

**The Coming of Synchronous Sound  
to Filmmaking: an Introduction**

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## The Coming of Synchronous Sound to Filmmaking: an Introduction<sup>1</sup>

The Hollywood side of the U.S.A. doesn't interest me at all, I want to see the country! And the techniques for sound movies. For I am absolutely certain that the entire future of films lies with sound.

Sergei Eisenstein (1929)<sup>2</sup>

Every art has the right to stem from a previous art; it not only has the right to but must so stem ... In art there is only slow or rapid progress, implying in essence evolution and not revolution.

Bela Bartok<sup>3</sup>

... it is the nature of hearing that what is heard comes from someplace, whereas what you can see you can look at. It is why sounds are warnings, or calls; it is why our access to another world is normally through voices from it ...

Stanley Cavell<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A version of this essay was published in 1980 as the "Editor's Introduction" on pages viii-xiv of *Sound & the Cinema: The Coming of Sound to American Film* (New York, New York: Redgrave Publishing Company, 1980), an anthology that I compiled and edited (with the assistance of William F. Wilbert and Joan Evans-Cameron) of contributions to a symposium at George Eastman House, Rochester, New York in October 1973 on "The Coming of Sound to the American Film: 1925-1940".

<sup>2</sup> Letter to Léon Moussinac of 1929. See page 35 of Moussinac, *Sergei Eisenstein: an Investigation into his Films and Philosophy*, translated by D. Sandy Petrey, Editions Seguers' Cinéma d'Aujourd'hui (New York, New York: Crown Publishers, Incorporated, 1964).

<sup>3</sup> Quoted by Erno Lendvai in "Duality and Synthesis in the Music of Bela Bartok", an article included in *Module, Symmetry, Proportion*, edited by Gyorgy Kepes (London: Studio Vista, 1966), pages 181 and 187.

<sup>4</sup> Stanley Cavell, *The World Viewed: Reflections on the Ontology of Film* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1979 [1971]), page 18.

### The Cinematical Revolution

As Bartok observed, the arts before filmmaking were immune to revolution: innovations percolated but never subjugated. The history of artistic transformation had been without exception evolutionary.

An immense question, then, confronts historians of filmmaking, emasculating for many their understanding of it, of the other arts and of everything else, namely

Why did the advent of synchronous sound revolutionize the design and production of films?

By 1927 filmmakers were accustomed to changes wrought by technological innovation. Each advance in emulsion formulae, lens design, magazine size, lighting capacity and projection technique had gradually reshaped the face of film production and distribution.

By 1927 filmmakers were accustomed, as well, to producing sounds to accompany movies. The cinema was never silent. When the Lumière's first projected movies to an audience in 1895, the flickering images were seen as the sounds of a tinkling piano were heard. And for 35 years thereafter filmmakers wedded to their works occasional music, spoken words and effects, hoping at best to deepen the emotional impact and at worst to mask the noises of gas lamps, projector gears, love-making and upset stomachs.

Yet by 1930, scarcely three years after the 'first talking picture' was released, not one asynchronous enacted film remained in production in the United States, the dominating centre of international filmmaking.<sup>5</sup> The prevailing traditions of film design, production and exhibition and the structure of the industry that sustained them had been shattered once and for all time. An art had been exterminated at the zenith of its power and something new – something without precedent in human history – had taken its place.

If we are to understand filmmaking, the sources of its power and the roots of its dominant traditions, we must understand the causes and effects of the revolution that occurred when synchronous sound came to the American film and quickly thereafter to the world. To do so, however, we must understand why we hear as we do and what part our ears play in that integrated perception of the world upon which our deepest emotional life rests. No treatise on the physiology or phenomenology of perception will

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<sup>5</sup> See page 36 of Douglas Gomery's "Hollywood Converts to Sound: Chaos or Order?", reproduced as pages 24-37 of 'Part I: The Technological Revolution' of the anthology cited in footnote 1 above.

be undertaken here, but a sketch of the surface of what now seems pertinent may preclude misunderstanding of the depths.

### Hearing Contra Seeing

Were the choice forced upon you, which would you prefer to lose? Your sight or your hearing?

