

**Heavenly Cinema –**  
Films about Flying







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Lufthansa





Two inventions have fundamentally changed our century, and in the process brought the world closer together: the aeroplane and the film. The development of flying instruments and those of cinematography are more closely related than the now 100 year old founding decade at first reveals. On the technical side there is for instance the French researcher, Etienne-Jules Marey (1830-1904), whose photographic motion studies in bird flight gave aviators, including even Otto Lilienthal, valuable information, and his "photographic shotgun" was a prototype of the film-camera. And just like the pioneers of flight, it was the aim of the film-pioneers to achieve hitherto non-existent levels, to widen the horizon of "modern" mankind. Aeroplanes like film changed and are changing our view of the world, bringing the exotic nearer and allowing new forms of experience.

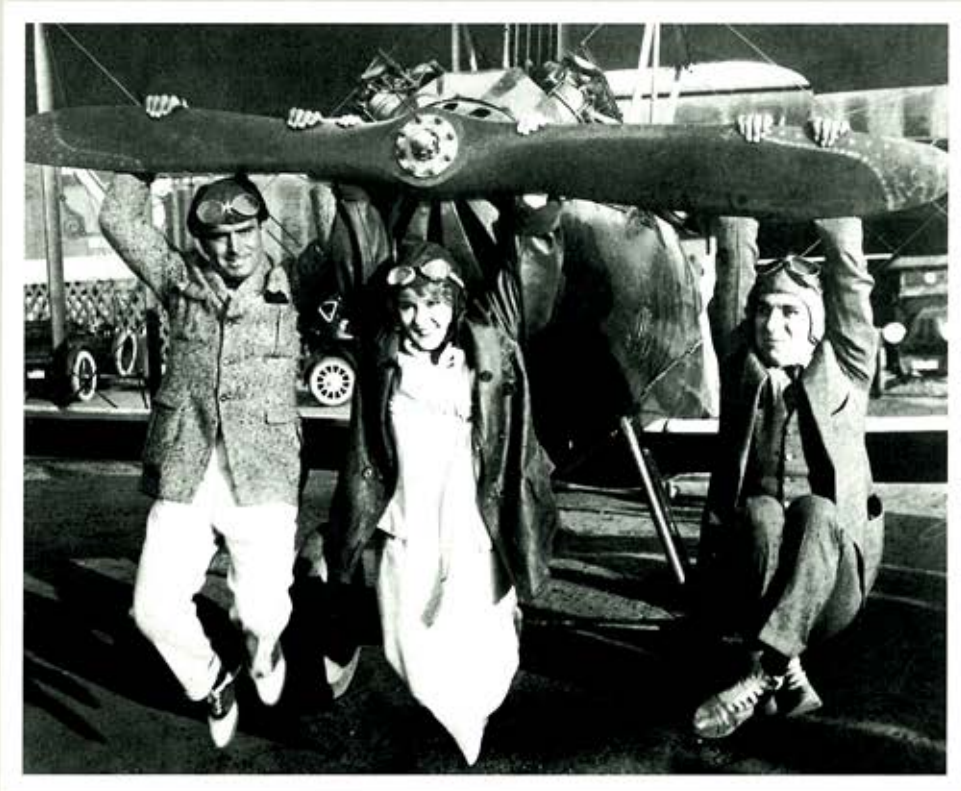
Most people experienced this new perception of the world – from above – in the cinemas. Films, always looking for new and lasting sensations, adopted the aerial shots gratefully into their repertoire, complemented by fantastic outer-space journeys or breath-taking real-life acrobatics by daredevil pilots and stunt-men and women. Charlie Chaplin's brother Syd and the Hollywood mogul Cecil B. DeMille ran airfields from the very beginning. DeMille believed in the great future of air-travel and founded in 1919 the first Californian airline. Like no other medium, film is perfectly suited to communicate the miracle of flying, hovering and gliding. Alongside this flight-realism, the cinema has also offered since the pioneer-days of the film-magician George Méliès the most fantastic aerial experiences and space-flights. Apparently nothing is impossible in film. Everything and everyone can fly.

This book takes you on a journey through cinema's wide and amazing skies. Be invited for some surprising findings.

Jürgen Weber  
President  
Lufthansa German Airlines



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Douglas Fairbanks,  
Mary Pickford and  
Charlie Chaplin, 1917

In fact, watching the movies thus carried me away so that I was no longer quite myself. Instead, we were part of the world of the moving picture. I was lifted out of my shell into a world where what I felt and did no longer had any relation to the real me and to reality.

*Bruno Bettelheim in a speech, 1981*

**Heavenly Cinema –**  
Films about Flying

Flying and Gliding  
in the Movies.  
A Surprising Journey.





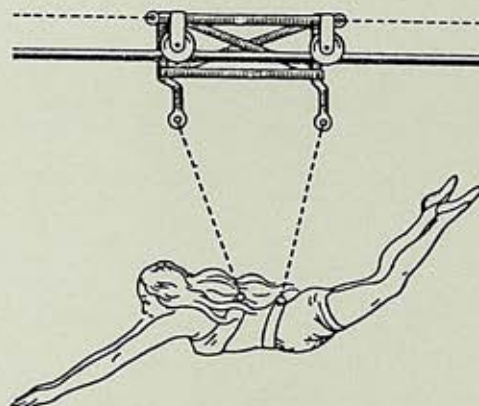
## Twice a pioneer

Etienne-Jules Marey's (1830-1904) invention of chronophotography (i.e. the recording of motion) made him a harbinger of cinematography. His studies of motion about bird flight very soon called the attention of the pioneers of flying "something heavier than air", amongst them Pénaud and Tatin, who in Marey's laboratory worked out his "compressed-air aeroplane" in 1878. It was also Marey, being closely connected with the followers of flight instruments, who, in 1898, introduced Ader's first aeroplane to the French academy of science.

*German Film Museum, Frankfurt*

Here starts a serene dance of the stars, of meteors, comets and so on, which are taking animated shape with the approach of the car. Phoebe appears, sitting on the crescent moon, then Saturn in his planet; vivid gigantic faces looking out of passing stars, to the travellers' astonishment, who are enchanted by this unusual spectacle.

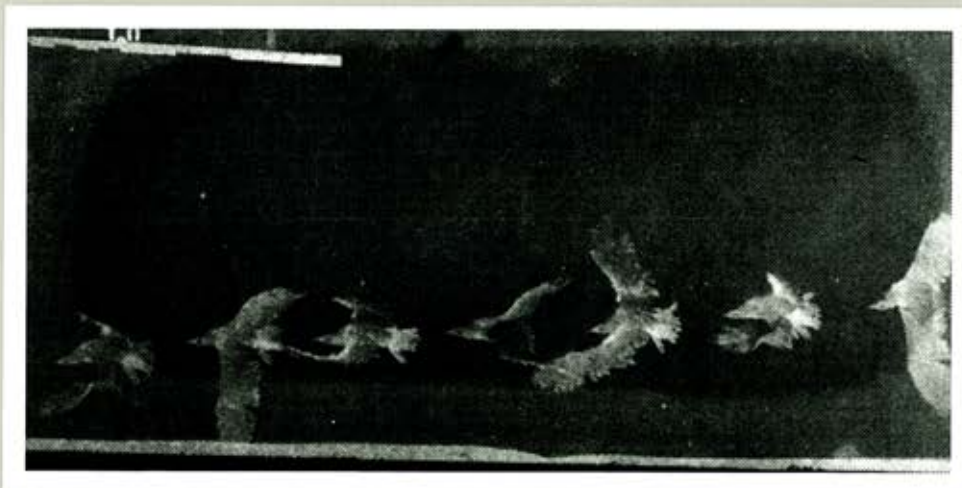
*Scenario of a Méliès film, 1906*



above:  
Ferdinand Zecca, 1901;  
right: sketch by Georges  
Méliès;  
below: gull in flight,  
chronophotography by  
Marey, 1888

*A la Conquête de l'Air*  
France 1901; silent; 1 min  
P: Pathe; w, d, ph: Ferdinand Zecca

*The '7' Motorist*  
Greatbrit. 1905; silent; 3 min  
P: Robert William Paul; d: Walter R. Booth





## Magician of the cinema

There was a lot of speculation among cameramen about the Méliès camera, built in France before 1904. All we could do was guess how he worked out all his film fantasies himself. His magic tricks intrigued cameramen like me who were not permitted to waste company film experimenting. At the end of a film roll, there is always some left over, and this I used for experimental purposes, though I never discovered the secrets of the Méliès magic.

*American cinematographer Billy Bitzer (1872-1944)*

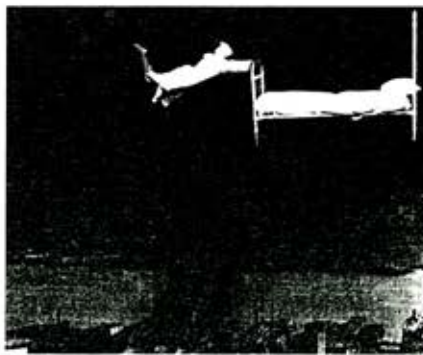
Draughtsman, stage decorator, illusionist, script-writer, director and leading actor of all his compositions, he produced a large number of films from 1896 to 1914, all of which he created solely out of his fantasy. These films were successful all over the world and soon they earned him honorary titles like: King of Phantasmagoria, King of Illusion, Jules Verne of the Film, Magician of the Film, etc.

*Georges Méliès in "Mes Mémoires", written in 1938 in the third person*



The Méliès film  
"Voyage to the Moon":  
left: "The 'Z' Motorist"  
from 1905

A trip with the bed:  
"Dreams of the Rarebit  
Fiend"



*Voyage to the Moon*  
(*Le Voyage dans la Lune*); France 1902; silent; 21 min  
w, d: Georges Méliès, after the novel by Jules Verne;  
ph: Lucien Tainguy; c: G. M., Bleurette Bernon, Victor  
André, Corps Ballet du Chatelet et al.





Emil Jannings as  
Mephisto in  
F.W. Murnau's *"Faust"*,  
Germany 1926

### Faust's Aerial Journey

Mephisto bows to him like a journeymaster, spreads his coat at his feet and says invitingly: Title: "Upon my coat step, and around you the world will circle!"

Faust does but one step and already he is carried away through the air. There is an hour-glass growing in the picture.

And out of it fragments of landscapes are emerging, revolving, dashing near, heaving, and sommersaulting:

hills, valleys and forrests, wells of rock, mountain's lakes, hurting down waterfalls, towers of gothic churches.

Above them is Faust, hold by Mephisto, floating on the coat.

Now the snowcovered peaks of the Alps appear, seen from a big height, breakers foaming against the riffs, the eternal ocean opens, ships in the storm. The hour-glass, inside which grains of sand are rippling, fades to white, southern landscapes are breaking up with colonnades and wide places, palm-trees are rushing in, above all Faust in the magic coat, huge fantastic birds flying towards him ...

*"Faust"-scenario by Hans Kyser, 1925*

*Conquest of the North Pole*  
(*A la Conquête du Pôle*); France 1912; silent; 33 min  
p, w, d, ph: Georges Méliès

*The Sky Ship*  
(*Himmelskibet*); Danmark 1917; silent; 97 min  
P: Nordisk; w, d: Holger Madsen; c: Gunnar Tolnaes et al.



Gunnar Tolnaas and Lilly Jacobsen in the Danish "Sky Ship", 1917

## A Danish "Skyship"

This is a pacifistic tale of Professor Planetarios who takes his son to Mars where they find a vegetarian, white-robed, peace-loving people. The high priest's daughter agrees to return with them to earth where their plea for peace is received enthusiastically by everybody ... The film was an understandable call for peace in the third year of World War I.

*"The Aurum Film Encyclopedia"*

## Conquest of the North Pole

Professor Maboul has invented an aerobus, complete with a giant chicken's head. He intends to mount an air expedition to the North Pole, and assembles a team of six intrepid professors from six different nations: England, America, Germany, Spain, China, Japan. After due preparations, and despite a demonstration by suffragettes with their placards: "The Pole for Women!", the international group sets forth. The great bronze and aluminium aircraft sails through the sky ...

*"The Aurum Film Encyclopedia"*

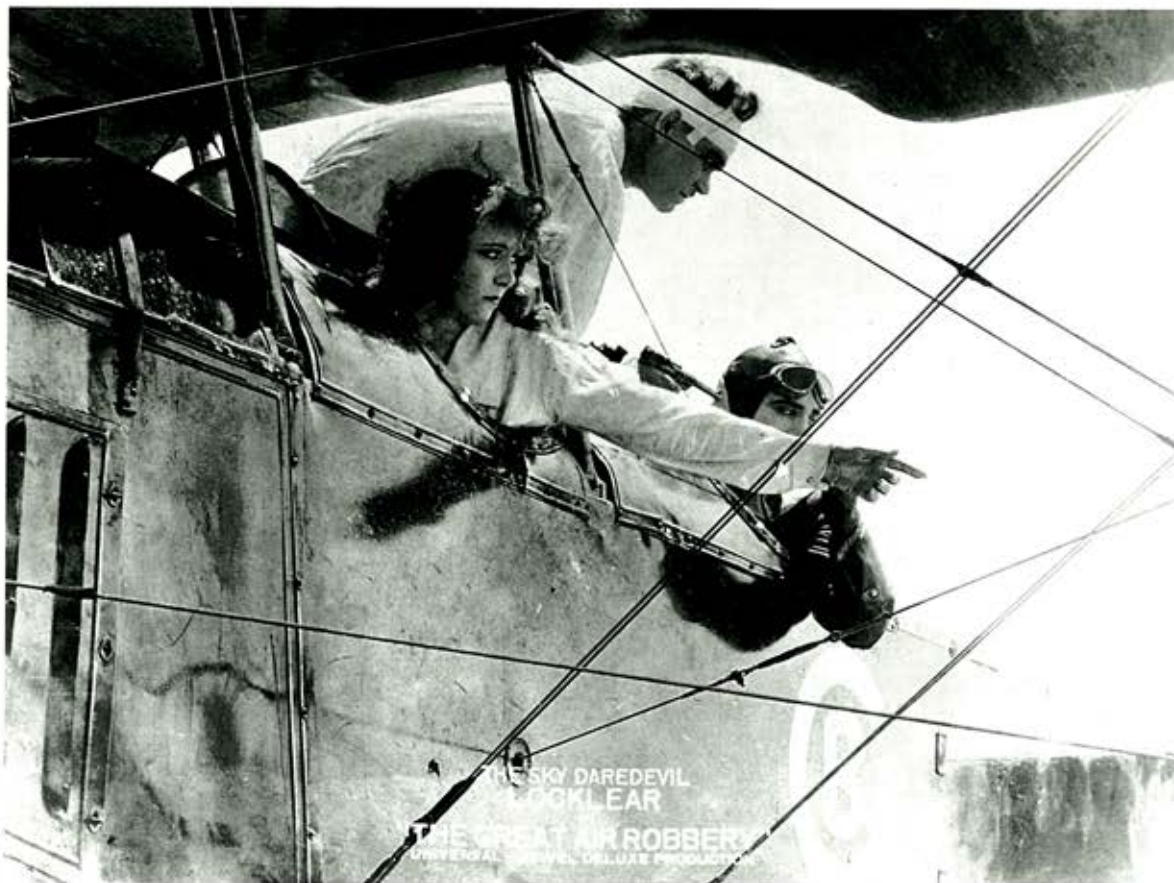


*Aelita – The Flight to Mars*  
(Aelita); USSR 1924; silent; sw; 45 min  
d: Jakow Protasanow; w: Fjodor Ozep, Alexej Falko, Alexej Tolstoj, after the novel "Aelita, A Mars-Story" by Alexej N. Tolstoj; ph: Juri Scheljabuschski, Emil Schönemann; sets/costumes: Victor Simow, Isaac Rabinowitsch, Alexandra Exter; c: Nikolai Tseretelli, Nikolai Batalow, W. Orlowa et al.



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### A sensational detective film

Annexed I hand over a just finished sensational detective film written by me: "The Message from Outer Space" for examination and an eventual purchase. The film, some 2500 meters, talks for itself, is unequalled in its thrilling action and a first-rate box-office hit... I need not telling you anything about the technical production, for your splendid enterprise, however, it will easily be possible to take all the pictures without going to America. These examination may not be longer than four weeks. As for the money, you may name the amount, because I am interested in going into business with you. From the scenario: aeroplane manufactory of the Philadelphia-Wright-Company... cabin of the screwflier "Uranus", Newyork from a bird's view...

*Max Georgalbert Brückner from Graz in a letter to a film company, Oct. 10, 1919*

"The Great Air Robbery", 1919, the first film shot at DeMille Field right side; stunt flier Ormer Locklear

*The Great Air Robbery  
USA 1919; silent  
P: Universal; d: Jacques Jaccard; w: J. J., George Hively;  
c: Ormer Locklear, Francella Billington et al.*



### Flying as a sensation

Aware that the public was demanding more and more thrills in motion pictures, producers were turning to the airplane for added sensations. It wasn't that airplanes hadn't been used before. But now they were bigger and faster and able to do more things than they could ever do before. Whether the stunt had anything to do with the plot was immaterial. The idea was to get people into the theatres.

*Art Ronnie, "Locklear: The Man Who Walked on Wings"*

### I am motion

I am Kinoglaz. I am a mechanical eye. I, the machine, show you the world the way only I am able to see it. From this day on to all future I free myself from the human immobility. I am in constant motion, approaching the objects and removing myself from them, crawling underneath them, climbing upon them, moving next to a mouth of a galloping horse, racing with full speed into the crowd, throwing myself on my back, ascending with aeroplanes, I fall and rise together with falling and rising objects.

*The Russian director Dsiga Vertov, 1923*



Already in 1920, the German critic Hermann G. Scheffauer, who is living in America for quite a while, predicted, that the film will enable man "to get to know the world like his own house, even if he might never cross the border of his village".

*Siegfried Kracauer, "Theory of Film"*





## Fascinated by flying

Somehow, during the rush of film production, DeMille found time to get in some serious flying experience. During 1918, DeMille took extensive lessons with the expert aeronaut Al Wilson. He was fascinated by the experience ... The wind in the struts and the deafening roar of the motors were music to his ears. He immediately decided to buy a plane ...



DeMille Field Number 1;  
above: DeMille's airline  
"Mercury", founded 1919

I myself, when very young, laughed with derision at the thought of a horseless carriage, and in my youthful stupidity made the remark that one never would be invented. Now, I hear on all sides the same stupid remark made with regard to aviation which once I made concerning the automobile, and which my great-great-grandfather made regarding the locomotive. In spite of this common disbelief we are on the verge of a great aerial age.

*DeMille interviewed by "Los Angeles Examiner", August 25, 1920*



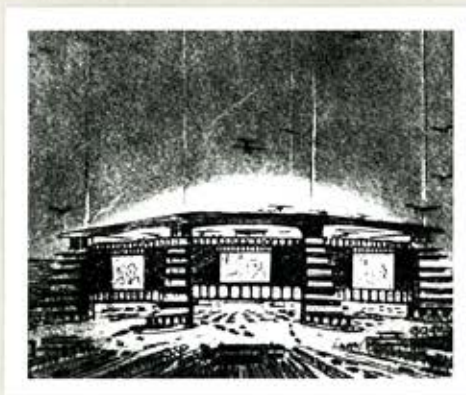
## DeMille's airline

Shortly thereafter, on December 18, 1918, the pilot and actor Al Wilson came to DeMille with an interesting proposal. He said that if DeMille would lend him his plane for a day, he would earn him a handsome profit. DeMille agreed, and Wilson took various passengers to various areas and back for ten dollars. DeMille's profit was three hundred dollars for one day. When Wilson returned from the final flight, DeMille shook his hand and said, "Al, we're in business!"...

In May, DeMille and a group of associates formed the Mercury Aviation Company, the first official commercial airline in California's history...

DeMille's obsession with flying became so extreme in the fall of 1920 that both Lasky and Zukor begged him to desist. They felt that the quality of his work as a director was beginning to fall off, and that if the obsession proceeded to develop, we would be finished as a creative force. Though he argued bitterly with them, at heart he knew they were right. On September, 15, 1921, he admitted his defeat after almost three glorious years of his new life. On that day, the Mercury Aviation Company sold out to the Rogers Airport group, and ceased to exist.

*Charles Higham, "Cecil B. DeMille"*



A Fly-In-Cinema, proposed by Fernandez Shaw, 1930  
middle: C.B. DeMille (right) and his screenwriter Bennett Macpherson taking flying lessons, 1918  
above: Chaplin's brother Syd and Harvey Lander with their airliner, 1918





Patricia Medina and John Agar onboard "The Magic Carpet", 1951

## Wires with a guarantee

In this same picture we had the problem of photographing Mr. Fairbanks on a flying magic carpet. We got a ninety foot Llewellyn crane and had the carpet suspended on six wires. There was Doug hanging on six wires he couldn't see. They were each guaranteed to hold four hundred pounds, but he said, "I would like something more than a guarantee in a place like this." We also had to arrange for a travelling camera and had a platform built for the cameraman which travelled with the crane. That was the first travelling shot. Of course today they have complicated machinery for this purpose.

William Cameron Menzies

The "Thief of Bagdad" is the farthest and most sudden advance that the movie has ever made and, at the same time, it is a return to the form of the earliest presentable films... Fairbanks has gone far beyond the mere bounds of possibility: he has performed the superhuman feat of making his magic seem probable... If any one can see this marvelous picture and still choose to sneer at the movies, I shall be glad to escort him to Hollywood and feed him to the large dragon in the Fairbanks menagerie.

Robert E. Sherwood in "Photoplay", 1924

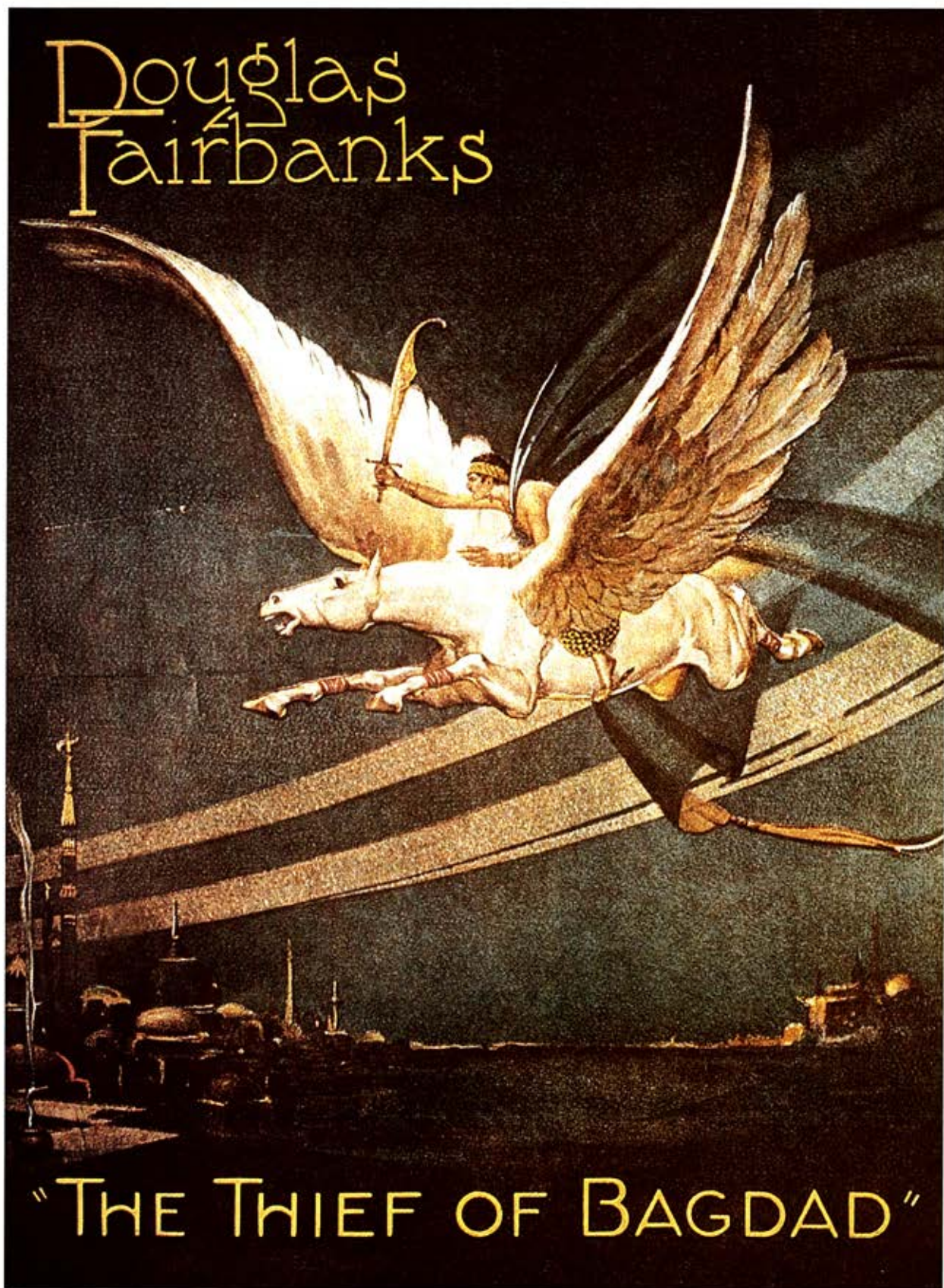
*The Thief of Bagdad*  
USA 1924; silent; 135 min  
d: Raoul Walsh; w: Elton Thomas (= Douglas Fairbanks)  
after a story by Edward Knoblock/Lotta Woods; ph:  
Arthur Edeson; sp: Hampton des Ruth; d: Douglas  
Fairbanks, Julian Johnston, Anna May Wong et al.

