



FILM ON FILM FOUNDATION
presents...



Otto Preminger's

THE CARDINAL



www.filmonfilm.org

Only \$8

7:30pm, Sunday, December 6, 2009

PFA Theater, 2575 Bancroft Way, Berkeley

The Film on Film Foundation (www.filmonfilm.org), an organization dedicated to encouraging the exhibition of celluloid motion picture film in the manner it is meant to be screened, presents at the PFA Theater, on Sunday, December 6, to augment the PFA's series of Otto Preminger's films...

THE CARDINAL

Otto Preminger was a titan of Hollywood's Golden Age. He lived large, on set he was God—strictly Old Testament—and he fought tooth-and-nail to make films his way, with ambition, showmanship, and controversy. From script development to casting and staging, Preminger always knew what he wanted and he thrived on total control. One of the first directors to tear loose from the shackles of a weakening studio system, he became an independent producer-director par excellence.



A born provocateur, his films broke through barriers of race (**Carmen Jones**) and sexuality (**Advise and Consent**). They dared to challenge contemporary mores with their frank treatments of sex (**The Moon is Blue**) and drugs (**The Man with the Golden Arm**), and he relished the controversy and attendant publicity they would generate. Numerous times he battled the Production Code Administration head on, and with each victory lessened its reactionary grip on Hollywood. And he was the first to break the blacklist in 1960 by crediting writer **Dalton Trumbo** for his work on **Exodus**.

The bravura sophistication of Preminger's *mise-en-scène* derived from a theatrical background in Vienna and on Broadway. He favored the mounting tension of a performance-heightening long take, but cultivated performances appropriate for the big screen: understated and subtly emotive. Expert use of the moving camera counterbalanced his restrained but effective montage. Manifest already in his early masterpiece **Laura**, these qualities would come to full fruition with Preminger's embrace of the new widescreen processes of the 1950's, which allowed him to realize his compositions and movements on a grand scale. This mature period spawned a remarkable string of epic-scale works, among them **Anatomy of a Murder**, **Exodus**, **Advise and Consent**, and **The Cardinal**.

"Otto is a dear man, sort of a Jewish Nazi, but I love him." --Joan Crawford

Though his family had narrowly escaped the holocaust, Preminger would moonlight as a Nazi in several films during his career--he had the look, the accent, and above all the temperament. Just ask any actor on a Preminger shoot who failed to ignite, before the rolling camera, the spark that had landed him the role. Ask **Tom Tryon**, star of *The Cardinal*, who absorbed the brunt of Preminger's vitriol on this difficult production: "To go on that set was like getting into the tumbrel and going to the scaffold.... Day after day after day."

The Cardinal portrays the ascension through the priestly ranks of one Stephen Fermoye (Tryon), but Preminger's fascination with the workings of movements and institutions ensures that the film is as much about the Catholic Church itself, its internal politics laid bare, and its interaction with the world around it. Indeed, over the course of its 30-or-so year storyline, the film is a veritable compendium of the major problems of the 20th century, some of which Preminger faced firsthand: religious bigotry, fascism, and racism, addressed earnestly and intelligently.



John Huston gives a standout performance in his acting debut, while **Romy Schneider**, **Carol Lynley**, **Burgess Meredith**, **Ossie Davis**, **Dorothy Gish**, and **Chill Wills** round out a first-rate cast. But most impressive is Tryon, whose serene bearing belies the agony of his working relationship with Preminger.

Above all, *The Cardinal* is beautiful, epic entertainment. With its cultural and historical sweep, the film is by turns refined and earthy, depicting everything from stately Vatican ritual to tawdry dance-hall spectacle, while locations in Boston, Rome, and Vienna lend their picturesque color to **Leon Shamroy's** fluid photography. There is something for everyone in *The Cardinal*.

1963 35mm Cinemascope
Dye Transfer Technicolor
175 min. + intermission

Please note: We are renting the venue. This is not a PFA program and thus does not appear in their publicity. For more information please visit

www.filmonfilm.org

