywood studio, and his mentorship of other filmmakers have helped make him one of the most influential figures in his profession. In recent years, Francis has gone back to his indie filmmaking roots, supported by his Napa Valley winery. Francis's wife, Eleanor, chronicled his Vietnam War film *Apocalypse Now* in a book and a documentary film.

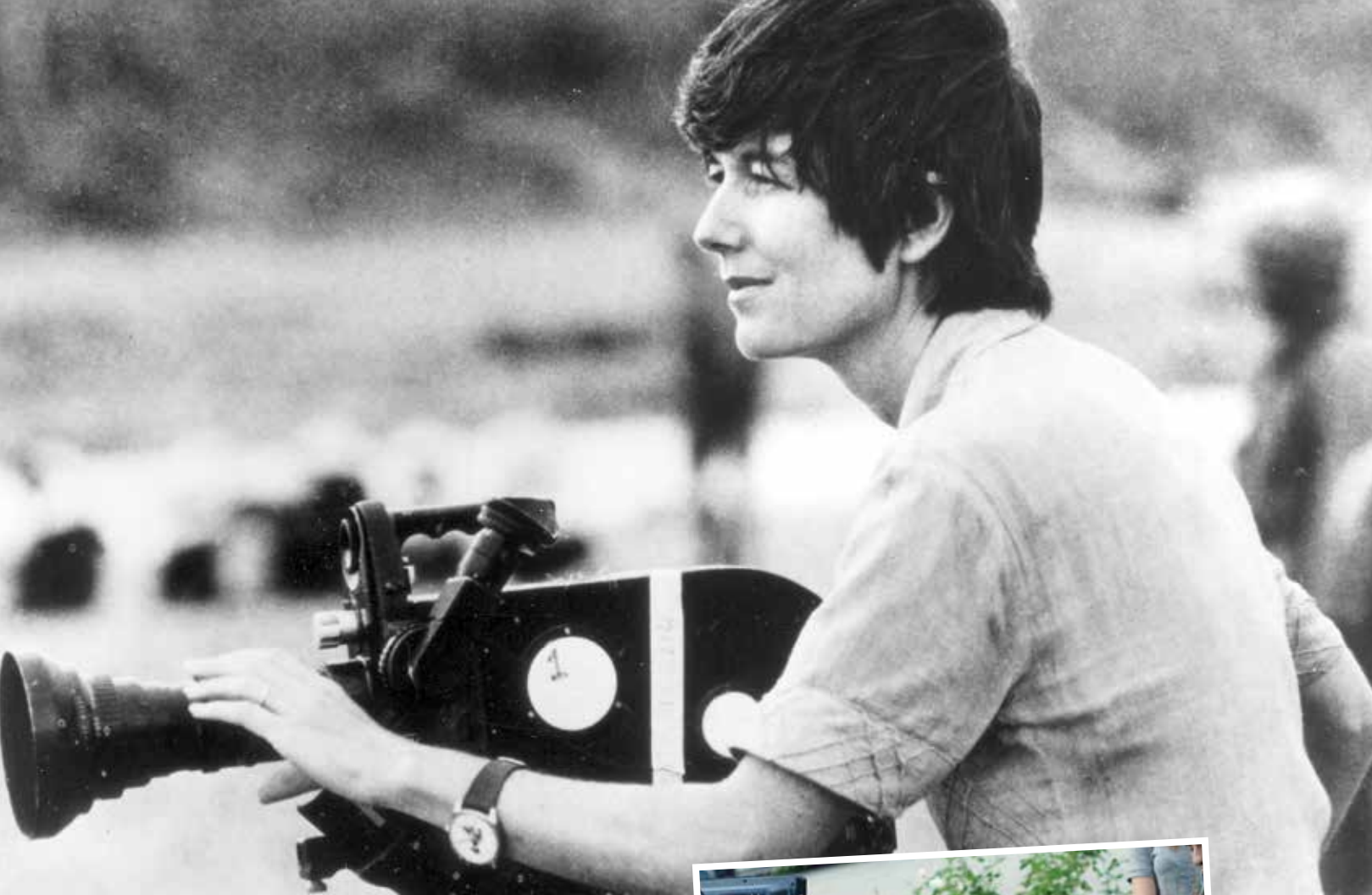
In addition to Sofia, whose *Lost in Translation* won her a screenwriting Oscar, their children include Roman, a screenwriter, producer, and second-unit director. That generation also includes August's sons Nicolas Cage, the actor, and another director, Christopher, as well as actor Jason Schwartzman, one of Talia's sons. Now the fourth generation has brought us Gia, the director granddaughter of Francis and Eleanor and daughter of their late son, Gian-Carlo.