The latest adaption:  
"Arabian Adventure"  
from 1978





Douglas  
Fairbanks



"THE THIEF OF BAGDAD"





Straps for coping with the lack of gravity on the trip to "Woman in the Moon", 1929

## Cinema and reality

There are only some minor differences between Wernher von Braun's science-fiction stories and the script of "Woman in the Moon" by Thea von Harbou and Fritz Lang. The poor professor Hermann Oberth, whose works on rockets provoked but a pitiful smile, could easily have been its main character. Hoping, the Ufa filmcompany would finance his real experiments, he helped to create the technical outline of the film, and finally Fritz Lang, tired of the constant discussion with the producer, paid half of Oberth's experiments.

The film started on the 30th of September 1929, but without the originally intended advertising gag: the take-off of a true Oberth-rocket on the beach near Horst in Pommern, at which the space-ship should rise to an altitude of 40 kilometers.

1932 the jet-research was declared a military secret and therefore Lang's film was confiscated – by now it had the ring of probability. (Hermann Oberth became a well-acknowledged rocket-constructor later.)

*Paul Virilio, "Guerre et cinema"*

*Woman in the Moon*  
(Die Frau im Mond); Germany 1929; silent; 185 min  
P: Universum/UFA; d: Fritz Lang; w: F. L., Thea von Harbou, after a novel by v. Harbou; ph: Kurt Courant, Otto Kanturek; sp: Oskar Fischinger, Konstantin Tschetwerikoff; technical advisors: Hermann Oberth, Willy Ley; c: Gerda Maurus, Willy Fritsch, Fritz Rasp, Gustav von Wangenheim et al.



### Count-down

For this film Fritz Lang invented the count-down: "While shooting the take-off of the rocket, I said: if I count one, two, three, four, ten, fifty, hundred, the audience will not know the starting time. But by counting backward ten, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one, ZERO, they'll understand."







A scene in "Wings"  
middle below: Wellman  
and his lead R. Arlen  
far left: William A.  
Wellman, director of  
15 aviation films  
right: chief photo-  
grapher Harry Perry

Two young men join Air Service during World War I, and one eventually shoots the other by accident. An epic of early aviation, still stirring in its action sequences.

*"Halliwell's Film Guide"*

Air battles are photographed from every conceivable angle, producing many bold cinematic effects... so much in fact happens in the air that it is impossible to take it all in.

*"National Board of Review"*





## The first Oscar

"Wings" won the first Academy Award for Best Picture. Wellman (who appears briefly in the film as a soldier) and Saunders, both World War I ace pilots, were well acquainted with air combat and with the flyers themselves.

No process photography was used – all aircraft scenes were shot in the sky. Dick Grace, one of Hollywood's best stunt pilots, provided two of the crashes. The movie was in production for a year at the cost of \$2,000,000, not including the War Department's loan of equipment and uniforms in exchange for a picture that provided a good image of the Army Air Corp. Gary Cooper's role was small but memorable; the studio was flooded with fan mail for the "pilot who ate the chocolate bar and went to his death".

*Kathryn Leigh Scott, "Lobby Cards"*

## Aerial close-ups

We were using the first motor-driven cameras which were mounted a little in front of the cockpit. The 400-foot reels ran off about 90 feet a minute which gave us only a little more than four minutes of picture. Bill Wellman would tell us on the ground what he wanted us to do in the air. We would waggle our wings when ready and then take over as producer, director and actor. We would hold up the proper number of fingers for takes one, two or three. If we thought the scene was bad we would run a finger across our throats for a cut. That was why Wellman wanted actors for "Wings" who could fly. "Buddy" Rogers couldn't, but he learned damn quick.

*Richard Arlen in "Air Classics", Feb. 1969, about "Wings"*



*Wings*  
USA 1927; bw (some handtinted scenes); 136 min  
P: Paramount; d: William A. Wellman; w: Louis D. Lighton, Hope Loring, after a story by John Monk Saunders;  
aerial photography: Harry Perry, E. Burton Steene, Al Williams, William Clothier et al.; c: Clara Bow, Charles "Buddy" Rogers, Richard Arlen, Gary Cooper et al.



## Grand openings

The premiere of "Hell's Angels" on May 27, 1930, was the gaudiest, splashiest, star-attended affair ever seen in Hollywood. So dense was the crowd of 1,300,000 who had come to witness the spectacle (with 30 planes flying overhead) that one movie critic complained of taking one hour to travel four blocks to Grauman's Chinese Theater.

*Mel Torme*



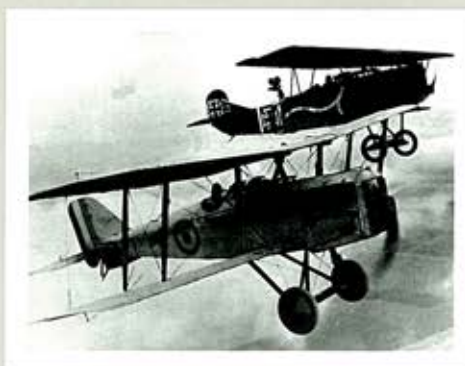
When "Hell's Angels" opened in New York in August 1930, audiences were stunned by the feast Hughes had prepared for them: nearly ninety authentic World War I fighter planes piloted by 137 fliers, red-tinted battle scenes, a ball sequence in two-color Technicolor, and, in some theaters, a screen that enlarged in a couple of sequences for even more sensational effects.

*Curtis F. Brown "Jean Harlow"*

## Order for Noah

My first objective is to become the world's number-one golfer. Second, the top aviator, and third I want to become the world's most famous motion picture producer. Then, I want you to make me the richest man in the world.

*Howard Hughes, 1928, to Noah Dietrich, "Howard, The Amazing Mr. Hughes"*



above: "Hell's Angels"  
Howard Hughes (left)  
confers with his chief  
cameraman Harry Perry  
on dogfight maneuvers



## The conductor

The time Howard Hughes took for shooting the scenes on the ground were nothing compared to the amount of time for the aerial photography. Hour after hour he spent with drawing the development of the air-battles, which he filmed afterwards. He built three-dimensional models of imagined air-lanes, using toy-machines and studying the most propitious camera-focusses during these "sand box plays". Whole days long he painstakingly explained the hired pilots how they should fly. To make dead-sure the pictures of the air-battles would procede exactly the way they had been planned, he decided to fly the machine carrying the camera equipment himself and from there he directed by hand-signals the flight routes of each and every fighter and bomber.

Noah Dietrich, "Howard, The Amazing Mr. Hughes"

## The aerodynamic bra

"This brassiere should hold up her breasts, but be so thin that it retains the natural form of her breasts, instead of giving them an unnatural form. And if anything could be attached to the dress itself at the point of the nipple, to give the dress a realistic tip (which Jane Russell doesn't always have), and if that could be done without putting anything into the dress except at the point of the nipple – then that would be ideal."

Howard Hughes in his "We're not getting enough output out of Jane's breasts" memo to his aerodynamic constructors



A milestone of cinema history.

"Halliwell's Film Guide"

*Hell's Angels*  
USA 1930; bw (some colour scenes); 135 min  
P: Howard Hughes/United Artists; d: Howard Hughes;  
w: Howard Estabrook, Harry Behn, after a story by  
Marshall Neilan and Joseph Moncure March; ph: Tony  
Gaudio; aerial photography: Harry Perry, E. Burton  
Steene, Elmer Dyer; c: Jean Harlow, Ben Lyon, James  
Hall, Frank Clarke et al.





Bette Davis as a pilot in "Skyward", 1980.  
above: Ruth Chatterton  
opposite middle: young Katharine Hepburn as an aviatrix in her second movie appearance, 1933  
below: Dorothy Arzner, directrix of "Christopher Strong", 1933  
left: Ruth Elder who nearly flew the Atlantic  
right: Anna Neagle in "They Flew Alone", 1941



"Skyward" (1980) has a full 22 minutes devoted to flight scenes, starring Bette Davis at age 72 in the role of a former woman stunt pilot who persuades a young female paraplegic (Suzy Gilstrap) to learn to fly in Bette's Christen Eagle II. The movie's debut took place in Washington, D.C., when President Carter proclaimed 1981 as the "Year of the Handicapped".

*Christopher Strong*  
USA 1933; bw; 72 min  
P: RKO; d: Dorothy Arzner; w: Zoe Atkins, after the novel by Gilbert Frankau; ph: Bert Glennon; m: Max Steiner; c: Katharine Hepburn, Colin Clive, Helen Chandler, Billie Burke et al.



## Liberated women

The revolution taking place in aviation was itself bringing the first glimmers of change on many levels of contemporary society. The aviatrix, among the first of this century's so-called "liberated women", found early and repeated representation on the screen from the late 1920s. The characters, as much a product of the screenwriters' imaginations as fact, nonetheless had growing numbers of real-life counterparts, especially in Southern California.

Aviatrixes such as Florence "Pancho" Barnes, Neta Snook, Amelia Earhart, Gladys Roy, Marian Bowen, Elinor Smith, and Bobby Trout were among the better known local California fliers of the 1920s and 1930s. But screen actresses such as Ruth Chatterton and Andre Peyre and DeMille screenwriter Jeanie Macpherson, who learned to fly in 1920, were as well known for their exploits in the air as for those before the cameras on the ground. In October 1927 actress Ruth Elder received front pages around the world for her attempted Atlantic crossing, ending with a mid-ocean rescue. Ruth Chatterton owned her own plane and preferred flying from New York to Hollywood instead of taking the train.

*James H. Farmer, "Celluloid Wings"*

## Great God Speed

The personal story of a million daughters... She gave herself to the great god Speed, and tried to run away from the fires within her!

*Publicity for "Christopher Strong", 1933, where Katharine Hepburn played an aviatrix in her second movie appearance*







Clark Gable as "Test Pilot"; below: posing

### Plane advertising

So MGM – very nicely, I thought – gave me a big private plane. Each time we arrived somewhere the pilot flew around several times before landing, and I could never figure out why so many people always collected.

Then I discovered they'd painted a damn great MGM lion under the belly of the plane with my name in huge letters beside it. That solved the riddle.

*Robert Taylor (1911-1969) in "The Sunday Express", Aug. 12, 1962*



Tyrone Power and Robert Taylor with their planes below, director Henry King with his Waco sports plane, 1941



## The flying director

Director King was hard to satisfy on the action. While we stood there, he had the two actors go through it at least five times. Peck was attired in a heavy flying suit, with fur-lined boots and jacket. He certainly must have been hot under the Florida sun, but you couldn't tell it by looking at him.

*E.C. Mathews about the shooting of "Twelve O'Clock High"*



The fascination with aviation that James Stewart had shown as a child grew with time and as a film actor with a solid income he indulged himself in 1938 by buying an airplane, a two-seat Stinson 105. With the outbreak of the Second World War in September of 1939 he believed America would eventually be involved and he clocked up as many hours of flying time as he could in order to eventually qualify as a military pilot. He was drafted in January 1941, although underweight for a man of his height. But, by the day of his induction, March 22, 1941, he managed to meet the requirements by a matter of ounces. No actor of any fame at that time more eagerly tried to get into the armed forces than this one. He stills recalls his draft number - 308. His salary dropped from \$12,000 to \$21 per month.

He was highly decorated at the end of the war: he had won the Air Medal, with Oak Leaf Cluster, and was given the Croix de Guerre by the French government for his war services. As a squadron commander with several hundred planes in his group, Stewart led eleven missions.

By the time of his discharge from service in September of 1945 he had been promoted to full colonel, making him one of the highest ranking and most combat-involved celebrities to have served in the war.

*"The Films of James Stewart"*





## Flying with PAA clippers

Merian C. Cooper, producer and director of "King Kong", had an ulterior motive in producing this film; as a director of the fledgling Pan American Airways and eager to promote air travel, he saw to it that dozens of PAA Sikorsky clippers were made available to the production, though no cast member actually flew to Rio (or got off the ground, for that matter).

John Eastman, "Retakes"

*Flying Down to Rio*  
USA 1933; bw; 89 min  
P: RKO; d: Thornton Freeland; w: Cyril Hume, H. W. Haneman, Erwin Gelsey, after the play by Anne Caldwell; songs: Edward Elisen, Gus Kahn; choreography: Dave Gould; m: Vincent Young; ph: J. Roy Hunt; c: Dolores Del Rio, Gene Raymond, Ginger Rogers, Fred Astaire et al.

## On wings of a song

A musical extravaganza staged in the clouds, romance that soars to the skies on the wings of a song.

Publicity for "Flying Down to Rio", 1933





## A place in film history

And then, to the amazement of the audience, two people sprint onto the stage to show the other dancers "a thing or three". The man says, "I'd like to try this once". It's Fred Ayres and Honey Hale, otherwise known as Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers, and although they do only two brief dance turns before the stage is overrun by with extras, their place in film history is assured the moment they take the floor... Here is a sense of discovery, ours as well theirs, plus a hint of the skill, radiance, and beauty that turned two dancers into a legend...

The movie closes with its best-remembered number, in which Astaire sings the title song while airplanes soar overhead with chorus girls strapped to their wings. No matter how often this sequence is viewed the effect is equally astonishing and preposterous, and although we know that the girls are only a few feet off the ground, it is also a bit frightening...

This number was filmed in an airplane hangar, using wind machines and a few airplanes suspended from the ceiling. Authentic background footage of Rio was mixed with aerial views of a more accessible Malibu Beach.

*Ted Sennett, "Hollywood Musicals"*



Fred Astaire defying gravity in "Royal Wedding", 1951

*Royal Wedding*;  
USA 1951; col; 93 min  
P: MGM; d: Stanley Donen; w: Alan Jay Lerner;  
ph: Robert Planck; m: Johnny Green; c: Fred Astaire,  
Jane Powell, Peter Lawford et al.

## Only a few hours

Although a clever director and talented stars have been straining to make you believe in the epic achievement of flying aeroplanes over dangerous territories by night instead of day, all that is really being achieved is the saving of a few hours – another slight acceleration of the pace of modern living, which doesn't, after all, seem such a triumph of high endeavor...

*John Gammie, "London Film Weekly", 1933*



Helen Hayes desiring her flying husband Clark Gable in "Night Flight", 1933  
above: Elmer Dyer's squall line, finally filmed after two months of cloud hunting

## Waiting for clouds

You just can't shoot any sky stuff when the sky is cloudless. If you photograph a plane against a blue sky it appears to be motionless. A few clouds scudding by show that the plane is actually moving and thereby add speed to the action.

*William A. Wellman, director of 15 aviation movies*

*Night Flight*  
USA 1933; bw; 85 min  
P: MGM; d: Clarence Brown; w: Oliver H. P. Garrett, after the writings of Antoine de Saint Exupéry; aph: Elmer Dyer, Charles Marshall; ph: Oliver T. Marsh; c: John Barrymore, Helen Hayes, Clark Gable et al.



Photographer Elmer Dyer and stunt pilot Paul Mantz went for maybe the greatest cloud hunt in film history. They searched the skies for two months, looking for the squall line required by the script of "Night Flight". Dyer thought he had found the clouds in need over the white peaks of the Colorado Rockies near Denver... Staying in close with the weather bureau, they chased various storm fronts through Texas, Nebraska, Kansas, Missouri, New Mexico, Arizona, and Nevada, invariably arriving too late. Two months later, above his own hangar in Burbank, California, Mantz finally found the long-sought squall.

To all women who love and admire the fearless heroes of the air, and who, with brave hearts, encourage them, hope, and pray for them.

*Director's dedication by William A. Wellman in "Men's with Wings"*



*Men with Wings*  
 USA 1938; Technicolor; 106 min  
 P: Paramount; d: William A. Wellman; w: Robert Carson;  
 ph: W. Howard Greene; aph: Wilfrid M. Cline, Charles  
 Marshall; m: W. Frank Harling, Gerald Carbonara; c: Fred  
 MacMurray, Ray Milland, Louise Campbell et al.





### Bringing Gable down

Although Gable was purportedly Adolf Hitler's favorite American actor, Air Minister Hermann Göring announced that he was holding a 5.000 Dollar reward, plus furlough time to spend it and a promotion for the German flier who brought Gable down, death or alive.

Clark Gable: "There is one thing I'll never do. I'll never bail out. If I ever fall into Hitler's hands, the son of a bitch will put me in a cage like a big gorilla. He'd exhibit me all over Germany."

Gable's mission completed in England, he returned to the United States with 50.000 feet of film shot over the hot skies of war-time Europe.

*Chester Williams, "Gable"*

### Publicity for a bomber

The Army Air Corps provided the production of "Test Pilot" with four different airfield locations and the use of B-17 bombers, the latest military aircraft, to exploit their publicity value. Clark Gable was fascinated with the B-17 and persuaded a pilot to let him fly one, with the pilot giving instructions with the dual controls. A blend of romantic comedy and melodrama, the film was both a popular and critical success.

*Kathryn Leigh Scott, "Lobby Cards"*

*Test Pilot*  
USA 1938; bw; 118 min  
P: MGM; d: Victor Fleming; w: Victor Lawrence, Waldemar Young, after a story by Frank Wead; aph: Ray June, Charles Marshall; m: Franz Waxman; c: Clark Gable, Myrna Loy, Spencer Tracy, Lionel Barrymore et al.



## Turning on the gas

Director Fleming ("Gone with the Wind") let his star-trio turn on the gas: Gable, while he is attempting to create a new world-speedrecord has to make an emergency landing near the Barton farm, because of an oil-leak. Here the sympathetic and pretty daughter takes him under her wing and makes the playboy into a husband inside 24 hours. Gunnar (Spencer Tracy) has mixed feelings about this marriage, as he also has taken a fancy to the young lady.

*ARD-pressrelease to "Test Pilot"*

The picture is so noisy with sure-fire elements – box office cast, violent excitement, glycerine tears and such – that it may be hard to keep the ear attuned to the quieter, more authentically human things in it.

*James Shelley Hamilton*



The classic constellation in aviation movies: a woman (here Myrna Loy in "Test Pilot") between two men (Clark Gable and Spencer Tracy), 1938; below: Gable gives Myrna Loy a flight lesson.

## Simulations

Question: You worked with Clark Gable and Spencer Tracy on another film called "Test Pilot". Did you have many models of airplanes in that?

Answer: You call them models! My British cohorts call them models too, but we call them miniatures. A model is something you put over a fireplace. A miniature is a working model. We used a lot of miniatures in "Test Pilot".

Most of the close shots of the actors in the airplanes were done like this on a sound stage with simulated weather. Snowstorms when necessary. Clark Gable didn't mind going through a certain amount of physical discomfort to get a scene.

*Special effects artist Arnold "Buddy" Gillespie on "Test Pilot"*





## A lot of heart burns

One day we had just finished a scene – Alan Hale, Dennis Morgan and I – in which we had to bring in a plane, jump out of the cockpit onto the tarmac, then sprint fifty or sixty feet to get out of camera range. And this we did *all* day. The first take, the plane wasn't where it should have been; the second take we were where we shouldn't have been, and so on down the line. We wore out three sets of cadets, and all they had to do was walk between us and the camera. When we left the set at day's end the three of us were bone tired.

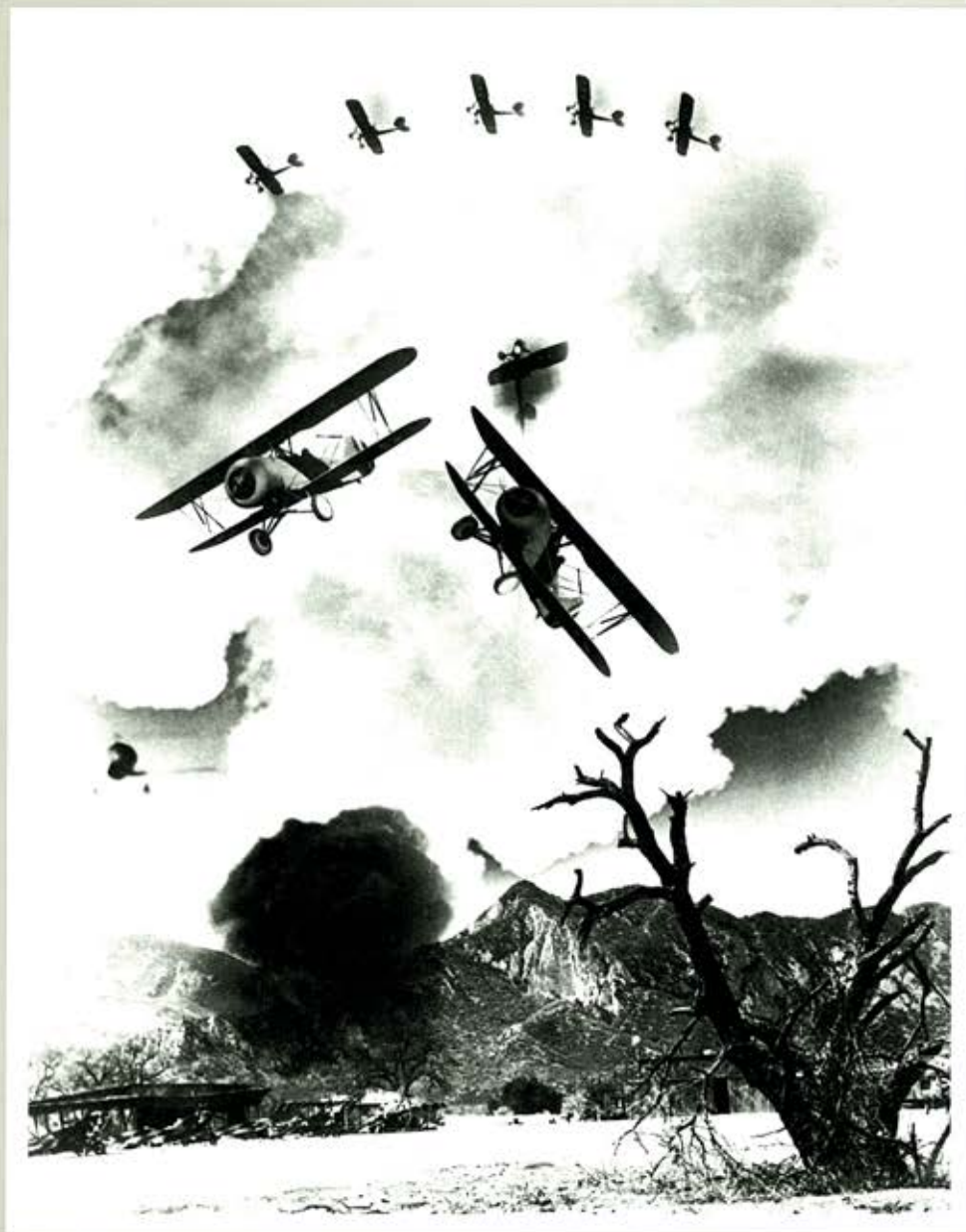
*James Cagney, talking about his work on "Captains of the Clouds"*

Forty famous stunt flyers helped Dick Barthelmess crowd "Dawn Patrol" with more thrills than you'd get in a dozen actual flights. And the author of "Wings" has packed the story with heart-throbs such as only heroes know! "Take off" to "The Dawn Patrol" the minute it comes to town.

*Publicity from 1930*

Bare, cleancut, uncluttered technique, a stark story line, terse dialogue ... and a pervasive atmosphere of hopelessness captured with economy and incisiveness.

*Andrew Sarris on "The Dawn Patrol"*



A dogfight in "The Dawn Patrol", Howard Hawks' first talkie

*The Dawn Patrol*  
USA 1930; bw; 82 min  
P: First National/Warner Bros.; d: Howard Hawks; w: H. H., John Monk Saunders, Dan Totheroth, Seton I. Miller, after the short story "Flight Commander" by John Monk Saunders; ph: Ernest Haller; m: Leo F. Forbstein; c: Richard Barthelmess, Douglas Fairbanks Jr. et al.

*The Bride Came C.O.D.*  
USA 1941; bw; 92 min  
P: Warner Bros.; d: William Keighley; w: Julius J. & Philip G. Epstein; ph: Ernest Haller; m: Max Steiner; c: Bette Davis, James Cagney, Stuart Erwin et al.



