THE CRITERION COLLECTION

One of the greatest films about film ever made, Federico Fellini’s 8 1/2 (Otto e mezzo) turns one man's artistic crisis into a grand epic of the cinema. Guido Anselmi (Marcello Mastroianni) is a director whose film—and life—is collapsing around him. An early working title for the film was La Bella Confusione (The Beautiful Confusion), and Fellini’s masterpiece is exactly that: a shimmering dream, a circus, and a magic act. The Criterion Collection is proud to present the 1963 Academy Award® winner for Best Foreign Language Film—one of the most written about, talked about, and imitated movies of all time—in a beautifully restored new digital transfer. Disc Two features Fellini’s rarely seen first film for television, Fellini: A Director’s Notebook (1969) produced by Peter Goldfarb. This "imagined documentary" of Fellini on Fellini is a kaleidoscope of unfinished projects, all of which provide a fascinating and candid window into the director’s unique and creative process.

DOUBLE-DISC SET

Disc One

- New digital transfer of restored film elements, enhanced for 16x9 televisions, with digital image restoration
- Screen-specific audio essay featuring commentary by film critic and Fellini friend Gideon Bachmann and NYU Professor of Film Antonino Mondo
- Introduction by Terry Gilliam, director of Brazil and 12 Monkeys
- 22-page booklet featuring essays by Fellini, longtime Fellini collaborator and critic Tullio Kezich, and film professor and author Alexander Sesonske
- Theatrical trailer
- New and improved English subtitles
- Optional image quality: RSDL dual-layer edition

Disc Two

- Fellini: A Director’s Notebook, a 52-minute film by Federico Fellini
- Nino Rota: Between Cinema and Concert, a compelling 48-minute documentary about the maestro behind the music of Fellini’s films
- Interviews with actress Sandra Milo, director Lina Wertmüller, whose career began on the set of 8 1/2, and cinematographer Vittorio Storaro, who discusses the revolutionary art of Gianni di Venanzo
- Rare photographs from the collection of Gideon Bachmann
- Gallery of behind-the-scenes and production photos
- Optional image quality: RSDL dual-layer edition

1963 • 135 minutes • Black and White • Monoaural • In Italian with optional English subtitles • 1.85:1 aspect ratio
CHAPITERS

1. Traffic jam
2. The cure
3. The critic
4. Signora Carla
5. Mother & Father
6. The hotel
7. Grand evening
8. The clairvoyant
9. Asa nisi maso
10. "Why don't you come visit?"
11. "Production" office
12. Claudia in white
13. The fever
14. Scraghina
15. Punishment
16. The steam baths
17. Luisa
18. Spaceship
19. Pillow talk
20. Luisa & Carla
21. Guido's harem
22. Jacqueline Bonbon
23. Screen tests
24. Claudia in black
25. The press conference
26. Circus
27. End credits
28. Color bars

To switch between the menus and the movie, use the MENU key on your remote. Use the ARROW keys to cycle through menu selections. Press ENTER/SELECT to activate the selection. To switch between the film soundtrack and audio commentary while viewing the movie, press the AUDIO key on your remote at any time. Color bars are included as the last chapter in order to calibrate the correct brightness of your screen.
CAST

Guido Anselmi
Claudia
Luísa Anselmi
Carla
Rossella
Gloria Morin
Daumier
Saraghina
The Actress
The Beautiful Woman
Mario Mezzabotta
Pace, the producer
Pace's girlfriend
The Cardinal
Maurice
Maya
Guido's father
Guido's mother
Guido's grandmother
Nanny in White
Nanny in Black
Young girl at farmhouse
Guido at farmhouse
Guido as a schoolboy
Jacqueline Bonbon
Luísa's sister
Enrico
Conochia
Cesarino
Cesarino's "nieces"

Marcello Mastroianni
Claudia Cardinale
Anouk Aimee
Sandra Milo
Rossella Falk
Barbara Steele
Jean Rougeul
Edra Gale
Madeleine Lebeau
Caterina Boratto
Maria Pisu
Guido Alberti
Annie Gorassini
Tito Masini
Ion Dallas
Mary Indovino
Annibale Nindhi
Giulietta Risone
Georgia Simmons
Maria Raimondi
Marisa Colomber
Roberta Valli
Riccardo Guglielmi
Marco Gemin
Yvonne Cassade
Elisabetta Catalano
Mark Herron
Mario Conocchia
Cesarino Miceli Picardi
Eva Groia
Dina De Santis
Bruno Agostini
Hazel Rogers
Hedy Vessella
Roberto Nicolosi
Eugene Walter
Gilda Dahlberg
Mino Doro
Mario Torchetti
CREDITS

