



SENIORS' FREE MATINEE

The Rebel

The Rebel

Directed by: Robert Day
Production Company:
Associated British Picture Corporation
Produced by: W.A. Whittaker
Production Manager: R.E. Dearing
Assistant Director: Kip Gowans
Continuity: Doreen Deamaley
Casting Director: Robert Lennard
Scenario Editor: Frederick Gottfurd
Screenplay by: Alan Simpson, Ray Galton
Based on an original story by: Tony Hancock, Alan Simpson, Ray Galton
Director of Photography: Gilbert Taylor
Camera Operator: Val Stewart
Editor: Richard Best
Art Director: Robert Jones
Set Decorations by: Scott Slyman
Paul's Paintings by: Alistair Grant
Miss Saad's Dresses by: Alan Sieveright
Wardrobe: Dora Lloyd
Make-up: Tony Sforzini
Hairdressing: Ivy Emmerton
Titles Designed by: James Baker
Music by: Frank Cordell
Played by: The Associated British Studio Orchestra
Musical Director: Stanley Black
Recording Director: A.W. Lumkin
Sound Recordists: Leonard Abbott, Len Shilton
Dubbing Editor: Arthur Southgate
Studio: Associated British Elstree Studios
uncredited
Production Secretaries: Jean Clarkson, Carole Conway
2nd Assistant Director: Gordon Gilbert
3rd Assistant Director: Bernard Williams
Crowd Casting: Etienne Bonnichon
2nd Unit Director of Photography: Lionel Banes
2nd Unit Camera Operators: Brian West, Brian Elvin
Focus Puller: Kelvin Pike
Clapper Loader: Jimmy Stilwell
Grip: R. Osborn
Stills: George Higgins
Assistant Editor: Eve Catchpole
2nd Assistant Editor: Peter Lennard
Draughtsmen: Ron Benton, Alan Tomkins
Scenic Artist: Bill Beavis
Props Buyer: Dudley May
Hairdresser: Polly Young
Sound Camera Operators: Stan Samworth, Bill Wayland
Boom Operator: Bill Cook
Sound Maintenance: Les Grimmell
Dubbing Crew: Len Shilton, Bill Rowe, J. Houten Robin Gregory
Assistant Dubbing Editor: Angie Ibbetson
Unit Press Representative: Edna Tromans
Publicity: Alan Thomson
Cast:
Tony Hancock (*Anthony Hancock*)
George Sanders (*Sir Charles Brewer*)
Paul Massie (*Paul*)
Margit Saad (*Margot Carreras*)
Gregoire Aslan (*Carreras*)
Dennis Price (*Jim Smith*)
Irene Handl (*Mrs Cora Grevatte*)
John Le Mesurier (*office manager*)
Liz Fraser (*waitress*)
Mervyn Johns (*London art gallery manager*)
Peter Bull (*Paris art gallery manager*)
Nanette Newman (*Josey*)
Marie Burke (*Madame Laurent*)

Ray Galton and Alan Simpson on Hancock's 'The Rebel'

When did you first meet Tony Hancock?

We first met Tony Hancock in the stalls of the Paris Cinema, Lower Regent Street, in October 1951, during rehearsals of a radio show in which Hancock was appearing and to which we were contributing, albeit not the bit in which he was appearing in up to then. We didn't say anything to him and he didn't say anything to us. Thus began a partnership that lasted until 1961 and encompassed 103 radio half-hours, 65 television half-hours, 26 other assorted radio shows, several *Workers Playtimes*, *Variety Ahoy's*, *Music Halls* etc. two stage shows and one film. All in ten years – just imagine what we could have achieved had we spoken to each other that afternoon. The one film was, of course, *The Rebel*, first released in 1960 and such a huge success that it is being released on video 34 years later.

What memories do you have of making The Rebel?

It was the first film that we were ever involved in. After nine years of the relative tat of the wireless and television, we were ushered into the glamorous and sophisticated world of the cinema. A magical never-never land that we had hitherto only heard about from the likes of such luminaries as Sid James and Bill Kerr. And we were not disappointed. It was goodbye to the Empire Dining Room, Shepherd's Bush, and hello to the Savoy Grill. At last we were among proper actors. A glance down the cast list will explain our wide-eyed wonderment; Dennis Price, Paul Massie, Irene Handl, Nanette Newman, and the first screen appearance [sic] of the legendary Oliver Reed. Then just 21, Reed's one short scene in the film was prophetically set in a bar. He portrayed a young artist and had one long speech expounding his philosophy on art. Normally one could expect such a bit part to be completed in one or two takes. It says much for the power and magnetism of his performance that the producer allowed him to do 27 takes before he got it right. Any other unknown with less charisma would have been slung off the set after four or five takes and replaced. It was obvious that even with such a small part we were in the presence of a future star.