Most persons to whom I have put the question, remembering perhaps a blind person with a cane unable easily to cross streets or to avoid unseen objects, answer unequivocally: hearing! Imagined blindness, unlike deafness, seems terrifying. However inconvenient deafness would be, blindness would be abhorrent beyond comprehension.

But what happens when the choice is forced upon us, not in our imaginings but in reality? Von Békésy, winner of the Nobel Prize for his enquiries into the physiology of hearing, gives us a hint in an atypically poignant passage of scientific literature:

We could do much to ameliorate the tragedy of deafness if we changed some of our attitudes toward it. Blindness evokes our instant sympathy, and we go out of our way to help the blind person. But deafness often goes unrecognized. If a deaf person misunderstands what we say, we are apt to attribute it to lack of intelligence instead of to faulty hearing. Very few people have the patience to help the deafened. To a deaf man the outside world appears unfriendly. He tries to hide his deafness, and this only brings on more problems.<sup>6</sup>

Statistics unfortunately confirm the observation, for the incidence of acute mental disturbance among the deafened is many times greater than among the blinded.

Why the asymmetry? If our eyes and ears informed us about identical aspects of the world, it would make no difference to our mental health were we to be blinded rather than deafened, or conversely. But such is not the case. Deafness forces an inability to sense one's own identity that has no parallel in blindness.

The question is inescapable:

Why is hearing, unlike seeing, crucial to maintaining a stable awareness of one's personal identity?

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<sup>6</sup> Georg von Bekesy, "The Ear", *Scientific American*, August, 1957, reprinted in *Perception: Mechanisms and Models* (San Francisco: W. H. Freeman & Company, 1972), page 93.

Often our eyes convey to us information about events in the world supplemented by our ears. Often our ears warn us of the presence of events to which we have not as yet attended with our eyes: we hear the fire engine before we turn to see it, or we hear the door opening behind us before turning to see who is about to enter the room.

Within the world, however, are other events that cannot be seen – happenings to which our eyes can have no access. Among them are musical events: we see the tools that make music and the making of it but not the music made, for a modulation from G major to E minor must be heard rather than seen. Among them also are those events within our brains that we encounter mentally: we see our own body and the bodies of others, but when we think and feel, we see nothing by doing so.

We cannot see, in particular, either the self that constitutes our own identity or the selves that constitute the identity of others. We must infer both. How? We infer the identity of others largely, indeed almost exclusively, from what we hear them say, for verbal expression is our most flexible tool for informing others of how we are thinking and feeling, and we infer that the converse is true as well. We infer who we are by measuring ourselves against the inferred and nuanced identities of those we hear about us, and we identify much of the remainder of the world by the values that we, as self-identified persons, project upon it.

Our world thus divides into events to which our eyes are privy and those to which they are not. By hearing, we may attend to those events to which our eyes remain unprivileged. Our ears, therefore, grant us access to those unseen and unseeable events that, abetted by inference, define the identity of ourselves, others and the world beyond.

No wonder the deafened find identity elusive. Without seeing, the nearby world of seeable things retains its identity, for one can often touch and hear objects one cannot see. Without hearing, however, the world of unseeable events remains largely beyond acquaintance. Limited access may be had, by inference, to the grosser mental and emotional states of others, but the finer delineations that only spoken language can express easily and well remain elusive and with them the identity of the world and everything of human value within.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> By signing, a deafened person may communicate with other persons versed in the language as expressively as by any of its verbal analogues, and it is both sad and inexcusable that so many people have caused so much pain among the deafened by prohibiting them from learning and communicating with the only natural language naturally available to them. My point here is simply that in a world peopled largely by non-signers, the range of linguistic events available to the deafened by which to measure and refine their identities are generally restricted.

### The Cinematical Revolution

Why then did the coming of synchronous sound revolutionize filmmaking? Through hearing we acquaint ourselves with those unseeable events, matched to a world of things seen, from which we infer the identity and value of ourselves, others and the world about us.

Our deepest emotional engagement with the world presupposes the sustained, simultaneous, correlated and integrated perception of both seeable and unseeable events by our two distance senses, sight and hearing.

