

**FOURTH ANNUAL
CLASSIC FRENCH FILM FESTIVAL
PRESENTED BY
TV5MONDE**

Weekend



Co-presented by Cinema St. Louis and Webster University Film Series
Webster U.'s Winifred Moore Auditorium
July 13-29, 2012
www.cinemastlouis.org





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FOURTH ANNUAL CLASSIC FRENCH FILM FESTIVAL PRESENTED BY TV5MONDE



Co-presented by Cinema St. Louis and Webster University Film Series

When: July 13-15, 19-22, and 26-29, 2012

Where: Winifred Moore Auditorium, Webster University's Webster Hall, 470 E. Lockwood Ave.

How much: \$10 general admission;

\$8 for students with valid and current photo ID, Cinema St. Louis members with valid membership cards, and Alliance Française members;

\$15 for the Eric Rohmer double bill on July 15 (no discounts);

free for Webster U. students with valid and current photo ID

More info: www.cinemastlouis.org, 314-289-4150

Cinema St. Louis and the **Webster University Film Series** celebrate the city's Gallic heritage and France's cinematic legacy with their **Fourth Annual Classic French Film Festival**.

This year's fest is highlighted by a quartet of significant feature restorations: Marcel Carné's "Children of Paradise," Jean Renoir's "Grand Illusion," Henri-Georges Clouzot's "Wages of Fear," and René Clair's "The Italian Straw Hat." In addition, a special program focused on the seminal silent filmmaker Georges Méliès is anchored by a spectacular restoration of his short "A Trip to the Moon."

The festival for the first time explores France's major contributions to the silent era and pairs the works with live music: The Rats and People Motion Picture Orchestra performs with a representative selection of Méliès' shorts, and the Poor People of Paris accompany Clair's comic delight "The Italian Straw Hat."

Seven programs feature newly struck 35mm prints: the restorations of "A Trip to the Moon," "Grand Illusion," and "Wages of Fear," and four works of *la nouvelle vague* – Jacques Rivette's magical epic "Céline and Julie Go Boating," Jean-Luc Godard's incendiary "Weekend," and Eric Rohmer's charming "The Green Ray" and "Four Adventures of Reinette and Mirabelle." Jean Eustache's rarely screened masterpiece, "The Mother and the Whore," is also presented in 35mm.

The fest is rounded out by Chris Marker's mesmerizing documentary essay "Sans Soleil" and a double bill of Jean Vigo's essential "Zero for Conduct" and "L'Atalante."

All films are in French with English subtitles.

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7 P.M. FRIDAY, JULY 13

Children of Paradise/Les enfants du paradis

Marcel Carné, 1945, B&W, 190 min. (plus 10-min. intermission)

New restoration, Blu-ray source

Poetic realism reaches sublime heights with “Children of Paradise,” the ineffably witty tale of a woman (Arléty) loved by four different men. Deftly entwining theater, literature, music, and design, director Marcel Carné and screenwriter Jacques Prévert resurrect the tumultuous world of 19th-century Paris, teeming with hucksters and aristocrats, thieves and courtesans, pimps and seers. This masterpiece – frequently cited as the greatest French film of all time – is presented in a new 4K digital restoration that used the original camera negative as its source.

“Poetry with a capital ‘P,’ sprinkled with fairy dust,” writes the New Yorker’s Richard Brody. Salon’s Andrew O’Hehir declares: “If you give this movie time to work on you, the elements that seem overly artificial or impossibly distant from our own time fade into insignificance, and you’re left with a complicated and wonderful romantic drama that’s full of surprises.”

With an introduction and post-film discussion by Joe Williams, film critic for the St. Louis Post-Dispatch.



7 P.M. SATURDAY, JULY 14

**The Italian Straw Hat/Un chapeau de paille d’Italie
(aka The Horse Ate the Hat)**

With live accompaniment by the Poor People of Paris

René Clair, 1927, B&W, 105 min.

Sponsored by Jane M. & Bruce P. Robert Charitable Foundation

New restoration, original director’s cut, DVD source

“The Italian Straw Hat,” René Clair’s sparkling comedy of manners, is a witty and inspired satire on bourgeois behavior. A bridegroom is riding to his marriage when his horse eats a straw hat hanging on a branch. It’s soon revealed that the hat’s owner is a married lady enjoying a tryst behind the bush with her lover, a fierce hussar. Because madam cannot go home hatless without risking the discovery of her infidelity, the extravagantly bellicose soldier insists that the groom periodically interrupt his wedding with attempts to find a twin chapeau.

