



## DRAMA AND DESIRE: THE FILMS OF YOUSSEF CHAHINE

# My One and Only Love (Enta Habibi)

### **My One and Only Love aka You Are My Love (Enta Habibi)**

Director: Youssef Chahine

Production Company: Farid El Atrache

Screenplay and Dialogue: Abu el-Seoul el-Ibiari

Director of Photography: Ahmad Khorsheed

Editors: Said al-Shaykh, Hussain Afifi

Costumes: Fouzia Higazi

Music: Farid El Atrache

Cast

Farid El Atrache

Adel Salam Nabulsi

Shadia

Hind Rostom

Serag Mounir

Mimi Chakib

Egypt 1957

109 mins

Restored by Misr International Films

## DRAMA AND DESIRE: THE FILMS OF YOUSSEF CHAHINE

### **Daddy Amin aka Father Amin (Baba Amin)**

Sat 1 Jul 15:30; Wed 12 Jul 20:30

### **Dark Waters (Seraa Fil Mina)**

Sat 1 Jul 20:30; Sat 15 Jul 18:00

### **The Devil of the Desert (Shaitan el Saharaa)**

Sun 2 Jul 18:20; Mon 17 Jul 20:40

### **The Youssef Chahine Story**

Mon 3 Jul 18:10

### **The Blazing Sun (Seraa Fil Wadi)**

Mon 3 Jul 20:20 + intro by season curator Elhum

Shakerifar; Sat 15 Jul 12:30

### **My One and Only Love aka You Are My Love (Enta Habibi)**

Tue 4 Jul 20:40; Sun 16 Jul 12:50

### **Cairo Station (Bab El Hadid)**

Fri 7 Jul 18:00; Sat 29 Jul 15:00

### **Dawn of a New Day (Fagr Yom Guedid)**

Sat 8 Jul 15:30; Wed 19 Jul 20:25

### **Saladin aka Saladin the Victorious aka Saladin and the Great Crusades (Al-Nasser Salah Al-Din)**

Sun 9 Jul 14:30; Sat 29 Jul 17:00

### **The Land (El Ard)**

Sun 9 Jul 18:00; Thu 26 Jul 18:00 + intro by

filmmaker May Abdalla

### **The Sparrow (Al Asfour)**

Mon 10 Jul 18:15 + intro by poet and essayist

Momtaza Mehri; Thu 20 Jul 20:50

### **Return of the Prodigal Son (Awdet Eli Ibn El Dal)**

Fri 14 Jul 18:00; Sat 22 Jul 20:20 + intro by novelist

Ahdaf Soueif

### **Alexandria... Why? (Iskindereya Leh)**

Sun 16 Jul 15:10; Sat 22 Jul 11:30

### **An Egyptian Story (Hadouta Masriya)**

Sun 16 Jul 18:15; Sat 22 Jul 14:40

### **The Sixth Day (Al Yom El Sades)**

Tue 18 Jul 20:30; Mon 24 Jul 18:00

### **Alexandria Again and Forever (Iskindereya Kaman we Kaman)**

Sun 23 Jul 18:10 + intro; Fri 28 Jul 18:15

Legendary singer Farid El-Atrash stars alongside screen icon Shadia in this visual feast, which finds the pair playing characters forced into a marriage neither of them wants, solely to attain an inheritance. Combining comedy with sumptuous musical numbers and subtle class commentary, Chahine ponders how marriage can be as illusory as a theatre show, but love always finds a way to win out.

[bfi.org.uk](http://bfi.org.uk)

It is instructive to situate Chahine's bio-filmography within the context of Egyptian cinema and the overall political and cultural scene, for the seeds of many of his films were sown in historical events which he witnessed. It is significant, for example, that the year he made his debut as a film director (1950) happened to fall in between two major historical turning points. In 1948, the Arabs lost Palestine and Israel was born; in 1952, Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser led the bloodless Revolution which ended a corrupt monarchy. The significance of these two watershed events, artistically speaking, is that they shaped the society which Chahine chose to portray on the screen for the next 50 years.