THE COPPOLAS: A FAMILY OF FILMMAKERS



Roman and Gian-Carlo proudly show off two of the four Oscars won by their father and grandfather at the 47th Academy Awards, 1975. Courtesy of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences/ABC/Photofest



WOMEN BEHIND THE CAMERA

From playing the infant Michael Francis Rizzi in the first *Godfather* movie in 1972 to becoming the first American woman nominated for an Oscar as best director, Sofia Coppola has had an extraordinary career. And she is only 44. For her 2003 movie *Lost in Translation*, the daughter of Francis and Eleanor Coppola also won the Oscar for best screenplay.

Sofia and another Italian American woman director, Anjelica Huston, who is better known as an actress, form what's been called "a party of two," as the only third-generation members of filmmaking families to win Oscars (Anjelica is the daughter of director-actor John Huston and granddaughter of actor Walter Huston). Sofia bounced back from largely negative reviews as an actress (playing the daughter of Al Pacino's Michael) in *Godfather III* to focusing her creative energies on her directing career. Her debut in that post was with *The Virgin Suicides* in 1999, and she has also directed *Marie Antoinette* and *The Bling Ring*.



Eleanor Coppola has directed five documentaries, including shooting the location footage of the making of Francis's *Apocalypse Now* for *Hearts of Darkness: A Filmmaker's Apocalypse*. Talia Shire, Francis's sister, directed *One Night Stand* in 1995. Gia (Giancarla) Coppola, the daughter of Francis and Eleanor's late son Gian-Carlo and Jacqui de la Fontaine, made her feature directing debut with 2013's *Palo Alto*, which she wrote with cast member James Franco.

MAIN: Eleanor Coppola on location for *Hearts of Darkness: A Filmmaker's Apocalypse* (1991). *Courtesy of American Zoetrope.* **INSET:** Gia Coppola (at far right) on the set of her 2013 film, *Palo Alto*. *Courtesy of Tribeca Film/Photofest.*

COPPOLA CLAN COUSINS

Although it can help to have a powerful relative in show business, after you get your foot in the door, it's up to you to demonstrate your talent. And that is what three first cousins in the extended Coppola clan have managed to do with great success.

Francis Coppola's son Roman did visual effects for his father's *Bram Stoker's Dracula* before becoming a second-unit director on five of Francis's films. Roman's creative partnership with director Wes Anderson brought him an Oscar nomination for cowriting *Moonrise Kingdom* and includes writing and producing *The Darjeeling Limited*. Roman directed and wrote the features *CQ* and *A Glimpse Inside the Mind of Charles Swan III*.

With cousin Jason Schwartzman and Alex Timbers, Roman is creator and executive producer of the Internet TV series *Mozart in the Jungle*. Jason, son of Talia Shire and the late producer Jack Schwartzman, is also a musician and has had many notable acting roles, in Wes Anderson films as well as in his cousin Sofia Coppola's *Marie Antoinette*, *CQ*, and *Saving Mr. Banks*.

Nicolas Cage, son of August Coppola, changed his name to avoid the appearance of nepotism but scored roles in Francis's *Rumble Fish* and *Peggy Sue Got Married*. Cage has starred in a wide variety of films. His most notable performance has been in *Leaving Las Vegas*, which brought him an Oscar for playing a suicidal alcoholic.