Before 1927 the cinema, like all other arts, was unnatural: neither inartistic nor ineffective but qualitatively unlike nature. For although filmmakers had learned to mimic the visual continuities of the natural world without impediment, the absence of colour and depth notwithstanding, they were unable to mimic its integrated aural complement.

Denied the means of stimulating both distance senses naturally, filmmakers, as other artists, had no choice but to compensate, so they denaturalized their visuals into art! Under constraint, they learned to express elegantly a few unsophisticated emotions through visuals alone: stereotypical characters moved with grace through melodramatic situations evoking emotions reminiscent of grand opera, for similar though inverse compensations were being made.

When synchronous sound arrived, however, the need for compensation largely disappeared. A natural art sprang unimpeded into being to which people could react with the same integrated perceptual, conceptual and emotional habits with which they reacted to the faces, voices, gestures and other patterns of seeable and unseeable events in their everyday world. For the first time in human history, for example, humans could enter a room in Toronto, face a darkened wall, and, without being psychologically maladjusted, see and hear a woman dying in an emergency ward in New York City Hospital.<sup>8</sup> They would not see and hear a film of a woman dying (barring elliptical descriptions), but would rather see and hear a woman dying by means of a film – which is as different as night from day.

No wonder a revolution occurred! Before 1927 created and natural events were perceptually and hence conceptually distinct. Unless one were psychopathologically

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<sup>8</sup> See, for example, Frederick Wiseman's HOSPITAL (1970).

disturbed, one perceived painted flowers as painted, staged duels as staged and narrated conversations as narrated. Therein lay the source of their genius and the root of the conceptual compensation that they demanded as the price of their transfiguration into art.

After 1927, however, the perceptual boundary between created and natural events dissolved. The events upon which one could project natural expectations and habits were no longer restricted to those found in the everyday world, for the universe of happenings perceivable as if real had been expanded. Created events could now induce reactions physiologically indistinguishable from those caused by events in the everyday world: cinematically happenings, unlike those of any other art, could induce physical revulsion, epileptic seizures, hysteria, terror, horror and even psychotic trauma.

It would take time, of course, for filmmakers in Hollywood and thereafter the world to assimilate synchronous sound elegantly and powerfully into films of enacted events. It would take longer for them to understand what they had done and much longer for some of them, screenwriters in particular, to divest themselves of lingering confusions inherited from other arts.

By the middle 1930s, however, filmmakers around the world had catapulted their art into its golden age. One need only list the titles of a sampling of the movies released world-wide during 1938-39 as the barriers of World War II arose, capping a decade of international artistic achievement unequalled thereafter, to recall their variety, accessibility, range and power and to marvel at what had been accomplished.

THE ADVENTURES OF MARCO POLO  
 ALEXANDER NEVSKY  
 ALGIERS  
 BABES IN ARMS  
 BEAU GESTE  
 BOYS TOWN  
 CAREFREE  
 THE CITADEL  
 DARK VICTORY  
 DRUMS ALONG THE MOHAWK  
 THE GIRL OF THE GOLDEN WEST  
 GOODBYE, MR. CHIPS  
 THE GREAT WALTZ  
 HARVEST [FRENCH TITLE?]  
 THE HUNCHBACK OF NOTRE DAME  
 JAMAICA INN

THE ADVENTURES OF ROBIN HOOD  
 ALEXANDER'S RAGTIME BAND  
 ANGELS WITH DIRTY FACES  
 THE BEACHCOMBER  
 BLUEBEARD'S EIGHTH WIFE  
 BRINGING UP BABY  
 UN CARNET DE BAL  
 CONFESSIONS OF A NAZI SPY  
 DESTROY RIDES AGAIN  
 FERDINAND THE BULL  
 GONE WITH THE WIND  
 LA GRANDE ILLUSION  
 GUNGA DIN  
 HOLIDAY  
 INTERMEZZO  
 JESSE JAMES

