



LOUISE SNIDER

## Sardinian peasants' harsh life revealed in 'Padre Padrone'

"Padre Padrone" (my father, my master) is a film which soundly destroys bourgeois myths about the romance of peasant life, the attachment to the soil and the beauty of intimacy with nature.

It is a powerful story of the harsh life of the Sardinian peasants, the tyranny of their patriarchal society and the development of one human being who escapes its physical bondage.

Paolo and Vittorio Taviani directed this film (originally made for Italian television, which makes one realize what we're missing on American TV) based on the best-selling autobiography of Gavino Ledda.

Ledda is the battered boy of the movie. Yanked out of school at the age of six, he was put to work in his father's sheepfolds. He lived in the craggy pastureland as shut off from human companionship and communication as any convict in solitary confinement. Beatings from his father and occasional furtive meetings with boy-serfs like himself were his only human contacts.

THE TAVIANI brothers learned their lessons from the gritty realism of an earlier generation of Italian films. They honor their predecessors' commitment to social commentary, but their film technique is more imaginative and includes fantasy, especially in their use of sound.

One memorable and moving episode occurs in the schoolhouse when young Gavino is pulled out by his father. The camera pans across the faces of the seated boys as we hear their inner thoughts.

Some assure themselves that this will never happen to them; others worry about when it will happen to them; and still others think about how they will kill their fathers rather than let it happen to them.

In another remarkable episode, animal lust swells to a choral crescendo in a strangely humorous sequence that cuts from copulating animals to masturbating boys to stimulated fathers who rush home to bed down their eager wives.

Although Ledda's autobiography presents a searing indictment, one that almost seems to call for a black and white film, flourishes such as the above reveal the directors' interpretations and license. The Tavianis literally take a more colorful view and a more objective one. They see the individual within the context of his society. Thus, even the brutish father is a victim of the harsh economic conditions of the Sardinian shepherd's life.

GAVINO LEDDA himself appears at the beginning of the film, handing a wooden switch to the actor who will play his father. At the end, Ledda appears again and comments on what has happened to him.

Illiterate until the age of 20, he struggled out of his desolate, fear-ridden world, learned to read and write and eventually became a linguist and author. But his "success" story is not that slick. The price he paid for freedom was too high. Ledda talks about that at the end.

"Padre Padrone" is the only film to ever win both major prizes at the Cannes Film Festival, the Grand Prize and the International Critics Prize. In Italian with English subtitles, it will be premiered by the Detroit Film Theatre at 7 and 9:30 p.m. Friday at the Detroit Institute of Arts.



Saverio Marconi portrays Gavino.

## Glimpses

### NEW RELEASES

**THE BETSY (R).** Intrigue and power within the horny set of auto industry, based on Harold Robbins best-selling novel. Many scenes filmed in metropolitan Detroit.

**BLUE COLLAR (R).** Tough, realistic drama of three auto workers whose small-time rip-off produces drastic results.

**CANDLESHOE (G).** Jodie Foster in Walt Disney adventure about young heirs and a search for treasure. Helen Hayes and David Niven co-star.

**CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND (PG).** Steven Spielberg's megabuck epic about contact with extraterrestrial beings. Special effects make this another treat for sci-fi fans.

**COMA (PG).** Scary and unpleasant movie about some strange goings-on at a hospital. Genevieve Bujold is the plucky doctor who uncovers a fiendish arrangement.

**THE GOODBYE GIRL (PG).** Neil Simon comedy of set-up situation and laughs when an actor (Richard Dreyfuss) moves in with a twice-dumped, actor-hating hooper (Marsha Mason).

**A HERO AIN'T NOTHING BUT A SANDWICH (PG).** Cloely Tyson and Paul Winfield in constructive story about young black teenager who shoots heroin to escape home-life pressures.

**HIGH ANXIETY (PG).** Mel Brooks tips his hat to Hitchcock in this lunatic romp at the Psycho-Neurotic Institute for the Very, Very Nervous. Liberal visual "quotations" from Hitchcock in this howler.

**THE MOUSE AND HIS CHILD (G).** Award-winning full-length cartoon feature with voices of Peter Ustinov and Cloris Leachman.

**THE ONE AND ONLY (PG).** Zany romantic comedy with Henry Winkler pursuing Kim Darby and getting gussied up as a wrestler called "The Lover."

**THE OTHER SIDE OF THE MOUNTAIN, PART II (PG).** Three-banky movie about doubts, frustrations and loves of real-life Olympic skier paralyzed after an accident.

### MOVIE RATING GUIDE

G General audiences admitted.  
PG Parental guidance suggested. All ages admitted.  
R Restricted. Adult must accompany person under 18.  
X No one under 18 admitted.

## Travel film eyes Tahiti, islands

"Tahiti and Islands of the South Seas" is the tropical subject of the travel film program scheduled at The Community House in Birmingham on Friday and Saturday. The 8 p.m. program brings photographer Philip Walker to narrate his colorful film.

From where did the ideas for the stone giants of Easter Island originate? From where did the first sculptors and masons who created them come? Why were the stone giants made? The secret of Easter Island may be solved in the Marquesas, with photographic evidence in "Tahiti and Islands of the South Seas."

Philip Walker and his wife, Florence, voyage to Tahiti in this film, and invite armchair travelers to come along on the yacht Scaldis. The voyage follows the coasts of Mexico and Central America, out to Galapagos and Westward to French Polynesia.

Despite days and weeks at sea, the film is largely of people and places on shore and of romantic South Sea Islands—beautiful Tahiti, Moorea, Bora Bora, Raiatea and Huahine in the Societies; Rangiroa and Manihi in

the Tuamotus; Hiva Oa, Nuku Hiva and Fatu Hiva in the Marquesas.

IN THIS comprehensive travel adventure film, the audience will see everything from a touch of hotel life in Acapulco, a Good Friday Festival in Taxco, the Indians, parks and street scenes in Ecuador, and the fascinating Galapagos Islands to the people of Tahiti, making a dugout canoe, the waterfront, waterfalls, beaches and sunset over Bali Bali.

From there armchair travelers enjoy a visual journey to Tuamotus, her picturesque villages and pearl culture; Society Islands with a fascinating visit to the temple sites and Tahitian market day; a luxury holiday in Bora Bora, and Tahitian dances, plus a colorful pageant of the Enthronement of an Ancient King of Tahiti.

Preceding the travel film program, The Community House will serve dinner featuring a Tahitian menu. Dinner is served from 6 p.m. by reservation only (644-5832).



View of Moorea is from Philip Walker's color film.

## DINING AND ENTERTAINMENT GUIDE ON THE TOWN

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\*based on double occupancy.

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