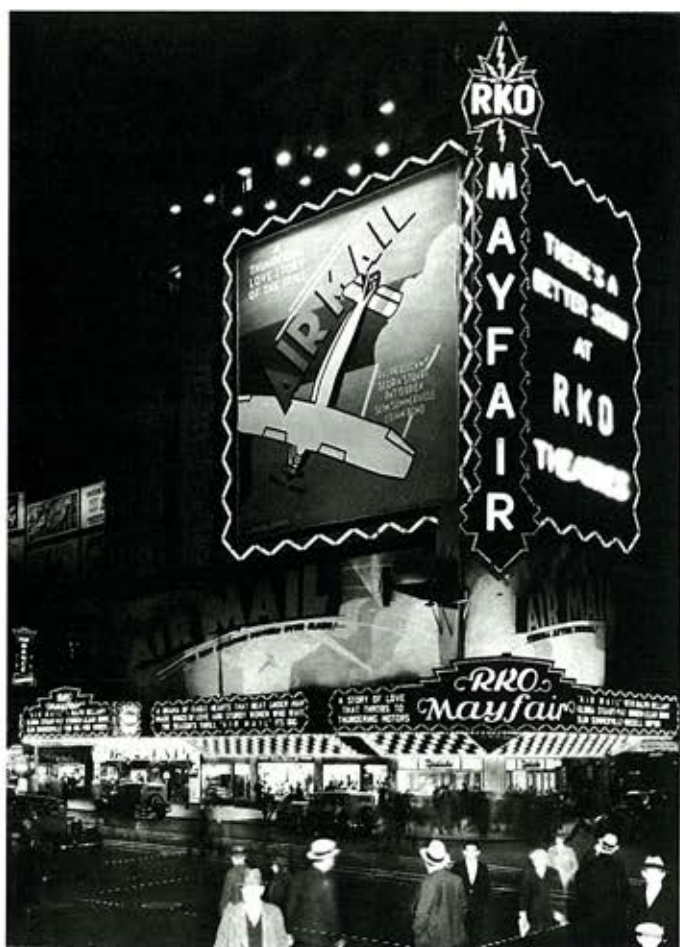
## Arranged kidnapping

Bette Davis, taking time off from her big dramatic roles, as an eloping heiress in a screwball farce, with James Cagney opposite her. The heiress is about to marry an obnoxious bandleader when her father arranges with a pilot (Cagney) to kidnap her and bring her home. The plane makes an emergency landing in Death Valley, and Davis and Cagney battle each other with wisecracks, and her rump hits a bed of cactus. Davis shrieks her lines happily, and Cagney sticks out his ample gut and holds his ground.

*Pauline Kael on "The Bride Came C.O.D."*



Bette Davis and James Cagney after the plane crash; below: Ford's "Air Mail", 1932



## Studio tricks

The first picture to optimize the stage was John Ford's "Air Mail" in 1932. Special effects artist Fulton was particularly fond of it, having been awarded his pilot's license on June 10 by instructor Paul Mantz. Much of the film's trick work involved miniature planes on wires in front of process backgrounds which Fulton photographed himself in the High Sierras. To direct the movement of the miniature craft, the designed a regulation cockpit... he was able to achieve realistic rolling, pitching, and yawing.

The model planes for "Air Mail" were among the most sophisticated ever built for a motion picture. Midget electric motors spun propellers and soft rubber tires functioned as landing gear. Under Fulton's direction, they achieved a realism that reportedly fooled veteran military pilots.

*Paul Mandell, "Making Miracles the Hard Way: John P. Fulton"*



## Tough as they are

Tension creeps into the relationships of the men who fly cargo planes over the Andes when a stranded showgirl sets her cap at the boss... It couldn't be more typical of the Howard Hawks film world, where men are men and women have to be as tough as they are.

"Halliwell's Film Guide"

## How a film gets a start

Question: Were you influenced at all by Ford's "Air Mail" (1932) when you made "Only Angels Have Wings" (1939)?

Answer: I never saw it. I was influenced by knowing the characters that were in my story. All of that is true. For instance, I knew the fellow who jumped out of a plane and left someone behind, and nobody would talk to him. And the thing where Grant has to tell his friend about his broken neck – I saw it happen. The only thing we added was that Grant went and stood out in the rain while his friend died.

I did a lot of flying myself. I had dinner one night with some bush pilots down in Mexico, and they told me about this little place... and they had to fly over a hump and they had a man sitting up there. So I wrote it down on a piece of paper, and then one day I went over to talk to Frank Capra about something.

Harry Cohn always knew everyone who came into Columbia, and instead of giving me permission to go and talk to Capra, he asked me to come up and talk to him. He said, "Look, I'm stuck, I've got to have a story for Gary Grant and Jean Arthur." I said, "Here's a story I was writing on this morning." He said, "When can you start?" I said, "What do you mean, I haven't got a script written." He said, "You've got to start ten days from now." I said, "Okay, but it's gonna cost you a lot more money."

Howard Hawks interviewed by "Take One"



Only Angels Have Wings  
 USA 1939; bw; 121 min  
 P: Columbia; d: Howard Hawks; w: Jules Furthman,  
 after stories by Howard Hawks; aph: Elmer Dyer;  
 ph: Joseph Walker; m: Dmitri Tiomkin; c: Gary Grant,  
 Jean Arthur, Rita Hayworth, Richard Barthelmess,  
 Thomas Mitchell et al.



## Faulkner's film work

Howard Hawks was himself working away at beating the patriotic drum for Warner Brothers ... and his big project for 1942 was "Air Force", a panoramic picture about the fate of a single B-17 bomber ... The working screenplay was by Dudley Nichols, perhaps the most highly regarded screenwriter at the time ... Hawks apparently felt there was something lacking in his script and decided to use Faulkner for the writing of several entirely new scenes.

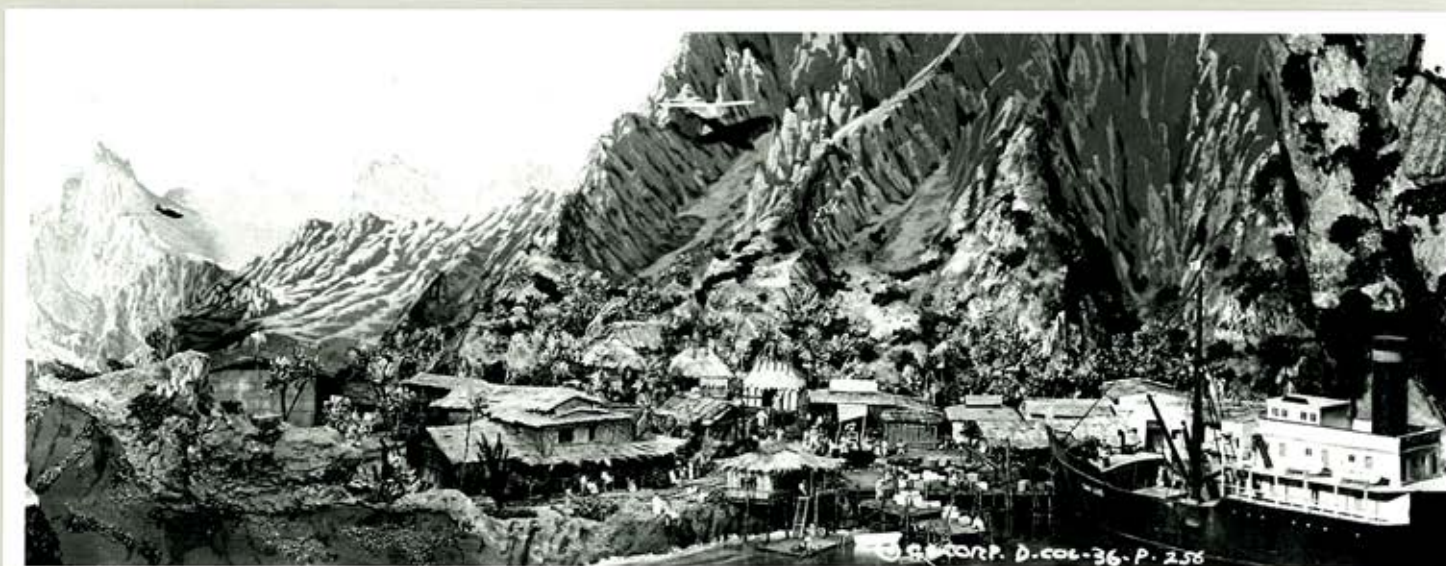
One of these scenes was the concluding one in which the dying Captain Quincannon thinks he is preparing his B-17 for takeoff. Lying on a hospital bed, surrounded by the surviving crew members, he runs

through all the items on his flight checklist. Each crew member replies dutifully, until he finally asks the navigator for the direction to be taken. The film ends as the answer is given, "Due East - into the sunrise", followed by the final chords of Franz Waxman's score. Reduced to words on paper, the scene seems cheap and obvious enough, but Hawks and his cast (headed by John Garfield) managed to bring it off surprisingly well. It was the kind of scene that Hawks seemed to have felt he needed at the very end of a picture like this, and that Faulkner could supply on quick demand, which he did.

"Air Force" was a tremendously popular film, and although Faulkner received no official screen credit for his work, his contribution to it were generally known around Warner

Brothers. More importantly, it reestablished his contact with Hawks, and served as his working credentials to go on working with him on a fairly regular basis, culminating in their two triumphs, "To Have and Have Not" and "The Big Sleep".

*Tom Dardis, "Some Time in the Sun. The Hollywood Years of Fitzgerald, Faulkner, Nathanael West, Aldous Huxley, And James Agee."*



A village in the Andes, built at Columbia Studio left. Gary Grant and Jean Peters, starting the "lighting business" which made the Hawks films famous

I was in the Air Corps in the First War. And, oh, I really started to fly 'long about '15. And then after the war was over, I owned about twelve, fifteen airplanes, all different kinds. Had about ten thousand hours - a lot of time. Flying isn't much fun any more, you have to make up plans of where you are going to go and what time you are going to leave and it's no fun.

I knew all of the pilots. When airlines started I knew everybody, every pilot who flew on

the airlines. I knew all the test pilots. You unconsciously begin to find out how they think and what they do, and I made several airplane pictures and I've utilized those things.

*Howard Hawks in Richard Schickel's "The Men Who Made the Movies"*



## He was the first

He made wingwalking an art. When he was the first man to change from one plane to another in midair, he amazed the world, even though most credited him with more guts than brains. It was his startling stunt work in the air, copied by many others, that gave that extra dash and thrill to movie serials just beginning their greatest era.

*Art Ronnie on Ormer Locklear, "The Man Who Walked on Wings"*

## "It's not a trick"

"Is it a dangerous trick to jump from one plane to another several thousand feet in the air, Omar?" asked one reporter.

"It's no trick and far from dangerous. And the name is Ormer."

"How long will you continue to do it?"

"Until I die of old age."

"Omar, why did you change from dropping from one plane to the other for the rope climb?"

"A man is really foolish to risk his life and I didn't believe in taking unnecessary chances. But the name is Ormer."

*Art Ronnie in "Locklear: The Man Who Walked on Wings"*



Stunt pilot Frank Tailman, 1975; "13 Black Cats", Hollywood's first stunt flier association, 1924



## Precision flying

It was impossible to wear either helmet or goggles because the wind tore them off the face. The hair was whipped and beaten until you can't even comb it for days after... during one picture eleven shirts were torn from my back in making wing tricks.

*Stunt pilot Dick Grace*

Paul Mantz had more of a feel for what his plane was doing than any man I ever flew with... The nice thing was that when he flew me for camera he could fly his airplane and at the same time concentrate on the action, angle, and distance. It's quite a trick to fly a camera ship. You have to know all the time where the lens is looking; you can't just fly right on past your action, or the poor guy in back will end up shooting the tail or wingtip.

*Cinematographer Elmer Dyer on Paul Mantz*

Throughout his career Paul Mantz shunned the term "stunt flying". He preferred "precision flying", and precise he was. If a movie studio asked him to handle a particularly dangerous flying job, Paul would go out and inspect the site for the shooting. Then he would carefully and meticulously plan all the intricate phases of the gag itself – measuring, calculating and computing the answers he needed to make the stunt as safe and as effective as possible.

*Jim & Maxine Greenwood, "Stunt Flying in the Movies"*

In 1924 13 Southern Californian fliers organized the "13 Black Cats". They became Hollywood's first formal association of stunt fliers. One of the requirements of membership was that each name must contain 13 letters. But one of the more innovative concepts was a list of rates for specific movie stunts such as loopings, wingwalking...

*James H. Farmer, "Celluloid Wings"*



A camera plane in "Great  
Waldo Pepper"  
above: Wingwalker  
Ormer Locklear, 1918



## Between Heaven and Earth

Buildings 250 stories high!...Traffic on nine levels...Rockets that shoot from star to star...Airplanes that land on the roofs of buildings...A whole meal in a capsule that can be swallowed at one gulp...No – this isn't a Jules Verne dream induced by a welsh rarebit...It's New York in 1980, as foretold in the new Fox picture, "Just Imagine!"...A picture of the great set showing the metropolis fifty years hence – the most intricate setting ever created for pictures...It took 205 engineers and craftsmen five months to build it, at a cost of \$168,000...It was designed after long conferences with noted artists and scientists who dare peer far into the future...The set stands in a balloon hangar at a former Army flying field twenty miles from Hollywood...In 1980 – people have serial numbers, not names...Marriages are all arranged by the courts...But there's still love!...Don't laugh! Our granddaddies laughed at the thought that men might fly!

*Publicity for "Just Imagine!", 1930*



Maureen O'Sullivan and John Garrick, 1930 in the New York of 1980: "Just Imagine!"



A World War II squadron leader deliberately bails out of his plane without a parachute. He journeys between two worlds – Heaven and Earth – as he is put on trial for taking his own life. Heaven is depicted as an ethereal land, surrounded in mists, amid the cosmos. A mammoth technical job in the heavenly sequences, "Stairway to Heaven" deserves full marks for sheer arrogance, wit, style and film flair.



Signing in for heaven in "Stairway to Heaven"

*A Matter of Life and Death; also: Stairway to Heaven Great Britain 1947; bw and col; 102 min  
P: Archers; w, d: Michael Powell, Emeric Pressburger;  
ph: Jack Cardiff; m: Allan Gray; sp: Henry Harris, Percy Day, Douglas Woolsey; c: David Niven, Kim Hunter, Raymond Massey, Richard Attenborough et al.*





Crashlanded in the Valley of the Moon in Tibet. "Lost Horizon", 1937, a Frank Capra film

Incredible science-fiction musical comedy set in the wonderful, then futuristic New York of 1980! El Brendel, an actor with a phony Swedish accent, wakes up Buck Rogers-style in the future where 19-year-old Maureen O'Sullivan is fought over by men who need government approval to marry her. Brendel and one of the suitors blast off to Mars, where everyone is a twin. The sets of future Manhattan were so impressive that scenes were later used in Flash Gordon serials. The Prohibition humor and songs are unbelievably silly and the Martian costumes could start new fashion trends if this got widely shown. Lightning bolts, spikes, and metallic-print bikinis mixed with ridiculous wigs and eye

makeup are part of the wackiest outfits in screen history. Never has a movie been at once so ahead of its time and so dated.

Michael Weldon, "The Psychotronic Encyclopedia of Film", on "Just Imagine!"

"What the hell does heaven look like?" barked studio chief Harry Cohn to his set designers. The answer, to Cohn's apparent satisfaction, turned out to be fog atop dry ice to simulate a location somewhere above the clouds.

John Eastman, "Retakes"

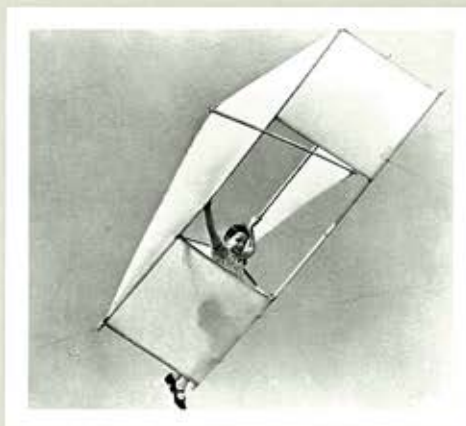
*Just Imagine!*  
USA 1930; bw; 102 min  
P: 20th Century Fox; w, d: David Butler; ph: Ernest Palmer; sp: Ralph Hameras; m: Ray Henderson, B. G. Desylva, Lew Brown; c: Maureen O'Sullivan, El Brendel, John Garrick, Mischau Auer et al.





"This picture depicts pioneer days in air travel. As a result of these heroic events, we have arrived at today's safety."

*Opening statement in "Ceiling Zero", 1935, added on behalf of the airlines, which feared for their customers and would have liked the movie wouldn't have been made at all*



above: "I Wanted Wings", 1941  
left: from "Men with Wings"

## Always those motors

From then on, it was airplanes and fliers and the heartening stink of burning oil and the roar of motors. About the middle of the picture I found I had lost fifteen pounds, was living on crackers and milk, and had developed a full head of grey hair. I worked fifteen hours a day and couldn't sleep when I got home. No matter where I was, I yelled at the top of my voice ... I could always hear those motors!

William A. Wellman on "Men with Wings"



### I Wanted Wings

USA 1941; bw; 131 min

P: Paramount; d: Mitchell Leisen; w: Richard Maibaum, Lt. Beirne Lay Jr., Sig Herzig; ph: Teo Tover; aph: Elmer Dyer; m: Victor Young; c: Ray Milland, William Holden, Veronica Lake et al.

### Blaze of Noon

USA 1947; bw; 91 min

P: Paramount; d: John Farrow; w: Frank Wead, Arthur Sheekman, after the novel by Ernest K. Gann; ph: William C. Mellor; aph: Tom Tutwiler; m: Adolph Deutsch; c: Anne Baxter, William Holden, Sterling Hayden et al.



Peter Pan and friends below: "Adventures of Prince Achmed" right side; "Peter Pan", "Fantasia" and "Dumbo", all of them Walt Disney productions



### "We were outsiders"

Animated films were supposed to make people roar with laughter, and no one dared to try this for more than 10 minutes. Everybody in the industry was horrified. But we didn't belong to the industry – we being me and my husband Carl Koch. We had always been outsiders and done what we wanted to do. A Berlin banker asked me to consider making a full-length film and installed us in a studio above the garages of the house in Potsdam.

*Lotte Reiniger (1899-1981) on "Achmed"*

### What a miracle-work

If one considers that all of the protagonists must be able to move all their joints, that true to the story of 1001 Nights the most incredible fable- and fantasy-creatures appear and the dark silhouettes contrast to a picturesquely designed background, which show strange landscapes, threatening clouds, stormy seas, one can approximately imagine what a miracle-work has been created here. But it's not only a question of technical prowess, the main thing is that the spirit of the fairytale is reincarnated in the film picture-sequence and that the world of oriental wonders, of fabulous transformations, of dreamlike occurrences is created anew. We are here in the realm of absolute film, which doesn't pertain to any realistic model...

*"Vorwärts", 9.5.1926 on "The Adventures of Prince Achmed"*

*Peter Pan*  
USA 1953; Technicolor; 76 min  
P: Walt Disney; d: Clyde Geronimi, Wilfred Jackson, Hamilton Luske; w: Ted Sears, Joe Rinaldi u. a., after the play by James M. Barrie; m: Oliver Wallace; Supervisor: Ben Sharpsteen.

*Die Abenteuer des Prinzen Achmed*  
Germany 1926; silent; 71 min  
w, d, ph: Lotte Reiniger; sp: Walter Ruttmann, Berthold Bartosch; animation: L. R., Carl Koch, Berthold Bartosch, Walter Ruttmann, Alexander Kardan, Walter Türck; m: Wolfgang Zeller.



## Into the dark blue

"Peter, I can't! Think of Mummy! Besides, I can't fly."

"I'll teach you, Wendy."

This was too much for her. "Peter, will you teach John and Michael to fly as well?"

"Yes, if you like."

So John und Michael were awakened. They watched Peter fly about the room, and tried to imitate him, flapping their arms clumsily at first like unfledged birds, and flopping about all over the place.

"That will never do," Peter said, "I must blow the fairy dust on you. Now waggle your shoulders as I do."

So they tried, and found that they could fly; just a little at first, from the bed to the floor and back again; then over the bed and across the room, and then, as they grew braver, almost as freely and easily as Peter himself.

"Tink, lead the way!" called Peter, and the fairy shot out like a little star. None of the children had time to put on their day clothes, but John snatched his top hat as he flew out of the window, followed by Michael. Peter Pan held Wendy's hand, and away they floated into the dark blue depths of the starry night.

*Daniel O'Connor, "The Story of Peter Pan"*



In "Plane Crazy", Disney's first Micky-Mouse film (1928), a toy car changes through the mere power of the pencil into an aero-plane, which, driven by Micky Mouse, takes off and flies away. In "Dumbo" a similar miracle takes place: the earthbound elephant suddenly begins to use his over-sized ears as wings and glides like a Pegasus or a bomber through the air. However the miracle doesn't just arise out of the fact that the film is a cartoon, but rather stems from the psychological effect of a "magic pen", which Dumbo's friend, a tiny mouse, has ripped off from an impertinent pack of crows ...

*Siegfried Kracauer, "Kino"*





Hans Albers and Sybille Schmitz in "F.P. 1"



### Only the best pilot...

Through the mediation of pilot Ellissen (Hans Albers), Lieutenant-Captain a.D. Droste (Paul Hartmann) can realise with the help of the Lennartz company his dream of constructing a runway-platform (F.P.1) in the middle of the ocean. Here there should be the opportunity for pilots underway to the opposite continent to land, rest and to refuel their aeroplanes and to carry out necessary repairs. Ellissen, who has fallen in love with Claire (Sybille Schmitz), avoids a total commitment to her in order to throw himself into a new flying adventure...

One day, during a hurricane, the telephone connection to F.P.1 breaks down. Shortly before, shots and screams could be heard on the line. Sabotage? Only the best pilot would be capable of landing on the island in this weather. Claire looks for and finds Ellissen...

"Lexikon des Science Fiction Films"

Actors with a pilot's licence: Richard Arlen, Wallace Beery, Robert Taylor, Tyrone Power, Wayne Morris, Jack Palance, James Stewart, Robert Preston, Georges Peppard, Cliff Robertson et al.

As pilots in World War II served: Charlton Heston, Richard Boone, Paul Newman, William Holden, Dennis Weaver, Sabu, Cameron Mitchell, Jackie Coogan, William Conrad...

*F.P. 1 antwortet nicht*  
Germany 1932; bw; 114 min  
P: UFA; d: Karl Hartl; B: Walter Reisch, after a novel by Kurt Siodmak; ph: Günther Rittau, Konstantin Tschet, Otto Baecker; m: Allan Gray, Hans-Otto Borgmann; c: Hans Albers, Sybille Schmitz, Peter Lorre et al.



## Gigantic constructions

Erich Kettelhut, who had already proved his ability in "Metropolis", covered the small Baltic Sea island Oie in corrugated iron: "The gigantic construction of the substructure, the twinkling lights at night and the vision of the platform appearing out of the dawn mist: those are impressions of a grandeur, which film has very rarely achieved."

Siegfried Kracauer, "Frankfurter Zeitung",  
on "F.P.1 Doesn't Answer"



The Russian aviation film  
"Lodjki" by Julij  
Taitzman, 1935  
below: Ernst Udet in  
"SOS Eisberg"







Hans Albers as „Münchhausen“; Angela Lansbury rides as a patriotic witch

*Münchhausen*  
Germany 1943; Agfacolor; 105 min  
P: UFA; d: Josef von Baky; w: Berthold Bürger (= Erich Kästner); ph: Werner Krien, Konstantin Irmen-Tschet;  
m: Georg Haentzschel; c: Hans Albers, Brigitte Horney, Gustav Waldau et al.

*Bedknobs and Broomsticks*  
USA 1971; Technicolor; 117 min  
P: Walt Disney; d: Robert Stevenson; w: Bill Walsh, Dan DaGradi; ph: Frank Phillips; music/songs: Richard M. and Robert B. Sherman; sp: Eustace Lycett, Alan Maley, Danny Lee; c: Angela Lansbury, David Tomlinson, Sam Jaffe et al.

## The lie as theme

In the war-year 1943, the Ufa filmcompany celebrated its twentyfifth birthday with a film, which took the lie as its theme. With a prestige film in Agfacolor, which wanted to show Hollywood who's boss, which could invest five million marks in equipment, tricks, stars and costumes without an iota of directing talent. What came out was a showpiece, which is still being studied in the trick departments of film schools...

Karsten Witte on "Münchhausen",  
"Frankfurter Rundschau", 4.7.1978







## Flight instructor Quax

The clerk Otto Groschenbühl wins a free training course to become a sports pilot. Against all expectations he qualifies for a flight instructor. His eagerness to strike his hometown and his worshipped girl causes some funny situations. A grotesque comedy which owes its success Heinz Rühmann's humor, who spends some of his private time being a sports pilot himself.

*Lexikon des Internationalen Films, "Quax, der Bruchpilot" (Crash Pilot Quax)*

*Quax, der Bruchpilot*  
Germany 1941; bw; 91 min  
P: Terra; d: Kurt Hoffmann; w: Robert A. Stemmle, after the story by Hermann Grote; ph: Heinz von Jaworsky; m: Werner Bochmann; c: Heinz Rühmann, Harry Liedtke, Karin Himboldt et al.

