Intro to *On the Waterfront*

On the Waterfront was released in 1954. It was directed by Elia Kazan and stars Marlon Brando, Karl Malden, and Eva Marie Saint. The score was written by Leonard Bernstein. The film is gritty and beautifully realistic. Elia Kazan's films were concerned with personal or social issues of special concern to him. Kazan writes, "I don't move unless I have some empathy with the basic theme." *On the Waterfront* portrays New York City union corruption of the time.

Elia Kazan was a Greek-American director, producer, writer and actor--described in The New York Times as "one of the most honored and influential directors in Broadway and Hollywood history. In his work, Kazan focused on political, sociological, and psychological themes--he liked to expose reality for all it really was. He was one of the founders of Method acting "realism" and the Actors Studio. He preferred to work with unknown actors, and he was responsible for the careers of Marlon Brando, James Dean, Andy Griffith, Warren Beatty etc,--notably drawing out the best performances from his actors. This is fully realized in *On the Waterfront,* which some consider as "one of the greatest films in the history of international cinema."