JEZEBEL	JUAREZ
KIDNAPPED	THE LADY VANISHES
THE MAN IN THE IRON MASK	MARIE ANTOINETTE
MR. SMITH GOES TO WASHINGTON	NINOTCHKA
OF MICE AND MEN	THE PRIVATE LIVES OF ELIZABETH & ESSEX
PYGMALION	QUAI DES BRUMES
REBECCA OF SUNNYBROOK FARM	THE ROARING TWENTIES
LE ROMAN D'UN TRICHEUR	ROOM SERVICE
THE SON OF FRANKENSTEIN	SNOW WHITE & THE SEVEN DWARFS
STAGECOACH	YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU
SOUTH RIDING	TEST PILOT
U-BOAT	THE UGLY DUCKLING
UNION PACIFIC	THE WIZARD OF OZ
THE WOMEN	WUTHERING HEIGHTS
YOUNG MR. LINCOLN	ZAZA

The revolution had begun in Hollywood, of course, a city within a country that, through luck of geography, was to miss the direct impact of the war. Unsurprisingly, therefore, American dominance of the industry producing films of feature-length for international distribution was simply accelerated by World War II. No filmmaker anywhere in the world, however, will ever forget or deny the standard set by the filmmakers of Hollywood during the studio era, or attribute it simply to luck. Capra, Cukor, Curtiz, Disney, Ford, Hawks, Hitchcock, Huston, Lang, Mamoulian, Milestone, Sturges, Vidor, Walsh, Wellman, Welles, Wyler and others, directing and coordinating the best endeavours of so many fellow artists and coworkers, did their best work during these years – work characterised by a directness of human expression unsurpassed in any other art and equalled, I think, only during the splurge of sustained musical creativity that occurred in and around Vienna during the one-hundred-and-thirty-five years from Haydn's Op. 20 quartets to the death of Mahler.<sup>9</sup>

The financial burden of converting an industry to the making and distribution of 'talking pictures', however, reshaped the patterns of production within Hollywood. Control within the major studios was wrested suddenly and irreversibly from the hands of those

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<sup>9</sup> [Note added 17 April 2019]. At the time of the writing of the published version of this essay, I had already acquired a working awareness of how screenplays inform the making of movies by writing, rewriting and pondering them. Only after years of teaching others to be comparably aware, however, was I to register – with increasing astonishment! – how uniquely *fundamental* the designs of screenplays were to the success or failure of the movies made from them. Had I known better, this paragraph would have read differently. I trust that the evidence of the Appendix to this revision will in some measure compensate, albeit tardily, for my earlier ignorance.



experienced in the working and evolving continuities of the crafts of filmmaking and placed into the hands of financiers, producers and technicians inexperienced in any of the arts, but most of all the arts of filmmaking. The coming of synchronous sound precipitated the industrialization of the industry, the controlling impingement of the cinematically ignorant and, ultimately, the destruction of those very institutions that for such a brief and brilliant time permitted the coordinated training and employment of human beings in the service of an art both modest and humane. By 1960, the din of demolition had all but extinguished the unassuming power of the 'talking pictures' of the studio era.

But how wondrously they had once worked their magic! Frank Capra evaluated the cinemematical revolution as follows:

Films went all the way to what I think is real greatness when they got that third dimension of sound.<sup>10</sup>

Capra's assessment is apt but understated, for the coming of synchronous sound to the cinema was not simply a cinemematical revolution. It was the sole cataclysmical event in the history of art and hence a watershed in the history of humankind, for therewith a natural art for the first time found its *métier*. We live no longer within the perceptual boundaries of the natural world within which my grandparents, for example, were born, for in 1927 those boundaries disappeared. Neither we nor our world will ever be the same again.

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<sup>10</sup> From page 80 of Capra's remarks of 1973 reproduced as pages 77-84 of "Part II: Reminiscence and Reflection" within the anthology cited in footnote 1 above.

## Appendix

### Exemplary Screenwriters of the Studio Era: 1930-1960<sup>11</sup>

James Agee (b. 1909): THE QUIET ONE (1949); AFRICAN QUEEN (1951); NIGHT OF THE HUNTER (1955).

Leigh Brackett (b. 1915): THE BIG SLEEP (1946); RIO BRAVO, 1959); THE LONG GOODBYE, 1973); THE EMPIRE STRIKES BACK, 1980)

Sidney Buchman [b. 1902]: IF I HAD A MILLION (1932); LOST HORIZON (1937); HOLIDAY (1938); MR. SMITH GOES TO WASHINGTON (1939); HERE COMES MR. JORDAN (1941); THE TALK OF THE TOWN (1942).