Created and directed by Federico Fellini
Produced by Angelo Rizzoli
Story by Federico Fellini
Ennio Flaiano
Screenplay by Federico Fellini
Tullio Pinelli
Ennio Flaiano
Brunello Rondi
Cinematographer Gianni di Venanzo
Cameraman Pasquale De Santis
Assistant cameraman Tazio Secchiaroli
Art director Piero Gherardi
Music Nina Rota
Sound Mario Foraoni
Editor Alberto Bartolomei
Production supervisor Clemente Fracassi
Production director Nello Meniconi
"I, FELLINI"

In the case of 8 1/2, something happened to me which I had feared could happen, but when it did, it was more terrible than I could ever have imagined. I suffered director’s block, like writer’s block. I had a producer, a contract. I was at Cinecittà, and everybody was ready and waiting for me to make a film. What they didn’t know was that the film I was going to make had fled from me. There were sets already up, but I couldn’t find my sentimental feeling.

People were asking me about the film. Now, I never answer those questions because I think talking about the film before you do it weakens it, destroys it. The energy goes into the talking. Also, I have to be free to change. Sometimes with the press, as with strangers, I would simply tell them the same lie as to what the film was about—just to stop the questions and to protect my film. Even if I had told them the truth, it would probably have changed so much in the finished film that they would say, “Fellini lied to us.” But this was different. This time, I was stammering and saying nonsensical things when Mastroianni asked me about his part. He was so trusting. They all trusted me.

I sat down and started to write a letter to Angelo Rizzoli, admitting the state I was in. I said to him, “Please accept my state of confusion. I can’t go on.”
Before I could send the letter one of the grips came to fetch me. He said, “You must come to our party.” The grips and electricians were having a birthday party for one of them. I wasn’t in the mood for anything, but I couldn’t say no.

They were serving spumante in paper cups, and I was given one. Then there was a toast, and everyone raised his paper cup. I thought they were going to toast the person having the birthday, but instead they toasted me and my “masterpiece.” Of course they had no idea what I was going to do, but they had perfect faith in me. I left to return to my office, stunned.

I was about to cast all of these people their jobs. They called me the Magician. Where was my “magic”?


But myself didn’t answer. I listened to a fountain and the sound of the water, and tried to hear my own inner voice. Then I heard the small voice of creativity within me. I knew the story I would tell was of a writer who doesn’t know what he wants to write.

I tore up my letter to Rizzoli.

Later, I changed the profession of Guido to that of film director. He became a film director who didn’t know what he wanted to direct. It’s difficult to portray a writer on the screen, doing what he does in an interesting way. There isn’t much action to show in writing. The world of the film director opened up limitless possibilities.

The relationship between Guido and Luisa has to show what once was there between them and what is left over in their relationship. It is still very much a relationship, though it has undergone changes from the days of courtship and the honeymoon. It’s difficult to show the bond between a husband and wife who married because of romance and passion, but who have now been married a long time. A friendship largely replaces what was there before, but not totally. It’s a friendship for a lifetime, but when feelings of betrayal enter into it . . .

Marcello and Anna are excellent actors who could pretend. I cannot say, however, that I minded that the two of them found each other so attractive. I think some of that was caught on the screen. Of course, Mastroianni and Anita Ekberg didn’t find each other so attractive in real life, and certainly there wasn’t anything going on between them, yet La Dolce Vita worked.

I had a different ending in mind for 8 1/2, but I was required to film something for a trailer. For this trailer, I brought back two hundred actors and photographed them as they paraded before seven cameras. When I saw the footage, I was impressed. The rushes were so good, I changed the original ending, which took place in a railroad dining car where Guido and Luisa establish a rapprochement. So, sometimes even a producer’s request can have a beneficial effect. I was able to use some of the discarded material in City of Women. The segment in which the mysterious Snoraz thinks he sees the woman in his dream sitting in his railway compartment was inspired by a segment of Guido thinking he sees all the women from his life sitting in the dining car, which was to have been the end of 8 1/2.

WHEN "HE" BECAME "I"

The typical mid-life crisis, to which we all fall victim in some major or minor degree, came to Fellini with a slight delay. On the 20th of January, 1960, the day of his 40th birthday, he was, in fact, too deeply engaged in the completion of *La Dolce Vita* to worry about anything else.