Made during the final flowering of silent cinema, “The Italian Straw Hat” consciously evokes the detail, costume, and design of the first movies, offering a sophisticated commentary on early silent film by transposing the action of the perennial stage farce from 1851 to 1895 – the year cinema was born. Calling it “one of the funniest films ever made,” legendary critic Pauline Kael asserts that the film was “so expertly timed and choreographed that farce becomes ballet.”

With an introduction and post-film discussion by Cliff Froehlich, executive director of Cinema St. Louis and adjunct professor of film studies at Webster University.

7 AND 9:15 P.M. SUNDAY, JULY 15

Eric Rohmer Double Bill

Separate admission for each film or \$15 for the double bill

The Green Ray/Le rayon vert (aka Summer) (7 p.m.)

Eric Rohmer, 1986, 98 min.

Four Adventures of Reinette and Mirabelle/4 aventures de Reinette et Mirabelle (9:15 p.m.)

Eric Rohmer, 1987, 95 min.

New 35mm prints

Eric Rohmer’s “The Green Ray,” the fifth in his “Comedies & Proverbs” cycle, follows the independent but insecure Delphine (Marie Rivière), a newly single young Parisian who cannot find a holiday companion for the month of August. Overhearing a discussion of Jules Verne’s “The Green Ray,” Delphine becomes fascinated with seeing the elusive meteorological event of the story’s title. Rivière, who also co-wrote her largely self-created role, delivers one of the most captivating lead performances in any of the filmmaker’s works. “The Green Ray” is “Rohmer’s ultimate masterwork,” says the Village Voice’s Andrew Sarris, who calls it “a singularly ennobling episode in the history of cinema.”

Rohmer made “Four Adventures of Reinette and Mirabelle” while waiting to finish “The Green Ray.” In the first of the film’s four episodes, two young women – one from the city (Jessica Forde), the other from the country (Joëlle Miquel) – meet and bond over an exquisite atmospheric event (“The Blue Hour”). Rooming together in Paris, they subsequently encounter a series of memorable characters: an impossible waiter (“The Waiter”), a Métro station hustler (“The Beggar, the Kleptomaniac and the Hustler”), and a snooty gallery owner (“Selling the Painting”). Calling the film “a perfect example of Rohmer’s emphasis on people talking, relating and living,” the New York Press’ Armond White declares it “one of his most charming.”

With introductions and post-film discussions by Robert Hunt, former film critic for the Riverfront Times.

The Green Ray





7 P.M. THURSDAY, JULY 19

Sans Soleil

Chris Marker, 1983, 100 min.

Blu-ray source

Chris Marker – filmmaker, poet, novelist, photographer, editor, videographer, and digital multimedia artist – has been challenging moviegoers for years with his complex queries about time and memory. “Sans Soleil” is his mind-bending free-form travelogue that shuttles from Africa to Japan to Iceland to France to the U.S., guided by an unnamed narrator reading the letters of the fictional Sandor Krasna, the film’s putative cameraman.

Marker dissolves the distinctions between fiction and nonfiction film, offering the viewer the extraordinary sensation of simultaneously spanning the globe and being enclosed within someone’s mind. “No two people will come away from ‘Sans Soleil’ with the same impression, nor will a solitary viewer’s multiple viewings yield the same experience,” says Slant’s Eric Henderson. “Marker’s film prefigures multimedia and . . . approximates the experience of being trapped inside the Internet and making radical leaps of associative connection.”

With an introduction and post-film discussion by Cliff Froehlich, executive director of Cinema St. Louis and adjunct professor of film studies at Webster University.



7 P.M. SATURDAY, JULY 21

Céline and Julie Go Boating/Céline et Julie vont en bateau (aka Phantom Ladies Over Paris)

Jacques Rivette, 1974, 193 min. (plus 10-min. intermission)

Sponsored by a Friend of Alliance Française de Saint Louis

New 35mm print

This magical tale recounts the adventures of librarian Julie and the flamboyant Céline, a White Rabbit who leads Julie through the Looking Glass into a world of her imagination. With the help of some magic candy, Céline and Julie become entangled in a bizarre drama set in a mysterious, and possibly haunted, house. Residing there are two women in love with the same man, a widower who had promised his wife that he would not remarry as long as their invalid daughter was alive. As the competition in the triangle reaches a murderous level, the high-spirited heroines plot a daring rescue.