Lenore Coffee [b. 1896]: POSSESSED (1931); EVELYN PRENTICE (1934); FOUR DAUGHTERS (1938); THE WAY OF ALL FLESH (1940); THE GREAT LIE (1941); THE GAY SISTERS (1942); OLD ACQUAINTANCE (1943); TOMORROW IS FOREVER (1946); SUDDEN FEAR (1952); THE END OF THE AFFAIR (1955).

Betty Comden [b. 1919] and Adolph Green [b. 1915]: ON THE TOWN (1949); SINGING IN THE RAIN (1952); THE BAND WAGON (1953); AUNTIE MAME (1958); THE BELLS ARE RINGING (1960).

Philip Dunne [b. 1908]: THE COUNT OF MONTE CRISTO (1934); THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS (1936); HOW GREEN WAS MY VALLEY (1941); THE GHOST AND MRS. MUIR (1947); PINKY (1949); THE ROBE (1953); TEN NORTH FREDERICK (1958).

Julius Epstein [b. 1909] and Philip Epstein [b. 1909]: THE STRAWBERRY BLOND (1941); CASABLANCA (1942); THE MAN WHO CAME TO DINNER (1942); THE BATTLE OF RUSSIA (1943); ARSENIC AND OLD LACE (1944); MR. SKEFFINGTON (1944).

Carl Foreman [b. 1914]: SO THIS IS NEW YORK (1948); CHAMPION (1949); CYRANO DE BERGERAC (1950); THE MAN (1950); HIGH NOON (1952); BRIDGE ON THE RIVER KWAI (1957); THE GUNS OF NAVARONE (1961).

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<sup>11</sup> [Appendix added on 17 April 2019] As noted within footnote 9 on page 7 above, I have appended this listing of movies made from screenplays of screenwriters of the studio era to compensate for having failed within the essay as published to reaffirm the fundamental contribution of screenwriters to the making of the movies that distinguished it. The achievement of the four writers on the list who worked outside Hollywood in England, France and Italy is especially remarkable, for none of the countries had the financial resources during the 1930s to compete with the Americans in the making of 'talking pictures', and the institutions and facilities for production that survived the second world war had to be reborn. Nevertheless, movies fashioned from screenplays written in whole or part by Graham Greene, Jacques Prévert, Charles Spaak and Cesare Zavattini remain by common consent among the finest ever made. I have included in the listing as well a few movies whose screenplays were written after 1960 to augment by comparison with others by the writer the sense of the impending conclusion of the era.

Jules Furthman [b. 1888]: MOROCCO (1930); SHANGHAI EXPRESS (1932); MUTINY ON THE BOUNTY (1935); ONLY ANGELS HAVE WINGS (1939); TO HAVE AND HAVE NOT (1944); THE BIG SLEEP (1946); PRETTY BABY (1950); RIO BRAVO (1959).

Frances Goodrich [b. 1890] and Albert Hackett [b. 1900]: THE THIN MAN (1934); NAUGHTY MARIETTA (1935); EASTER PARADE (1948); IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE (1946); THE PIRATE (1948); FATHER OF THE BRIDE (1950); SEVEN BRIDES FOR SEVEN BROTHERS (1954); DIARY OF ANNE FRANK (1959)

Ruth Gordon [b. 1896] and Garson Kanin [b. 1912]: A DOUBLE LIFE (1948); ADAM'S RIB (1949); BORN YESTERDAY [Kanin alone] (1950); THE MARRYING KIND (1951); PAT AND MIKE (1952); IT SHOULD HAPPEN TO YOU (1954) [Kanin alone].

Graham Greene [b. 1904]: BRIGHTON ROCK (1947); THE FALLEN IDOL (1948); THE THIRD MAN (1949); ST. JOAN (1957).

Ben Hecht [b. 1894]: SCARFACE (1932); TWENTIETH CENTURY (1934); WURTHERING HEIGHTS (1939); HIS GIRL FRIDAY (1940); ANGELS OVER BROADWAY (1940); SPELLBOUND (1945); NOTORIOUS (1946); A FAREWELL TO ARMS (1957).