*Secret Service of the Air*  
USA 1939; bw; 61 min  
P: Warner Bros.; d: Noel Smith; w: Raymond Shrock; c: Ronald Reagan, John Litel, Ila Rhodes et al.

## The Flying G-Man

Within days after the outbreak of World War II in 1939, Ronald Reagan began working on a new motion picture tentatively called "The Enemy Within." In the following weeks, its working title would change to "Uncle Sam Awakens" and finally to the more sensational "Murder in the Air." The film favorably portrayed the young House Committee on Un-American Activities, warned of internal subversion from spies and saboteurs. Reagan played a Secret Service agent, Brass Bancroft, whose mission included the defense of a new super weapon, "a death ray projector," that could stop enemy aircraft and make the United States "invincible in war," thus promising "to become the greatest force for world peace ever discovered."

This film is also noteworthy because its story centers around the protection of "a new super-weapon," actually "the most terrifying weapon ever invented," a "death ray projector" that would make America invincible and at the same time be "the greatest force for world peace ever discovered." The weapon, called "the Inertia Projector," could knock down planes within a four-mile radius. To some, it may appear as an early prototype of the latter-day Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI).

*Stephen Vaughn "The Secret Service Films of Ronald Reagan"*

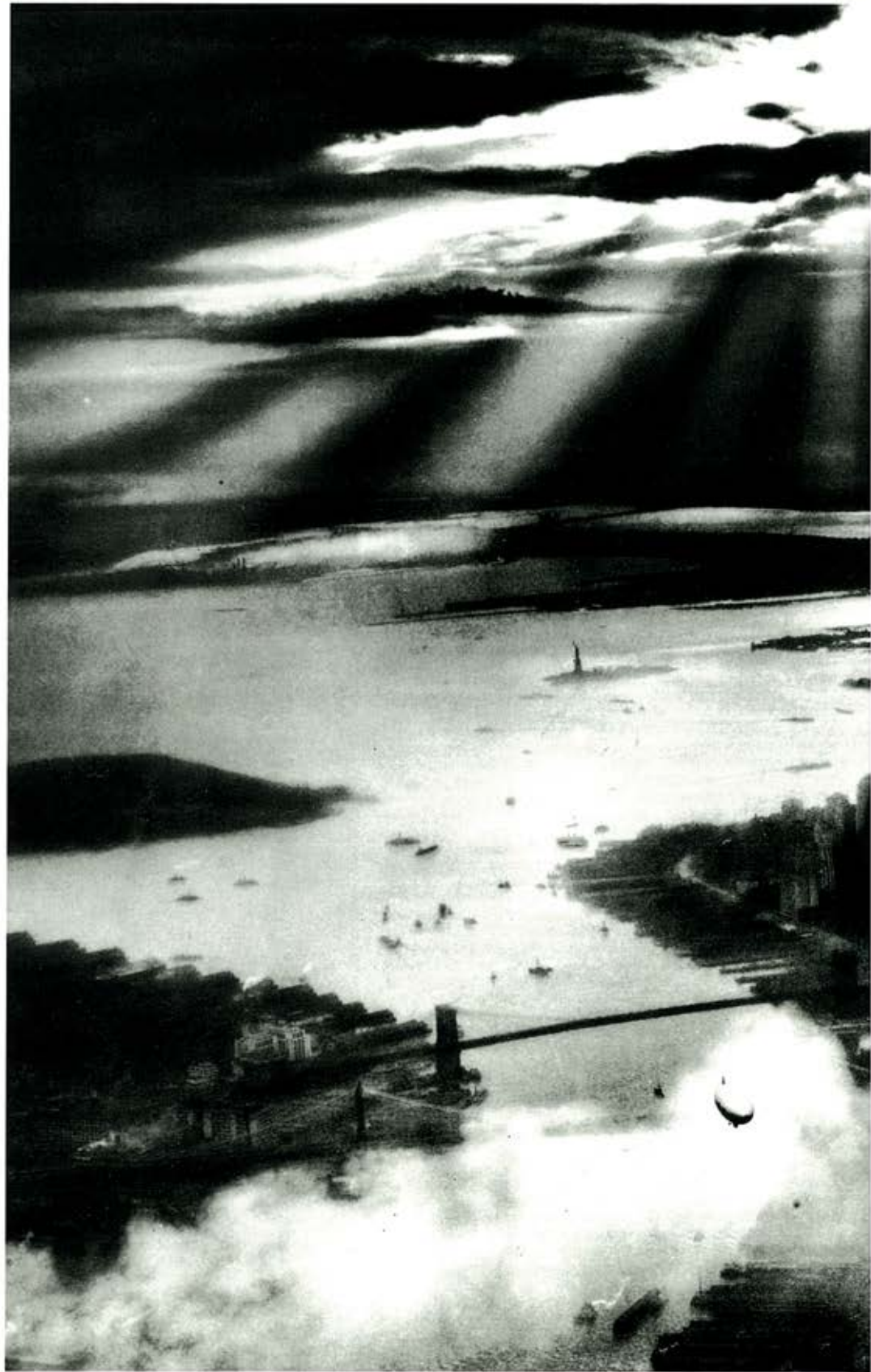


Heinz Rühmann, a flying actor, as "Crash Pilot Quax"; Ronald Reagan as a flying G-Man, 1939 in "Secret Service of the Air"



## Grand Opening

The opening sequence of "Jennie" (1948) was a heartstopping sunset over Manhattan, perfectly illustrating what the narrator called: "Since time began, man has looked into the awesome reaches of infinity and asked the eternal questions: What is time? What is life? What is space? What is death? Through a hundered civilisations, philosophers and scientists have come together with answers, but the bewilderment remains... Out of the shadows of knowledge, and out of a painting that hung on a museum wall, comes our story, the truth of which lies not on our screen but in your hearts."







## Expensive End

Ten years after he had produced "Gone with the Wind", and five years after he had, according to "Time", said that he would soon be the biggest in the film-branch, David Selznik, after the flop of "Portrait of Jennie", gave up his activities as a film-producer and returned with Jennifer Jones to Europe. Almost the whole 4.04 million dollars invested in "Jennie" had to be chalked up as a loss. As excerpts out of his much-dreaded "Memos" document, Selznik had already foreseen the coming catastrophe during the shooting: "Both from the theme and from the production costs, this is the highest-risk film that we have ever made: according to the latest estimates ... it will cost \$ 1,999,000 ... an amount, which, considering that we've already spent half a million and we've only got just over 10 minutes film for it, is absolutely ridiculous ... The extent of our extravagant, wasteful and exaggerated expenditure ... I have to ultimately ... accept the responsibility for myself, and that for two reasons: 1) my production methods; 2) my yearlong tolerance of wasteful extravagance. But now, when it's clear that millions of dollars have been thrown out of the window ... and the most successful films of all time will probably not recover more than 20 percent of their production costs, I don't want to continue bearing this responsibility ..."

*"Memos from Selznik"*

*Portrait of Jennie*  
USA 1948; bw (with tinted scenes); 86 min  
P: David O. Selznik; d: William Dieterle; w: Peter Berneis, Paul Osborn, Leonard Bernovici, after the novel by Robert Nathan; ph: Joseph August; m: Dmitri Tiomkin, after Debussy; c: Jennifer Jones, Joseph Cotten et al.



## Chain Lightning

After the second World War, an American test pilot (Humphrey Bogart) with courage and ambition gains experience during the test of a new jet-plane and wins the woman of his life. Great aerial shots and an attractive main actor can't make up for a banal script.

*"Lexikon des Internationalen Films"*



## Lust for a Rockefeller

She sits in an airplane intently reading a book upside down. She then discovers she has taken the wrong plane and is going to Kansas and not Atlantic City. She lusts for a Rockefeller and when asked which one, she replies: "I don't care."

*Joan Mellen, "Marilyn Monroe"*



Bogart in "Chain Lightning", 1950  
Marilyn Monroe finds her millionaire by getting on the wrong airliner in "How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying", 1953

You seldom catch a blonde in financial trouble. I haven't got any relatives anywhere, but I got a rich uncle.

*Jean Harlow as "Suzy"*



Jean Harlow as "Suzy" (1936), a female bigamist

*Chain Lightning*  
USA 1950; bw; 94 min  
P: Warner Bros./First National; d: Stuart Heisler;  
w: Liam O'Brien, Vincent Evans, after an idea  
by J. Redmond Prior; ph: Ernest Haller; m: David  
Buttolph; c: Humphrey Bogart, Eleanor Parker,  
Raymond Massey et al.



The film of the long good-bye, at an airport of course: "Casablanca"

Ilsa (as Rick's intention fully dawns on her): No Richard, no. What has happened to you? Last night we said ...

Rick: Last night we said a great many things. You said I was to do he thinking for both of us. Well, I've done a lot of it since then and it all adds up to one thing. You're getting on that plane with Victor where you belong.

Ilsa (protesting): But Richard, no, I, I ... But what about us?

Rick: We'll always have Paris. We didn't have it, we'd lost it, until you came to Casablanca. We got it back last night.

Ilsa: And I said I would never leave you!

Rick: And you never will. But I've got a job to do, too. Where I'm going you can't follow. What I've got to do, you can't be any part of.

Ilsa, I'm no good at being noble, but it doesn't take much to see that the problems of three little people don't amount to a hill of beans in this crazy world. Someday you'll understand that. Not now. Here's looking at you, kid.

(On the field, the airplane propellers start turning.)

Laszlo: Are you ready, Ilsa?

(Ilsa looks at Rick for the last time.)

Ilsa: Yes, I'm ready.

(to Rick)

Goodbye, Rick. God bless you.

Rick: You better hurry, or you'll miss that plane.

Howard Koch, "Casablanca. Script and Legend"





Sketch for "King Kong", 1933, which helped to sell the project to RKO

## Never seen

One travels with the railways, but one doesn't experience how the train races through unknown, exotic countries, how, all of a sudden, the train flies over river and mountain, or, even, how a child, playing unsuspectedly on the tracks, is saved by just chasing a butterfly. Never has one seen – and that's why one is hooting with laughter, when it is actually shown – that suddenly people are standing upside down, a car driving right into crashing dishes or a mother-in-law flying over the roofs of the houses. That's why people are going to the cinema.

Kurt Pinthus, "Das Kinostück", 1913

*A Night in Casablanca*  
USA 1946; bw; 85 min  
P: United Artists; d: Archie L. Mayo; w: Joseph Fields, Roland Kibbee, Frank Tashlin; ph: James van Trees; m: Werner Janssen; c: Groucho, Harpo and Chico Marx, Charles Drake, Lois Collier et al.



## Brothers in Casablanca

Stewardess: "Time to get up, Sir, we're landing shortly."  
 Fields: "Ohhh!"  
 Stewardess: "Are you air sick?"  
 Fields: "No, dear, somebody put too many olives in my martini last night."  
 Stewardess: "Could I get you a bromo?"  
 Fields: "No, I couldn't stand the noise ..."  
 Gloria: "We're falling two thousand feet!"  
 Fields: "It's all right, dear. Don't start worrying until we get down one thousand, nine hundred and ninety-nine. It's the last foot that's dangerous."

*Dialogue, shortly before and while W.C. Fields falls out of a plane in "Never Give a Sucker an Even Break".*



W.C. Fields before he falls out of a plane in "Never Give a Sucker an Even Break".

Word got out that the Marx Brothers were planning a film to be called "A Night in Casablanca". Being told that Warner Brothers might sue because the title was too close to their "Casablanca", Groucho Marx replied: "I'll sue them for using the word Brothers."

*Peter Hay, "Movie Anecdotes"*



The Marx Brothers on their way to "A Night in Casablanca", 1946. Below: Marlene Dietrich in "No Highway in the Sky", 1951.

During a transatlantic flight, a scientist (James Stewart) discovers that the aeroplane's tail-unit, due to metal-fatigue, is about to fall off... Only one passenger (Marlene Dietrich) believes him... "Turn back, I'm telling you, any minute now it can be too late!" Psychologically masterful, brilliantly acted, full of suspense and humor: best American cinema of storytelling.

*Lexikon des Internationalen Films*

*No Highway in the Sky*  
 USA 1951; bw; 98 min  
 P: 20th Century Fox; d: Henry Koster; w: R. C. Sheriff, Oscar Millard, Alec Coppel, after a story by Nevil Shute; ph: Georges Périnal; c: Marlene Dietrich, James Stewart, Jack Hawkins et al.







## Flying with Flubber

MacMurray is the absent-minded professor of the title – he missed his own wedding twice – who invents an anti-gravity flying rubber, Flubber. He uses it to enhance a losing kids' basketball game and plants it into his model T Ford engine and flies off into the clouds – he even gets as far as Washington, where he's at first treated as a UFO, and tries to convince Congress of the importance of his discovery. The deft direction of Stevenson, MacMurray's fine performance and excellent special effects are under-pinned by Walsh's anti-authoritarian screenplay which mocks red tape and official mumbo-jumbo in a surprisingly successful manner. The film's enormous success led to a sequel, "Son of Flubber" (1963).



*"The Aurum Film Encyclopedia"*

There were many scenes where people were suspended on wires. These scenes had to be lit so that the wires were invisible. We hung the Model T on heavy wires and spun it around here and there on different sets. We had to have a big crane to move it around ... I earned an Academy nomination for this one.

*Special effects artist Edward Colman on "The Absent-Minded Professor"*

*The Absent-Minded Professor*  
USA 1961; bw; 97 min  
P: Walt Disney; d: Robert Stevenson; w: Bill Walsh;  
K: Edward Colman; sp: Peter Ellenshaw, Eustace Lycett,  
Robert A. Matthey; m: George Bruns; c: Fred MacMurray,  
Nancy Olson, Keenan Wynn et al.

*Son of Lassie*  
USA 1945; col; 102 min  
P: MGM; d: Sylvan Simon; w: Jeanne Sarhett, after the  
characters in Eric Knights book "Lassie Come Home";  
ph: Sam North; m: Lazlo Schifffrin; c: Peter Lawford,  
Donald Crisp, June Lockhart et al.



## Run-in with the star system

When I was making "Son of Lassie", I had my first run-in with the star system. First of all, the dog had a dressing room, but I didn't. When we were shooting scenes in Canada of Lassie and the rapids, they had the dog all wired and roped so that they wouldn't lose him, and I was floundering around in the water with very little protection. Lassie was insured for a million dollars, and I had the suspicion that if I was insured at all, it was for a substantially smaller amount.

*Peter Lawford in "The Peter Lawford Story"*

It was the way we called pictures in those days. We didn't think to call it "Lassie II, III, IV." We just called it "Son of Lassie." "Son of" became a general term. You had "Son of Dracula", and I once had the suggestion to call one movie "Son of a Bitch", which I think they should have considered.

*Producer Sam Marx in "The Peter Lawford Story"*



In a purely physical sense nowadays we are changing places with such an ease and with uncomparable speed, that the stable impressions are replaced by ceaselessly alternating ones: aerial views on earthly landscapes we have grown accustomed to; not a single object has kept its unchangeable definitely recognizable look...

*Siegfried Kracauer, "Theory of Film. The Redemption of Physical Reality", published 1960 in New York*





### Hitsongs in Paradise

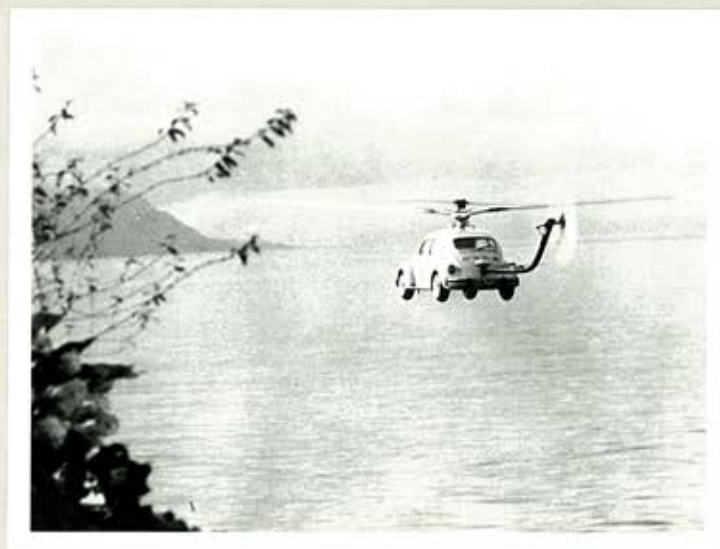
In this one Elvis is a helicopter pilot and gets to sing ten songs and ogle a cute nine-year-old girl. She gets to sing „Bill Bailey, Won't You Please Come Home?“, Hawaiian style, yet.

*Judith Crist, 1974*

*Paradise Hawaiian Style*  
USA 1965; col.; 91 min  
P: Hal Wallis; d: Michael Moore; w: Allan Weiß, Anthony Lawrence; ph: W. Wallace Kelley; m: Joseph J. Lilley and 10 songs by Elvis Presley; c: Elvis Presley, Suzanne Leigh, Donna Butterworth et al.



Ann Sothern and her eggshaped helicopter in "Up Goes Maisie"; a Volkswagen in "The World's Craziest Car"; below: Woody Allen as "Sleeper", 1973



## Just don't change anything

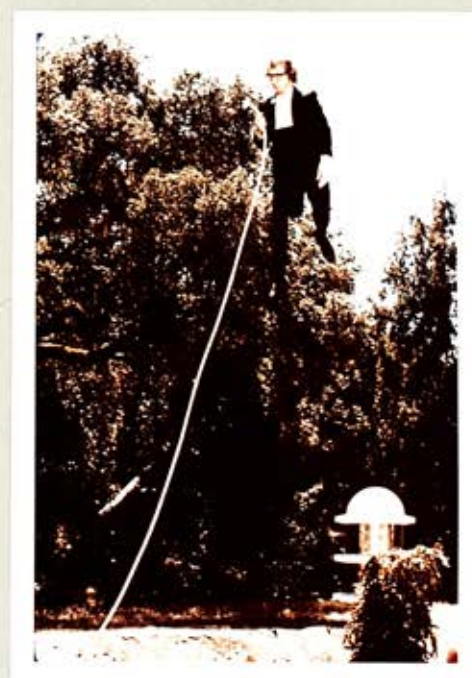
The healthfoodshop owner and hobby jazz-musician Miles Monroe (Woody Allen) only wanted to be treated in hospital for a bunion in 1974, but as it sometimes happens with bureaucracy, he ends up being frozen. When he wakes up, it is – horror of horrors! – the year 2174 ...

Isaac Asimov, who got a call one day from one of Woody Allen's assistants, asking him to take a look at the script: "I read the script

and almost fell off my chair." Allen invited him to dinner and asked him what he thought of it. Asimov: "I told him quite openly that I found it very powerful. He wanted to know, if he should change anything. No, I told him, it's perfect. If I'm sure? Yes, of course I'm sure."

"How many Science Fiction books have you written?" Allen asked. Rather nervously, I said "Not many. Well actually – not very many at all. All in all about thirty books."

*"Lexikon des Science Fiction Films"*



*Up Goes Maisie*  
USA 1946; bw;  
P: MGM; d: Harry Beaumont; w: Thelma Robinson;  
c: Ann Sothern, George Murphy, Hillary Brooke et al.

*Sleeper*  
USA 1973; col; 87 min  
P: Jack Rollins/Charles H. Joffe for United Artists;  
d: Woody Allen; w: W. A., Marshall Brickman; ph: David Walsh; sp: A. D. Flowers; c: Woody Allen, Diane Keaton, John Beck et al.



## A bloody good idea

One evening I picked up a newspaper called "The Evening News" and became intrigued by a story. It said that Geoffrey DeHavilland was killed over the Thames estuary and the plane he was flying broke up in the air. Then there were two or three lines questioning whether he was exceeding the speed of sound, which it was thought could break up the plane. I said, "Look Alex (Alexander Korda), I think this is a bloody good idea for a movie."

*David Lean on "The Sound Barrier"*

Susann (Ann Todd): "Father answer me a question, will you? Is the ability to travel at two thousand miles an hour going to be a blessing to the human race?"

Ridgefield (Ralph Richardson): "Well, I'd say that's up to the human race."

The test craft is called "Prometheus" and among its victims are Ridgefield's son-in-law Tony, who before the fatal flight is reminded by Ridgefield that Prometheus was the Greek titan who stole fire from heaven.

"He came to a sticky end, didn't he?" asks Tony. "He did", replies Ridgefield, "but the world got fire."



Ralph Richardson in David Lean's film "The Sound Barrier"



### *The Sound Barrier*

Great Britain 1952; bw; 110 min

P: London; d: David Lean; w: Terrence Rattigan, William Abbesshire; ph: Jack Cardiff, Jac Hildyard; m: Malcolm Arnold, Alfred Newbourg; c: Ralph Richardson, Nigel Patrick, Ann Todd, John Justin et al.

### *The Tarnished Angels*

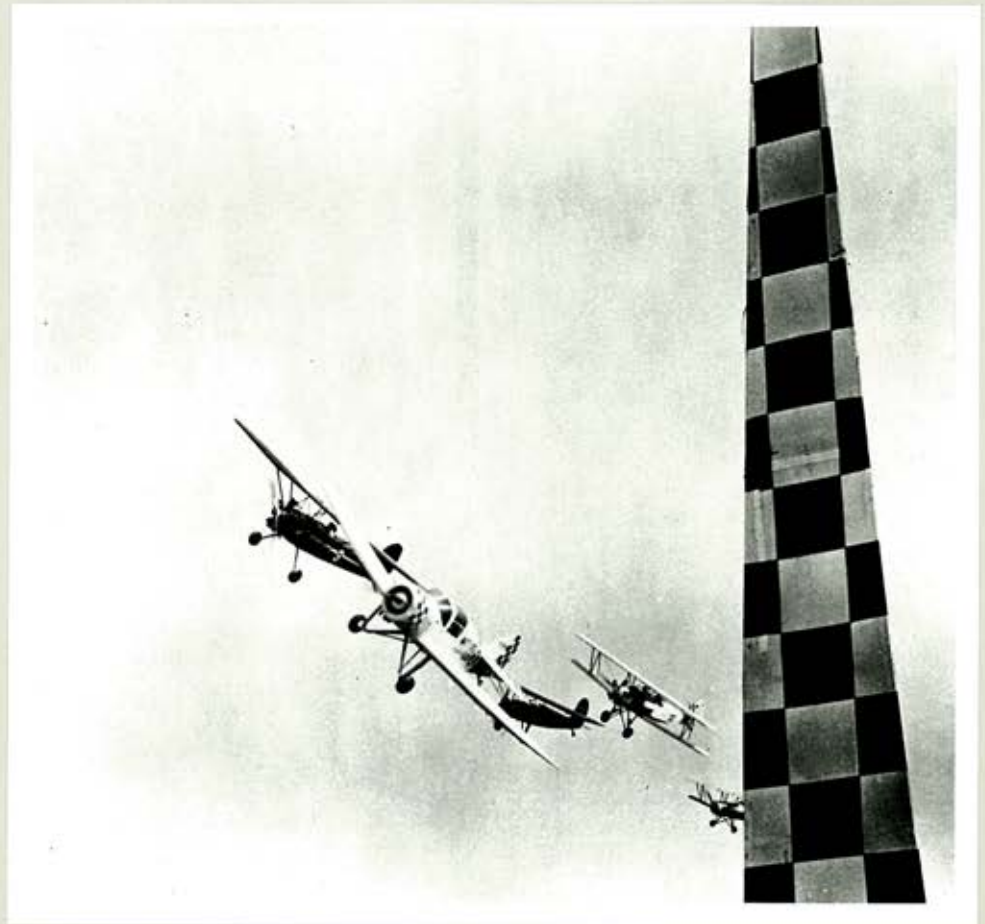
USA 1957; bw; 91 min

P: Universal/Albert Zugsmith; d: Douglas Sirk; w: George Zuckerman, after the novel "Pylon" by William Faulkner; ph: Irving Glassberg; m: Joseph Gershenson, Frank Skinner; c: Rock Hudson, Robert Stack, Dorothy Malone, Jack Carson et al.

## What Rock Hudson didn't understand

Rock Hudson said that this movie was not like his others – that he disapproved of it, and that such nasty stories shouldn't be presented to the American public. The nasty material is William Faulkner's "Pylon", adapted by George Zuckerman. Set in New Orleans in 1931, the movie attempts to recreate Faulkner's hectic, feverish atmosphere and heroes – the ex-war pilots who will do anything to sustain the thrill of flying. The daredevils are played by Robert Stack, Dorothy Malone as his promiscuous parachutist wife, and Jack Carson as a mechanic; Hudson, pooped as ever, is the heavy-drinking reporter who wants to do a story on the trio. It's the kind of bad movie that you know is bad – and yet you're held by the mixture of polished style and quasi-melodramatics achieved by the director, Douglas Sirk.

*Pauline Kael on "The Tarnished Angels"*



Rock Hudson and the aviators in Sirk's "The Tarnished Angels"



I wanted to use him as a drab guy with no experience but his shitty job in his drab, shitty office. Then he falls in love with the gypsies of the air... These fliers are trying to leave the prison of society – which was terrible after the war. They think they are escaping into the air. But we are all prisoners, into the final prison, which is the grave, and death. This is something I don't think Rock understood, but for his part, as the outsider, his confusion as an actor helped.