In his early period (1952-70), Chahine was preoccupied with the large issues of his time the liberation movements that were sweeping the Arab world, be it colonialism or monarchy; the Egyptian *fellah*, whose welfare was central to the Revolution; the rise of a new kind of leadership, as exemplified by the charismatic Nasser; and by Arab socialism and the betrayal of it by those who put self-interest above national interest. The seismic Revolution of 1952 which ended the 141-year-old dynasty that Muhammad Ali had started in 1811, made the Free Officers who engineered it instant heroes, and inaugurated the new era of pan-Arab Nationalism. Serious Egyptian filmmakers were also encouraged by what they were hearing in regard to their own medium. The first president of the new Republic, General Muhammad Naguib, delivered a major speech which resonated throughout the Egyptian film industry. After criticising the 'effeminacy and moral depravity' that had reflected the old regime, he added, 'Today we cannot accept from Art or from those in charge of it anything like what used to happen in the past.' The industry was now in concert with the policies advocated by the new regime. While some directors were in favour of the government becoming involved in the film industry, Youssef Chahine was satisfied to listen and not comment.'

Two years before the Free Officers' Revolution, Chahine had his own ideas on filmmaking. With his first film, *Baba Amin (Daddy Amin)*, which he made at the age of 24, he conceived an agenda for himself while accommodating genuine requirements of local tradition, he would deal with more urgent themes. This introduced a new departure from contemporary Egyptian cinema in seriousness and originality. From the very beginning Chahine began to lay bare parts of his autobiography.

### The Emigrant (Al Mohager)

Mon 24 Jul 20:20; Sun 30 Jul 18:10

### The Other (Al Akhar)

Wed 26 Jul 18:00; Mon 31 Jul 20:30

### Destiny (Al Massir)

Thu 27 Jul 20:20; Mon 31 Jul 18:05

#### With thanks to



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#### In cultural partnership with



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Ciné Lumière will present a selection of Chahine titles throughout the summer: [institut-francais.org.uk](http://institut-francais.org.uk)

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The day after his wedding in 1951, Chahine started his second film, *Nile Boy*, which was 'an adaptation of the stage play *Nature Boy* by the American Grant Marshall.' The film is important for two reasons. One, it deals with the Egyptian *fellah*, a subject to which Chahine would return several times. Two, the film marks Chahine's entrée into international film festivals. The way he went about it is also illustrative of his resolve to broaden his horizon and to bring attention to Egyptian cinema in general. Still in his twenties and unaware of procedures, Chahine carried his film cans under his arm and headed for Venice, only to be told that his film could not be scheduled. Because he had neither submitted an application nor been invited to enter his film, it would not be shown. But Chahine stood his ground. He argued and sought assistance from another Egyptian director, Niazi Mustapha, who happened to be there, until *Nile Boy* was given a slot out of competition at ten o'clock in the morning.

In one of his early films, *The Blazing Sun* (1954), Chahine introduced Omar Sharif to the screen. Omar Sharif was at that time still known by his real name, Michel Shalhoub. He was a fellow Alexanderine and a graduate of Victoria College, which Chahine had attended six years earlier. Visually, *Blazing* represented something new in Egyptian cinema. The chase and the extremely long shots and high angles in the exotic setting of the monumental columns at Luxor reminded viewers of the director's affinity with Hollywood.

This last characteristic became particularly apparent in some of the musicals he directed at this time, such as *My One and Only Love* (1957), which contains one of the loveliest and most inventive duets in the history of Egyptian cinema. Here we find two singers enacting the love/hate relationship of young lovers, with charm and liveliness that was often missing in Egyptian musicals.

During his first seven years, however, Chahine also became known as the 'wrecker of producers.' He earned the epithet after *Devil in the Desert* (1954), also starring Omar Sharif. While the film was Chahine's first major box-office failure, the label itself was really placed on its young director too early in his career.

A series of political upheavals intervened before the next phase of Chahine's career. Their relevance to Chahine was more indirect than direct, but nevertheless they help reveal his political growth and the psychological condition of his potential audiences. On the positive side, Nasser was able to negotiate a peaceful evacuation of the British troops from Egypt, but after the United States reneged on its promise to finance the Aswan Dam, Nasser retaliated by nationalising the Suez Canal. The crisis escalated into the British-French-Israeli invasion of the Suez Canal zone in 1956. After the shooting had stopped, the Canal remained in Egyptian hands and Nasser was hailed as a hero in much of the Arab world. Syria invited Egypt to form a union with her. Though reluctant, Nasser agreed to form a republic with him as its president, and many thought of the newly formed United Arab Republic as a harbinger to the Arab unity they desired.

Ibrahim Fawal, *BFI World Directors: Youssef Chahine* (BFI Publishing, 2002)

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