

Fellini's 8 ½ on the Big Screen

Natasha Lardera (February 27, 2013)



A new restored version of Federico Fellini's 8 1/2 is opening on March 22nd at the Quad Cinema (34 W 13th St.). Corinth Films is responsible for bringing one of the masterpieces of our time to the big screen once again, in a beautiful new 35mm restoration.

[Federico Fellini](#) [2]'s 8 1/2 (1963) is a film that juxtaposed dreams, visions, fantasies, and realities in a cinematic version of the director's own stream of consciousness. A film that left audiences guessing what was real and what imagined, with little help from the director. A film that was "described at the time of its release as a "spectacle of the spirit," but in retrospect it was also the moment of creative implosion when Fellini lost his way in a maze of Jungian archetypes, Freudian fixations, and Sartrean despair." (Alan A. Stone, Boston Review).

"Federico Fellini tops even his trendsetting *La Dolce Vita* in artistry," a review in *Variety* from 1963 says, "And he confirms himself one of the few undisputed masters of the visual-dramatic medium. For here is the author-director picture par excellence, an exciting stimulating, monumental creation which is likely to unleash almost as many controversies and discussions as "*Dolce Vita*" did some time back."

A film about film-making... enter the world of Guido Anselmi (played by [Marcello Mastroianni](#) [3]). At the peak of his career and experiencing a mid-life crisis, Guido is unable to commence his next film project. At the urging of his doctors, he takes some time off to rest from his hectic schedule of film production, only to find escape from his throng of staff and idlers impossible. Retreating from reality, Guido assimilates himself in a cerebral world where his fantasies compete against his sense of

urgency to make any kind of progress on his new movie. Masquerading through his memory are many characters and personalities, each having a unique influence on the master director.

A film that parallels director Federico Fellini's own creative struggles, 8 1/2 is one of the films that most defines his career. It is a comedy-drama co-scripted by Fellini, Tullio Pinelli, Ennio Flaiano and Brunello Rondi. Shot in B&W by cinematographer Gianni di Venanzo, the film features a soundtrack by Nino Rota with costume and set designs by Piero Gherardi. 8½ won two Academy Awards: for Best Foreign language Film and Best Costume Design. It was also nominated Best Director, Best Original Screenplay and best Art Direction. The film screened in April at the 1963 Cannes Film Festival to almost universal acclaim but no prize was awarded because it was shown outside the competition.

"The film's title refers to Fellini's eight and a half films as a director: his previous directorial work consisted of six features ([Lo sceicco bianco](#) [4] (1952), [I vitelloni](#) [5] (1953), [La strada](#) [6] in (1954), [Il bidone](#) [7] (1955), [Le notti di Cabiria](#) [8] (1957), and [La Dolce Vita](#) [9] (1960)), two short segments, and a collaboration with director [Alberto Lattuada](#) [10], the latter three productions accounting for a "half" film each." (Wikipedia)

"What is this 8 ½? It can be described as something between a muddled psychiatric visit and an orderless examination of conscience, with Limbo as setting. A melancholy film, almost funereal, but emphatically comic," Federico Fellini wrote in the original 1963 Embassy Pictures Press Book. "Most people have written that s autobiographical. In a certain sense I am autobiographical even if I am telling the life story of a sole. And yet I swear that this is a work of fantasy and of all my films this is the one which has least reference to little personal facts. I have put a bit of everything into it: things I have experienced, things I have heard, things I have imagined. Maybe it is a naive hope on my part but I would like to think that people will go to see this film with a completely open mind, recognizing that I have just been telling a fable and that there's nothing in it beyond what is to be seen on the screen. I wouldn't want anyone to think that the film was the secret biography of an erotic. Absolutely not."

A new restored version of Federico Fellini's 8 1/2 is opening on March 22nd (<http://www.quadcinema.com/coming-soon/> [11]) at the [Quad Cinema](#) [12] (34 W 13th St.). [Corinth Films](#) [13] is responsible for bringing one of the masterpieces of our time to the big screen once again, in a beautiful new 35mm restoration. This is the opportunity to view a masterpiece firsthand on the big screen and relive some moments that have made film history.

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