BOTTOM: Roman (left) and Sofia Coppola with their cousin Jason Schwartzman at the Oscars, 2004. *Courtesy of American Zoetrope.* **INSET:** Nicolas Cage in his Oscar-winning role as Ben Sanderson in *Leaving Las Vegas* (1995). *Courtesy of United Artists/Photofest.*





AN OFFER HE COULDN'T REFUSE

"Behind every great fortune there is a crime." With that quotation attributed to the French novelist Honoré de Balzac, Mario Puzo began his Mafia novel *The Godfather*, published in 1969. The book became a runaway bestseller and led to the landmark *Godfather* movie saga, on which Puzo collaborated with writer-director Francis Ford Coppola, collecting two writing Oscars in the process.

Puzo admittedly turned to lurid fiction about mobsters (as well as borrowing from the saga of the Kennedy family) to start making money with his fiction to support his family of five children. The New York native, son of Italian immigrants, had earned good reviews but little financial reward with his 1965

novel *The Fortunate Pilgrim*, based on his mother's saga. He said, "Whenever the Godfather opened his mouth, in my own mind I heard the voice of my mother. I heard her wisdom, her ruthlessness, and her unconquerable love for her family and for life itself."

Puzo went on to write other screenplays (including for *Superman* and *Superman II*) and published several other novels, including *The Sicilian*, *The Fourth K*, and *Omertà*. *The Fortunate Pilgrim* became a TV miniseries in 1988, starring Sophia Loren. Puzo died in 1999.

TOP: Mario Puzo at the gate of Paramount Pictures studio, 1970. *Courtesy of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences*. INSET: Poster for *The Godfather* (1972). *Courtesy of Paramount Pictures/Photofest*.

The *Godfather* saga is among the most ambitious and celebrated achievements in American movie history. Francis Ford Coppola's adaptation with Mario Puzo of that author's 1969 novel *The Godfather* became a 1972 blockbuster with its depiction of gangster family life as both violent and sentimental. The novel has sold many millions of copies, and as Italian American writer Gay Talese, a friend of Puzo, has said, "Take away the gambling and the murder, and it's pretty much a straightforward story about how Italian-American families were assimilated into American culture.... In times of such social upheaval... many Americans of other backgrounds were fascinated by the idea that they would kill to uphold their family values and traditions—appalled, but fascinated."

The Godfather stirred controversy from Italian American groups who objected to how it helped link gangsterism in the public imagination with ethnicity. Those who pointed out that crime has always been a multiethnic enterprise and that it stems from poverty more than from people's ethnic backgrounds found the film offensive. Then there were others who thought the *Godfather* films sentimentalized the Mafia as perversely lovable upholders of "family values" in a time when traditional concepts of the family were threatened. Coppola's brilliantly layered *The Godfather Part II* (1974), alternating between the early 1900s and the 1950s, addresses those concerns by highlighting the toll the descent into crime takes on the soul of Michael Corleone (Al Pacino) and on his family.

The Godfather Part III (1990) portrays the partially reformed Michael as an alternately raging and loving King Lear figure, while dealing with another failed attempt by the Corleones to go legitimate. Despite all the controversy, the *Godfather* films remain some of American cinema's most complex and powerful meditations on family life, crime, and the drive toward assimilation.

THE GODFATHER SAGA



TOP: Francis Ford Coppola on the *Godfather II* (1974) set with Robert De Niro. *Courtesy of Paramount Pictures/Photofest*. BACKGROUND: The Coppolas on the set of *Godfather II* (1974). From left to right: Francis; his mother, Italia; his sister, Talia (playing Connie Corleone); and his father, Carmine, who together with Nino Rota composed the score for the film. *Courtesy of Paramount Pictures/Photofest*.