One of the major films of ’70s, this brilliant meditation on the art of cinema and the nature of fantasy is regarded by many as New Wave master Jacques Rivette’s most accomplished film. Critic David Thomson enthuses that “Céline and Julie Go Boating” is “the most radical and delightful film since ‘Citizen Kane’” and declares it “the experience of a lifetime.” A “comic feminist extravaganza,” in the view of the Chicago Reader’s Jonathan Rosenbaum, the film “is as scary and unsettling in its narrative high jinks as it is exhilarating in its uninhibited slapstick.”

With an introduction and post-film discussion by Robert Hunt, former film critic for the Riverfront Times.

A Trip to the Moon



7 P.M. FRIDAY, JULY 20

Georges Méliès Program

With live accompaniment by the Rats & People Motion Picture Orchestra

113 min., B&W and tinted color

New restoration and 35mm print of “A Trip to the Moon,” 35mm print of “Le Grand Méliès,” DVD source for other shorts

Justly celebrated in Martin Scorsese’s recent “Hugo,” silent-film pioneer George Méliès is one of cinema’s seminal figures. This program pays tribute to Méliès’ extraordinary legacy, featuring as its centerpiece the St. Louis premiere of one of the most technically sophisticated and expensive restorations in film history: the gorgeous color version of “A Trip to the Moon” (1902, 13 min.). Presented in 35mm, the short features a new score by the French band AIR.

The program begins with a charming docudrama, “Le Grand Méliès” (1952, 31 min.) – which is directed by another master of French film, Georges Franju (“Eyes Without a Face”) – and concludes with a generous sampling of Méliès shorts with original musical accompaniment by St. Louis’ Rats and People Motion Picture Orchestra. The selection features 10 short works of 1-3 minutes each (“Playing Cards,” “The Vanishing Lady,” “The Haunted Castle,” “The Temptation of St. Anthony,” “The Devil in a Convent,” “The Pillar of Fire,” “The One-Man Band,” “The Man with the Rubber Head,” and “The Melomaniac”) and a trio of longer films of 16-20 minutes each (“The Kingdom of Fairies,” “The Impossible Voyage,” and “The Merry Frolics of Satan”).

With an introduction and post-film discussion by Jean-Louis Pautrot, professor of French and international studies at St. Louis University.



7 P.M. SUNDAY, JULY 22

Weekend

Jean-Luc Godard, 1967, 105 min.

New 35mm print

Jean-Luc Godard’s scathing late-’60s satire is one of cinema’s great anarchic works. Determined to collect an inheritance from a dying relative, a petit-bourgeois couple travel across the French countryside while civilization crashes and burns around them. Featuring a justly famous centerpiece single take of an endless traffic jam, “Weekend” is a surreally funny and deeply disturbing expression of social oblivion that ended the first phase of Godard’s career – and, according to the credits, cinema itself.

Calling the film “less an individual movie than the culmination of a process we might call the Godardification of cinema,” the Village Voice’s J. Hoberman writes: “Dramatizing homicidal conflict in the context of inexplicable, matter-of-fact social disaster, Godard’s unrelenting, consistently inventive farrago of grim humor, revolutionary rhetoric, coolly staged hysteria, and universal aggression is pure ’68, an art-house analog to its contemporary, George Romero’s ‘Night of the Living Dead.’”

With an introduction and post-film discussion by Kathy Corley, professor and program facilitator of film studies at Webster University.

L'Atalante



7 P.M. THURSDAY, JULY 26

Jean Vigo Double Bill

Single admission for the double bill
Zero for Conduct/Zéro de Conduite
Jean Vigo, 1933, B&W, 41 min.

L'Atalante

Jean Vigo, 1934, B&W, 89 min.
Blu-ray source

Although he made only a trio of shorts and a single feature before his death from tuberculosis at age 29, Jean Vigo stands as one of French film's most towering figures. "Zero for Conduct," Vigo's portrait of prankish boarding-school students, is one of cinema's great acts of rebellion. Based on the director's own experiences as a youth, the film presents childhood as a time of unfettered imagination and brazen rule-flouting. It's a sweet-natured vision of sabotage made vivid by dynamic visual experiments, including the famous, blissful slow-motion pillow fight.

