

# Great Directors: Kubrick

## **Spartacus** 1960

Friday, November 21 - Wednesday, November 26, 2008



### **Film Information**

**Directed by**  
Stanley Kubrick

**Language**  
English

**Running Time**  
87 minutes

### **Film Notes**

Seven names stand out on the original movie poster for SPARTACUS, the star-studded film released in 1960 by Universal Pictures: Kirk Douglas, Laurence Olivier, Jean Simmons, Charles Laughton, Peter Ustinov, John Gavin, and Tony Curtis. Even if an eighth name had been added to that list, it still probably wouldn't have been Stanley Kubrick—the person who directed the film. SPARTACUS told the story of a slave (Douglas) who leads an uprising against an unmovable empire. Consciously or not, it was a theme Kubrick probably identified with throughout the production.

An epic project both on screen and off, SPARTACUS starred Kirk Douglas in both the title character and as executive producer, and both roles instigated their share of battles. After one week of shooting, Douglas fired the original director, Anthony Mann, and replaced him with Kubrick, with whom he'd worked on PATHS OF GLORY. There is not nearly enough space here to detail the serpentine conflicts that took place among Douglas, Kubrick, screenwriter Dalton Trumbo, Universal, and Howard Fast (who wrote the novel on which the film was based), to list just a

few of the players, but suffice it to say an ongoing struggle over the scope, tone, and direction of SPARTACUS raged throughout the production. If anyone won, it wasn't Kubrick.

Despite the behind the scenes acrimony, SPARTACUS soared at the box office and earned four Academy Awards (plus another two nominations). Its success, however, did little to lessen Kubrick's disgust with Hollywood, and from that point on he sought financing for his films from outside the studio system. Shortly after the release of SPARTACUS, Kubrick relocated to England to begin shooting LOLITA. He would live and work from that country for the rest of his life.

—Casey



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“I am not an animal!”

**More Information**

**Screenplay by**

Dalton Trumbo  
Calder Willingham  
Peter Ustinov

**Based on the novel by**

Howard Fast

**Featuring**

Kirk Douglas  
Laurence Olivier  
Jean Simmons  
Charles Laughton  
Peter Ustinov  
John Gavin  
Nina Foch  
Tony Curtis

**Cinematography by**

Russell Metty

**Original Music by**

Alex North

**Film Editing by**

Robert Lawrence  
Irving Lerner

**Country of Origin**

USA

“If I ever needed any convincing of the limits of persuasion a director can have on a film where someone else is the producer and he is merely the highest-paid member of the crew, then SPARTACUS provided proof to last a lifetime.”

—Stanley Kubrick

**Also Recommended, by Kubrick**

Paths of Glory 1957  
Dr. Strangelove 1964  
Full Metal Jacket 1987