*Director Douglas Sirk about Rock Hudson's role in "Tarnished Angels"*



## A landmark in film scoring

The film needed a score that would support the bare dramatics of a man flying the Atlantic alone – the loneliness and the apprehension he must have felt on that pioneering flight. Waxman's music carries the burden; it literally accompanies the lonely aviator and speaks his mind as he looks down at the ocean and the various lands over which he flies. The music also alludes to the danger of drowsiness, his fear of not being able to land the plane, and his prayers. Truly a landmark in film scoring.

Howard Thompson, "James Stewart"



## Dense atmosphere

Especially in that part of the film, which shows the flight, does James Stewart's acting ability meet its greatest challenge. Stewart was approximately 20 years older than Lindbergh, but that apparently didn't matter. The actor hits exactly the feeling of excitement mixed with fear, and that is far more important than historical or physical exactness. Forced into a narrow cockpit, without any comfort whatsoever, not even a radio, in his obsession to reduce his weight to a minimum, Stewart has the film completely under control. He succeeds in portraying his increasing tiredness and boredom

through the watching of the few movements of his gawky figure by his tired eyes. Although "The Spirit of St. Louis" is definitely a marginal part of Wilder's work, it is still an extremely underestimated film; actually it's a piece of entertainment in the best sense of the word and technically is at the pinnacle of what Hollywood was able to produce at that time. The aerial shots are stunning and clever, in one shot one can even see the shadow of Lindbergh's plane passing over a range of hills, and James Stewart looks down at it. The set and the subtle colours create a remarkably dense atmosphere.

"The Films of Billy Wilder"



Curd Jürgens as Harra in Käutner's "The Devil's General", 1955  
above: James Stewart as Lindbergh in Wilder's "The Spirit of St. Louis"

*The Spirit of St. Louis*  
USA 1957; Warner Color; CinemaScope; 135 min  
P: Leland Hayward Prod. Inc./Billy Wilder Prod. Inc. for Warner Bros.; d: Billy Wilder; w: B. W., Wendell Mayes, Charles Lederer, after the book by Charles A. Lindbergh; ph: Robert Burks, J. Peverell Marley; aph: Thomas Tutwiler; m: Franz Waxman; c: James Stewart, Murray Hamilton, Patricia Smith et al.



## "It was a night mare"

We had no contact with the airplane once it was in the air. So, when we had to make a new take, the pilot had to land, get his instructions and then had to start again. We also had other planes in the air to shoot the aircraft from above. Dear God, it was a night mare. I should never have made this film. It would have needed a director like John Frankenheimer, a man with large amounts of patience for technical details.

*Director Billy Wilder on "The Spirit of St. Louis"*



## Too tired for counting

Robert Mitchum plays a Texas gunrunner who becomes Villa's one-man air force, apparently half asleep. One can't really blame Mitchum for dozing off. This is one of the most tiresome action movies.

*Kathleen Carroll, "New York Daily News"*

Mitchum seems to be counting to ten before talking, but considering the dialogue he's handed, a hundred would have been the wiser figure.

*Judith Crist, 1974, on "Villa Rides"*



## Filmed in Berlin

An excellent account of adventures during the Berlin air lift, with the American Air Force bringing in supplies in the face of the Russian blockade. Filmed entirely in Berlin and making exciting use of Tempelhof Airport, the story has Montgomery Clift as a pilot and Paul Douglas as a ground operations sergeant doing their jobs successfully despite the pilot's unhappy love affair with a local girl. Clift and Douglas are the only Hollywood personalities; the rest are German actors and members of the armed forces. Writer-director Seaton makes this an entertaining as well as informative picture.

Robert Mitchum as pilot in "Villa Rides"; "The Big Lift" descending at Tempelhof, Berlin

*The Big Lift*  
USA 1950; bw; 119 min  
P: 20th Century Fox; w, d: George Seaton; ph: Charles G. Clarke; m: Alfred Newman; c: Montgomery Clift, Paul Douglas, Bruni Löbel, O. E. Hasse et al.



### Always good fun

The original scenario was the classic flying story: airplanes, battles in the air and one girl on the base; the girl who belongs to the sure-footed squadron leader; and the other flier... a happy-go-lucky character... who comes in and wants to take her away. Even if the plot had been done before, it makes for good drama, good entertainment, and fun.

*Director David Miller on "Flying Tigers" and the plot of many aviation movies*



John Wayne above the South China seas in "Flying Leathernecks" by Nicholas Ray above; with Maureen O'Hara on "Wings of Eagles", 1957



*The Court Martial of Billy Mitchell*  
USA 1955; col; CinemaScope; 100 min  
P: Warner; d: Otto Preminger; w: Milton Sperling, Emmet Lavery; ph: Sam Leavitt; m: Dmitri Tiomkin; c: Gary Cooper, Charles Bickford, Ralph Bellamy, Rod Steiger, Elizabeth Montgomery et al.

*The Wings of Eagles*  
USA 1957; Metrocolor, Cinema-Scope; 108 min  
P: MGM; d: John Ford; w: Frank Fenton, William Wister Haines, after the life of Commander Frank W. (Spig) Wead; ph: Paul C. Vogel; m: Jeff Alexander; c: John Wayne, Maureen O'Hara, Ward Bond et al.



## From the "Lexikon des Internationalen Films"

A bomber squadron stationed in England in 1942 is disciplined and freshly motivated by a tough and pitiless commander. A from the dramatic viewpoint, skilfully constructed and from the technical, solidly produced representation of the air war. A serious gripping warfilm with a convincing character portrayal.

On *"Twelve O'Clock High"*

A film-biography of a commander of US-Marine pilots during World War II., Frank ("Spig") Wead, who, after a serious injury, transforms from a rowdy into a national hero and starts a campaign for the extension of the armed forces. Partly crude, partly sentimental patriotic tragicomedy – a subordinate work of John Ford.

On *"The Wings of Eagles"*

The controversy between two officers of a Marine flying-unit becomes irrelevant through their fearless joint battle-engagement in the South Pacific. A clichéd war-drama with quite a few effective aerial shots. The handwriting of the Hollywood-outsider Nicholas Ray ("Rebel Without a Cause") is scarcely noticeable.

On *"Flying Leathernecks"*

With a surefire sense of suspense, a documentary out of US-military history. The general, battling for the modernisation of the Airforce, Billy Mitchell – he predicted Pearl Harbour as far back as 1925 – is court-martialled because of over-stingent criticism.

On *"The Court Martial of Billy Mitchell"*



Gary Cooper who got famous in 1927 with *"Wings"*. In *"The Court Martial ..."*, 1955 below: Gregory Peck *"Twelve O'Clock High"*



*Flying Leathernecks*  
USA 1951; Technicolor; 102 min  
P: RKO; d: Nicholas Ray; w: James Edward Grant, after a Story by Kenneth Gamet; ph: William E. Snyder; m: Roy Webb; c: John Wayne, Robert Ryan, Don Taylor, Janis Carter et al.

*Twelve O'Clock High*  
USA 1948; bw; 132 min  
P: 20th Century Fox; d: Henry King; w: Sy Bartlett, Beirne Lay jr.; ph: Leon Shamroy; m: Alfred Newman; c: Gregory Peck, Hugh Marlowe, Dean Jagger et al.





The B-52 pilots in "Dr. Strangelove"  
right: Orson Welles in  
"Catch 22"

*Dr. Strangelove or How I Learned to Stop Worrying  
And Love the Bomb*  
GB 1963; bw; 95 min  
P: Hawk Films; d: Stanley Kubrick; w: S. K., Terry  
Southern, Peter George, after the novel "Red Alert"  
by P. George; ph: Gilbert Taylor; sp: Wally Veevers;  
m: Laurie Johnson; c: Peter Sellers (3 roles), George  
C. Scott, Sterling Hayden, Keenan Wynn, James Earl  
Jones et al.

### Sane or insane?

"You mean there's a catch?"  
"Sure there's a catch," Doc Daneeka  
replied. "Catch-22. Anyone who wants to  
get out of combat duty isn't really crazy."  
There was only one catch and that was  
Catch-22, which specified that a concern  
for one's own safety in the face of dangers  
that were real and immediate was the process  
of a rational mind. Orr was crazy and could  
be grounded. All he had to do was ask; and  
as soon as he did, he would no longer be  
crazy and would have to fly more missions.  
Orr would be crazy to fly more missions and  
sane if he didn't, but if he was sane had to  
fly them. If he flew them he was crazy and  
didn't have to; but if he didn't want to he  
was sane and had to. Yossarian was moved  
very deeply by the absolute simplicity of this  
clause of Catch-22 and let out a respectful  
whistle.  
"That's same catch, that Catch-22," he  
observed. "It's the best there is," Doc  
Daneeka agreed...

Joseph Heller, "Catch-22", 1955

### Living or dead...

"Dr. Strangelove" begins with the printed  
preface: "It is the stated position of the United  
States Air Force that their safeguards  
would prevent the occurrence of such  
events as are depicted in this film. Furthermore  
it should be noted that none of the  
characters portrayed in this film are meant  
to represent any real persons living or  
dead."





## Poetic propaganda

For the producer Howard Hughes, the essential thing was to satisfy his then three greatest passions: flying, Janet Leigh and anti-communism. One can safely say, that these three wishes were fulfilled – beyond his wildest dreams, for “Jet Pilot” has remained one of the best aviation films. Janet Leigh is overwhelming in it, and the anti-communism of a particularly perfidious sort...

When Janet Leigh's machine appears in the sky, the plane driven by John Wayne flies beside her and one can hear their lovetalk by radio, we are gripped by a totally pure emotion, created with poetic means; so much ingenuity and beauty takes your breath away. The thrust of the film is, I repeat it again, stupid and propagandistic, but the director Josef von Sternberg constantly transcends this, and the tears emanate from so much beauty, when the male and the female planes search for and find each other, excite each other, calm each other and finally fly together side by side. Yes, in this film the planes make love with each other.

*François Truffaut, 1958*

## A black comedy

Swiftian satire at its best, a scathing survey of the human and his propensity for self-destruction. Undoubtedly the most significant American film of the past twenty-five years, it is immaculate in its production, glittering with unique performances...

The film is heady stuff for the audience, for Kubrick has assumed that we're mature enough to share his bitter laughter.

Moreover, beyond the flashing needles and knives Kubrick wields against sacred cows, there is a gripping suspense thriller here, sharply unfolded, tightly told, neatly cut from climax to climax. And beyond the laughter and the tension, there is a savage morality tale that stands as the ultimate black comedy of our time.

*Judith Crist, 1974, on “Dr. Strangelove”*



John Wayne and Janet Leigh in “Jet Pilot”, one of François Truffaut's favorite movies

### Jet Pilot

USA 1950–57; Technicolor; 112 min

P: RKO; d: Josef von Sternberg et al.; w: Jules Furthman et al.; ph: Winton C. Hoch; m: Bronislau Kaper; c: John Wayne, Janet Leigh, Jay C. Flippen et al.; with support of the US Air Force.

### Catch 22

USA 1970; Technicolor, Panavision; 122 min

P: Paramount/Filmways; d: Mike Nichols; w: Buck Henry, after the novel by Joseph Heller; ph: David Watkin; m: June Edgerton; c: Alan Arkin, Martin Balsam, Anthony Perkins, Orson Welles, Martin Sheen, Jon Voight et al.





### Washington, D.C., destroyed

Flying Saucers have always been a fascination to me, which made the film doubly interesting to work on. A great deal of research was necessary to keep the whole idea as credible as possible and within the scope of reported sightings. Of course imagination had to play its part in the script as well.

The flying saucer reports were predominant in the news and Charles Schneer wanted to develop a film about an invasion of our planet by saucers from outer space.

This project gradually developed into "The Earth versus the Flying Saucers", in which we succeeded in totally destroying Washington, D.C. – through the use of special effects, of course.

A prime fascination to me was the challenge of seeing just how interesting one could make an inanimate object such as a rounded metal spaceship... The saucer itself was only 12 inches across but it was magnified to give the awesome impression of size.

*Special effects artist Ray Harryhausen on "Earth versus the Flying Saucers"*

### Only a few survive...

Eventually the Earth collides with the star Bellus and is destroyed. But just before this traumatic conclusion to Earth's history, a rocket-load of survivors, headed by Derr and chosen by lottery, blast off to Zyra. At first the planet looks inhospitable with mountains and snow, but when the apprehensive party land, they find a paradise with water meadows, flowers and lush countryside. They settle thankfully in their new world.

In retrospect the film seems peculiarly old-fashioned, less for the melodramatic subplot constructed around the affair of Derr and Rush, than for its initial premise, that a natural cosmic disaster would bring about the end of the world, which side-stepped the fears of a nuclear holocaust of the time.

*"The Aurum Film Encyclopedia"*



*Earth versus the Flying Saucers*  
USA 1950; bw; 81 min  
P: RKO; d: Fred F. Sears; w: George Worthington Yates, Bernard Gordon; ph: Fred Jackman Jr.; sp: Ray Harryhausen, Russ Kelley; c: Joan Taylor, Hugh Marlowe, Harry Lauter et al.



Only 46 survive "When Worlds Collide" and start for Zypra in a rocket ship



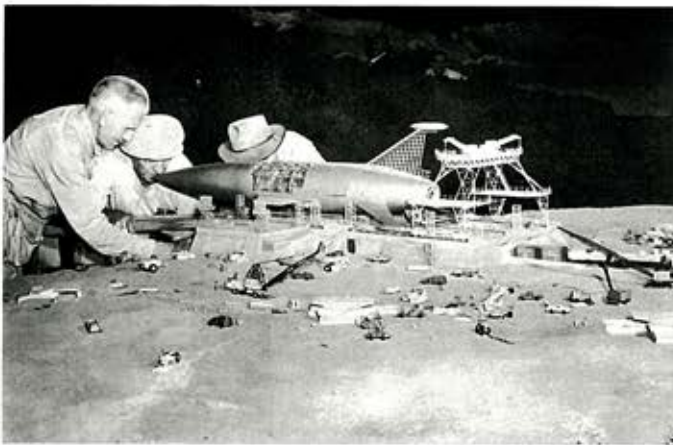
## Oscar for world's end

"When Worlds Collide" was released in 1951 and costed \$965.000. For this film George Pal achieved to get together the special effects artist Gordon Jennings and his highly gifted colleagues: the painter Chelsey Bonestell and the art directors Hal Pereira and Albert Nozaki. Their fascinating miniatures and their mock-ups won Jennings and his team an Oscar.

*"Cinema – Die Tricks"*

Which of us hasn't already travelled to the moon with him, like once upon a time the Baron Münchhausen! Who hasn't been assaulted as a gold-digger on the prairies, who wasn't run over by his carriage and had to (not just for this reason) marry a rich widow! Who hasn't seen the Czar Ferdinand waving out of his compartment window and followed him into the war! Does one realise at last, that the cinema is an enhancement of life's pleasures, an enrichment of our fantasies!

*Walter Hasenclever, 1913*



*When Worlds Collide*  
USA 1951; Technicolor; 82 min  
P: Paramount; d: Rudolph Maté; w: Sidney Boehm, after a novel by Philip Wylie and Edwin Balmer; ph: John Seitz, W. Howard Greene; m: Leith Stevens; c: Richard Derr, Barbara Rush et al.



## Leaving the ground

A small film about a big dream: to simply step out of the door, to take a run up to it and to rise into the air like a bird. When Tristram Collin ties his rucksack onto his back like a rocket, pulls down his steel safety-helmet, tightens his safety-belt and after taking a running start lifts off the ground, he confronts the viewer with his own dream, which for once isn't set in a fantastic fairytale or in a fabulous other world, but instead is right smack in the middle of ordinary everyday life, between the office and the apartment. The adventure of the rocketman make playground experiences into adult reality. When the rocketman soars through the air with stretched-out arms, chasing after fleeing gangster cars, bringing fast trains to a halt at the last minute before reaching collapsed bridges, shooting through tunnels or falling out of skyscrapers and saving himself with a rocket like in some invisible elevator – then these are precisely the moments, where fabulous technique combines with desire to close the gap between dream and reality.

"Kultfilme"



### *King of the Rocket Men*

USA 1949; bw; 120 min

P: Republic; d: Fred C. Brannon; w: Royal K. Cole, William Lively, Sol Shor; ph: Ellis W. Carter; sp: Howard and Theodore Lydecker; m: Stanley Wilson; c: Tristram Coffin, Mae Clarke, Don Haggerty et al.

### *Mars and Beyond*

USA 1957; col; 45 min

P: Walt Disney; d: Ward Kimball; technical advisors: Wernher von Braun, Willy Ley; screened at: Disneyland

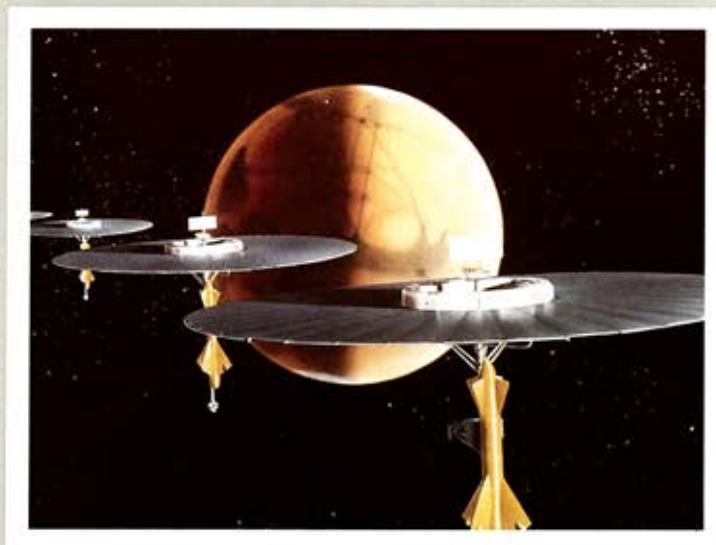
### *Moon Zero Two*

GB 1969; col; 100 min

P: Hammer Films; d: Roy Ward Baker; w: Michael Carreras; ph: Paul Beeson; m: Don Ellis; c: James Olsen, Catharina von Schell et al.



Wernher v. Braun and  
Willy Ley gave advice for  
"Mars and Beyond"  
below: "Moon Zero Two"



## Entertaining nonsense

This is the feature film-version of an originally twelve-part serial, a science-fiction adventure. A mad physician wants to rule the world and nearly destroys New York with his wonder weapon, before the Air Force manages to fix him for good. Hair-rising nonsense with remarkable special-effects. Entertaining for fans of this genre.

*Lexikon des Internationalen Films on "King of the Rocket Men"*

## Exactly on schedule

Question: Didn't you once say that "War of the Satellites" (1958) was released within a few weeks after the first Sputnik in 1957?

Roger Corman: Yes.

Question: Would you call that the essence of the exploitation film?

Corman: Yes... it really was! Actually, it was released within a month or two. What happened was this: The Sputnik went up, and the day after it went up I told Steve Broidy, the President of Allied Artists, that I could deliver the picture in eight weeks, I think it was, and that if they would start the ads right away, based upon what I told them the picture was about, and if they would give me the money, I would deliver the picture. He said yes, because I had had a couple of pictures that had been successful with Allied.

We did it exactly on that schedule, and it was one of those rare times when everything meshed. I delivered the picture on the exact date I promised, and they had the advertising campaign ready at the same time. We booked it directly into the theatres, and the picture did very well.

*Interview with Roger Corman, producer and director of a lot of "cheapies" and also a gifted talent-finder*





The story transported on the letter: "Robinson Crusoe on Mars", 1964



### Mars at Death Valley

I consider that film the best thing I've ever done, because it had basically one of the soundest stories ever written. Unfortunately the film did not become a hit because of the bad judgement of the producer and the releasing company. I fought like a tiger to get rid of the silly-ass title but to no avail. We filmed most of it in Death Valley. People have shot movies there before but usually down in the valley. We shot our stuff up on the ridges so that we'd have the sky in the backgrounds. Larry Butler, who later did the effects in "Marooned" over at Columbia, did the effects on "Crusoe" as a favour to me. He has an optical printer you wouldn't believe and he removed all our skies for us.

We had to convince audiences dramatically that they were not seeing Earth. A blue sky would have been a dead give-away, so he matted in an orange red colour.

*Director Byron Haskin on "Robinson Crusoe on Mars"*

*Robinson Crusoe on Mars*  
USA 1964; col; Techniscope; 110 min  
P: Paramount; d: Byron Haskin; w: Ib Melchior, John C. Higgins, after the novel by Daniel Defoe; ph: Winton C. Hoch; sp: Lawrence W. Butler; m: Van Cleave; c: Paul Mantee, Adam West, Vic Lundin et al.

## Pie fight on Venus

A juvenile musical romp with the Three Stooges.

The cleaners at a rocket base, the Three accidentally launch themselves into space and land on Venus where they meet a unicorn which talks, a thinking machine and a giant spider which clutches a flame thrower. The film climaxes, in traditional style, in a lengthy pie fight after which the trio return home as heroes.

Cheaply made and harshly received by the critics, the film, their first feature for over five years, was a phenomenal success and revived their careers when Columbia had chosen not to renew their contract.

*"The Aurum Film Encyclopedia"*



## Period.

Gore Vidal's "Visit to a Small Planet", a witty and cogent stage comedy, comes to the screen as an unsuitable knockabout 1960 romantic bit for Jerry Lewis; and justice is done neither star nor script. One brief beatnik dance sequence, with Lewis and Barbara Lawson stomping up a storm, is worth watching. Period.

*Judith Crist, 1974*



*Visit to a Small Planet*  
USA 1960; bw; 85 min  
P: Paramount; d: Norman Taurog; w: Edmund Beloin, Henry Garson, after Gore Vidal; ph: Loyal Griggs; sp: John P. Fulton; m: Leigh Harlin; c: Jerry Lewis, Fred Clark, Joan Blackman et al.



GDR-Design 1960: "The Silent Star"  
left: Martha Hyer and William Lundigan as "Riders to the Stars", 1954;  
above: Jerry Lewis on "Visit to a Small Planet"



"Marooned" by John Sturges



## For kids of all ages

Pure kid-stuff, good fun all the way. There are some dandy sci-fi effects, and if you watch early on you'll see Adam West as the astronaut who doesn't make it to Mars. But Paul Mantee and a monkey do. This 1964 film follows the Defoe plotting right down to details and is complete with a Friday from a farther-off planet. As noted, it's pure kid-stuff – for us kids of all ages.

*Judith Crist, 1974, on "Robinson Crusoe on Mars"*

*Marooned*  
USA 1969; Technicolor, Panavision 70; 134 min  
P: Frankovich-Sturges/Columbia; d: John Sturges;  
w: Mayo Simon, after the novel by Martin Caidin;  
ph: Daniel L. Fapp; c: Gregory Peck, Richard Crenna,  
David Janssen, Gene Hackman et al.



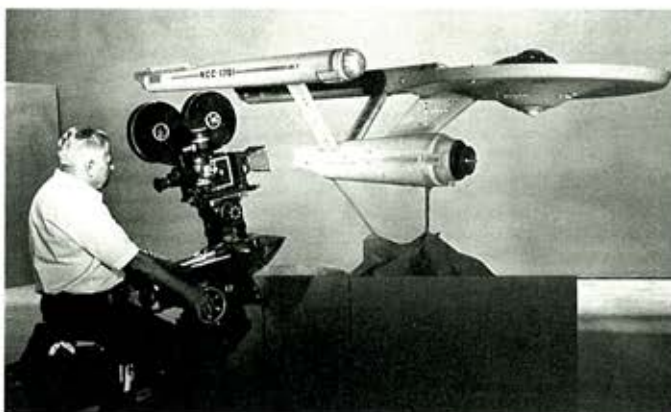
## Stephen King's horror

For me, the terror – the real terror, as opposed to whatever demons and boogies which might have been living in my own mind – began on an afternoon in October of 1957. I had just turned ten. And, as was only fitting, I was in a movie theater: the Stratford Theater in downtown Stratford, Connecticut... We were watching "Earth versus the Flying Saucers" and just as the saucers were mounting their attack on Our Nation's Capital in the movie's final reel, everything just stopped. The screen went black. The theater was full of kids... The film hadn't broken; the projector had simply been turned off. And then the house-lights began to come up, a totally unheard-of occurrence. We sat there looking around, blinking in the light like moles.

The manager walked into the middle of the stage and held his hands up – quite unnecessarily – for quiet. We sat there in our seats like dummies, staring at the manager. He looked nervous and sallow – or perhaps that was only the footlights. We sat wondering what sort of catastrophe could have caused him to stop the movie just as it was reaching that apotheosis of all Saturday matinee shows, "the good part." And the way his voice trembled when he spoke did not add to anyone's sense of well-being. "I want to tell you," he said in that trembly voice, "that the Russians have put a space satellite into orbit around the earth. They call it... Sputnik."