In "L'Atalante," Vigo's only feature-length work, an unassuming tale of conjugal love becomes an achingly romantic reverie of desire and hope. Jean (Jean Dasté), a barge captain, marries Juliette (Dita Parlo), an innocent country girl, and the two climb aboard Jean's boat, L'Atalante – otherwise populated by an earthy first mate (Michel Simon) and a multitude of mangy cats – and embark on their new life together. "L'Atalante' manages to be more modern than anything being made today," writes the Guardian's Peter Bradshaw.

With an introduction and post-film discussion by Diane Carson, professor emeritus of film at St. Louis Community College at Meramec and adjunct professor of film studies at Webster University.



7 P.M. SATURDAY, JULY 28

The Mother and the Whore/La maman et la putain

Jean Eustache, 1973, B&W, 217 min. (plus 10-min. intermission)
35mm print

Hailed as the best film of the 1970s by Cahiers du Cinema, the rarely seen "The Mother and the Whore" – still unavailable on DVD – examines a fraught love triangle involving unemployed lay-about Alexandre (New Wave icon Jean-Pierre Léaud), enabling live-in girlfriend Marie (Bernadette Lafont), and a free-spirited nurse (Françoise Lebrun) he picks up after first failing to reconcile with yet another lover. Offering an insightful portrait of post-May '68 Paris, "The Mother and the Whore" is the first of only two features Eustache made before committing suicide at age 43 after a disabling auto accident.

Time Out New York's Andrew Johnston writes of his first encounter with the film: "One of the great, if all-too-infrequent, pleasures of being a film critic is having your mind blown by a film you didn't expect much from. ... Yes, I'd heard that ("The Mother and the Whore") was a classic of French cinema, but I wasn't exactly thrilled at catching an early-morning screening of a three-hour-and-thirty-five-minute black-and-white foreign-language film that reportedly consisted of little more than people sitting around and talking. ... Little did I know, as I eased into my seat, that I was in for one of the most memorable cinematic experiences of my life."

With an introduction and post-film discussion by Kathy Corley, professor and program facilitator of film studies at Webster University.



7 P.M. FRIDAY, JULY 27

Grand Illusion/La grande illusion

Jean Renoir, 1937, B&W, 114 min.
New restoration, 35mm print

Routinely hailed as one of the greatest films ever made, "Grand Illusion" is also one of the very first prison-escape movies. Jean Renoir's antiwar masterpiece stars Jean Gabin and Pierre Fresnay as French soldiers – one working class, the other aristocratic – held in a World War I German prison camp. Legendary director Erich von Stroheim co-stars as the unforgettable Capt. von Rauffenstein, a German whose kinship with his fellow officers creates a temporary bridge across the nationalist divide.

The Chicago Reader's Jonathan Rosenbaum calls the film "still one of the key humanist expressions to be found in movies: sad, funny, exalting, and glorious," and the Observer's Philip French describes "Grand Illusion" as "an optimistic, elegiac tragedy, looking at the great war and the crucial changes it wrought."

With an introduction and post-film discussion by Andrew Wyatt, film critic for St. Louis Magazine's Look/Listen arts-and-entertainment blog.



7 P.M. SUNDAY, JULY 29

The Wages of Fear/Le salaire de la peur

Henri-Georges Clouzot, 1953, B&W, 147 min.
New restoration, original director's cut, 35mm print

In a squalid South American oil town, four desperate men (Yves Montand, Charles Vanel, Folco Lulli, and Peter Van Eyck) sign on for a suicide mission to drive trucks loaded with nitroglycerin over a treacherous mountain route to a faraway oil fire. The result is one of the greatest thrillers ever committed to celluloid, a white-knuckle ride from France's legendary master of suspense, Henri-Georges Clouzot ("Diabolique"), presented in a new 35mm print created from a complete HD digital restoration.

"The film's extended suspense sequences deserve a place among the great stretches of cinema," asserts critic Roger Ebert, and the Chicago Reader's Jonathan Rosenbaum writes, "A significant influence on Peckinpah's 'The Wild Bunch,' this grueling pile driver of a movie will keep you on the edge of your seat."

With an introduction and post-film discussion by Diane Carson, professor emeritus of film at St. Louis Community College at Meramec and adjunct professor of film studies at Webster University.



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Légende: Marina Hands (Dorothée) et Julien Doré
(Nicolas). © Etienne George / Les Films Français

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