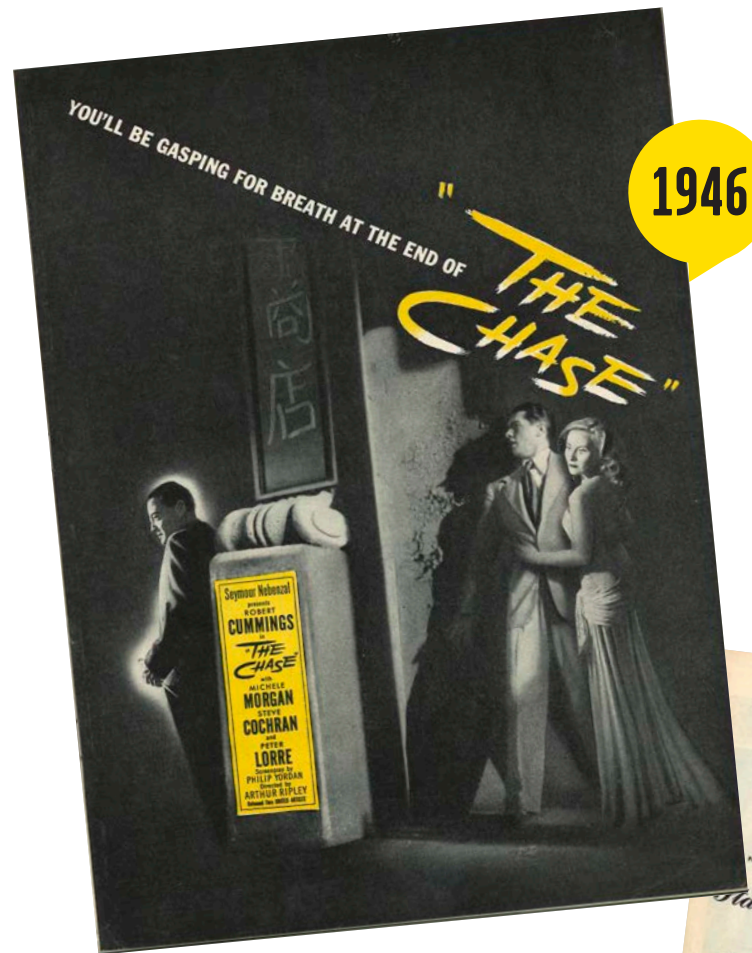


VINTAGE ADS

POSTWAR MOVIE NIGHT

After global conflict, films tackle dark themes.

BY MARY-LIZ SHAW



1946

DOWN THE RABBIT HOLE

An obscure, nightmarish thriller notable for having a troubled ex-GI (Robert Cummings) as its protagonist. He suffers from “shock”—PTSD in modern parlance—which makes it tough to fight his scary boss (Steve Cochran) or his affection for the boss’ wife (Michele Morgan).

1946

THE PLOT WORE THIN

Comedies struggled in the postwar era as audiences had to get used to laughing again. Sadly, *The Bride Wore Boots*, despite skilled co-stars Barbara Stanwyck and Bob Cummings as a mismatched couple, had no truly funny leg to stand on.



1947

CHERCHEZ LES FEMMES FATALES

Considered one of the best examples of film noir ever made, *Out of the Past* serves up a delicious plot-soup of double-crosses, shrewd women, wise-cracking gangsters and a former private eye, played by the incomparable Robert Mitchum, trying

to make sense of it all. And let’s not forget the smoking—so much smoking, everywhere, by everyone. The story is as dark and tense as they come, but superb acting, including by a young Kirk Douglas as the bad guy, makes it a must-see.

More postwar movies, page 54 »