Only a few months later the maestro was confronted by a dilemma he never expected to face: what to do next. Until then, Fellini had always nurtured new ideas, which would naturally follow and take over his time once the project underway had been completed, without ever experiencing a real break between these two moments of the creative process. But for the movie about Via Veneto, the effort and emotions he had invested were such that, once the great clamor of critical acclaim and polemics started to quieten, the author felt the horror of an inspirational void.

He had been telling himself for a while, almost superstitiously, that a director's artistic life lasts ten years, after which one ends up repeating oneself; he would quote cases such as those of René Clair, O.W. Pabst, Jean Renoir, Fritz Lang, and others. The ghost of creative barrenness appeared to him, almost poisoning the pleasure of a moment that could have otherwise been magic, and became a sort of obsession, so much so that he considered making it the theme of his new movie.

He started working with his usual team of screenwriters: Tullio Pinelli, Ennio Flaiano, and Brunello Rondi. Federico handed me a script to read. I can't recall if the first draft of what was to become *8 1/2* had a title. I know that Flaiano had proposed *Lo Bella Confusione* (The Beautiful Confusion). Meanwhile, the director, perhaps in order to dispel a certain air of pessimism lingering about the project, insisted upon defining the movie as "comic." Needless to say, on-set he only sporadically remembered his own definition, and even then turned this so-called "comicality" into irony or the grotesque. Personally, I found very little solace reading those pages recounting, in a rather tormented fashion, the crisis of a writer
unable to complete his novel and caught in an embarrassing sentimental web dividing him between wife and mistress. The many autobiographical implications, even though hidden between the lines, were evident, as they had previously been in La Dolce Vita. This time, however, the amalgamation between fantasy and reality didn't feel as accomplished as before. The problem was that Fellini had decided to make his protagonist a writer, a character he could not clearly picture emotionally.

Until the time when he was consecrated as a great director, Fellini didn't have an easy relationship with writers, his contemporaries who used to gather in the evening in Via Veneto's many cafés. In those circles, the filmmaker was merely tolerated as one of the friends of the writer, columnist, great one-liner satirist and pivotal point of that milieu: Ennio Flaiano. At the time Federico didn't read much—he became a keen reader only when he developed insomnia in later years—and he wasn't particularly attracted to writers. On the contrary, he actually displayed all the symptoms of being quite bored by them. He immediately spotted their ridiculous side, what made them intolerable. He had kept, in relation to the representatives of the so-called "mainstream culture," the iconoclastic attitude of the Marc'Purifico's small-time journalist. Why he had determined to explore and narrate a writer's dilemmas baffles me, even to this day. It was probably an idea floating around those circles. Just think of the protagonist of Michelangelo Antonioni's La Notte. The movie, shot in the summer of 1960, featured a writer played by Marcello Mastroianni. When he heard about this, the director from Rimini was deeply shaken. "What am I going to do now?" he kept repeating. "How am I going to ask Marcello to play a writer again? He'll end up believing he's one and he'll write a novel." All this while, troubled by such thoughts, he toyed with the idea of finding a different protagonist for his movie and would come out with names such as Laurence Olivier, to frighten Mastroianni away from his thoughts.

The gestation of the project went on for so long that Fellini wrote and directed one of the four episodes of Boccaccio '70 in the meantime. The 8 1/2 script was stagnating, and the director started feeling desperate until one day he announced he had made an important resolution: the main character was no longer a writer but a movie director. It was obvious, even though he never actually spelled it out, that what he wanted to say was: "I am the protagonist." In the light of this new transformation, all the elements of the project started coming together. Reassured by his new discovery, Federico regained his happy disposition, thinking he would be able to talk about himself and his environment without having to make up too much—and without having to take too many risks.

Little by little, the production's atmosphere started emerging around the figure of the director Guido Anselmi, who was now definitely to be played by Mastroianni. We, as part of his circle of friends, started having fun making up names for the various people we knew were becoming characters in the movie. Also circulation amongst his innermost circle were malicious identifications for some of the female figures in the harem. Fellini recounted on-screen exactly what his feelings were then. In that moment: his fear of not being able to make his movie, his specters of perpetually postponing the shoot, the inevitable final collapse. This way, while confessing his inability to create it, he paradoxically realized his masterpiece. When it came time to choose a title, he picked the cabalistic 8 1/2, which should have corresponded to the number of movies he had shot, although this isn't even accurate.