THE GODFATHER OF MODERN AMERICAN FILM

A friend of Francis Ford Coppola told *American Film* magazine in the 1970s, "What Francis really wants out of life, most of all, is to be an Italian papa with eleven children, serving spaghetti and pouring wine from the head of a long table." That dream, metaphorically speaking, has come true for Coppola both personally and professionally.

During his rich and varied career as a screenwriter, director, producer, magazine publisher, resort owner, and winemaker, Coppola, winner of five Oscars, has left a huge mark on American film. He led the revolt of what Billy Wilder called "the kids with beards" who transformed the industry before the conglomerates took over. Coppola helped create the modern blockbuster with the classic *Godfather* films; tried to run his own Hollywood studio; made and lost fortunes; and more recently has returned to his independent filmmaking roots.

In that way, as in his personal life, Coppola has "set the table" as the man who benignly presides over a fertile artistic legacy. He has helped nurture many of finest filmmakers, whether they are Coppolas or not.

After the death of his composer father, Carmine, in 1991, Francis became paterfamilias of a major filmmaking clan that includes successful directors, writers, and actors.



TOP: From left to right: Francis Coppola, Robert Zemeckis, George Lucas, R2D2 from Lucas's *Star Wars* films, Martin Scorsese, Steven Spielberg, and Ron Howard, 2001. *Courtesy of Fox Broadcasting/Photofest*. TOP INSET: Francis and sons, Roman and Gian-Carlo, making wine, 1970s. *Courtesy of American Zoetrope*. BOTTOM INSET: Francis and his father, Carmine, 1970s. *Courtesy of American Zoetrope*.

Front Cover Captions (top to bottom): Liza and Vincente Minnelli, 1976. *Courtesy of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences*. Francis and Roman Coppola, 1992. *Courtesy of American Zoetrope*. Frank Capra, 1927. *Courtesy of Columbia Pictures/Photofest*. Francis and Sofia Coppola, 1989. *Courtesy of Buena Vista/Photofest*. Robert De Niro and Martin Scorsese, 1990. *Courtesy of Warner Bros./Photofest*. Ida Lupino, c. 1950s. *Courtesy of Photofest*. Quentin Tarantino, 2007. *Courtesy of Dimension Films/Photofest*

Back Cover Captions: LEFT FILM STRIP (top to bottom): Frank Langella, 2008. *Courtesy of Universal Pictures/Photofest*. Marisa Tomei, 1992. *Courtesy of Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation/Photofest*. Ida Lupino, 1950s. *Courtesy of The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences*. Danny Borzage (right), 1925. *Courtesy of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences*

CENTER FILM STRIP (top to bottom): John Cazale, 1978. *Courtesy of Universal Pictures/Photofest*. Lou Costello (left), 1948. *Courtesy of Universal Pictures/Photofest*. John Turturro, 1998. *Courtesy of Gramercy Pictures/Photofest*. Frank Sinatra, 1949. *Courtesy of MGM/Photofest*. Gino Corrado (center), 1945. *Courtesy of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences*. Sylvester Stallone, 1976. *Courtesy of United Artists/Photofest*. Liza Minnelli, Martin Scorsese, and Robert De Niro, 1977. *Courtesy of United Artists/Photofest*

RIGHT FILM STRIP (top to bottom): Gina Lollobrigida, 1959. *Courtesy of United Artists/Photofest*. Leonardo DiCaprio, 2006. *Courtesy of Warner Bros./Photofest*. A scene from the 1906 gangster film *The Black Hand*. *Courtesy of Biograph Studios*. Al Pacino, 1974. *Courtesy of Paramount Pictures/Photofest*. Lorraine Bracco, 1990. *Courtesy of Warner Bros. Pictures/Photofest*. Virna Lisi, 1965. *Courtesy of United Artists/Photofest*. Dean Martin, 1958. *Courtesy of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM)/Photofest*



Denari!! we are desperate!
Mister Angelo we need have
\$1000 - ~~Fix it to us or~~
at ~~we~~ will take your Maria
and Blow Up your Shop.
BLACK HAND