But undoubtedly for us the most exciting part of the experience was meeting and working with the legendary George Sanders. A true star! A Hollywood star! One of our boyhood heroes – The Saint. *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, *The Moon and Sixpence*, *All about Eve*, *Call Me Madam*, dozens and dozens of them and to cap all, a man who up to a year beforehand had been married to Zsa Zsa Gabor. And what a charming, lovely man. His contract was a work of art in itself. A product of years of experience in the Hollywood jungle. Twice the salary of anybody else on the film, including the star, a grand piano to be on the set at all times for his sole use between takes, hereupon he would regale us all with selections from Franz Lehar, Sigmund Romberg and Ivor Novello, which immediately alienated him from the 'sparks' and 'chippies' who regarded such flamboyance as the behaviour of a big-headed pooffer.

The man oozed style, sheer elegance – personified in the story of George's cigarette case. Hancock and ourselves were intrigued by the sight of this beautiful gold hand engraved *objet d'art*. It was very narrow and very, very

Bernard Rebel (*art dealer*)
Sandor Eles, Oliver Reed, Garry Cockerill, Neville
Becker (*artists*)
Marie Devereux (*Yvette*)
John Wood (*poet*)
Victor Platt (*dock official*)
Mario Fabrizi (*coffee bar attendant*)
Barry Shawzin (*bistro owner*)
uncredited
Hugh Lloyd (*man on train*)
Dido Plum (*Yogi guest*)
Middleton Woods (*art gallery guide*)
Patrick Newell (*man in art London art gallery*)
UK 1960©
105 mins
Digital (restoration)

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long, rather like the magazine clip of an automatic rifle. What type of cigarettes could he possibly be carrying in such a strange shaped case? We decided he must either have 40 two-and-a-half-inch long Woodbines going widthwise, or five ten-inch joysticks going lengthwise. We had to know. Finally the three of us trooped over to the grand piano interrupting the Student Prince in full flow, and asked. He withdrew the priceless cigarette case and opened it. Of course, four separate compartments going lengthwise, each carrying five Balkan Sobranies, five Turkish Ovals, five Russian and five handmade Virginians.

But the most abiding memory we have of the lovely George was on location in Paris in the Place du Tertre in Montmartre. It was ten o'clock on a beautiful summer's morning. We were sitting on the terrace outside a café between takes, sipping chilled champagne naturally, when the conversation got round to George's recently published biography *The Memoirs of a Professional Cad*. Tony broached the subject by saying to him: 'In your time George, you must have had some of the most beautiful women in Hollywood.' We will never forget this impeccably dressed legend of the silver screen as he answered in the languid drawl famous the world over, 'Quite true, but you know, dear boy, I am fast reaching the stage of life where a satisfactory evacuation of the bowel is far preferable to a good fuck.' George – it was a great privilege knowing you.

You haven't told us anything about the actual screenplay of The Rebel.

That's true. You should have pointed this out earlier instead of letting us go on like this. Well there's no room left now. You'll just have to go out and buy the video. Thank you very much.

Sight and Sound, March 1994

A contemporary review

Tony Hancock, the funniest of the television comedians, has made the dangerous transition to the larger screen rather more happily than most. The script, by his TV writers, keeps the element of brave fantasy, the conviction of unrecognised grandeur; and Hancock at work, chipping away at his appalling statue, squirting paint with bland optimism over his action painting, is a fine figure. One misses, though, his anchor-man, the astringent Sidney James, and the whole background of down-at-heel respectability. The more prosaic the setting, the funnier Hancock seems; transplanted into a conventionally silly screen art world, he is submerged among the other grotesques. *The Rebel* gives its hero some agreeably deflationary dialogue; but the director, Robert Day, lacks the confidence to allow humour to take its time in developing and continually tries to force it by over-emphasis. The scene of office routine and the beatnik party in Paris are cases of thin material made to look thinner by the handling. All the same, enough of Hancock's gloomy truculence and shabby splendour come through; he makes his paint-crazed insurance clerk very likeable.

Monthly Film Bulletin, March 1961