Fellini's fantasies were often prophetic, considering he ended up really living his story of a director unable to finish the film he had been hired to shoot. In 1967, during the pre-production of Il viaggio di G. Mastorna (G. Mastorna's Journey) and after an expensive replica of the Cologne Cathedral and other huge sets had been built in Cinecitta, he wrote a letter to producer Dino de Laurentiis, telling him he was quitting the project. The producer, wild with anger, demanded the judicial repossessing of the Fellinis' villa in Fregene.

Fellini, by recounting through 8 1/2 the impossibility of making a movie, ended up creating a masterpiece that almost fell into his lap; ironically, although he worked on it almost ad infinitum until the end of his life, Mastorna was never accomplished.

—Tullio Kezich

Tullio Kezich is the author of the biography Fellini (1987) and a diary of the shooting of La Dolce Vita (1960). He also co-wrote the screenplay The Legend of the Holy Drinker (1988) with Ermanno Olmi.
A FILM WITH ITSELF AS ITS SUBJECT

8 1/2: a bizarre and puzzling title, but one precisely appropriate for this film which announces in its first frame that modernism has reached the cinema. If the mark of modernism in art is self-reference, 8 1/2 surely goes beyond any predecessor in having itself as its subject. Before 1963 Federico Fellini had, by his count, made seven and a half films; hence "8 1/2" is like an opus number: this is film #8 1/2 in the Fellini catalog. Self-referential enough, but only the beginning. 8 1/2 is a film about making a film, and the film that is being made is 8 1/2. Notice how everything Guido says about the film he is making turns out to be true of 8 1/2, even the sailor doing a soft-shoe dance, how all the screen tests are for roles in the film we are seeing; how some camera movements create an ambiguity between Guido, the director in the film, and Fellini, the director of the film, thus taking self-reference one step beyond the work to its maker.

It was perhaps this last level of self-reference that led some critics in the mid-1960s to dismiss 8 1/2 as autobiographical trivia, brilliant on its surface but devoid of significant content—a criticism already made within the film by Daumier, the writer. The world-wide success of 8 1/2 and its current status high on the list of the greatest films ever made have long since refuted such critics, but they were right on two counts: 8 1/2 is both autobiographical and brilliant. Its surface flow of images dazzles us with sharp contrasts of black and white, startling eruptions from off-screen, unexpected changes of scene, and a virtuoso display of all the possibilities and effects of camera movement. We find almost a catalog of humanity in its stream of faces; some of them are momentary visions while others persist through the film and long after in our memory, such as Saraghina, that lumbering monster transformed into the embodiment of joyous life and movement. But Fellini's brilliance reaches beyond the surface to include an intricate structure of highly original, highly imaginative scenes whose conjunction creates an unprecedented interweaving of memories, fantasies, and dreams with the daily life of his hero and alter ego, Guido Anselmi. This more than anything, probably, made 8 1/2 the most influential film of the 1960s, liberating filmmakers everywhere from the conventions of time, place, and mode of experience that had prevailed in cinema for decades.

In a film in which almost every scene is memorable, within its own pace and ambience, its characteristic forms of movement and emotional tone, some scenes are extraordinary: a childhood reminiscence of a farmhouse overflowing with warmth, love, and security, with an ascent into an enchanted darkness where the magical words "cosa n'è moso" promise wealth and happiness; a boyhood flight from the stifling confines of a Catholic school to the voluptuous marvels of Saraghina's rhumba, with its grotesque aftermath of cruel punishment and guilt; young Guido being told that Saraghina is the devil, though a Dantean descent into hell reveals a cardinal enthroned at the center of the inferno, solemnly repeating that there is no salvation outside the church; a whirling, riotous harem scene which mocks the absurdities of male fantasy.

Federico Fellini began his career in the motion picture world in 1945, as writer and assistant to the neo-realist director Roberto Rossellini, but by the time he directed his own first film his vivid imagination had begun to replace reality as the central source of his inspiration. Through the 1950s he explored the fantasies and illusions which both sustain and destroy us in films peopled with characters whose lives run outside the normal streams of everyday experience; circus performers, swindlers, prostitutes. Then La Dolce Vita, a huge, sprawling evocation of contemporary urban high-life, made him an international celebrity and faced him with that most stuifing challenge for an artist: After such a success, what can you do next?

Fellini responded, finally, with 8 1/2, making the challenge itself his subject and expressing the stuifing in his alter ego Guido's confusion and inability to choose. He made this an opportunity to probe the mystery of artistic creation and the problems of human relations created by a society whose traditional education portrays women as either sacred or profane, either mother or whore. Serious problems, but his film is comic. Hence none of the questions posed is
ever really answered; for, as Guido Fellini tells us, he has nothing to say. But his complete mastery of film technique and form speaks for him, shaping a purely formal solution for Guido in an imaginary dance of acceptance and communion which leaves us, the spectators, feeling a glow of happy resolution as young Guido, now dressed in white, leads his clown band into the darkness.

