

ENCYCLOPEDIA OF CINEMA

Ozu, Yasujiro

ame Street" and "Muppet Show" TV series, where he created, and provided the voices for, widely loved characters such as Fozzy Bear, Miss Piggy and Animal. Ozu's first feature film, *The Dark Crystal* (1982), was co-directed with the late "Muppet" mastermind Jim Henson; he has since proved himself an adroit handler of comedy, adventure and fantasy material. • *The Muppet Movie* 1979 (a, creative consultant, song); *The Blues Brothers* 1980 (a); *The Empire Strikes Back* 1980 (a); *An American Werewolf in London* 1981 (a); *The Great Muppet Caper* 1981 (Muppet performer, a, p); *The Dark Crystal* 1982 (a, d); *Return of the Jedi* 1983 (a); *Trading Places* 1983 (a); *The Muppets Take Manhattan* 1984 (a, d, sc); *Sesame Street Presents: Follow That Bird* 1985 (a); *Spies Like Us* 1985 (a); *Labyrinth* 1986 (a); *Little Shop of Horrors* 1986 (d); *Dirty Rotten Scoundrels* 1988 (d); *What About Bob?* 1991 (d).

Ozu, Yasujiro • Director; also screenwriter. • Born Tokyo, December 12, 1903; died December 11, 1963. Educ. Waseda University. Few filmmakers outside the avant-garde have developed a personal style as rigorous as Yasujiro Ozu. While his films are in a sense experimental, he worked exclusively in the mainstream Japanese film industry, making extraordinary movies about quite ordinary events. His early films include a ghost story, a thriller, and a period piece, but Ozu is best known and admired for his portraits of everyday family life shot in what one critic has called a most "unreasonable style."

Ozu's early fascination with cinema soon turned into an obsession; as a student he reportedly went to great lengths to skip school and watch movies, usually Hollywood fare. His own filmmaking career began with his entry in 1923 into the newly formed Shochiku Studios, where he worked as an assistant cameraman and an assistant director. He directed his first film in 1927, and over the next four years directed twenty-one more.

The years 1931 to 1940 saw some of his greatest films, and he received the Best Film award from Kinema Junpo three consecutive times, for *I Was Born, But...* (1932), *Passing Fancy* (1933) and *A Story of Floating Weeds* (1934). During the war, he directed two relatively successful films before being sent to Singapore to make propaganda pictures. There, he had the opportunity to screen captured prints of American films; later he would comment: "Watching *Fantasia* made me suspect that we were going to lose the war. These guys look like trouble, I thought."

Upon his return to Japan, he directed several unexceptional films before returning to form with *Late Spring* (1949). From this point onward, Ozu scaled

down his output to about one film a year, while maintaining the high standards he had set during the thirties.

The most distinctive aspect of Ozu cinema is its self-imposed restraint. The elements of his unique style were in place by the mid-1930s and are deceptively easy to list. They represent a range of "unreasonable" choices, which the director continually refined (or reduced) throughout his career. Ozu's signature feature is his camera placement, which is usually (but not always) close to the ground. Its position is actually proportional: the height can change, as long as it stays lower than the object being shot.

Ozu also developed a curious form of transition, which various critics have labeled "pillow shots" or "curtain shots." Between scenes, he would always place carefully framed shots of the surroundings to signal changes in setting, as well as for less obvious reasons. Basically a hybrid of the cutaway and placing shots, these transitions were considered unusual for extended length; they sometimes seem motivated more by graphic composition and pacing than by the demands of the narrative.

Ozu's most radical departure from classical style was his use of 360-degree space. By convention, Hollywood style dictates that the camera should stay within a 180-degree space to one side of the action. This is to provide proper "screen direction" and a sense of homogeneous space. Ozu's camera, on the other hand, orbits around the characters. Furthermore, this 360-degree space is broken down into multiples of 45 degrees, into which the camera angles generally fall. This produces a number of unusual effects, but Ozu's stories are so engrossing that they don't disrupt the story.

One effect of jumping over the 180-degree stage line is that actors facing each other seem to look off in the same direction. Ozu's response to this was to place characters in identical positions between (as well as within) shots. He favored a sitting position with the actor's body "torqued" to face the camera. Frustrated actors found their bodies treated as objects to be carefully manipulated within the frame, their lines to be delivered with a minimum of emotion and movement.

Ozu pushed this "graphic matching" between shots to notorious extremes: it is not unusual to see props such as beer bottles moved across tables or closer to the camera to preserve their size and screen position from shot to shot. Any effects that interfered with composition were cast away; Ozu never used a zoom and only one dissolve (in *Life of an Office Worker*, 1929). He also subordinated camera movement to composition; he never used pans because they disturbed his framing. The few Ozu tracking shots were designed to maintain a static composition (by moving along a road with a

character, for example). When Ozu began shooting in color (with *Higanbana*, 1958), he did away with camera movement altogether.

While Ozu's films are not flashy, they are exceedingly complex. An essay this brief cannot begin to suggest the extent to which all these stylistic features are systematically choreographed. The permutations of form and variation become so minute they are visible only on close, multiple viewings.