John Huston [b. 1906]: JEZEBEL (1938); HIGH SIERRA (1941); SERGEANT YORK (1941); THE MALTESE FALCON (1941); TREASURE OF THE SIERRA MADRE (1948); KEY LARGO (1948); ASPHALT JUNGLE (1950); AFRICAN QUEEN (1951); MOBY DICK (1956); HEAVEN KNOWS, MR. ALLISON (1957).

Nunnally Johnson [b. 1897]: PRISONER OF SHARK ISLAND (1936); JESSE JAMES (1939); GRAPES OF WRATH (1940); THE GUNFIGHTER (1950); THE DESERT FOX (1951); THREE FACES OF EVE (1957); THE DIRTY DOZEN (1967).

Howard Koch [b. 1902]: THE SEA HAWK (1940); THE LETTER (1940); SERGEANT YORK (1941); CASABLANCA (1942); LETTER FROM AN UNKNOWN WOMAN (1948).

Norman Krasna [b. 1909]: BOMBSHELL (1933); THE RICHEST GIRL IN THE WORLD (1934); HANDS ACROSS THE TABLE (1935); FURY (1936); BACHELOR MOTHER (1939); THE DEVIL AND MISS JONES (1941); IT STARTED WITH EVE (1941); PRINCESS O'ROURKE (1943); WHITE CHRISTMAS (1954); INDISCREET (1958); LET'S MAKE LOVE (1960).

John Lee Mahin [b. 1902]: SCARFACE (1932); RED DUST (1932); TREASURE ISLAND (1934); NAUGHTY MARIETTA (1935); CAPTAINS COURAGEOUS (1937); BOOM TOWN (1940); DR. JEKYLL AND MR. HYDE (1941); TORTILLA FLAT (1942); QUO VADIS (1951); SHOW BOAT (1951); MOGAMBO (1953); HEAVEN KNOWS, MR. ALLISON (1957).

Robert Maibaum [b. 1909]: GOLD DIGGERS OF 1937; THE LADY AND THE MOB (1939); THE GREAT GATSBY (1949); RANSOM! (1956); DR. NO (1962); FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE (1963); GOLDFINGER (1964).

Hermann Mankiewicz [b. 1897]: DINNER AT EIGHT (1933); THE WIZARD OF OZ (1939); IT'S A WONDERFUL WORLD (1939); CITIZEN KANE (1941); THE PRIDE OF THE YANKEES (1942); STAND BY FOR ACTION (1943); THE ENCHANTED COTTAGE (1945).