This piece of intelligence was greeted by absolute, tomblike silence. We just sat there, a theaterful of 1950s kids with crew cuts, whiffle cuts, ponytails, ducktails... The Russians had beaten us into space. Somewhere over our heads, beeping triumphantly, was an electronic ball which had been launched and constructed behind the Iron Curtain. Neither Captain Midnight nor Richard Carlson had been able to stop it. It was up there... and they called it Sputnik. The manager stood there for a moment longer, looking out at us as if he wished he had something else to say but could not think what it might be. Then he walked off and pretty soon the movie started up again.

Stephen King, "Danse Macabre"



*Solaris*  
USSR 1972; col; CinemaScope; 170 min  
P: Mosfilm; d: Andrej Tarkowskij; w: A. T., Friedrich Gorenstein, after the novel by Stanislaw Lem;  
ph: Wadim Jussow; m: Eduard Artemjew, J. S. Bach;  
c: Natalia Bondartchuk, Donatas Banionis, Nikolai Grinko et al.

The flying head of  
"Zardoz", 1973;  
"Solaris" by Andrej  
Tarkowskij, 1972;  
above: veteran Linwood  
G. Dunn shooting for  
"Star Trek"



### To an outer limit

The special effects in the movie – particularly a voyage, either through Dullea's eye or through the slab and over the surface of Jupiter-Earth and into a period bedroom – are the best I have ever seen; and the number of ways in which the movie conveys visual information (there is very little dialogue) drives it to an outer limit of the visual.

*"The New York Times Film Reviews"*

Arthur C. Clarke, on whose short story "The Sentinel" the film was based, watched the first reels and couldn't but praise the perfection of the special effects. There will be no way to improve it, he told, except to shoot on location (i.e. in space).

*"Lexikon des Science Fiction Films"*





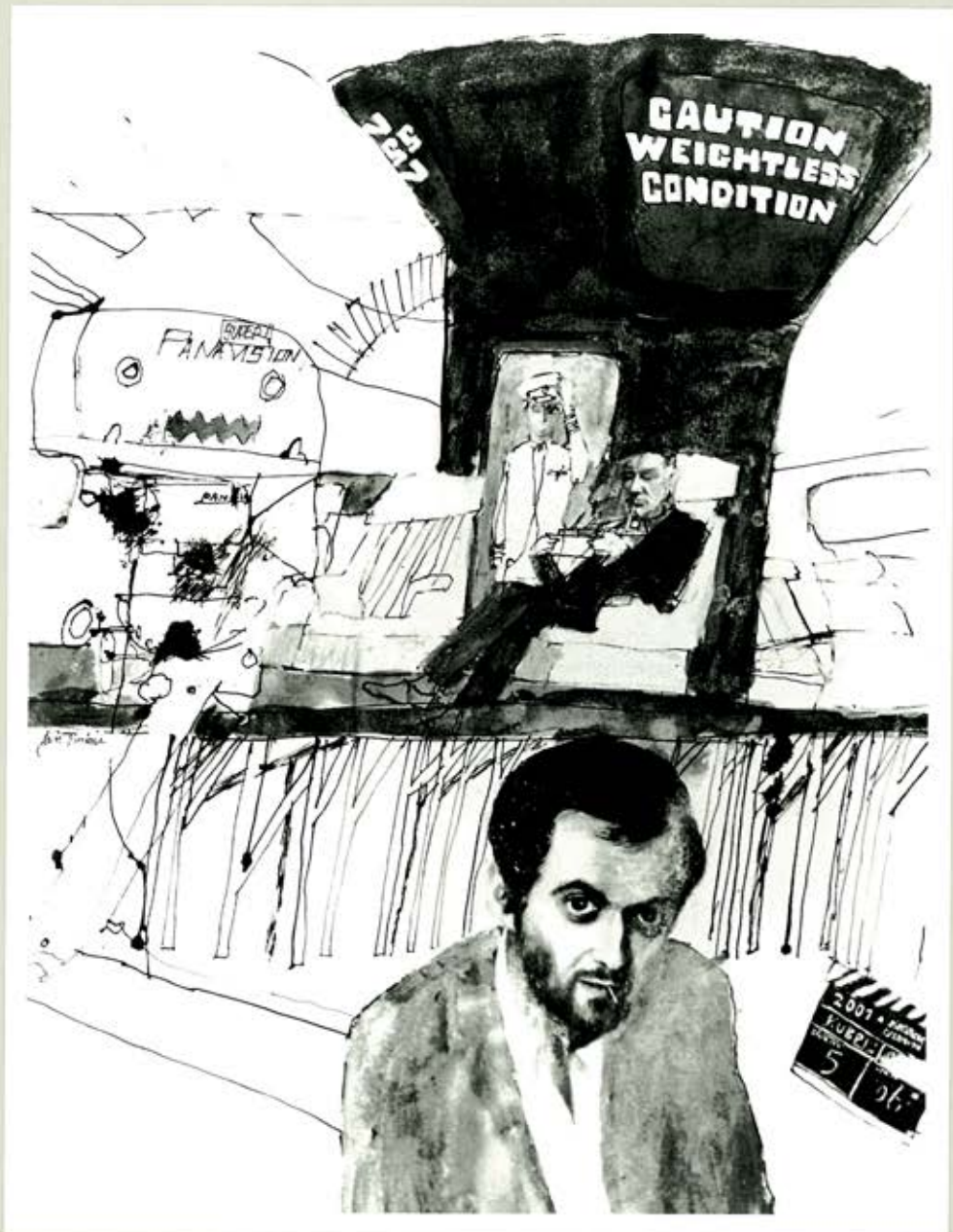
## Unflattering

No one works with Kubrick, one only works for him...but he has the talent for collecting really good people around him...

Kubrick has credited himself with the production and design of the special effects of "2001", which I regard as unflattering to the 4 people who were really involved in the actual design. Kubrick's method was to suggest that he wanted a certain scene and then the sketch artist would pull out 8 different conceptions and then Kubrick would say, "Well, I'd like a piece of this one and a piece of this one and a piece of that one. Now go back and do me another sketch." And then you would have 4 more sketches, and he would come back and say: "I'd like a piece of this one and of that one" – which becomes a terribly time-consuming process. And if in this way he means he designed, then that would be true...

The technique for flying people that was adopted for use in "2001" is very excellent for concealing not only the wire but also for concealing (what is more important) the creases and the folds in the suit. When you strap a wire harness onto someone's body, where the wire comes out of the clothing, there are always stress lines. To avoid this sort of problem you suspend this person from the ceiling and work with the camera directed up at them and you can't see the support wires.

Wally Gentleman, "Take One", Sept. 1968



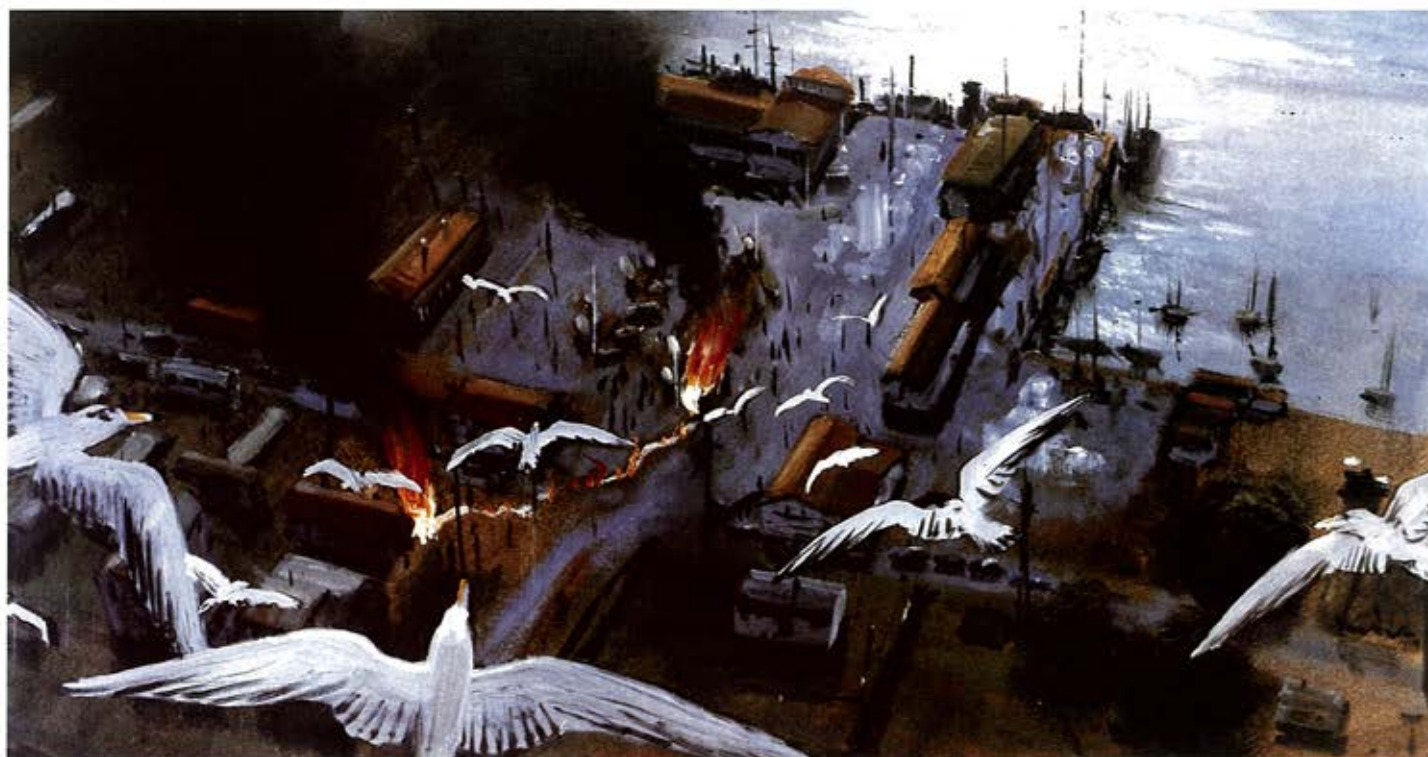
Stanley Kubrick by  
artist Jan Parker for  
MGM, 1968

2001: A Space Odyssey  
GB 1968; 70 mm Metrocolor, Super Panavision in  
Cinerama; 141 min  
P: Stanley Kubrick Productions for MGM; d: Stanley  
Kubrick; w: S. K., Arthur C. Clarke, after the short story  
"The Sentinel" by A. C. Clarke; ph: Geoffrey Unsworth,  
John Alcott; sp: S. Kubrick (Supervising), Wally Veevers,  
Douglas Trumbull, Con Pederson, Tom Howard, Colin J.  
Cantwell, Bryan Loftus, Frederick Martin, Bruce Logan,  
David Osborne, John Jack Malick; m: pieces by Aram  
Katchaturian, György Ligeti, Johann Strauß, Richard  
Strauß; Productioned: Tony Masters, Harry Lange, Ernest  
Archer; c: Keir Dullea, Gary Lockwood, William Sylvester,  
Margaret Tyzack, Vivian Kubrick et al.

After viewing "2001" the Russian astronaut  
Alexei Leonov said: "I felt like being in  
space for a second time."

"The Making of 2001"





Sketch for the most terrifying scene in "The Birds", shortly before they dive for the gas station, 1963

### Shot from a helicopter?

Nor does anyone apparently wonder about the 'bird's eye view' shot over the gasoline station asking, "Where was that shot from? A balloon?" The seaside was up at Bodega Bay. The other side of the road was on the studio back-lot, because there were only meadows opposite at Bodega Bay. We created the town on a matte. We did it by putting the camera on a high hill shooting down to a new parking-lot they were building. We put in the blazing car, etc., and all the rest was left blank. Then the matte artist painted in the whole scene and we fitted the two pieces together. In other words, on his painting the live parts looking down are black. On our side you can see the live part, but all the rest, all his part, is painted black. Then you put the two together...

So in that shot – the one from above – I wanted the gulls to descend. We went out here to a high cliff, put some food behind the camera and gulls came immediately. Then we took the food and threw it down to a beach below the cliff, whereupon the gulls went down for the food, away from the camera and down to the beach.

When the film was brought back to the studio we had gulls going down towards a beach against surf, sand, and the side of a cliff. It took two women three months to copy each gull on to a plain board and a silhouette on another board, frame by frame. When they made their film, we had live gulls against a plain background, each one drawn separately, and that was printed over the other matte shot. And people thought we shot it from a balloon or a helicopter!

*Alfred Hitchcock in "The Celluloid Muse"*

*The Birds*  
USA 1963; Technicolor; 119 min  
P: Universal/A. Hitchcock; d: Alfred Hitchcock; w: Evan Hunter, after a story by Daphne du Maurier; ph: Robert Burks; sp: Lawrence A. Hampton; sound advisor: Bernard Herrmann; c: Rod Taylor, Tippi Hedren et al.



## A cyclone...

I remember Hitch kept talking about a cyclone, and how it menaces Grant from the sky. I said, 'Hitch, that's not good'. He said, 'Oh, that would be wonderful. It's easy to do.' I said, 'Yeah, but they're trying to kill him. How are they going to work up a cyclone?' Anyway, now we are up in the sky with a cyclone, right? And I just can't tell you who said what to whom, but somewhere during that afternoon, the cyclone in the sky became the crop-duster plane. Before the day ended, Hitch and I were acting out the entire sequence. The plane making its passes, Grant seeing the cornfield, ducking into the cornfield, the various passes of the plane with a gun; then he sees a car, tries to wave it down, it ignores him, and he races into the cornfield. Crop-dusting poison is going to drive him out. He sees a diesel truck. I remember all that stuff. The next day I went to my office and wrote it, naturally with the greatest of ease. I had already seen it all.

*Ernest Lehmann, "The Craft of the Screenwriter"*



Gary Grant pursued by a crop-duster plane



*North by Northwest*  
USA 1959; Technicolor, VistaVision; 136 min  
P: MGM; d: Alfred Hitchcock; w: Ernest Lehman;  
K: Robert Burks; m: Bernard Herrmann; c: Gary Grant,  
Eva Marie Saint, James Mason et al.



## Shooting in Tempelhof

We from Lufthansa staff have contributed in our way most intensively in the Ufa-made film, "Stormy Flight to Claudia", and in the Tobis-film "The small and the great love".



Jenny Jugo while at work as Lufthansa stewardess gets to know and love "her" businessmen (Gustav Fröhlich), 1936

Our sterling JU-52 ascended one, two, three times, until the takes were mercifully accepted by the director...The actors in the brand-new Lufthansa uniforms walked around the airport, as if they had never done anything else.

Many's a surprise resulted from this disguise, and the Lufthansa passengers, who were rushing by, turned around flabbergasted.

Well, since when do the crew of our German airlines put on makeup?

Then the astonishment turned into cheerful laughter. But of course, that's him... or that's her...

*Franz Schlenstedt, "Vollgas!", Berlin 1939*

*Die kleine und die große Liebe*  
Germany 1936; bw; 102 min  
P: Tobis; d: Joseph von Baky; w: Sonja Lehmann;  
ph: Arno Schürin; m: Max Steiner; c: Jenny Jugo,  
Gustav Fröhlich, Rudi Golden et al.

## The new Lufthansa

After a ten-year imprisonment, a flying captain returns from Siberia. Although he ruins his former commanding-officer's hoped-for dream of happiness in retirement with the estate secretary, the latter paves his way into Lufthansa. Then comradeship loyalty prevents the happiness of the young people: The ex-Captain finds out that a member of his squadron is in prison for murder instead of him. He confesses to a military court, is then exonerated – because the comrades of the Royal Air Force don't leave him in the lurch...After eighty minutes in black-and-white the punch-line comes: the "grey mistiness of the dawn" becomes colourful, the multi-coloured bunting flutters in the wind, and the happiness of everyone involved is complete, as the new Lufthansa rises into the bright blue sky.

*"film-dienst" on „Morgengrauen“, 1954*

The Joint-stock Company for Air-Traffic Needs, today Lufthansa, tried in 1954 to prevent the showing of the film "Morgengrauen," (Dawn), because a special allowance for the civil use of four aeroplanes was pending. They were of the opinion, that the film's story – a flying officer returns from eight years as a prisoner-of-war with a not totally clean record and applies to join the new Lufthansa – could adversely affect the ongoing negotiations.

*Federal Archive Koblenz, files of the Filmbürgschaftsausschuß No. B.102/18177 Heft 1 and 2*

*Morgengrauen*  
W-Germany 1954; bw and col; 100 min  
P: Ariston/VNF; d: Viktor von Tourjansky; w: Werner P. Zibaso, after a novel by Hubert Miketta; ph: Friedl Behn-Grund; m: Lothar Brühne; c: Alexander Kerst, Elisabeth Müller, Renate Mannhardt et al.



Set in a not too distant future: "Morgengrauen" (1954), in which the new Lufthansa is flying again







Stewardess Romy  
Schneider as  
"Mademoiselle Ange"

### A guardian angel

Romy Schneider plays a stewardess and an advertising model of an airline meaningfully named "Star Angel Line". Romy Schneider is secretly in love with a daring racing driver (Henri Vidal). His guardian angel now takes Romy's shape to draw the inattentive's attention to the woman in love.

Enno Patalas in "Filmkritik" about  
"Mademoiselle Ange"

*Mademoiselle Ange*  
W-Germany/France 1959; col; 86 min  
P: CCC-Film Atze Brauner; d: Geza von Radvanyi;  
w: René Barjavel, G.v.R.; ph: Roger Hubert;  
m: Jean Wiener; c: Romy Schneider, Henri Vidal, Jean  
Paul Belmondo, Michèle Mercier et al.



A comedy with some complications: Tony Curtis has affairs with three air hostesses in "Boeing Boeing" and friend Jerry Lewis has to help.

## Prejudices against stewardesses

The onset of faster airplanes upsets the "love-schedule" of a journalist and lover of three stewardesses from different airlines. Amusing Hollywood star comedy.

*Lexikon des Internationalen Films* on "Boeing Boeing"



*Boeing Boeing*  
USA 1965; Technicolor; 102 min  
P: Hal Wallis/Paramount; d: John Rich; w: Edward Anhalt, after a play by Marc Camoletti; ph: Lucien Ballard; m: Neal Hefti; c: Tony Curtis, Jerry Lewis, Christiane Schmidtner, Suzanna Leigh, Thelma Ritter et al.



## Infancy of aviation

It's a great big entertainment about the infancy of aviation, that bubbles with every variety of comedy, brimful of wonderful characters and hilarious situations as part of a plot that was made for movies – or were movies invented for it? Ken Annakin's eye-filling film is complete with a literate and sophisticated script, a galaxy of actors (Sarah Miles, Stuart Whitman, James Fox, Terry-Thomas, Robert Morley), and all the extravagant sound-and-sight fun that one expects, but rarely gets, in a multimillion-dollar production.

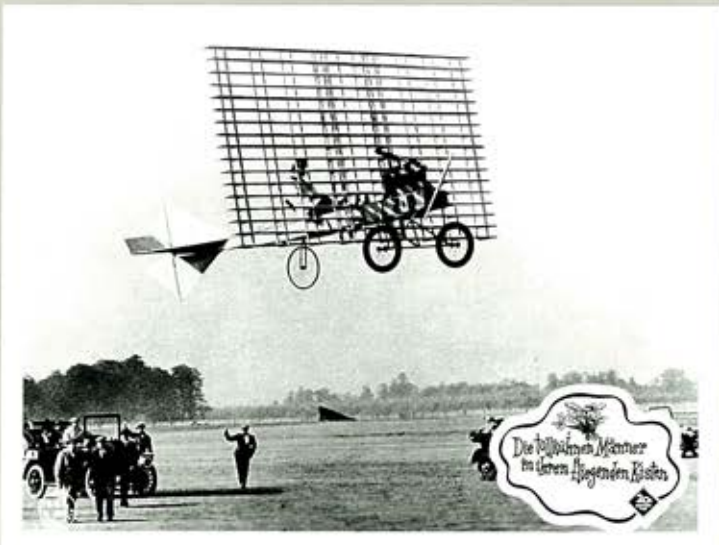
*Judith Crist, 1974*

The trouble with aviation today is that too many ideas are being dissipated in too many aeroplanes. If we only could bring together all the different types from all over the world, then everyone could learn from each other.

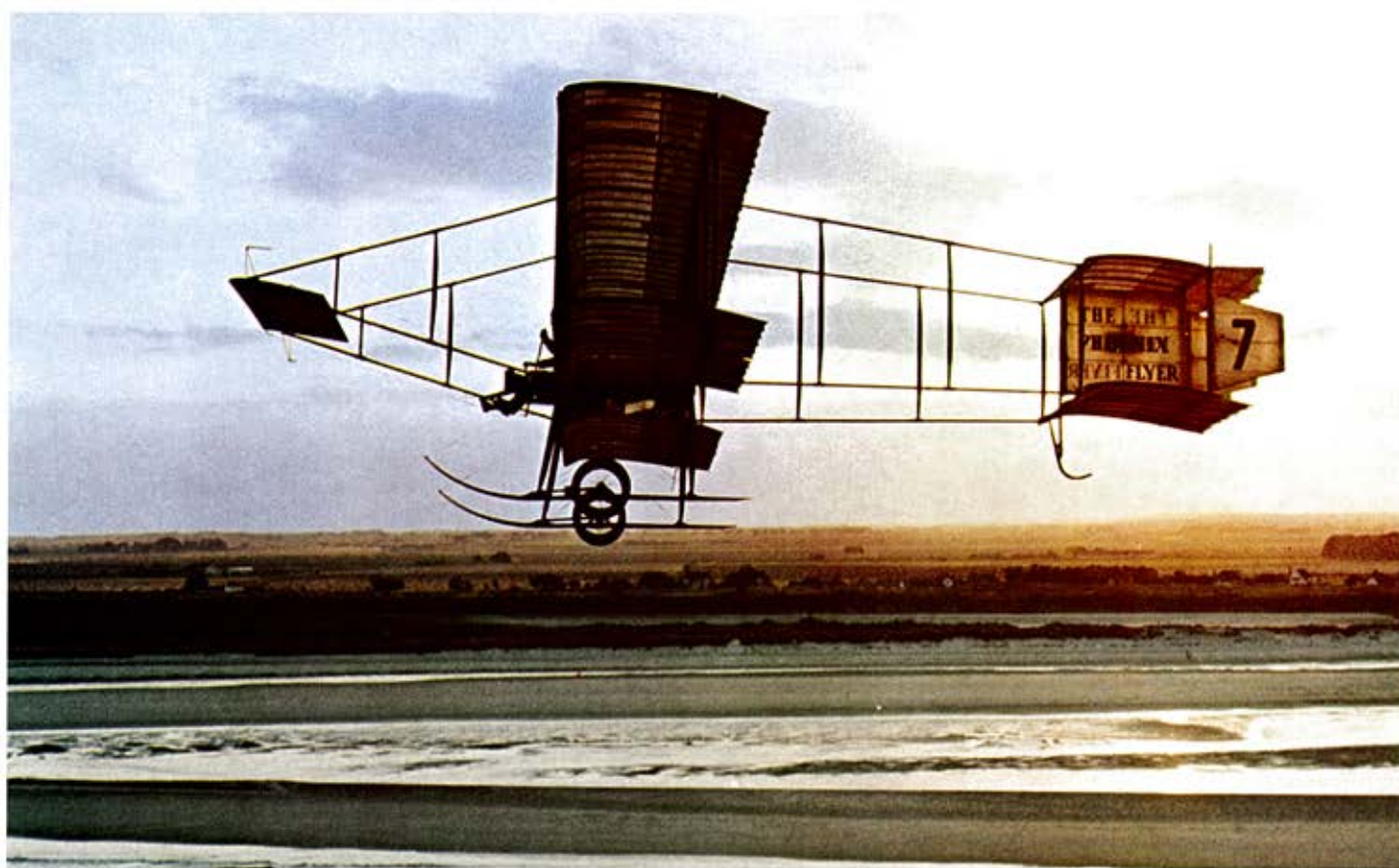
*English aviator Richard Mays (James Fox) in "Those Magnificent Men..."*

Not a flying film, and in fact one: "The Rule of the Game" ("La Règle du Jeu") by Jean Renoir, 1939. The flier André Jurieu has made a tremendous achievement: in twenty-three hours he has crossed the Atlantic. Through this he hopes to win the heart of Christine de La Chesnyae, a lady of bourgeois background. But she doesn't even show up to a reception at le Bourget. Like a disappointed child he pours out his despairing heart in front of the radio-reporters... Roland Toutain as the flier Jurieu wore the flying-jacket, which Jean Renoir had worn as a reconnaissance flier during the first World War. To achieve aerial shots from a constant perspective, the fliers had to fly at a constantly low altitude, which was, considering the German hunter pilots, extremely dangerous.

*Summarized from Jean Renoir's "My Life and My Films"*







One thing hasn't changed, though. That's the air. When I get up there with a couple of good cloth wings holding me up, I feel just like I did way back in 1912 when I got shed of the ground for the first time and took to the air with that ship I built... So I keep on flying.

But when I fly now, I'm mostly looking backward. If you want to look backward with me, why, come along. You'll see a lot of things that will make you think I was flying at a time when all the people were half-crazy. And you'll see some more things that will make you know for sure I was plumb crazy. I guess I was. I know I never was exactly the same after I started building that ship back in 1912. I was a Barnstormer of the Skies – a breed that's gone.

