



'1900' lengthy but remarkable for its courage

After five years of work, from rough idea to final cut, Bernardo Bertolucci (of "Last Tango in Paris") has completed his epic four-hour film "1900" (R).

The opening shot—grazing animals seen in striking high perspective and soft colors—suggests the rich visual texture of the film, just as the sweep of events suggests the boldness.

The date is April 25, 1945, liberation day in Italy and the day which director Bertolucci places at the center of the century. From that pulsing epicenter, the film shifts back and forward lingering at those times which mark historical events in Italy during the first half of the 20th century.

"1900" is a courageous and imaginative effort that captures the lyrical beauty of peasants playing their ocarinas and the horror of violent death.

THE AMBITIOUS and daring scope contains its own pitfalls, because grandeur of vision is difficult to maintain for four concentrated hours. Thus the film is sometimes confusing and occasionally dull.

The language alone is a problem. Bertolucci assembled an international cast that spoke English, French and Italian. The subsequent English dubbing provides both vocal coherence and an annoying distraction.

The lengthy chronicle tracks the lives of two boys born on the same day in 1900 (Gerald Depardieu) is the bastard grandson of the peasant Dalco (Sterling Hayden); Alfredo (Robert De Niro) is the grandson of the wealthy landowner Berlinghieri (Burt Lancaster).

The boys tease, tussle and play together in a wary friendship that reflects their physical closeness and social distance.

Returning from World War I, Olmo marries Anita (Stephania Sandrelli), a spirited schoolteacher who shares his Marxist ideas. Alfredo, an officer who remained at home during the war—thanks to his father's money, is captivated by the worldly Ada (Dominique Sanda).

OLMO AND ALFREDO become more estranged as their political commitments harden. Olmo speaks out for the farm laborers and for Communism. Alfredo (in a surprisingly ineffectual performance by De Niro) is a weak liberal. He's capable of standing up to his conservative family but not to his Fascist overseer Attila (Donald Sutherland). Consequently, Attila bullies and then terrorizes the workers under him.

The last third of the film is characterized by the increasingly strident political tone. Bertolucci graphically depicts the brutality of the Fascists and clearly condemns the bourgeoisie as their accomplices. In his view, the good guys are the ones with the red banners.

In contrast to this simplistic political orientation, the ending is puzzling because it seems to reject a political viewpoint. In a clumsy piece of humor, Olmo and Alfredo, twent, old men, scuffle with each other in a feeble replay of their childhood fights. We see them once again as individuals, not as political symbols.



Bertolucci's "1900" contrasts lives of Alfredo portrayed by Robert De Niro (left) and Olmo played by Gerald Depardieu.



Howard Armstrong plunks banjo in preparation for 1978 Jamboree. (Photos by Cynthia Abast)

100 banjos

The Ban-Joes of Michigan, 100-members strong, will make music at their 1978 Jamboree from 1-8 p.m. Sunday at Roma's of Bloomfield, 2101 S. Telegraph, north of Square Lake Road, Bloomfield Township. Tickets can be reserved by calling 681-0584 by Wednesday. The jamboree will feature continuous entertainment including Father Dustin, the Garter Snappers, and Charlie Tagawa. There will be dancing to live bands and a buffet dinner will be served at 3:30 p.m. Ban-Joes of Michigan is a non-profit organization of amateur and professional enthusiasts who play the four-string banjo. Members come from all over metropolitan Detroit and range in age from 14 to 83 years.



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Glimpses

- NEW RELEASES**
- COMING HOME (R)**. Powerful story of Vietnam era with Jane Fonda as officer's wife who falls in love with disabled vet (Jon Voight).
 - F.L.T. (PG)**. Sylvester Stallone as union organizer in film that spans decades from early struggle and idealism to national strength and corruption.
 - FM (PG)**. Funny film about a rock 'n roll radio station and the conflict between the disc jockeys and station management.
 - THE FURY (R)**. Director Brian DePalma unleashes the special effects in gory film about secret government agency and two teenagers with strange psychic powers.
 - HOUSE CALLS (PG)**. Walter Matthau and Glenda Jackson in entertaining comedy about amorous adventures of widowed doctor and complications in hospital politics.
 - I WANNABOLD YOUR HAND (PG)**. Beatle hysteria of the '60s in story of six youngsters who go to New York to see the Beatles on the Ed Sullivan show. Sound track of Beatles' recordings.
 - THE LAST WALTZ (PG)**. The last concert given by The Band Thanksgiving 1976, is documented in this film by Martin Scorsese.
 - MADAME ROSA (PG)**. Tender story of old Jewish woman who raises Arab boy. Won Academy Award for Best Foreign Language Film. English subtitles.
 - THE MEDUSA TOUCH (PG)**. Richard Burton with a mind bent on destruction. He has the telekinetic power to cause death, accidents, disasters.
 - OPERATION THUNDERBOLT (PG)**. Spirited Israeli account of the commando raid on Entebbe to free the passengers of hijacked jetliner.
 - PRETTY BABY (R)**. Red-light district of New Orleans in 1917 as seen by a child prostitute in lush, unromantic film by Louis Malle.
 - RABBIT TEST (PG)**. Joan Rivers directed this wild comedy about the world's first pregnant man.
 - SATURDAY NIGHT FEVER (R)**. John Travolta (of Kotel's sweatshops) is the main man in film with plenty of disco action.
 - A SPECIAL DAY (R)**. Sophia Loren and Marcello Mastroianni are excellent as two lonely individuals caught up in bombast of Italian Fascism.
 - AN UNMARRIED WOMAN (R)**. Jill Clayburgh in top form as woman who picks up the pieces after her husband leaves her, then finds there's more to life than Scotch Tape. Written and directed by Paul Mazursky.

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