The motives for Ozu's style have been the subject of rigorous debate. Because he was thought "too Japanese" for foreigners to accept or understand, for many years his films were not exported. When critics in the West finally discovered his work, his "unreasonable style" was usually explained in thematic, anthropomorphic and even religious terms. His low camera, for example, was described as the point of view of a child, a dog, a god or a person sitting Japanese style. Some critics attempted to explain the Ozu style through questionable comparisons to Zen Buddhism. Marxist critic Noel Burch, on the other hand, felt Ozu exemplified a rejection of Hollywood style and its ideological baggage. To date, the most convincing explanation has been offered by Kristin Thompson and David Bordwell, who suggest that in Ozu's cinema questions of style may be detached from theme and narrative. Ozu's films feature a playful, overt narration in which stylistic features do not have to mean anything and can be appreciated for their own sake.

Despite their restraint, Ozu's films, with their families in the throes of marriage and death, are among the most touching of melodramas. As important and influential as Ozu was, no other filmmaker has ever adopted his style, leaving his 53 films quite unique in the history of cinema. Ironically, the influence of Ozu's visual style may be more readily noticeable in a number of non-Japanese filmmakers, including Wayne Wang, Jim Jarmusch and Wim Wenders, who called Ozu's films "a sacred treasure of the cinema." MN • *Zange no Yaiba/The Sword of Penitence* 1927 (d); *Wakodo no Yume/The Dreams of Youth* 1928 (d); *Nyobo Funshitsu/Wife Lost* 1928 (d); *Kabocha/Pumpkin* 1928 (d); *Hikkoshi Fufu/A Couple on the Move* 1928 (d); *Nikutaibi/Body Beautiful* 1928 (d); *Takara no Yama/Treasure Mountain* 1929 (d); *Wakaki Hi/Days of Youth* 1929 (d); *Wasei Kenka Tomodachi/Fighting Friends—Japanese Style* 1929 (d); *Daigaku wa Deta Keredo/I Graduated, But ...* 1929 (d); *Kaishain Seikatsu/The Life of an Office Worker* 1929 (d); *Tokkan Kozo/A Straightforward Boy* 1929 (d); *Kekkon Gaku Nyumon/An Introduction to Marriage* 1930 (d); *Hogaraka ni Ayume/Walk Cheerfully* 1930 (d); *Rakudai wa Shita Keredo/I Flunked, But ...* 1930 (d); *Sono Yo no Tsuma/That Night's Wife* 1930 (d);

Srogami no Onryo/The F
of Eros 1930 (d); *Ashi ni*
Koun/Lost Luck/Luck T.
1930 (d); *Ojosan/Young*
Shukujo to Hige/The Lac
Beard/The Lady and Her
(d); Bijin Aishu/Beauty's
(d); Tokyo no Gassho/To
1931 (d); *Haru wa Gofuj*
Comes From the Ladies
arete wa Mita Keredo/I
1932 (d); *Seishun no*
Izuko/Where Now Are th
Youth 1932 (d); *Mata Ai*
the Day We Meet Again
no Onna/Woman of Tok
Hijosan no Onna/Dragn
On the Firing Line 1933
Dekigokoro/Passing Fan
Haha o Kawazuya/A Mo
Loved 1934 (d); *Ukigusa*
Story of Floating Weeds
Hakoiri Musume/An Inn
Young Virgin 1935 (d); *I*
Yado/An Inn in Tokyo
Daigaku Yoi Toko/Colle
Place 1936 (d); *Hitori M*
Son 1936 (d); *Shukujo*
Wasuretaka/What Did
1937 (d); *Toda-ke no Ky*
ers and Sisters of the To
(d); Chichi Arika/There
1942 (d); *Nagayo no Shi*
Record of a Tenement G
(d); Kaze no Naka no M
the Wind 1948 (d); *Bans*
1949 (d, sc); *Munekata S*
Munekata Sisters 1948 (d)
Bakushu/Early Summer
hazuke No Aji/The Flav
Over Rice/Tea and Rice
Tokyo Monogatari/Toky
(d, sc); Soshun/Early Spr
Tokyo Boshoku/Tokyo
in Tokyo 1957 (d); *Hige*
Flower 1958 (d); *Ohayo*
1959 (d); *Ukigusa/Float*
(d); Akibiyori/Late Aut
Kohayagawa-ke no Aki
mer/Early Autumn/The
1961 (d); *Samma No Aj*
ernoon 1963 (d, sc).

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P

Pabst, G. W. • Director; also actor, screenwriter. • Born Georg Wilhelm Pabst, Raudnitz, Bohemia, August 27,

1885; died 1967. *Educ.* Academy of Decorative Arts, Vienna. Georg Wilhelm Pabst's greatest contribution to filmmaking is his not being limited by a dominant style. Though his films have been criticized for their lack of stylistic unity, rather than diminishing their impact, that eclectic approach pushed him beyond the aesthetic norm to break away from convention. This experimentation contributed to the evolution of the "Neue Sachlichkeit" (New Objectivity) in German films, a movement which rejected the extremist values of Expressionism for a less intrusive, quasi-documentary style.