*Hart Stilwell and Slat Rogers,  
"A Barnstormer's Memoir"*

*Those Magnificent Men in Their Flying Machines, or  
How I Flew from London to Paris in 25 Hours and 11  
Minutes; Great Britain 1964; Technicolor, Todd-AO-70/  
CinemaScope; 131 min  
P: 20th Century Fox; d: Ken Annakin; w: Ken Annakin,  
Jack Davis, after his novel; ph: Christopher Challis;  
m: Ron Goodwin; c: Sarah Miles, Stuart Whitman,  
Robert Morley, James Fox, Alberto Sordi, Gerd Fröbe,  
Jean-Pierre Cassel; Karl Michael Vogler, Red Skelton,  
Sam Wanamaker, Eric Sykes, et al.*



## When aviation was young

Flyer-adventure from the Twenties when aviation was young. A formerly war pilot suffers some accidents during his career as an acrobatic stunter and finally crashes while shooting a war picture. Vacillating between burlesque and melodrama, it is a technically expensive and extremely human piece of entertainment.

*Lexikon des Internationalen Films on  
"The Great Waldo Pepper"*



Director and pilot  
George Roy Hill working  
on "The Great Waldo  
Pepper"

## A flying director

The emotional beginning of "Waldo" rested with the director, George Roy Hill. Sometimes, back when we were working on "Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid" in '68, we would digress and George would talk about his lifelong love: old airplanes. Hill had been a Marine pilot in both World War II and Korea, but his heart was then and forever with the Jennys and the other flimsy machines surrounding the period of the First World War. He owned one of these planes, flew it across country, never minding when the cars below went faster than he did in the sky.

*William Goldman, "Adventures in the Screen Trade"*

It was the barnstormers who kept flying alive in America after the end of World War I. What they did, at least in the beginning, was to give people rides, sometimes at a dollar a minute. Many if not most people at this time in America, especially in the Midwest, had never seen an airplane, much less ridden in one. So for several years, in the late teens and early Twenties, a plane would appear in rural areas and it would buzz a town. A crowd would gather and the pilot – a genuinely romantic figure – would make his pitch and then take people up for rides. And at the end of the day he would more than likely tie his plane down by the side of a barn, away from the wind, in case a storm came up. After which, if he was lucky, he would be given a free meal by some farmer... and be off into the skies again the following dawn.

*William Goldman*



*The Great Waldo Pepper*  
USA 1974; Technicolor, Todd-AO-35; 108 min  
P: Universal Pictures; d: George Roy Hill; w: William Goldman, (G.R.H); ph: Robert Surtees; m: Henry Mancini; c: Robert Redford, Bo Svenson, Susan Sarandon et al.





"The Phoenix", built from a wreck, takes off

## Flight of the Phoenix

There are certain men who, when faced with the choice of dying or doing the impossible, elect to live. This story is written in honour of their kind.

*Elleston Trevor's dedication in his novel "The Flight of the Phoenix" on which the Robert Aldrich film is based*

A sandstorm forces a transport plane with its multinational crew to make an emergency landing in the desert. A hopeless situation. But a methodical German technician (Hardy Krüger) manages to create a new airplane out of the wreck. And rescue them all. Robert Aldrich's adventure film is realistic in both its milieu and to a great extent in the psychological depths and offers adventurous and exciting entertainment.

*Lexikon des Internationalen Film on "Flight of the Phoenix"*

Stringer said in his monotonous voice: "I told Mr. Morgan there was no problem about building the plane, but I said we might have difficulty finding a pilot."

*Hardy Krüger addressing James Stewart in "Flight of the Phoenix"*

I like this man, Frank Towns, because I think as he does, that one must feel part of something, even an airplane. We cannot be ruled by machines and computers, by things which are important but things without a heart.

*James Stewart about his role as pilot in "Flight of the Phoenix"*

*Flight of the Phoenix*  
USA 1965; col by DeLuxe; 149 min  
P: The Associates and Aldrich Co/20th Century Fox;  
d: Robert Aldrich; w: Lucas Heller, after the novel  
by Elleston Trevor; ph: Joseph Biroc; airtunts: Paul  
Mantz; m: Frank de Vol; c: James Stewart, Hardy Krüger,  
Richard Attenborough, Peter Finch, Dan Duryea, Ernest  
Borgnine, Ian Bannen, George Kennedy et al.





## Exuberant sweep

Trapeze work is so graceful, so scary, and so marvellously photogenic that it has always been a source of regret that circus movies generally slight the high flyers and dwell on the seamy side (the sad-faced-clown-loves-the-beautiful-bareback-rider-who-loves-the-strong-man sort of thing). The script of "Trapeze" doesn't have much distinction; the characters aren't likely to be called deep, and their fates seem to be determined by theatrical convenience, but one is, nevertheless, caught up in the excitement. There's vitality in Carol Reed's direction, and an exuberant sweep in Robert Krasker's camera work. Burt Lancaster and Gina Lollobrigida function as stars – they're magnetic. And Tony Curtis shows the beginnings of acting skill. While the film is going on, you're too absorbed to consider how banal the story is; after it's over, you've had too good a time to care.

*Pauline Kael on "Trapeze"*

By far the best feature of the "Gypsy Moths" is the aerial photography. Cameraman Carl Boenisch jumped with the parachutists, shooting their acrobatics on the way down, giving the viewer a breathtaking sense of strange, dreamlike motion.

*Tony Thomas, "Burt Lancaster"*

For one of the scenes we strapped a camera to another trapeze, facing Jennings, and operated it electrically from the ground. To make the falling scene we lowered a camera by cable, slow-cranking all the way. We "shot" from every angle in the theater, using every device known and a great many that were invented at the moment.

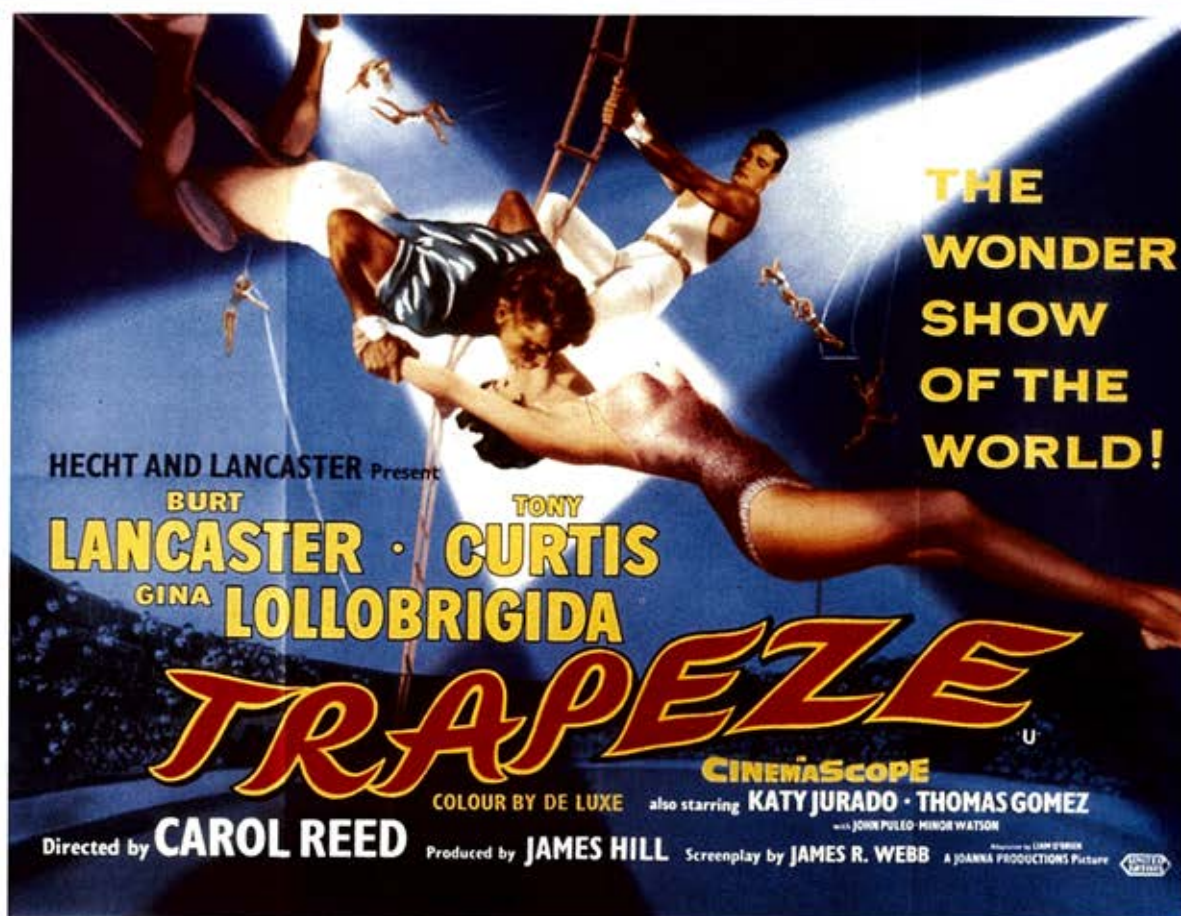
*Ewald-André Dupont, director of the famous circus-film "Variété" (1925), still considered by experts to be the best of this genre*



*The Gypsy Moths*  
USA 1969; Metrocolor; 110 min  
P: MGM, d: John Frankenheimer; w: William Hanley,  
after the novel by James Drought; ph: Philip Lathrop;  
aph: Carl Boenisch; m: Elmer Bernstein; c: Burt  
Lancaster, Deborah Kerr, Gene Hackman, Scott Wilson,  
Bonnie Bedelia, Sheree North et al.



Burt Lancaster as a skydiver (left) and at the trapeze (right)



Another, less fundamental, problem was how to deal with the aerial action. Reed's three principals were not aerialists, although Lancaster had acrobatic experience and was determined to do as much as he could himself. Lollobrigida was surprisingly game to learn as much as possible about climbing ropes and falling into nets and was a nimble pupil. Curtis, however, was afraid of heights, and it took a great deal of time to accustom him to work at the top of the Cirque d'Hiver. Reed was keen to maintain his reputation for authenticity and therefore keep all trick camerawork to a minimum. In the final cut of the film, only three shots – one a ludicrous in-flight kiss between Lancaster and Lollobrigida – involve trick photography, and they look horribly conspicuous against the rest.

Nicholas Wapshot, *"The Man Between. A Biography of Carol Reed"*



*Trapeze*  
USA 1969; col; CinemaScope; 107 min  
P: Susan Prod. Inc./United Artists; d: Carol Reed;  
w: James R. Webb, Liam O'Brien, after the novel  
by Max Catto; ph: Robert Krasker; m: Malcolm Arnold;  
c: Burt Lancaster, Gina Lollobrigida, Tony Curtis, Kathy  
Jurado et al.





Attending to a certain lifestyle even in his balloon: David Niven and servant Cantinflas

## "I'd do it for nothing"

The phone rang and a voice said, "This is Mike Todd.... Would you be interested in playing Phileas Fogg in the picture?" he asked.

"I'd do it for nothing," I shouted, my tongue working faster than than my brain.

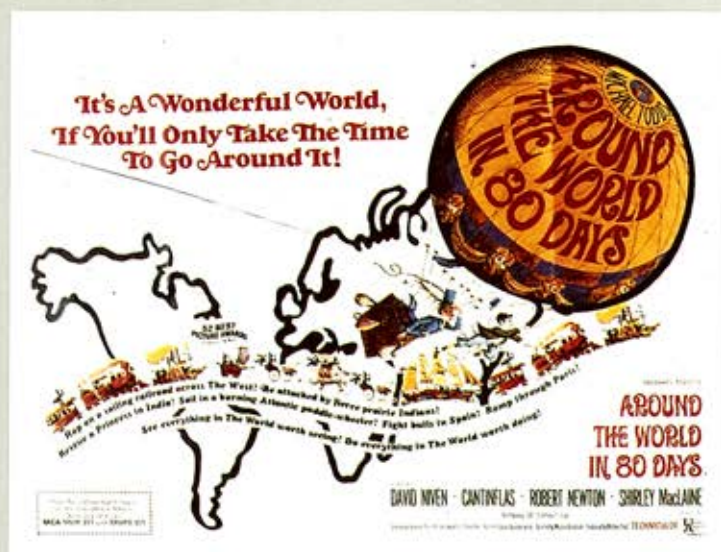
"You've got a deal," he snapped...

We were to have doubles, but they just didn't look legitimate. Todd asked us to do the sequence in place of the doubles. What bothered me was acrophobia, which means I'm allergic to heights. I almost pass out when I'm standing on a chair to fix something at home, not to mention cavorting in a wicker basket at the top of a crane 180 feet above the Universal-International back lot.

But Todd is a genius. He suspended operations while we discussed the ascent, using imported champagne to neutralize the heat and dust of the location. Before long, I wasn't afraid of acrophobia or anything else and escorted Cantinflas to the balloon. The bottle and a reserve supply accompanied us. I must say that even with the influence of the bubbly stuff, the ground looked very far away, but I was able to get through with it.

*David Niven about his dream role*

*Around the World in Eighty Days*  
USA 1956; Technicolor, Todd-AO-70; 178 min  
P: Michael Todd/United Artists; d: Michael Anderson, Kevin McClory; w: James Poe, John Farrow, S.J. Perelman, after the novel by Jules Verne; ph: Lionel Lindon; m: Victor Young; c: David Niven, Cantinflas, Shirley McLaine, Charles Boyer, Noel Coward, John Gielgud, Buster Keaton, Peter Lorre, Trevor Howard et al.





## Carried by the wind

A family idyll in London in the year 1910... a nanny is wanted. One day Mary Poppins comes literally floating into the house of the Banks in Cherry Lane. Her background is mysterious, she refuses to give references, promises however to look after the children "until the wind changes"... Mary Poppins possesses many wonderful abilities, she understands the language of birds, dogs and the wind, whom she allows to carry her through the air... The film got four Oscars. Julie Andrews got it for the title-role, in a year, when the other great musical, "My Fair Lady", was accredited as the best film of the year and Audrey Hepburn as the leading actress was the general favourite.

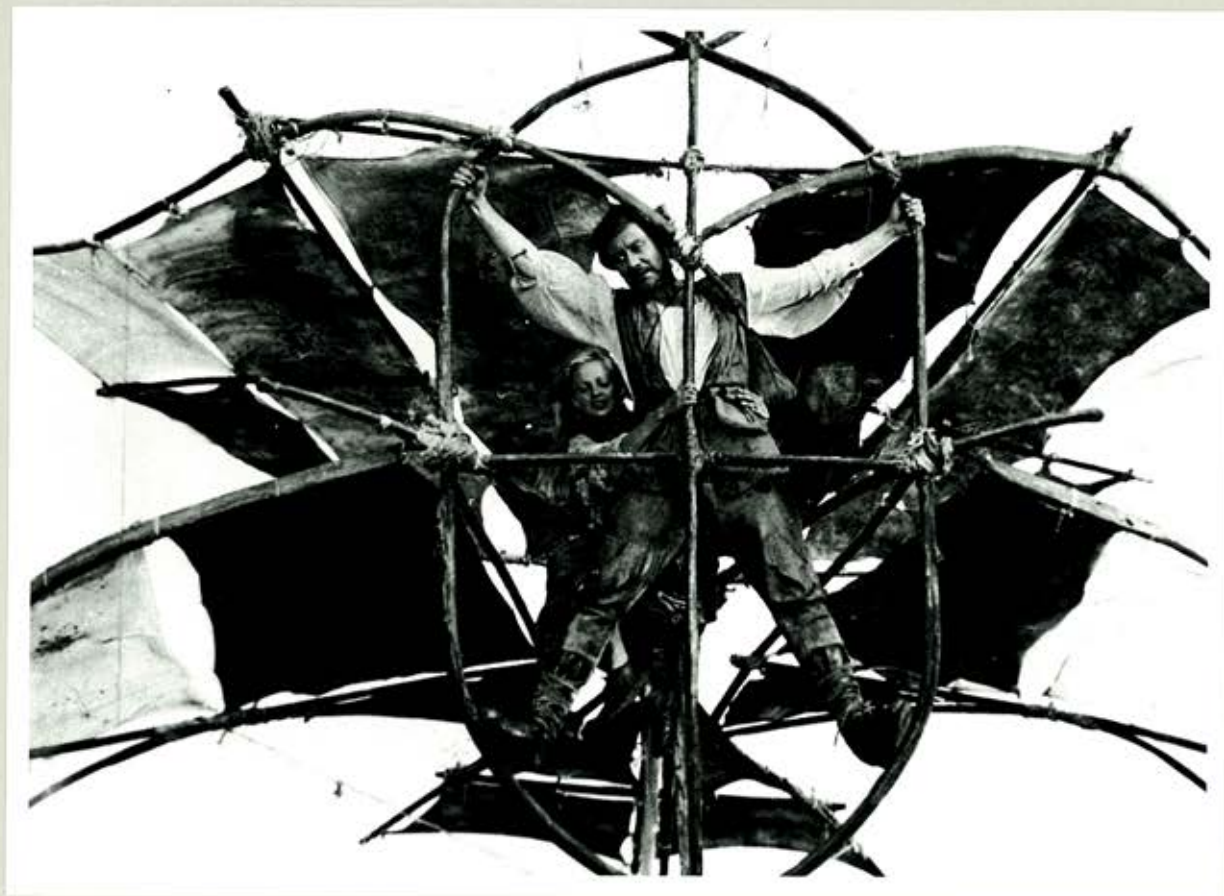
*"Lexikon des Fantasy Films"*



Mary Poppins arrives  
above: "The Great Race",  
1988

*Mary Poppins*  
USA 1964; Technicolor; 139 min  
P: Walt Disney; d: Robert Stevenson; w: Bill Walsh, Don  
da Gradi, after the novel by P.L. Travers; ph: Edward  
Colman; sp: Eustace Lycett, Peter Ellenshaw, Robert A.  
Mattey; m/songs: Richard M. & Robert B. Sherman;  
c: Julie Andrews, David Tomlinson, Glynis John, Dick  
Van Dyke et al.





Orlando and his flight in Mita's "Phantastic Story", 1982

### Flight in an overcoat

Orlando's genie soars to fantastic heights: he tears his priceless cape, in whose lining all his knowledge is written down, and constructs, with the help of some bars, a flying-apparatus, which brings them closer to their goal... Mita's "Phantastic Story", the "Fairytale of a Journey" is a film for children and adults, a mixture of magic and philosophical imagination, of cinematic effects and romance.

The special effects team of "Clash of the Titans", 1965

*"Mitteldeutsche Neueste Nachrichten"*

*A Phantastic Story*  
(*Pohadka o putovaní/Skasa stransiwu*), CSSR/USSR/  
Romania 1982; col; 101 min  
d: Alexander Mita; w: A.M., Juli Dunski, Valeri Frid;  
ph: Valeri Schuwalow; m: Alfred Schnittke; c: Andrej  
Mironow, Tatjana Axjuta, Lew Durow et al.





## Like a Magic Carpet

Selma Lagerlöf's novel "The Wonderful Journey of Little Nils Holgersson with the Wildgeese", a novel originally conceived for school lessons, is a classic work, translated into over 30 languages, whose actual purpose should have been to acquaint little Swedish boys and girls with the geography of their country.

Although the film-version reveals some animation weaknesses, one can confidently claim that the transfer into visual image is totally successful... Like on a magic carpet, little Nils flies on the backs of the geese or between the eagle's claws over the virgin land of the midnight sun – the big-screen colour shots are some of the most beautiful of their kind which one has ever seen.

*"Lexikon des Fantasy Films" on "The Wonderful Journey of Little Nils..."*

Astounded, Tonik, the first astronaut on the moon, has to accept that others got there before him. The Moon, this grey-blue fable-landscape full of unknown mists, has long been taken over by the figures of human fantasy, including the Moon-travellers Jules Verne, Cyrano de Bergerac and the Baron of lies, Münchhausen. The latter invites him to accompany him to visit the world, Münchhausen's world, which only exists in our fantastic dreams. A gondola carried by winged horses brings them to their destination... Karl Zeman's film "Baron Prasil" bubbles with ideas like these. The cartoon scenes are integrated masterfully into the real-life action, real people move around in drawn sets, which remind one of Gustave Doré's etchings.

*"Lexikon des Fantasy Films"*

*Baron Münchhausen*  
(*Baron Prasil*); CSSR 1961; bw and col; 79 min  
d: Karel Zeman; w: K. Zeman, Joseph Kainar, after Gottfried August Bürger and Gustav Doré; ph: Jiri Tarantik;  
special effects: Zdenek Rozkopal; m: Zdenek Liska;  
c: Milos Kopecky, Jana Brejchova, Rudolf Jelinek et al.



The hawk men in "Flash Gordon", 1978



Cruising with "Baron Prasil"

Leslie Howard, the great English actor, who left Hollywood in 1939 to make himself available in his own country, took part in a strangely prophetic film. In "Outward Bound" (directed 1930 by Robert Milton, with Douglas Fairbanks jr et al.), the passengers don't know what destination they are heading for, until they realize that they are all long dead and that the aeroplane is taking them into a different world – thirteen years later, the DC10 Ibis, with Leslie Howard and all the other passengers on board, disappeared without trace.

Paul Virilio, "Guerre et cinema"





## Flight into the air

After nothing works anymore in a totally crazy housing-block, the only thing left for the composer Shestopalow is the flight into the air. However the artist's high-altitude sorties are not tolerated by his neighbours. As a biting and amusing parable on the decline of Soviet society, Juri Mamin produced his socially critical comedy in 1978. "A Totally Crazy House" ("Fontan") won the main prize at the Russian Odessa film festival.

*ZDF-pressrelease*



The magic car "Chitty Chitty Bang Bang" dives for Neuschwanstein castle; Dick Van Dyke and one of his crazy inventions

The Soviet film "Fontan"; "Karlisson on the Roof"

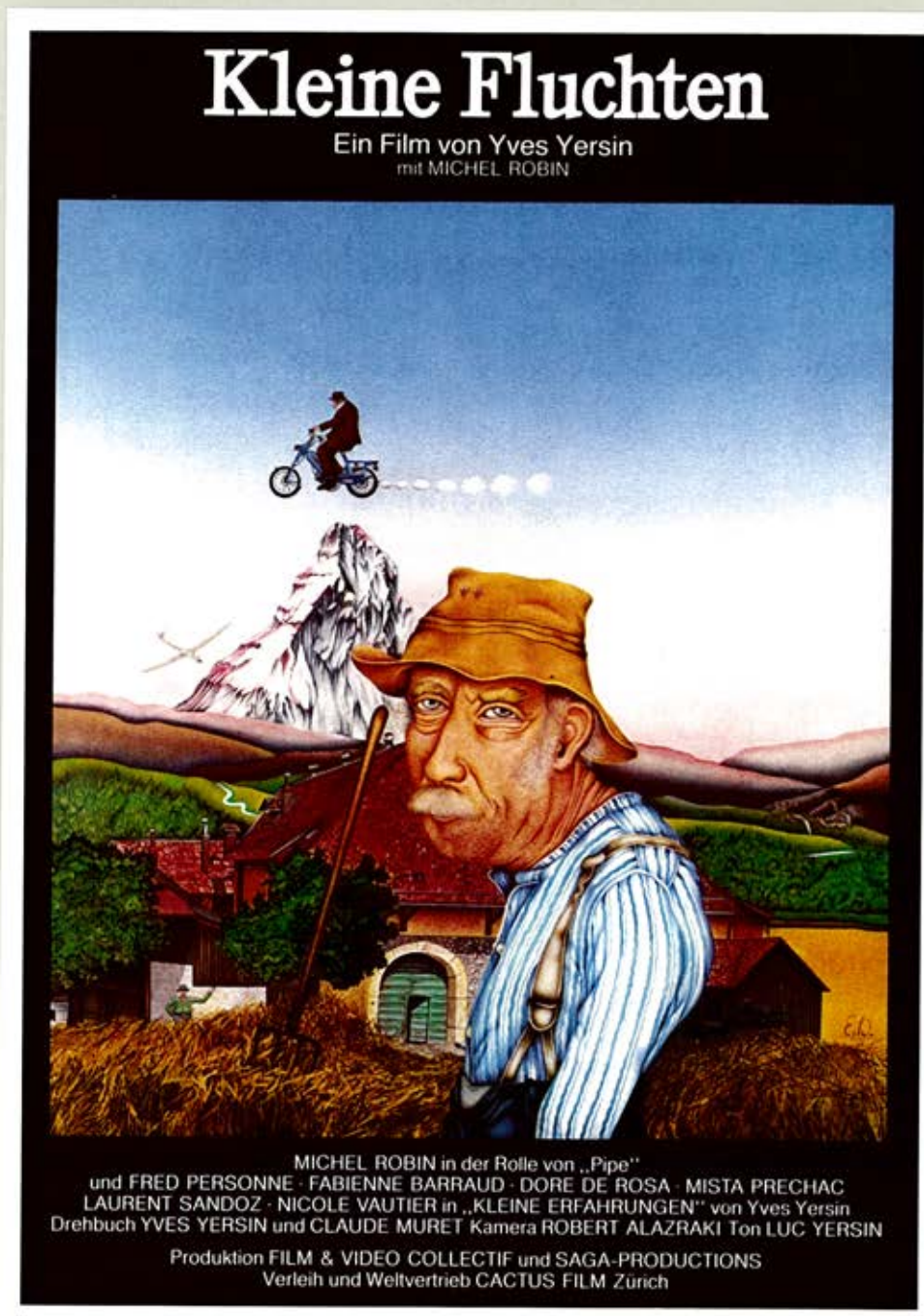
*Karlisson on the Roof*  
(Världens bästa Karlsson), Sweden 1975; col, 101 min  
d: Olle Hellbom; w: O.H., Astrid Lindgren, after her novel; ph: Lars Björne, Bertil Rosengren; m: Georg Riedel; c: Lars Söderdahl, Mats Wikström et al.