One puzzle which remains unresolved for most viewers of 8½ is the meaning of “osa nisi mosa.” “Say the magic words, then when the picture moves its eyes, we’ll all be rich.” The words derive from a children’s game, like pig latin, in which one takes a word, doubles each of its vowels and then puts the letter “s” between the two. So, run backwards, the root word is “anima,” the Italian word for soul or spirit. Diamler dismisses all this as another idle childhood memory, devoid of all poetic inspiration. Yet in the film the utterance of “osa nisi mosa” works like magic, releasing the marvelous flow of the joyful life of the farmhouse scene. And the childish promise is hardly idle; for it was when the picture moved its eye—when Fellini found his true métier in motion picture—that we all became enriched.

—Alexander Sesonske

Alexander Sesonske is the author of Jean Renoir, the French Films, 1924-1939. He is Professor Emeritus of Film Studies and Philosophy at the University of California at Santa Barbara.
"I, FELLINI" (reprise)

Our minds can shape the way a thing will be, because we act according to our expectations.

The hard thing is beginning. Whatever it is you want to do in life, you must begin it. The point of departure for the journey I must begin for each film is generally something that really happened to me, but which I believe also is part of the experience of others. The audience should be able to say, "Oh, something like that happened to me once, or to someone I know," or "I wish it had happened to me," or "I'm glad it didn't happen to me." They should identify, sympathize, empathize. They should be able to enter the movie and get into my shoes and the shoes of at least some of the characters. I first try to express my own emotions, what I personally feel, and then I look for the link of truth that will be of significance to people like me.

The picture I make is never exactly the one I started out to make, but that is of no importance. I am very flexible on the set. The script provides the starting point, as well as offering security. After the first weeks, the picture takes on a life of its own. The film grows as you are making it, like relationships with a person.
DVD PRODUCTION CREDITS

Issa Clubb
Bona Flechich
Fumiko Takagi and Peter Becker
Lee Kline
Christine Ditrio
Lucien S.V. Yang
Shayne Christiansen
Alex Mobile
Heather Shaw
Sean House
Bona Flechich
Ken Miller
Marc Walkow
Ken Hansen
Peter Becker, Issa Clubb
Tom Spohn/ Harmony 534, NYC
Leonard Hospidor/Back Pocket Studio, NYC
Michael Eliaser/Filmteknik, Berlin
Michele Darling
Stream P.O.P. DVD Center, CA

Milo and Storaro interview crew from the Accademia Internazionale per le Arti e le Scienze dell'immagine
Marco Martelli
Piermiconi di Muro
Benedetta di Claudia

Karen Stetler
Shari Rosenberg
Gary Bradley
Graham Day and Tora Gill
Robin Day
Black's, London

ABOUT THE TRANSFER

8 1/2 is presented in its original aspect ratio of 1.85:1. This new digital transfer, enhanced for widescreen televisions, was created on a high-definition Spirit Datacine from a 35mm fine-grain master made from the original negative. To further enhance the image, the MTS Digital Restoration system was used to remove thousands of instances of dirt, debris, and scratches. The sound was mastered from a 35mm magnetic audio track.

Telecine supervisor
Lee Kline
Audio restoration
Michael W. Wiese
Telecine colorists
Roberto Cesario/Cinecittà Studios, Rome
Chris Ryan/Nice Shoes, NYC
Quality control/
Image restoration
Matt Harris,
Alex Lopez,
Adrian Sosebee, and
Maria Palazzola

SPECIAL THANKS

Terry Gilliam; Sandra Milo; Vittorio Storaro; Lisa Weitzmuller; Tullio Kezich; Elisabetta Catalano; Charlotte Chandler; Guido Bachmann; Antonio Monda/NY Film Dept.; Peter Geloforb, Conrad Ripy; Felice Laudadio and Camilla Cerrani/Cinecittà Holding; Elisabetta Bruscalini and Rosetta Ioni/Scoleri Nazionali di Cinemas; Elisabetta Moreo; Francesca Pirelli/Buffalo of the Image; Stefano Spadoni/Fellini Foundation; Homay King; Instituto Luce; Nigel Rigor; Alan Linn/Black's; Curtis Tavi

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