- Joseph L. Mankiewicz [b. 1909]: IF I HAD A MILLION (1932); OUR DAILY BREAD (1934); THE KEYS OF THE KINGDOM (1944); A LETTER TO THREE WIVES (1949); ALL ABOUT EVE (1950); FIVE FINGERS (1952); GUYS AND DOLLS (1955).
- Frank Nugent [b. 1908]: FORT APACHE (1948); SHE WORE A YELLOW RIBBON (1949); WAGON MASTER (1950); THE QUIET MAN (1952); MR. ROBERTS (1955); THE SEARCHERS (1956); TWO RODE TOGETHER (1961); DONOVAN'S REEF (1963).
- Dudley Nichols [b. 1895]: THE LOST PATROL (1934); THE INFORMER (1935); BRINGING UP BABY (1938); STAGECOACH (1939); GUNGA DIN (1939); FOR WHOM THE BELL TOLLS (1943); THE BELLS OF ST. MARY (1945); SCARLET STREET (1945); AND THEN THERE WERE NONE (1945); PINKY (1949); RAWHIDE (1951); THE TIN STAR (1957).
- Jacques Prévert [b. 1900]: LE CRIME DE MONSIEUR LANGE (1936); QUAI DES BRUMES (1938); LE JOUR SE LÈVE (1939); LES ENFANTS DU PARADIS (1945); LES AMANTS DE VERONE (1949); LE ROI ET L'OISEAU (1979).
- Walter Reisch [b. 1903]: THE GREAT WALTZ (1938); NINOTCHKA (1939); COMRADE X (1940); THAT HAMILTON WOMAN (1941); THAT UNCERTAIN FEELING (1941); GASLIGHT (1944); TITANIC (1953); JOURNEY TO THE CENTRE OF THE EARTH (1959), THE REMARKABLE MR. PENNYPACKER (1959).
- Robert Riskin [b. 1897]: PLATINUM BLONDE (1931); AMERICAN MADNESS (1932); LADY FOR A DAY (1933); IT HAPPENED ONE NIGHT (1934); MR. DEEDS GOES TO TOWN (1936); LOST HORIZON (1937); YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU (1938); MEET JOHN DOE (1941); THE THIN MAN GOES HOME (1944); POCKET OF MIRACLES (1961).
- Casey Robinson [b. 1903]: CAPTAIN BLOOD (1935); DARK VICTORY (1939); ALL THIS, AND HEAVEN TOO (1940); NOW VOYAGER (1942); KINGS ROW (1942); PRIDE OF THE YANKEES (1942); THE CORN IS GREEN (1945); THE SNOWS OF KILIMANJARO (1952); THE EGYPTIAN (1954).
- Allan Scott [b. 1907]: TOP HAT (1935); ROBERTA (1935); SWING TIME (1936); FOLLOW THE FLEET (1936); SHALL WE DANCE (1937); CAREFREE (1938); SO PROUDLY WE HAIL! (1943); WAIT TILL THE SUN SHINES, NELLIE (1952); IMITATION OF LIFE (1959).
- Robert Sherwood [b. 1896]: THE SCARLET PIMPERNEL (1934); THE PETRIFIED FORREST (1936); THE ADVERTURES OF MARCO POLO (1938); REBECCA (1940); WATERLOO BRIDGE (1940); ABE LINCOLN IN ILLINOIS (1940); THE BEST YEARS OF OUR LIVES (1946); THE BISHOP'S WIFE (1947).
- Charles Spaak [b. 1903]: LA KERMESSE HÉROÏQUE (1935); LA GRAND ILLUSION (1937); LA FIN DU JOUR (1939); L'IDIOT (1946); THÉRÈSE RAQUIN (1953); AVANT LE DÉLUGE (1954); CARTOUCHE (1962).
- Donald Ogden Stewart [b. 1894]: DINNER AT EIGHT (1933); THE BARRETTS OF WIMPOLE STREET (1934); THE PRISONER OF ZENDA (1937); HOLIDAY (1938); THE PHILADELPHIA STORY (1940); THAT UNCERTAIN FEELING (1941); A WOMAN'S FACE (1941); LIFE WITH FATHER (1947); AN AFFAIR TO REMEMBER (1957).

Preston Sturges [b. 1898]: STRICTLY DISHONOURABLE (1931); THE POWER AND THE GLORY (1933); THE GOOD FAIRY (1935); THE GREAT MCGINTY (1940); LADY EVE (1941); SULLIVAN'S TRAVELS (1942); PALM BEACH STORY (1942); THE MIRACLE OF MORGAN'S CREEK (1944); HAIL THE CONQUERING HERO (1944).

Lamar Trotti [b. 1900]: ALEXANDER'S RAGTIME BAND (1938); YOUNG MR. LINCOLN (1939); DRUMS ALONG THE MOHAWK (1939); THE OXBOW INCIDENT (1943); GUADACANAL DIARY (1943); A BELL FOR ADANO (1945).

Daniel Taradash [b. 1913]: GOLDEN BOY (1939); DON'T BOTHER TO KNOCK (1952); RANCHO NOTORIOUS (1952); FROM HERE TO ETERNITY (1953); PICNIC (1955); BELL, BOOK AND CANDLE (1958); HAWAII (1966).

Billy Wilder [b. 1906]: NINOTCHKA (1939); DOUBLE INDEMNITY (1944); THE LOST WEEKEND (1945); A STAR IS BORN (1948); SUNSET BOULEVARD (1950); THE BIG CARNIVAL (1951); STALAG 17 (1953); SABRINA (1954); SOME LIKE IT HOT (1959); THE APARTMENT (1960).

Cesare Zavattini [b.1902]i: SHOESHINE (1946); BICYCLE THIEF (1948); MIRACLE IN MILAN (1951); UMBERTO D (1952); THE GARDEN OF THE FINZI- CONTINIS (1970).