## Flight with a moped

Because he knew exactly, which camera-angle he really needed in his film "Little Flights", but no money was planned in for this in the production budget, the Swiss film-maker Yves Yersin did shiftwork in a factory for several months in order to be able to rent the special camera, with helicopter, that he needed. He wanted a shot, in which the farm-hand Pepe, who dreams of flying around the Matterhorn, actually lifts off the ground and flies over Swiss valleys and mountains to the Matterhorn. The film-scene works so convincingly that it almost lifts the audience out of their cinema seats. One sees Pepe riding on his moped along a forest-path, his eyes half-closed in day-dreams – and (in a cut to a "subjective" camera) out of the bumpy ride becomes a smooth gliding, which gradually climbs higher and higher, to the treetops and even higher, over a magnificent landscape into the Swiss sky. The bumpy moped-ride and the gentle engaging ascent were filmed using a specially-located (underwater) camera, which was pulled along in its casing first by a trolley on the forest floor in front of Pepe and then lifted up by a helicopter into the air, shock-free.



### *Little Flights*

(Les petites fugues); Switzerland 1979; col; 138 min  
P: Film & Video Collectif/Saga Productions; d: Yves Yersin; w: Y.Y., Claude Muret; ph: Robert Alazraki;  
m: Léon Francioli, Guillermo Villegas; c: Michel Robin, Fred Personne, Fabienne Barraud, Dore de Rosa et al.





## Flight of association

Question: In "Artists in the Circus Tent: perplexed" there are a lot of pictures of fliers and aeroplanes. Where would you see the connection?

Alexander Kluge: Firstly flying in the circus tent is a permanent metaphor for circus perse. Secondly the open sky: that mankind wants to fly at all is the strongest expression of his desire for omnipotence; just

consider the Tailor of Ulm. Thirdly these are fantasy locations which allow the viewer to associate; he mustn't think logical, he is free to fly with his ideas. The sharper the contrast between two edited takes, the broader the possible associations, the better he is able to fly into this abyss. All my flying scenes seem unreal, such fliers aren't likely to be seen anywhere, at least not in realistically based films.

Alexander Kluge, interviewed by U. Gregor

Superman, 1945  
left: "Berliner", 1975  
above: "The Tailor of Ulm", 1978

*The Tailor of Ulm*  
(*Der Schneider von Ulm*); W-Germany 1978; col; 120 min  
P: Edgar Reitz/Peter Genée & von Fürstenberg Film-  
prod.; w, d: Edgar Reitz; ph: Dietrich Lohmann; m: Nikos  
Mamangakis; c: Hannelore Elsner, Tilo Prückner, Marie  
Colbin, Vadim Glowna, Rudolf Wessely et al.





## The cheaper version

The creation of Jerome Siegel and Joel Schuster was the perfect amalgam of three of the themes that dominated American pulp magazines in the second quarter of the 20th century – the alien visitor from another planet, the superhuman being and dual identity. First brought to life in National Comics' "Action" in June 1938, Superman had the misfortune to be acquired by quip-ster producer Katzman who finally secured a low-budget deal with Columbia. Whereupon Katzman set about slashing the budget until it was virtually impossible to believe in the character. Director Bennet later recounted the story of the artist who offered Katzman really effective animation to show Superman flying at \$64 a foot and 'not so effective' animation at \$32 a foot; Katzman naturally chose the cheaper.



## Casting a hero

Casting America's 20th-century hero archetype, a creature of comic books, was somewhat akin to casting Jesus Christ – who could do the part justice? Some two hundred actors and athletes considered for the title role included Robert Redford, Paul Newman, Steve McQueen, Clint Eastwood, Charles Bronson, Sylvester Stallone, and Bruce Jenner. Christopher Reeve, a TV soap opera actor, was finally selected when the producers decided to go for an unknown. Reeve began a strenuous pre-production physical regimen, adding thirty pounds of highly visible brawn... Reeve's hardest task was to "fly" properly in the elaborate harness and belts that wafted him by crane above the sound stage; keeping his limbs ramrod straight demanded all those muscles he had developed, resulting in huge bruises and calluses.

*John Eastman, "Retakes"*



## Electro-flight

One of the most interesting special-effects developed for "E.T." was the "Go-Motion-Technique". This is a further development of the already wellknown Stop-Motion-Technique (still photography with modification from picture to picture), which despite its astonishing effect, has one serious disadvantage: even in the most perfect Stop-Motion the artificiality of the puppet can still be felt. This is what Steven Spielberg's specialists wanted to prevent. Their invention: though the camera as before still does single shots, the puppet moves continuously. The photographed stills become then – particularly under very long exposure time – just as slightly unsharp as in regular films. This technique was also used for the most famous scene in the film, the flight with the bicycles. Electric motors drove both the wheels and the figures into motion.



"Brazil"  
below: the flying dragon  
in "The Neverending  
Story"



*The Neverending Story*  
(*Die unendliche Geschichte*); W-Germany 1984;  
col; 99 min  
P: Bavaria; d: Wolfgang Petersen; w: W.P., Herman  
Weigel, after the novel by Michael Ende; ph: Jost  
Vacano; sp: Brian Johnson, Bruce Nicholson, Dennis  
Lowe, Michael Pangrazis, Steve Archer; m: Klaus  
Doldinger, Giorgio Moroder; c: Barret Oliver, Noah  
Hathaway, Tami Stronach et al.





The flight on BMX-  
bicycles in "E.T."

## Flights of fancy

It's sweetly conjured up out of a toybox, and for such dragons as Fuchur, the flying scaled-dog with the blackberry eyes, one has to have a heart. But the spirit of the story, in which a neglected child escapes into a fantasy-world trying to deal with the nothingness – he dissolves into nothing.

*Ponkie, "Abendzeitung" Munich, on "The Neverending Story"*

The space ship  
in "E.T."



*E.T. – The Extraterrestrial*  
USA 1982; De Luxe; 115 min  
P: Universal/Spielberg-Kennedy; d: Steven Spielberg;  
w: Melissa Mathison; ph: Allen Daviau; sp: Industrial  
Light and Magic; creator of E.T.: Carlo Rimbaldi;  
m: John Williams; c: Dee Wallace, Peter Coyote et al.



Sam Shepard as test pilot Chuck Yeager in "The Right Stuff"; Bruce Willis as "Hudson Hawk" and girl friend with a flying device from Leonardo da Vinci; Burt Coxe as the flying millionaire in Robert Altman's "Brewster McCLOUD" (opposite page); young Jim and the wreck in Spielberg's "Empire of the Sun"



## "He knows the moon, the sun and the stars"

The two US-astronauts, who are maintaining contact from a radio-station in the Australian bush with John Glenn, currently travelling around the earth, get involved in a discussion with Aborigines.

When the Aborigines find out what it's all about, one of them says: "Look at that old man there, he knows. He knows the moon, the sun and the stars. The Milky Way. He will help you..."

At nighttime, the Aborigines create a massive, spark-spitting fire, playing on their droning musical instruments and murmuring invocations into the air...

Fascinated and joyously excited, Glenn in his space-capsule notices, how white flakes are dancing suddenly in front of the porthole. Laughing happily, he reports this strange phenomenon to Houston Control. There, down on Earth, no one can make head nor tail of it..

Scene from "The Right Stuff"



*The Right Stuff*  
USA 1983; CinemaScope; 193 min  
P: Warner/Ladd; d: Philip Kaufman; w: P.K. (and William Goldman) after the novel by Tom Wolfe; ph: Caleb Deschanel; m: Bill Conti; c: Sam Shepard, Scott Glenn, Ed Harris, Dennis Quaid, Fred Ward, Barbara Hershey, Veronica Cartwright et al.



## Creature of the air

Jim launched the balsa model into the wind and caught it as it returned to his hand. Already he was bored with this model glider...

Lying in the deep nettles was the fuselage of a single-engined Japanese fighter... The wings, propeller and tail section had been removed, but the cockpit remained intact, the rusting metal of the seat and controls blanched by the rain. Through the open radiator shutters Jim could see the cylinders of the engine that had pulled this aircraft and its pilot through the sky. The once-burnished metal was now as rough as brown pumice, like the hulls of the rusting U-boats beached in the cove below the German forts at Tsingtao. But for all its rust, this Japanese fighter still belonged to the sky. For months Jim had been trying to devise a way of persuading his father to take it back to Amherst Avenue. At night it could lie beside his bed, lit by the newsreels inside his head.

*J.G. Ballard, "Empire of the Sun"*



## A steak, medium

In "Happy Bottom's Riding Club", an old bar and meeting-point for test-pilots in the middle of the desert on the edge of "Edwards Air Base", the old woman-bar-keeper, formerly herself a flying stuntwoman in Hollywood, calls into the room. "The first guy to break the sound-barrier, I'll buy him a steak!"

Chuck Yeager (played by Sam Shepard) comes up to the bar, leans over, smiles at her and says, "I'd like mine medium!"

*Scene out of "The Right Stuff", a Phil Kaufman-film after the novel by Tom Wolfe*

*Brewster McCloud*  
USA 1970; Panavision; 105 min  
P: Adler-Philips/Lion's Gate Production for MGM;  
d: Robert Altman; w: Doran William Cannon; ph: Jordan Cronenweth, Lamar Boren; design of the flying device: Leon Ericksen; c: Bud Cort, Sally Kellerman, Michael Murphy, Shelley Duvall, Stacy Keach et al.



## The flying camera

"Birdy" provided the opportunity for Skycam's feature film debut, and it promised to be a considerable challenge. Director Alan Parker had imagined shots from a bird's point of view, swooping then soaring over the main character's neighborhood. The neighborhood consisted of one entire block in Northwest Philadelphia, and the shots could not be done by any known means, except perhaps, the new Skycam... He literally wanted to fly over the entire neighborhood, to create a feeling of majestic, untethered flight.

...The first shot was for a pivotal scene. In the film, it signifies a dreamlike state, Birdy's first "flight". As Alan described what he wanted, I was excitedly visualizing the shot... It begins with a static frame, 80 feet in the air, looking straight down at some kids playing in the middle of a junkyard. Without warning, the ground begins to rush up towards us. The camera is dropping like a rock. A junk car fills the frame at an alarming rate, and then, just before impact, we pull out of the dive. The shot continues, swooping low along the ground, veering left and right around the debris. A fence looms up in the frame. We pull up sharply to miss it, then continue climbing, and just



"Birdy" dreams of flying – and he makes it happen

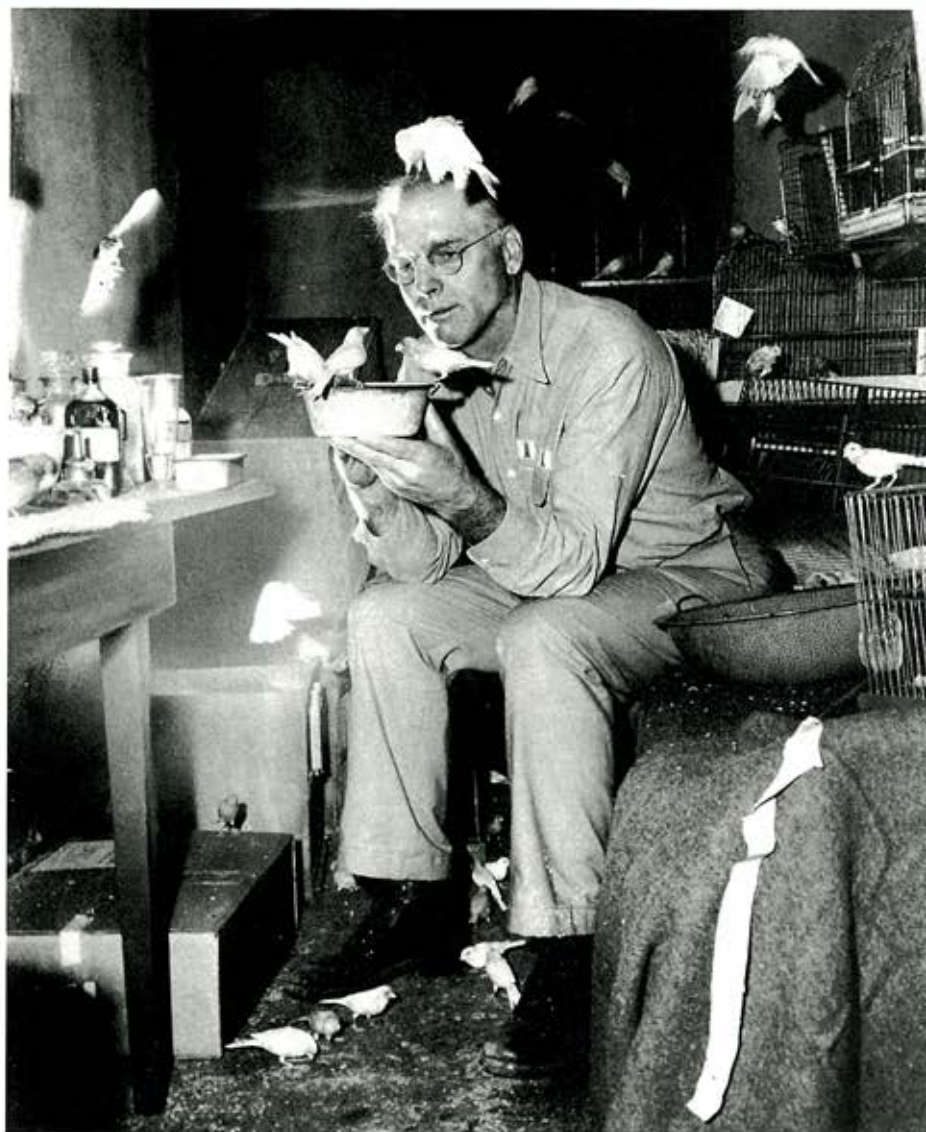
clear the tops of the trees separating the junkyard from the baseball field beyond. Soaring ever higher, this bird's-eye view reveals a lively softball game in progress down below. Its speed now subsiding, the camera floats gently above the field of play.

Larry McConkey, "Design and Operation of Skycam" in "American Cinematographer"



*Birdy*  
USA 1984; Metrocolor; 120 min  
P: Tri-Star; d: Alan Parker; w: Sandy Kroopf, Jack Behr,  
after the novel by William Wharton; ph: Michael Geresin;  
Skycam-camera: Larry McConkey; m: Peter Gabriel,  
c: Matthew Modine, Nicolas Cage, Sandy Baron et al.





46 years in prison; Burt Lancaster as "Birdman of Alcatraz" becomes a famous ornithologist – birds as a symbol of freedom.

## Never so involved

I'd never met this man Robert Stroud... but I felt I knew him intimately. I would actually begin to weep during some of the scenes. I've never been so personally involved in a part before or since. The film wasn't a great success, but now people constantly talk to me about it. It proves something, but I don't know what.

*Burt Lancaster about his character in "Birdman of Alcatraz"*

*Birdman of Alcatraz*  
USA 1962; bw; 148 min  
P: Norma/United Artists; d: John Frankenheimer;  
w: Guy Trosper, after the novel by Thomas E. Gaddis;  
ph: Burnett Guffey; m: Elmer Bernstein; c: Burt  
Lancaster, Karl Malden, Thelma Ritter, Telly Savalas et al.





Shot without a single trick in 1927: a camera plane for Wellman's "Wings" below: still calling the tune in aerial stunts, and in each movie a more daring one: the James Bond 007 films

## The wild pilots

Howard Hughes felt he could get better stuff without Army pilots, and that they weren't capable of doing the stunts that Hollywood stunt flyers could do. In those days several of the stunt flyers went around to county fairs doing those crazy stunts, such as wingwalking. Howard, I really thought, felt down in his heart that the stuff he wanted – planes spinning down out of control, spectacular dives, loops, crashes – would be done much better by these wild, crazy stunt pilots...

Frank Clarke, fearful of the lives of his flyers, one day stormed up to Hughes and said, "Howard, I'm getting damn sick and tired of flying these planes – they're just held together with baling wire. One of these days one of us is going to get killed." Hughes responded, "Well, Frank, there's nothing wrong with the planes. It's you flyers."

*Tony Thomas, "Howard Hughes in Hollywood"*



**JAMES BOND 007** **OCTOPUSSY**



Aerial adventures: "The Living Daylights", "Octopussy" and "You only live twice"



## Aerial secrets

The successful aerial cinematographer must, first of all, be an expert cinematographer. He must know photography in both theory and practice so perfectly that it is second nature to him: things happen so suddenly in the air that every fraction of a second counts; there can be no pauses for debating (mentally or otherwise) how to solve the particular problem in hand. Secondly, and of equal importance, the aerial cameraman must be physically, mentally, and psychologically fit. He must have the basic qualities of a first class stunt aviator: he must be physically fit, mentally alert, and equipped with unshakable nerves. He must have good eyesight, perfect equilibrium, and supernormal judgment of distance. Thirdly, he must know aviation. He must know airplanes, how each is constructed, and how each will perform. He must know pilots, and their capabilities. But more than anything else, he must know aerial photography, which is entirely different from earth-bound photography. He must know the results of every conceivable atmospheric condition upon his camera itself... Above all else, he must have an inborn talent for aerial photography – an indescribable knack of doing the right thing at the right time; not merely at the right minute, but at the right fraction of the right second...

In any sort of production it is a great advantage to work with a director who has a real knowledge of camerawork. Similarly, in aerial cinematography, it is an even greater advantage to work with a director who knows flying. Fortunately, most of the directors of air stories are pilots; William Wellman, Tay Garnett, Clarence Brown, Howard Hughes, Cecil DeMille, and many other outstanding directors are licensed pilots. It is well, too, to work with pilots who either have some knowledge of photography, or who at least have worked long enough in pictures to become camera wise... But more than anything else, it is important to work with a pilot in whom you can place your entire confidence. You cannot do good work if you are worrying about your pilot's ability.

*Aerial photographer Elmer Dyer, 1932*





## Flying in feature films

A pilot-essay by Alf Mayer-Ebeling



It was a very specific camera-angle, which made film very quickly the medium of the Twentieth Century. If already in 1896 the first shots of "Arrival of a Train", and shortly afterwards the first close-ups and film-montages were shocking and thrilling the audiences, how the more did those pictures which visualised and fantasised mankind's dream of flying and showed the world from high on or even stretched out into new, unknown worlds. Like film per se and with the help of montage can bridge every gap and create new contexts, there also out of airtravel a new world came into being. The rapid enthusiasm of writers and intellectuals for the new medium is proof of this visual-cultural revolution. "This assault on space, time and gravity fulfills", the film-theoretician Siegfried Kracauer perceived, "something of a utopian turn of mind." He described "Movie-watching" as a dream-like condition, the extension of seeing habits as "Realities of Another Dimension". And Film, liberated from the shackles of gravity, also taught Literature, for example the writer John Passos, to move simultaneously in different parts of the world. On the other hand, the new versatile medium brought to life the dreamed-up airtravels of literature and composed continually new ones to add to them.

George Méliès (1861 – 1938), the early magician of Film, worked (having no choice) with a stiff camera, his actors bowed in front of the audience like at a stage show. Astounding however, what journeys he produced with this. And how much more than the potential of Film, as the cameras became (more) mobile, became able to move on the ground, to turn around, then to climb (on scaffoldings), to hover, ascend and descend – and lastly to rise into the air with aeroplanes. Is it a coincidence, that the first "Oscar" went to

an aviation-film: 1928 to "Wings" by William A. Wellman, who got his flying-license in 1914. The aeroplane, one of the most exciting inventions of the Twentieth Century, in the history of its development, is not accidentally connected closely with that of cinematography, their effects on the world and on its weltanschauung are related to each other: raising the borders, bringing unknown experiences, widening of horizons. Etienne-Jules Marey (1830 – 1904), who with his chronophotography, the recording of movement, was a cinema-pioneer, won – through his motion studies in bird flight – very rapidly the attention of the flying-machine pioneers.

Penaud and Tatin were in close touch with him and also Clément Ader, whose first aeroplane was presented to the French Academy of the Sciences by Marey in 1898. Marey's "photographic shotgun" for the recording of movement is regarded as an important step in the development of the film-camera.

Film arose out of photography, which was at that time considered as a cheaper way of drawing and painting. The new medium of moving pictures, projected onto the screen of a cinema, and the increasing mobility of the camera created nothing less than the dissolving of the central perspective, which had been valid for centuries. In particular the new aerial perspective – what Leonardo da Vinci called "prospetta del perdimento", perspective of disappearance – allowed new visual discoveries, the "Conquest of approaching reality through art" to a much broader extent than the art historian Ernst H. Gombrich had propagated for the static pictures in "fine arts". Film is the medium of movement, of realism and its transcendentality. Like dreams and flying, films know no borders, they can look closer, broader, and more poetically than the mere eye can do. Film's mobile- and flying capacity, the manifold perspectives – integral components of every film dramaturgy – "give us that majority of fictions, that we need", as Sigmund Freud once commented on Literature.

The sensation of seeing anew and the sensation of moving anew are not just common to the founding decade. The connections are many and variegated. Only Film can transmit medially the elegance and poetry of flying. Already early on it profited



from the new liberated perspective as spectacle – and through this finds its way to itself.

At the same time as the Russian director Dziga Vertov was trying out the possibilities of the "unhinged camera" ("I rise together with falling and climbing aeroplanes, I fall and climb with falling and rising bodies"), the discoverer of that little spot "Hollywood", the film director and producer Cecil B. DeMille was so obsessed with flying that his filmwork began to suffer. DeMille foresaw a great future for air travel and founded the first Californian airline, years before Lindbergh's transatlantic flight awakened a worldwide enthusiasm for flying. Or Howard Hughes, whose first and last productions ("Hell's Angels", 1930, and "Jet Pilot", 1950 – 1957) were megalomaniac flying films. He won three world records in flying, flew around the world in three days, 19 hours and 28 minutes, and was welcomed in New York with a confetti-parade. His film "Hell Angels", shot without any film-tricks was regarded as a "milestone in film history". Truffaut counted "Jet Pilot" as one of his favourite films, because in it "the planes make love with each other". Every film, no matter how bad, leads and entices our eye, determines our perception like no other medium, can transfer us into unknown worlds. And nothing is impossible. Animation scenes turn all the natural laws on their heads, everything can be made to fly: whether it's a Ford Model T in "The Absent-Minded Professor", "Münchhausen" on his cannonball, "Mary Poppins" with her umbrella, "Faust" on Mephisto's overcoat, chorusgirls on the wings in "Flying down to Rio", the farmhand Pepe and his moped in "Little Flights" or "Son of Lassie" or ...

Most splendidly and effectively however is it – even today – when a film, already in its opening, transposes us into the cinema-world with an aerial shot: whether it's the flight over a futuristic Los Angeles in "Blade Runner" or that of an aerial camera accompanying a little Volkswagen on its way to a mountain-hotel in Kubrick's "Shining". The first aerial photographs were shot from cameras tied onto carrier-pigeons, today the Louma-crane soars to impossible heights and the remote-control Sky-cam-camera, as in "Birdy", can accomplish genuine flying manoeuvres. The fascinat-

ion of flying is even transmitted till the up-to-now most expensive camera-flights in film history: the cameras, mounted in the warheads of bombs in the Gulf War, with which we shot down onto the chosen targets. But that wasn't cinema, Dr. Strange-love ...

Films about flying, in their most beautiful moments, are like the Russian cosmonaut Alexei Leonov expressed it, after seeing Stanley Kubrick's "2001": "I feel as if I have been in space a second time."



From the Lufthansa Archive (left, from above): Jane Mansfield, 1961; Clark Gable onboard the virgin flight of a DeHavilland Comet-jet is received by John Ford at Entebbe, Uganda, in 1952; Sophia Loren, 1962 in Hamburg; above: Harry Piel, 1933, in "Ein Unsichtbarer geht durch die Stadt" (An Invisible Walks the Town)





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## Abbreviations

The means of the filmographical abbreviations used throughout the book are:

- P = production company;  
 d = director;  
 w = written by;  
 ph = photography;  
 aph = aerial photography;  
 sp = special effects;  
 m = music;  
 c = cast

Numbers in italics throughout the credits refer to pictures or pictured persons.



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