Pabst began his academic career in engineering but his interests gravitated to the theater and in 1904, he entered the Vienna Academy of Decorative Arts. He made his directorial debut in New York in 1910 on a tour with a German-language theatrical troupe. Upon his return to Europe in 1914, he was detained as an enemy alien in a French prison camp, where he organized a theater company. After the war, he directed theater in Prague and later in Vienna. The German cinematographer and film pioneer, Carl Froelich, coaxed Pabst into filmmaking, offering him a job as assistant director.

In 1923, Pabst directed his first film, *Der Schatz/The Treasure*. His use of "chiaroscuro" and his ability to arrange physical objects in highly expressive (though seemingly objective) ways demonstrated his technical prowess. His next film, *Gräfin Donelli/Countess Donelli* (1924) was a commercial success but it was *Die Freudlose Gasse/The Joyless Street* (1925) which established Pabst as an important director. *The Joyless Street* is a gritty look at how the residents of Melchior Street are affected by the post-war ills of corruption, prostitution and inflation. Among the film's accomplishments is its creation of a prototype for the naturalistic "street film" genre. One of the first directors to shoot on location, Pabst developed a photographic style that effectively depicted the stark realities of the streets. Among the cast of *The Joyless Street* was a young Greta Garbo; when Hollywood executive Louis B. Mayer saw the film, he recruited her to a contract with MGM.

Always fascinated by the human psyche, Pabst's next film, *Geheimnisse Einer Seele/Secrets of a Soul* (1926) dramatized a Freudian case history. The extraordinary dream sequences, which utilized optical distortion and other special effects, were prototypes of surrealism. *Die Liebe Der Jeanne Ney/The Love of Jeanne Ney* (1927), with its undercurrent of modern angst, marked an important advance in Pabst's technique. The editing reveals Pabst's technical adeptness, the rapid cutting on movement occupying the viewer's attention on movement, thus making the cuts "invisible." This method, especially useful with reverse cuts, where a shift of speaker

could be implied, foreshadowed the dialogue cutting of sound film and accounts in part for why Pabst's silent films seem surprisingly modern today.

One of his most controversial films was *Die Buchse Der Pandora/Pandora's Box* (1928). Criticized for its inconsistent style and its blatant sexuality, including a lesbian scene, the film received a hostile reception. Recent critics have praised the film, especially Louise Brooks's performance as Lulu, whose primitive sexuality is heightened by Pabst's careful closeups. Pabst's masterful direction of actors, especially women, inspired provocative, remarkable performances in many of his films.

The coming of sound further enhanced Pabst's artistry. His ingenuity with the new technology is especially evident in *Westfront 1918* (1930) and *Kameradschaft/Comradeship* (1931).

Although he continued to work in film into the 1950s, making movies in France, Austria, the United States and Italy, as well his native Germany, Pabst is best known for his early work. In general, Pabst refused to be defined. His constant drive to experiment reflected his restless vision, a vision which has influenced other directors and produced an inspired body of work. MCJ • *Der Schatz/The Treasure* 1923 (d); *Gräfin Donelli* 1924 (d); *Die Freudlose Gasse/The Joyless Street* 1925 (d); *Geheimnisse einer Seele/Secrets of a Soul* 1926 (d); *Die Liebe der Jeanne Ney/The Love of Jeanne Ney* 1927 (d); *Abwege/Begierde/Crisis/Desire* 1928 (d); *Buchse der Pandora/Pandora's Box* 1928 (d,sc); *Das Tagebuch einer Verlorenen/Diary of a Lost Girl* 1929 (d,p); *Die Weisse Hölle Piz Palü/The White Hell of Piz Palü* 1929 (d); *Westfront 1918/Comrades of 1918* 1930 (d); *Die Dreigroschenoper/The Threepenny Opera* 1931 (d); *Kameradschaft/Comradeship* 1931 (d); *L'Atlantide/Die Herrin von Atlantis* 1932 (d); *Don Quichotte/Don Quixote* 1933 (d); *De Haut en bas* 1933 (d); *A Modern Hero* 1934 (d); *Mademoiselle Docteur/Street of Shadows/Spies from Salonika* 1936 (d); *Le Drame de Shanghai* 1937 (d); *Jeunes filles en détresse* 1939 (d); *Paracelsus* 1943 (d,sc); *Der Prozess/The Trial* 1947 (d); *Geheimnisvolle Tiefen/Mysterious Shadows* 1949 (d); *La Voce del Silenzio/The Voice of Silence* 1952 (d); *Cose da Pazzi/Droll Stories* 1953 (d); *Das Bekenntnis der Ina Kahr/Afraid to Love* 1954 (d); *Der letzte Akt/The Last Ten Days/Ten Days to Die* 1955 (d); *Es Geschah am 20 Juli/The Jackboot Mutiny* 1956 (d); *Rosen Für Bettina/Ballerina* 1956 (d); *Durch die Wälder, durch di Auen* 1956 (d).

Pacino, Al • Actor • Born Alberto Pacino, New York, NY, April 25, 1940. *Educ.* High School for the Performing Arts, New York; Herbert Berghof Studio, New York; Actors Studio. Award-winning, Italian-American stage actor