The Many Hats of Robert Altman: A Life in Cinema

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Robert Altman and Actors Redux

Two photographs on the set of Gosford Park (2001), a period "whodunit" that explores the colliding "upstairs" and "downstairs" worlds in a 1930s English manor. Above, Robert Altman directs a dinner scene. On the right, Altman is consulting with actors Ryan Phillippe and Kristin Scott Thomas. The man in the shadows on the left may be Julian Fellowes, the film's co-writer.

Gina Gershon, handwritten letter to Robert Altman, not dated. Actress Gina Gershon, who had previously appeared in Altman's film The Player (1992), here campaigning for a role in his next ensemble endeavor, Short Cuts.

Bob – Even though I had just sealed a note to you that I'll send you your way now that you've moved – I felt an urgent need to write you right after talking to Catherine in the seemingly endless purgatory cleverly disguised as an MGM lounge. . . .

Rumor had it that you are considering casting Jennifer Beals instead of me for a role in L.A. Short Cuts. Bob, Bob, Bob, Bob, Bob, Bob, Bob, Bob! What are you thinking? If you like the idea, please call. No matter what happens, I hope you see me — please, I'd never get off this airplane. Much love, Gina

Behind-the-scenes photographs of Robin Williams, Shelley Duvall, and Robert Altman on the set of Popeye (1980). Although the film not a commercial or critical success, Altman and his crew spent endless hours crafting and perfecting the unique scenery built on the Mediterranean island of Malta. The child playing Swee'pee is Altman's grandson, Wesley Hurt, who eventually became a University of Michigan alum.