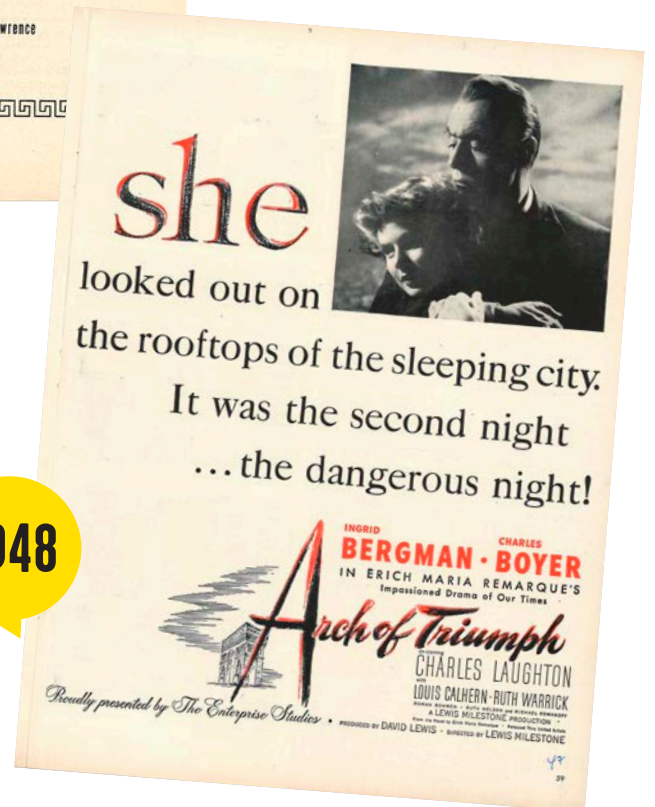
1947



1948

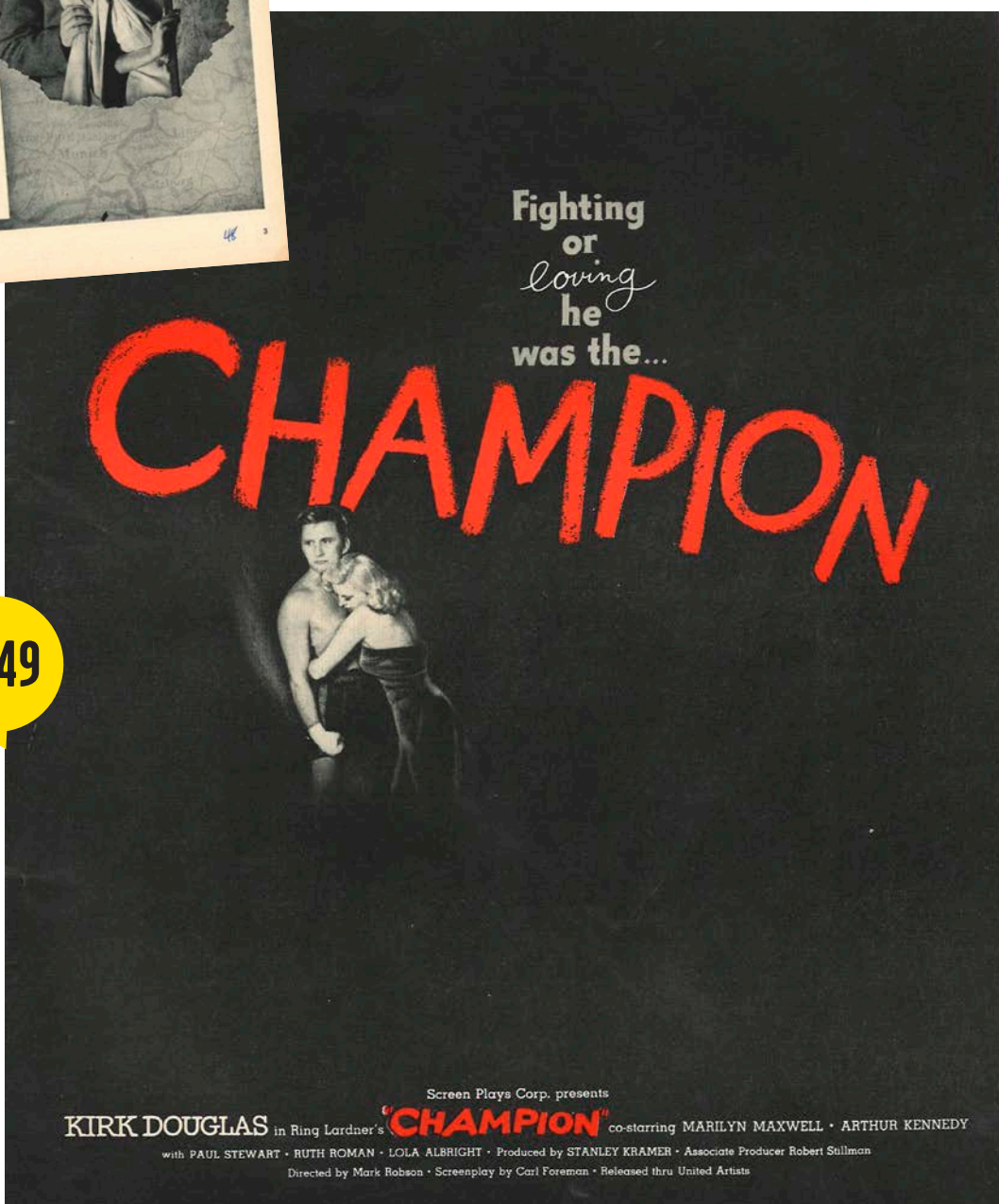
DON'T GIVE UP THE FIGHT

Another film built around current events, *Berlin Express* uses a classic thriller setting—a speeding train—to convey an urgent message about peace and democracy. Robert Ryan, Merle Oberon and their fellow passengers, all from different countries, conspire to protect a German doctor and peace activist from Nazi spies. And *Champion*, one of the best examples of sports drama, has Kirk Douglas as a morally compromised boxer battling his own demons as much as his opponents in the ring. The story no doubt hit home for countless veterans trying to find their place in peacetime. ●



1948

1949



DANGEROUS LIAISONS

On the surface, the historical adventure *Captain from Castile* promised escape from the dreary aftermath of World War II, especially with heartthrob Tyrone Power in the lead. But the story is really about moral and social conflict, and one nation invading another for political and financial gain—too familiar themes for 1940s audiences. WWII continued to loom large in classic melodrama, too. *Arch of Triumph*, based on the novel by exiled German writer Erich Maria Remarque, has Ingrid Bergman and Charles Boyer as doomed lovers and refugees in Paris as the Nazis gain power in 1930s Europe.