

Arts and Entertainment

Makers of 'Good Morning, Babylon' try to do too much

Paolo and Vittorio Taviani have been — along with fellow director Ermanno Olmi — responsible in keeping the Italian neo-realist tradition alive in recent years.

Review by
Sean Axmaker

★ ★ 1/2

Works such as the Tavianis' "Night of the Shooting Stars" and "Kaos" and Olmi's "Tree of Wooden Clogs" and "Camina, Camina" find a voice

as heartfelt and true as the early cinematic masterpieces by De Sica ("Bicycle Thief"), Fellini ("La Strada") and the Tavianis' self-professed inspiration, Roberto Rossellini ("Rome, Open City," "Paisan").

With "Good Morning, Babylon," the Tavianis take their approach and Italian sensibilities and relocate to the new world: America, circa 1915.

With "Good Morning, Babylon" the brothers try to do too much. Their simple, naturalistic style looks forced and contrived when the action moves to America. The acting style, in the past immediate and

easy, stiffens as gestures become more grand, pauses more posed. It is very much like a silent film style, a fitting homage in a film about one of America's great cinematic treasures, but it doesn't fit in the Taviani scheme of things. Only D.W. Griffith shines, his exuberant theatricality a vital part of his character.

The film is split thematically between the celebration of cinema and the study of the relationship between the brothers. No doubt both are themes close to the heart of the Tavianis. The tradition of cinema is important to almost

any director, and as the past films of the Tavianis prove, it runs strong with them. Here they are able to show the Italian contribution to the development of American cinema, from the World's Fair exhibition and the film "Cabiria" to the work by Nicola and Andrea in the film "Intolerance."

Yet the key point of the relationship of the brothers — always equal — is a thread running through the film which finally overtakes it and the film seems to veer off in another direction. Again, this is an important thematic element for two brothers who have co-

directed all of their films, but it isn't quite worked into the over-riding story.

The film is at its best in the opening and closing and when it is set in Italy dealing with the family, art and relationships. Here all of the threads are worked together because here it is a tradition, a way of life. When the story moves to America, however, the theatrical acting and grandiose sets of D.W. Griffith don't befit the simplicity and directness of the Taviani style. It is at once too grand and too simple, too self-consciously epic and not insightful enough.

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ΣΝ

Your composite was outta sight
So with all our might
We ran off with
Your bottles of great height

ΒΟΠ

Rambo
I Love You!
Squeaky

PERSONALS

ΓΦΒ

WENDI WILLSON
and

ΟΧ

SCOTT LOCKWOOD
Congratulations on your pinning!
LOVE, GAMMA PHI

ΔΥ

What a way to wake up — GREAT
LOOKING GUYS AND DOUGHNUTS!
Watch that composite, we may strike
again. Love, The Composite Stealing
Wonders of
Chi Omega

Congratulations

ΔΓ

Kathy Hoyt
on your initiation!
We wish you love and
happiness!
Love, your sisters

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Renee Foss

Thanks for the best weekend ever.
Let's do it again soon! My Love
Always, JOHN FOX

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Gordy, Beth and Farzahn

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WHIPPS



Love you lots,
KARI

MARYANNE AND FRIEND - THANK YOU for recovering my weatherization papers and returning them so quickly! I'm serious about tickets - stop by EMU Suite 2. L. DIEVENDORF

ΣΧ

David Shaw
You're a great
big bro!

Love,
Little Sis

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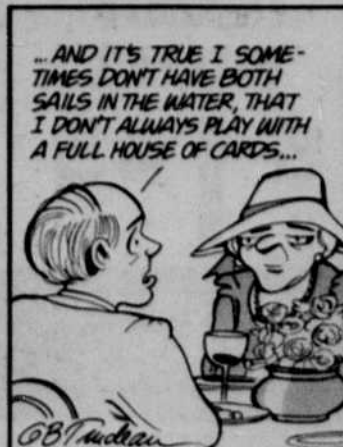
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